

Hebden Green Special School

1 Hebden Green Special School Grounds, WINSFORD, Cheshire, CW7 4EJ

Inspection dates	15/09/2014 to 18/09/2014	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Residential pupils actively look forward to the time they spend in residence. They receive outstanding levels of care and support in an environment which supports and meets their individual needs. They enjoy the whole experience of being in residence. As a result, they benefit by achieving improved personal, educational, social and emotional outcomes.
- Residential pupils are cared for in an environment where they are kept safe. As a result they develop excellent social and inter-personal skills based on the positive relationships they have with each other and with staff. Achievement is celebrated and the promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Disability is not accepted as a barrier to them experiencing a full, enriching lifestyle.
- Residential pupils live in an inclusive environment where aspirations for them are high. Regular consultation takes place which captures the views, thoughts and opinions of pupils. This provides them with opportunities to make genuine choices and contribute positively to life in the residential provision.
- The ethos, culture and working practices adopted in the residential provision, promote and encourage pupils towards improving skills that assists them in their journey towards greater independence.
- There is a continued commitment and desire for improvement. The management team, ably led by the headteacher, demonstrate a willingness to accept guidance, as well as constantly critically evaluate the whole schools performance. Making appropriate changes with the sole intention of achieving improved outcomes for its pupils, is an area of strength.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

The inspection of the residential provision commenced three hours after notice was given to the school. The inspector met with: residential pupils, the headteacher, senior school staff, residential care staff, nursing staff, the chair of governors, parent governors, independent monitoring visitor and parents. Inspection activities included: a tour of the premises; observation of activities, meal times and residential routines; and examination of policies, records, monitoring reports and a number of discussions with staff from the school and other external sources.

Inspection team

Graham Robinson

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Hebden Green Community Special School is a local authority maintained school for children with physical disabilities and associated medical and sensory needs. It educates children aged between 2 and 19 years. The residential provision caters only for those from Year 5 upwards. Different groups stay overnight between Monday and Thursday. Although the residential provision can accommodate up to 20 young people, the actual numbers in residence on any one night are less.

The residential provision is staffed by care staff employed by the local authority, supported by a team of qualified nurses employed by East Cheshire National Health Service Trust.

The residential provision of the school was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2013. In July 2014, Ofsted inspected the education provision, where all areas linked to education were judged to be outstanding.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils remain outstanding. Dedicated, skilled staff recognise and understand the diverse needs of the young people they care for. A strong bond of trust develops between staff, residential pupils and their parents, which lay the foundations for positive relationships to be developed and maintained. Diversity and individual differences are valued for all, which helps residential pupils to prosper socially, emotionally, physically and educationally.

Responses from residential pupils, parents and other external sources regarding their thoughts and views about the residential provision are consistently positive. One pupil summed this up by saying; 'I love coming here because I can be with my friends and we have a great time. There is always lots to do and staff are really kind.' Another says; 'I really look forward to coming here every week. I love the staff and other kids and we all have a great time.' One pupil looked beyond just having a good time by saying; 'We learn different skills and make choices throughout activities.'

Parents value having the residential provision not only for just a break, but as an opportunity for their child to socialise appropriately and develop new skills. For some, leaving their vulnerable child overnight at the school can cause anxiety. However, they trust the staff implicitly and show every confidence in them. One parent captured the views of others by stating; 'I am confident that my child's needs are fully met when they stay over. Staff are kind, as well as skilled at looking after children with complex needs. I trust them to look after my child.'

The residential care staff team have worked together for some time. They are experienced and fully committed to providing a high quality of care that improves outcomes for pupils. For example, communication with all pupils, no matter how complex, is not a barrier to them being consulted or allowing them to make decisions about themselves. The ability and patience of the staff team to communicate effectively with pupils is viewed as an area of strength. This allows all pupils to participate fully during their time in the residential provision. As a result, all pupils enjoy the full range of facilities and activities made available to them.

Personal development and making choices are areas that are promoted positively. For example, pupils accompanied staff on visits to furniture shops and helped to choose the new furniture recently purchased. Records and photographs give insight and provide evidence to show that pupils contribute significantly to life within the residential provision. This gives them a sense of purpose and a feeling of worth as well as demonstrating to them that their views and opinions do matter and are valued.

Regular, daily consultation with residential pupils continues to be a strength and underpins the success and popularity of the residential provision. Pupil and parental views continue to be reflected within the individualised plans and strategies which underpin evening and morning routines, ensuring care is personalised and dignified. A complete review and revision of the care plan format used for residential pupils has taken place since the previous inspection, demonstrating the schools desire and commitment to move practice forward and improve outcomes for pupils.

The behaviour of residential pupils at all times was observed as excellent. Pupils treat each other with respect, understanding and tolerance. They are responsive to each other's needs and helping each other comes naturally to them. For example, pupils assist each other in moving around an environment where they feel confident and safe. One pupil reflected on this by saying; 'I am perfectly safe when I stay over. Staff know how to look after me and understand what I need to keep me safe and well.'

The residential provision contributes significantly towards preparing pupils for life beyond the school. For example, a new initiative introduced recently supports reading and literacy, with residential staff taking a key role in the development of pupils literacy skills during their time in residence. Pupils are also encouraged to develop skills which lead them towards achieving a more independent lifestyle.

This is recognised not only as a strength by parents, but by residential pupils themselves. For example, one pupils says; `Residential has helped me massively to become more independent and also helped with my social skills.' Another who had met the inspector at a previous inspection described his progress as follows; `They (staff) find ways for you to achieve. I can do much more for myself from when you last came to the school. I can now toilet myself, take off my own splints and am beginning to be able to put them on, but this is more difficult. My Mum and Dad are really pleased.'

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of residential provision and care remains outstanding. The four groups of pupils using the provision Monday to Thursday are matched appropriately. This means no two nights are the same regarding the overriding needs of each group. For example, groups tend to be age appropriate although one is highly dependent, due to complex medical needs, with others being more independent or made up of younger children whose interests and needs vary accordingly. Helped by the recent introduction of the new care plan format, individual needs are clearly identified, understood and fully addressed, providing all pupils, whatever their needs, with an outstanding quality of care.

The health needs of residential pupils are being promoted positively. Information gathered from parents and medical sources populate individual health plans where the needs of pupils are assessed and addressed. Appropriate health information also transfers to care plans. The school has its own nursing team who oversee, monitor and co-ordinate the general health and medication needs of all pupils. Waking overnight nursing cover continues to be provided. Excellent links are maintained with external specialist services that are accessed when required. The well established services such as speech and language, physiotherapy along with the recent introduction of a dedicated counsellor, ensures that residential pupils complex health needs are well met.

Promoting a healthy lifestyle forms an important element of the residential experience. For example, general health and fitness levels are addressed with pupils participating in a wide range of group activities, individual interests and leisure pursuits. They also contribute to the choice of menu taking account of nutrition and general healthy eating information. Special dietary requirements are met. Pupils are encouraged to try unfamiliar foods, appreciate different cultures and try international cuisine. One pupil informed the inspector as they shared a meal, that they now liked Brussel sprouts. Festivals and religious events are celebrated.

Residential pupils continue to prosper and thrive in a safe, supportive and nurturing environment. Since the previous inspection, a number of developments introduced by the school have proved to be beneficial to the residential provision. For example, with the revision and update of the care plan format, which compliment individual risk assessments. Plans are more detailed and thorough. As they are updated, they capture the progress being made by pupils as they journey towards a more independent lifestyle.

The strong, trusting relationships built between staff, pupils and parents are the foundation for the ethos, culture and working practices on which the residential provision operates. For example, individual identity, culture and need is fully accepted by all, helping to develop the

strong bonds of friendship that exist within pupil peer groups. As one pupil put it; 'It's a chance to chill out with your friends and have a laugh.' Another says; 'I love coming here because I can be with my friends and we have a great time.'

Feedback from parents regarding the quality of care is consistently positive. None raised any issues, concerns or made any complaint. They recognise that staff share the same high aspirations for their child as they do and that disability is not used as an excuse or barrier to stop any pupil from engaging in a full, active and fulfilling lifestyle. As a result, pupils grow in confidence and ambition as their emotional resilience strengthens and their knowledge bases increase.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The school has retained its outstanding arrangements which keep residential pupils safe at all times. A whole range of policies and procedures, updated regularly to keep them current, underpin the working practices adopted by the residential provision. For example, with individual fire evacuation plans created for each residential pupil and with the robust clearance and recruitment procedures in place for new staff. Longer serving staff are being re-checked every three years. As a result, only suitably checked people work with or have contact with pupils.

The procedures to safeguard pupils and keep them safe remain outstanding. The significant changes made to the arrangements to protect pupils noted at the previous inspection are now fully imbedded into practice. Staff understand the arrangements and procedures, along with their own responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Lines of accountability are clear and regular refresher training for staff keeps their knowledge and practice of safeguarding updated. The school maintains its excellent links with the external agencies tasked with keeping children safe.

Bullying within the school and its residential provision is not an area of concern for pupils or their parents. They are confident that quick intervention would take place should an issue arise. However, pupils are supportive of each other, with the school creating an ethos of tolerance where they help each other through difficult times. Support and looking for positive, practical solutions to difficulties, coupled with a pro-active approach, ensures that pupils benefit from a non-punitive approach. As a result, behaviour management in this school is not a live issue.

Residential pupils are protected with a range of risk assessments that identify hazards both in and away from the school campus. Pupils participate in regular fire drills, with individualised evacuation plans in place to allow for a safe exit if necessary. Checks to maintain a safe environment are regularly undertaken. Pupils individual risk assessments, coupled with coping strategies, promote a safer environment for all. Individual strategies are updated as required, based on each pupils identified risk, progress and changing needs.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

Outstanding

The headteacher has just completed her first full year in post. She, along with the senior management team are now well established and enjoy the full support of the residential team. The drive, commitment and energy shown by the headteacher to move the whole school forward has reflected positively on the residential provision.

This is something recognised by both pupils, parents and external professionals who deal regularly with the school. For example, one pupil says; 'Things have changed for the better since Mrs Ashley took over. Don't get me wrong, it was really good before where I would give it 7-10, but now it's a 10-10. It's a happier place and I am always listened to.' A professional spoken with stated that; 'The school and children benefit from having a really dynamic young head. I have

every confidence in her.'

In the short time since the previous inspection, a number of developments and improvements have been made, which have had a positive impact on the residential provision. They include; the introduction of a dedicated counsellor, improved planning with greater detail contained in the revised care plan format, the creation of the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) which has improved the confidence of parents to visit the school as well as increasing fundraising and an improved, formalised, more practical role for parent governors in monitoring aspects of the school and its residential provision.

Residential staff recognise they receive excellent support, with regular meetings, supervision and appraisal taking place consistently. Training for staff is on-going, with all residential staff having access to training that keeps their skills and knowledge base updated. They have all gained an appropriate professional qualification. New staff receive appropriate induction. Collectively this ensures that residential staff possess the necessary competences and skills to effectively meet the diverse needs of the pupils they care for.

Residential pupils benefit from the school having a headteacher, who along with her management team, recognise and support the residential provision as an integral component of the whole school. The management team has a clear understanding regarding the strengths of the residential provision and areas in need of improvement. There is a clear sense of purpose and travel regarding the provisions own development, which is reflected in the schools residential improvement plan.

The arrangements for monitoring the residential provision have improved since the previous inspection, with parent governors taking a more active role. They supplement the formalised system in place where the residential provision is visited regularly, unannounced by someone independent of the school. Both parties produce written reports which contain elements of quality assurance and evaluation. Reports review performance and identify areas for improvements, which are used effectively for future planning. Residential pupils contribute to the monitoring process and can discuss their views.

The residential provision provides an environment that is safe, supportive and child-centred. It is popular with both parents and pupils who look forward to and value their time spent there. Not only are pupils extremely well cared for, they are challenged to work towards improving their educational achievements as well as developing practical skills that will serve them well as they progress towards greater independence. As one parent put it; 'The care children receive is first class. Residential gives my child something to look forward to, where he can meet his friends, socialise and develop skills. His views are listened to and taken seriously, making him feel valued.'

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	111505
Social care unique reference number	SC006614
DfE registration number	896/7109

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Maintained
Number of boarders on roll	44
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	9 to 19
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Ashley
Date of previous boarding inspection	19/11/2013
Telephone number	01606 594221
Email address	hebdengreen.cheshire.sch.uk

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