

Potterspurry Lodge School

Potterspurry Lodge School, Potterspurry Lodge, TOWCESTER, Northamptonshire, NN12 7LL

Inspection dates	11/09/2014	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Residential pupils enjoy being at the school and are able to talk about how residence has allowed them to develop their self-esteem, behaviour and educational attainment.
- The school has responded to concerns relating to health and safety legislation and complaints systems which were raised at the last inspection. There have also been developments in the external scrutiny of safeguarding processes and the head teacher's assessment of the residential provision. This inspection highlights the school needs to be fully responsive to pupils comments and also ensure that behaviour management policy is consistent with national minimum standard expectations relating to restraint.
- Residential pupils highlight activities as being a significant strength of the school. They enjoy a wide range of experiences, both within the school and externally. Pupils are also involved with leading activities, which develops their confidence and ability to manage their behaviours.
- Staff are consistently enthusiastic about their role. They feel well managed, well trained and supported. They are also knowledgeable in how to respond to young people's needs. All residential staff and managers are trained in safeguarding and supporting the welfare of pupils.
- Residential pupils are well prepared for adult life through effective college support and good procedures allowing them to experience independent living on the school site.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection with three hours' notice. Inspection activities included: observation of residential care practice over two evenings in the three residential houses in use; shared meals and informal discussions with children. There were meetings and discussions with a range of residential, teaching and support staff and scrutiny of a wide range of documentation about residence. There was no Parent View information or responses to Ofsted's online surveys. However, the inspector spoke with many children in residence throughout the inspection and made contact with the statutory safeguarding authority to gather their views.

Inspection team

Andrew Hewston

Lead social care inspector

Karen Wareing

Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Potterspurty Lodge School is an independent residential special school for 40 boys aged 8 to 18 years, nine of whom reside at the school during the week. The school offers termly boarding, weekly boarding and day provision. The residential accommodation is provided in four residential houses and an independence flat on the school site, although only three are fully operational currently. The school is situated on the outskirts of Towcester and caters for young people with autism and emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and associated learning difficulties.

The residential provision was last inspected by a social care inspector at a full inspection in February 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that residential pupils' comments following restraints are fully responded to.
- Develop a clear way of ensuring issues highlighted on the health and safety walks are responded to and recorded when completed.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
 - The policy complies with relevant legislation and guidance and is understood by staff and children (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 12.2)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Good

The residential experience has a positive impact on the lives of residential pupils, with good progress made in areas such as education attendance and achievement, and personal and social development. Residential pupils develop positive relationships with both the staff team and their peers during their time at the school. They are able to discuss how they have moved forwards, with one stating, 'I can really see the difference that being here has made to me, I feel a lot more mature.'

Residential pupils enjoy being at the school, stating that, 'it is a great place to be', with activities being highlighted as a primary reason for this. They develop in their self-esteem and confidence through learning and developing new skills. The use of activities also supports the development of their social skills as they become increasingly involved with the local community.

Residential pupils become more aware of their own behaviours due to clear boundaries and high expectations from the care staff team. This is consistent across the school site. One young person stated that their behaviour had, 'improved so much from just being here and learning how I should behave'.

The promotion of a healthy lifestyle helps residential pupils to learn about keeping themselves fit and eating a diet with fresh ingredients. Residential pupils' health is further enhanced through regular health appointments, with staff receiving additional support regarding behavioural and mental health issues. These allow residential pupils to be supported as staff gain skills and knowledge in the best ways to support individual needs.

Residential pupils are well prepared for independent living due to the self-contained flat and increased expectations of the older residents to take responsibilities for their own welfare, as well as being involved with leadership of activities. Good support structures are in place for pupils to develop their ability to travel independently. Support for pupils during this time is excellent, with a good life skills programme in place which works alongside individual plans. This ensures that they receive opportunities to become independent and become responsible members of society.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

The quality of the residential provision is of a good standard due to the committed and knowledgeable staff team responding well to the needs of the residential pupils. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with the staff team, who are well aware of the young people's differing needs and are highly responsive to these. Residential pupils are able to talk about staff that they enjoy being with and who help to support them on a daily basis, as well as within meetings. Effective links are in place between the educational and the care provision with twice daily discussions of the residential pupils' day and their achievements. This provides residential pupils with continuity of care, stability, support and varied learning opportunities which take account of their personal needs and interests. Staff have high aspirations for all residential pupils and every opportunity is taken to reinforce positive actions and celebrate pupil achievement, no matter how small.

All residential pupils go through an induction process that introduces them to the rules and expectations of being in residence, as well as highlighting the positive aspects of the school and support services. Careful thought is given to the appropriateness of the living arrangements to ensure that residential pupils live with those who will support them to develop.

Highly individualised care planning is in place. This highlights how the school recognises

residential pupils as individuals with their own set of diverse and unique needs. These needs are detailed in care plans and risk assessments that are routinely monitored, reviewed and updated. Professionals contribute fully to all aspects of care planning. Residential pupils are frequently involved in discussing their plans and the progress they are making. As a result, residential pupils can demonstrate a good insight into how they are cared for and the benefits of spending time in the residential setting. Residential pupils are encouraged to keep in touch with their families where appropriate, through both the home area telephones and their own mobiles.

The care staff place a strong emphasis on activities outside of school hours to develop residential pupils' self-esteem and interest in a variety of sports and keeping themselves healthy. Residential pupils are able to discuss how they have been involved with differing activities, including bike riding, which links to their work experience at a bike shop and training for a triathlon. Excellent links are in place with community uniformed organisations, including the cadets and scouts. One young person is learning to become a leader, stating that, 'it helps me to learn how to get on with others as well as having a good time.'

Care staff promote residential pupils' good health and support them to lead a healthy lifestyle. The school works closely with health professionals to ensure residential pupils have regular health checks and attend any medical appointments. Care staff are trained in the administration of medication and first aid to ensure they are responsive to the needs of all young people.

Meals provided by the school are nutritious, of good quality, with plenty of choice. Menus take account of pupils' likes and dislikes, and specific dietary needs are catered for where required. Residential pupils develop an awareness of how foods are grown and cooked, through gardening and collecting vegetables from around the school site. Mealtimes are social occasions where residential pupils are encouraged to sit together and chat with staff and peers. This results in a pleasant, purposeful and relaxed atmosphere that promotes a culture of respect and tolerance.

The accommodation is pleasant and homely. All areas are well cared for with regular maintenance of the grounds and residential areas. Residential pupils' rooms are well personalised, with one young person stating that, 'we are encouraged to bring our personalities into the decoration of our rooms.' This promotes a good level of independence and ownership of their own rooms as well as developing a responsibility for the care of communal areas.

Residential pupils' safety

Adequate

Staff support the safety of residential pupils through a consistent awareness of protecting pupils. Some development of school policy regarding restraint is necessary as is the need to be fully responsive to comments made following such instances, by residential pupils, despite such incidents being rare.

The management team has improved their awareness and understanding of safeguarding through external training and consultation with the local safeguarding team. This is in response to a concern raised at the last inspection to develop safeguarding practices. All safeguarding issues are fully responded to swiftly. Recordings include clear chronologies showing how the school has responded to concerns, the involvement of external agencies and evidence of how decisions have been met to ensure the well-being of the residential pupils.

Recruitment processes are detailed and clearly show that all necessary vetting checks are completed prior to staff starting at the school. Staff are trained in child protection matters and safe working practices. This further promotes the safety and well-being of pupils and staff.

The school maintains good anti-bullying practices. Staff effectively manage the environment and group dynamics which helps to ensure bullying, such as name calling, is promptly addressed in a

supportive manner with those involved. Staff are aware of the potential for bullying and the impact bullying can have on residential pupils' welfare. They work hard to foster a culture of openness within the residential setting, encouraging residential pupils to share their feelings and discuss any concerns they may have. Processes for raising concerns are good and all residential pupils said they could confidently approach at least one member of staff if they have any concerns, and feel they will be taken seriously.

Positive behaviour is consistently promoted throughout the school and there is a high expectation that they learn to live in harmony with each other. Where concerns relating to behaviour occur, effective sanctions are put in place. These are appropriate and responsive to the behaviours exhibited. The use of restraint is rare within residence, and when this occurs it is swiftly recorded. The school behaviour policy requires development to ensure there is clarity regarding the grounds for restraint within residence, as opposed to within school. Where a residential pupil has responded following restraint, the school's response is not consistently recorded and this does not promote development of practice at all times. Good reward structures are in place to further promote positive behaviours, with targets being developed through discussions with residential pupils.

Health and safety practices help to support the well-being of residential pupils. All pupils are involved with regular fire checks and drills at differing times of the day and night. Health and safety procedures are well organised, with gas, electrical and fire safety equipment regularly checked. Environmental issues are recorded during 'learning walks' around the school, although it is not clear if these have always been fully responded to. This could mean that issues are not completed in a timely fashion.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The residential provision is professionally and efficiently run by an experienced, qualified and knowledgeable management team. They are child-focused and committed to ensuring residential pupils' needs are met. Cohesive links between education and care promote continuity and enhance the residential pupils' holistic school experience. This ensures routines and procedures are clear, well established and operate consistently to provide a caring and safe residential experience.

The auditing of residential care files is thorough, with close examination of all documentation. The care management team has a strong knowledge of issues within the residential areas. This is completed through effective monitoring, both internally and through half-termly visits from an independent visitor, who completes reports for the trustees. The headteacher also completes reports to the trustees as part of his own monitoring process, this is in response to an area raised at the last inspection to improve care practices further. This ensures that all relevant parties are fully aware of the provision that the residential pupils are experiencing. This has also led to the development in areas such as activities, and more appropriate staff shift patterns. Both of these points have had a positive impact on the lives of the residential pupils at the school.

Residential pupils' views on their care are continually sought due to the high level of staffing and the daily discussions about their lives and plans. This area is being developed further through a new key-working system that is being rolled out by the head of care.

The care staff have a wealth of experience between them and many have been working at the school for several years. Their commitment to the residential pupils is strong; they recognise that the residential pupils need and benefit from consistency and routines. Consequently, any staff shortages are covered between team members as they strive to avoid any unnecessary disruption to the pupils' care and residential experience. Staff report that the new shift system, 'has really changed the enjoyment of the job and you now can concentrate more on the young people.'

Staff are appropriately trained, and regular updates are given to staff as part of a whole-school development plan. Staff state that they are well supported. Supervision arrangements show that regular meetings are completed with staff, helping to develop their own practice and also reviewing care of pupils. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss on-going issues across the school site and are also used as periods for development within the staff team.

The school has responded to issues raised as part of the last inspection. Clearer accountability and procedures are now in place relating to health and safety responsibilities, and the policy regarding complaints has also been updated in response to additional information required. This has led to improvements in the response to health and safety issues and an improvement in the speed and depth in the way that the school responds to any concerns raised either within school or externally.

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	122136
Social care unique reference number	SC012962
DfE registration number	928/6039

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	Independent residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	9
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Mr John Brown
Date of previous boarding inspection	25/02/2014
Telephone number	01908 542912
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