

Holly House School

Holly House School, Church Street North Old Whittington, CHESTERFIELD, Derbyshire, S41 9QR

Inspection dates	07/11/2014	
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 have an extremely positive view of the residential setting. Comments such as, 'It is the best and now it's even better' show their appreciation of the service, staff and the most recent improvements made to the bedrooms at the setting. Parents' comments such as 'amazing', 'brilliant' and 'fantastic' sum up the outstanding nature of the residential service.
- Holding safeguarding and behaviour management in the highest regard ensures outstanding outcomes for residential pupils. The proactive and motivational approach to organising an array of activities promotes excellent improvements in pupils' behaviour. The organisation and constant evaluation of the impact of activity time are exemplary. Bespoke and positive behaviour management motivates best behaviour and re-focuses pupils away from risk-taking activities.
- Residential pupils receive outstanding quality of care because systems and routines meet the holistic care and education needs of pupils. Systems between the care and education staff are seamless with excellent communication. Staff ensure residential pupils learn, feel nurtured, improve behaviour and have exciting and meaningful plans for their futures.
- Residential pupils receive excellent quality of care because the leaders and managers monitoring and drive for improvement are constant and outcome led. Pupil enjoyment and achievement are at the core of development plans. Leaders and managers utilise the skills and qualities of staff in order to provide maximum impact for pupils and families. Teamwork is excellent with staff embracing opportunities for professional development and service improvement. Pupils and staff thrive and develop in this energetic and enthusiastic environment.

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

This inspection was completed by one inspector following a 3 hour notice period. Two evenings were spent in the residential accommodation. Six pupils were resident on each night. Several other pupils were using the extended school day service. Several pupils were spoken with during the inspection and several pupils completed a tour of the accommodation. A range of records were examined relating to the care provided. The evening meal on both days was observed. Discussions were held with members of the management team, care staff and Designated Safeguarding Officers, Governors, school nurse, activities' organisers and parents. Documentation examined included health and safety and recruitment records, behaviour management records, care and health plans and management/independent visitor reports.

Inspection team

Elaine Cray

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Holly House School is a maintained residential community special school for children with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The school provides education for 40 pupils aged seven to 14 years with statements of special educational needs.

The school is located in Chesterfield, Derbyshire. The residential unit is located in an annex to the main school and is on two floors, each floor being self-contained. The unit provides accommodation for up to six pupils each night from Monday to Thursday during term time. Pupils access the service on a voluntary basis and follow a variety of placement arrangements according to their needs.

The residential provision was last inspected in February 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Update the pupils residential handbook with contact details for the Children's Commissioner.
- Review and develop a more reparative approach to sanctions.
- Improve consistency of information between the individual and central recording for physical interventions.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupils make excellent progress across all aspects of their lives as a result of attending the residential service. They thoroughly enjoy their stays and say their confidence, literacy, numeracy and behaviour all improve since coming to the residential setting.

Parents' examples about their children returning to mainstream school, developing social skills and making new friends exemplify how pupils make exceptional progress. They say the impact of residence is clear when pupils with a history of poor motivation to attend school now, 'Get up in the morning, are ready, dressed, waiting for their taxi to arrive and make me ring the school if the taxi is late.'

Residential pupils have strong foundations of stability and security. They feel safe in the residential setting. They are less anxious, enjoy fulfilling activities and have improved interactions with friends, family and in the local community.

Residential pupils develop confidence and social skills. An array of opportunities at the setting enable excellent social skills and self-esteem. Residential pupils who find face-to-face interactions socially challenging make meaningful relationships with peers and adults. They forge their own identities and independence as they spend time away from their family environments. Consistent encouragement and praise boosts pupils' confidence. Residential pupils feel good about themselves and develop emotional resilience as they embrace opportunities to fulfil their potential.

Residential pupils' behaviour improves significantly as result of staying in the residential setting. Pupils know what to expect and what is expected of them. Information and discussion about their rights, boundaries and expectations are explicit and therefore meaningful to them. Pupils have a strong sense of pride in their school and their achievements.

The pupils' charter lets pupils know about what to expect in terms of their care, emotional support, rights, decision making and access to personal records. A clear list of rules and expectations gives residential pupils meaningful information about their own responsibilities. Pupils experience an excellent sense of empowerment due to this very child-centred approach to information sharing.

Residential pupils mature and develop positive identities as a result of excellent role modelling by staff of both genders. They develop a sensitive understanding and tolerance of each other. Good manners and respect are key foundations in how individuals behave and are treated. These qualities contribute to the excellent anti-bullying culture throughout the school.

Pupils say the activities are one of their favourite aspects of staying over at the school. They thoroughly appreciate the excellent commitment of staff to provide pupils with fun and challenging experiences. Pupils' photographs and recollection of their achievements exemplify their sheer delight and exuberance about the activities on offer at the setting.

Pupils try new opportunities and their scope for enjoyment widens their awareness and motivation to reach their potential. Professionals say that, 'Letting children be children – playing, running around and learning', and the, 'layer of warmth throughout the setting', promote excellent outcomes for pupils.

The quality of care in the residential provision is outstanding. Pupils thrive because pastoral care is of a very high standard and meets the diverse and complex needs of the residential pupils. The service provides a vibrant, motivational and nurturing environment to promote pupils' educational and social development.

Residential pupils thrive and develop because care plans address all aspects of their care and education. Care plan targets dovetail with education and behaviour plans. Health care plans further enhance the support strategies in place to promote the physical and emotional well-being of the residential pupils. This connectivity in documentation and cohesion between all staff and agencies provide pupils with wraparound care and education.

Regular review of care plan targets and consultation with residential pupils about their care and education are contemporary and meaningful. The review processes are interactive with regular one-to-one support meetings. Review reports written by residential staff are highly personalised. These qualities and support for pupils to contribute give pupils a strong sense of self-determination and they grow in confidence.

Residential pupils have strong relationships with both teaching and care staff. Positive attachments enable pupils to discuss their concerns and worries. There is an excellent sense of nurture. Staff's knowledge about the backgrounds and individual identities of pupils gives excellent insight into their needs and vulnerabilities. Staff's intuitive and child-centred skills sensitively identify and promote the emotional well-being of pupils.

Transition to and from the school is effective because pupils, parents, carers and professionals receive good information about the provision. The recently reviewed website provides access to information about the ethos of the school, staying over, staff practice, policies and procedures.

Residential pupils are also able to access information via the pupils' residential handbook. An array of photos, pictures and flow diagrams support written information. This approach responds to the age and levels of understanding of the pupils as young as seven years and up to 14 years of age. Pupils, parents and carers can also visit the residential setting. Pupils say their own personalised gradual build-up helps them to settle and fully enjoy the residential experience.

Residential pupils make excellent progress due to meaningful and connected work with parents, carers and supporting agencies. Assessment, support and communication with families result in targeted work and outstanding outcomes.

Routines in the residential service support pupils' medical needs. Rigorous procedures for the storage and administration of medication protect residential pupils' health and medical needs. Effective partnership working between the school nurse, staff, pupils and families improve pupils' emotional and physical health. For example, residential pupils experience better personal hygiene and bedtime routines. Comments from the school nurse such as, 'amazing, the enthusiasm and the way staff embrace recommendations', exemplify the school's excellent commitment to working in partnership to improve the health of residential pupils.

Healthy meals and menu planning promote residential pupils' health and well-being. Their diets improve as a result of staying at the residential setting. Pupils try new foods and eat more fruit and vegetables. Sharing mealtimes with others enables pupils to develop good social skills and excellent manners. Pupils clearly enjoy the food and they are pleased the cooks and staff know about their favourite choices. The school nurse says her invite to lunch showed the very family-like approach to dining and this provides a very nurturing environment for pupils.

Residential pupils can access external advice from an independent listener. Pupils are enthusiastic about this individual, saying he is easy to talk to. They would not hesitate to call him if they were worried, but this is not really necessary because he visits the school regularly.

The thought put into the introduction of a new advocate exemplifies the managers' and leaders' commitment to advocacy having a meaningful role within the setting. The new independent listener has experience of working alongside children with challenging behaviours. Pupils already enjoy her interactive assemblies at school. This combination of qualities, experience and pupils' preference shows excellent regard for the views and rights of pupils.

Interactive and meaningful displays throughout the residential setting engage pupils' social awareness and tolerance of difference. Throughout this inspection pupils used the displays to explain about bullying, homophobia and racial discrimination. Advocacy and independent agency details include Childline and Ofsted, but do not reflect the change of role between the Children's Rights Director and the Children's Commissioner.

Staff provide an imaginative and varied programme of activities. Pupils keep fit, learn new skills and develop good teamwork skills with outdoor activities such as walking, biking, climbing and fishing. Adventure activities, cooking sessions, arts and crafts and cinema nights complement routine weekly activities such as boxing club, swimming and climbing club. Recent Halloween activities such as a ghost tour, pumpkin making and party games exemplify the creativity of staff.

Activity planning is purposeful and meaningful in order to enhance the development and growth of pupils. Strategic planning promotes individual goals, development and social learning for pupils. For example, while pupils experience sheer enjoyment in going walking, visiting parks and picnicking, staff have a clear written agenda for the activity. Objectives such as developing interaction skills with the public, making peer friendships, getting fit and learning about wildlife are the key focus for staff. Routine evaluation of each activity ensures the activities programme continues to be child centred, purposeful and contributes to the pupils' development.

Building independence skills is an integral part of the residential service. This school provides education and support to pupils up to the age of 14 years. On-going transition processes include pupils potentially returning to mainstream school. The residential service makes significant contribution to pupils' practical skills, but most importantly they grow in self-confidence. Greater self-esteem prepares pupils for important emotional transition into adolescence and preparation for changes in their education arrangements.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The safety of residential pupils is outstanding. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures protect all pupils. Endorsing checks carried out on agency staff who currently work at the setting to cover long-term staff sickness, further reinforce residential pupils' safety.

Residential pupils are safe because well-trained staff understand and implement the service's comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff and managers have an excellent awareness of the smaller picture in safeguarding. Identifying and discussing concerns at an early stage facilitate timely and practical interventions. Pupils are safer and their behaviour improves as a result of excellent implementation of child protection strategies.

Safeguarding is robust because staff have in-depth knowledge about young people's background, their risks and bespoke protocols and procedures. Close supervision, effective organisation of activities and structured routines promote residential pupils' safety. There are no incidents of pupils going missing while staying at the residential setting.

Comprehensive and practical risk assessment identifies concerns and challenges. Strategies to manage these concerns focus on safety but also ensure all pupils have opportunities to reach their potential and achieve. For example, bespoke risk management strategies mean that pupils with complex behaviours and needs can take part in climbing, biking, hill walking, camping and going away on holidays.

In-depth staff training in behaviour management ensures excellent support for residential pupils to improve behaviour. Proactive and meaningful behaviour strategies positively impact because staff play to pupils' strengths. Reinforcing positive behaviour ensures physical intervention is only used in the residential setting as a last resort and to protect pupils and staff.

Records are up to date and usefully monitor patterns and trends to inform and improve staff support and practice. Ensuring consistency in recording physical intervention techniques across central and individual records is an area for improvement.

Imposing few sanctions exemplifies the excellent focus on positive behaviour management. Pupils only receive sanctions for very serious misdemeanours, usually excessive aggression. Such incidents occasionally result in pupils not being able to attend the residential service. Safety is an important issue for all pupils, but taking away such an essential service for pupils is not in keeping with the usual positive stance taken in the residential setting. Reviewing and developing a more reparative approach to sanctions is an area for improvement.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. Leadership is exceptionally strong. The aims and objectives of the setting are clear and contribute to the outstanding outcomes for residential pupils. The school's Statement of Purpose is comprehensive. Staff practice is sound due to a clear and well-embedded framework of policies and procedures.

Leaders, managers and staff have a strong vision for the service and ensure all pupils can 'be the best they can be'. The residential service is integral to this vision because it gives a wide range of opportunities and supports the school curriculum.

Governors place the residential setting at the heart of the operation of the school. The service is well resourced, not least with significant refurbishment of the residential accommodation. Governors are proud because residence promotes better attendance, improves safety and increases educational attainment.

Effective staffing arrangements ensure residential pupils experience outstanding care. Extremely motivated, dedicated and competent staff look after the residential pupils. Pupils make outstanding progress as the enthusiasm and energy of the staff team permeate throughout and across all levels of the school.

Well-organised training, excellent teamwork and experience complement high staffing ratios. Annual appraisal, in-depth induction, core training and staff supervision support the expertise of staff. Quality of care is excellent because staff constantly seek out development opportunities. Managers connect with other services and agencies to ensure their knowledge and practice are contemporary and child-focused. For example, staff currently look forward to completing training in working with sexually exploited children.

Residential pupils grow in confidence because they know their views are important to the staff. Regular house meetings and one-to-one key-working sessions promote participation. Displays about children's and young people's rights give excellent points of reference for residential pupils. Displays are creative and interactive, giving excellent opportunity for residential pupils to learn

and discuss about how their contribution and right to complain are integral to the running of the service. Themed bedroom improvements and the very popular activities programme reflect pupils' valued contributions to the development of the service.

Residential pupils' positive relationships with the staff give them assurances and confidence about raising concerns and complaints. Close relationships with staff and access to an independent listener mean residential pupils can identify key adults to talk to about their worries.

Records are well maintained and provide all the required information about residential pupils in order to understand their backgrounds and meet their needs.

Excellent checking and monitoring systems are in place to promote safety. Security measures are thorough and keep pupils safe. Regular review of risk management promotes constant evaluation of young people's safety both inside and outside the residential setting. This means staff and residential pupils know what to do in the event of a fire and how to keep themselves safe and secure.

Effective and regular monitoring systems maintain excellent standards and drive improvement. Practice improves because leaders and managers use patterns and trends to evaluate behaviour, progress and the impact of staff practice. Independent scrutiny monitors standards and drives improvement. The independent monitoring visitor says the management team is, 'like an open book, a sponge for feedback and areas for development. Always wanting to get better.'

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	131322
Social care unique reference number	SC056234
DfE registration number	830/7000

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	
Number of boarders on roll	10
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to 14
Headteacher	Mr Peter Brandt
Date of previous boarding inspection	26/02/2014
Telephone number	01246 450530
Email address	pbrandt@hollyhouse.derbyshire.sch.uk

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