

Coln House

Coln House Special School, Horcott Road, FAIRFORD, Gloucestershire, GL7 4DB

Inspection dates	05/12/2014	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The quality of the provision provided by the school has a positive impact on the residential pupil's lives and provides them with a wide range of new opportunities. The improvements are not only educational but also social and personal which lead to the development of the individual as a whole and prepares them for later life.
- The leadership and management of the school is strong and committed to the school continued improvement. They work collaboratively with fellow professionals for the benefit of the pupils.
- The staff have excellent relationships with the residential pupils they care for based on respect and trust. Pupils well being, safety and progress is at the heart of all the work the staff undertake. Residential pupils make good to excellent progress from their starting points on admission to the school.
- The team of additional support services at the school, which includes the therapeutic team provide excellent residential pupils and the school staff with outstanding support in all aspect of the pupils care.
- Behaviour management is a strength of the school. The main focus of this is positive reinforcement of good behaviours. Linked with this is the understanding pupils achieve of their own behaviours and how to manage these.
- All national minimum standards are met. The areas identified for the school to further improve do not have a direct impact on the care and outcome for residential pupils. These areas include further development of the monitoring systems within the school.

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 school was given two hours notice of this inspection. Information was gathered during discussion with students, staff and external professionals. Documentation, policies and records were scrutinised. All residential accommodation was viewed, meals were taken with students, and activities, relationships and interactions were carefully observed. There were no pre-inspection surveys or parent view responses so the inspector examined the school's own consultation with students, families and others.

Inspection team

Wendy Anderson

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

This residential special school caters for 35 boys and girls aged 9 to 16 years old. The boarding accommodation is divided into five separate house areas providing small group living. A small cottage that was previously available for independence training is now being used to introduce new residents to the school. All pupils have emotional, behavioural, social and associated learning difficulties.

The school is maintained by the local authority and is situated on the edge of a market town in Gloucestershire. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ensure where a appointed Governor is absent a replacement is found from the Governing body to pick up their monitoring responsibilities.
- extend the head of pastoral care monitoring record so they include details of any shortfalls highlighted not just the actions taken to address shortfalls.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Residential pupils benefit from living in an inclusive boarding community where they make excellent progress from their starting point on admission to the school. This is especially evident in the improvements in their behaviours and the growth of their self confidence and self esteem. Residential pupils stated that the staff have helped them to identify, and understand their behaviours. Through this they have been able to develop self management techniques.

Residential pupils have strong effective relationship with the staff that care for them. These are based on mutual respect and trust. Residential pupils spoke very high of the staff. Comments from residential pupils included 'they never give up on you', 'being here has changed my life' and 'you couldn't ask for a better place, I've been to other schools and this is the best'.

Residential pupils are very proud of their school and of the individual boarding houses. The staff team have developed an effective caring community within the school where pupils are encouraged to support and look after not only themselves but each other. This ethos extends to the local community in which the school is based. Residential pupils give back to the local community through various activities such as tending the local flower beds, delivering fire wood and involvement in community celebrations. This work instils in residential pupils the important of their local community, wherever this maybe and the being a effective member of these communities.

Residential pupils sense of responsibility is developed by pupil being enabled to take on roles of responsibility within the school. The residential pupils said they enjoyed this responsibility. Some said this was the first time they had been placed in a position of responsibility and trust.

Residential pupils are able to take part in an extremely wide range of activities both on and off the school campus. These are not only fun but enable them to have new experiences and develop new skills so they are well rounded and feel able to achieve their full potential. Residential pupils do have input into what activities take place and they value their ideas and opinions being sought and acted upon by staff.

Residential pupils are well prepared for making the next move in their lives, including further education. Effective transition planning means that plans are structured well in advance of any move. This approach reduces young people's anxieties and helps them look forward to the future.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of care for residential pupils is outstanding. Residential pupils benefit from excellent pastoral arrangements which support and enable them in all aspect of their growth and development. The pastoral and education aspects of the school have high aspirations for the pupils and work closely to enhance the pupil's development. This is demonstrated by the excellent support pupils receive from the pastoral team on their academic work and the progress they make from their starting point on admission to the school.

Residential pupils have strong effective relationship with the staff who care for them, based on mutual respect and trust. Residential pupils spoke very high of the staff. Comments from residential pupils included 'they never give up on you', 'being here has changed my life' and 'you couldn't ask for a better place, I've been to other schools and this is the best'.

The well-being of residential pupils is at the heart of all practice. The key stone of the work undertaken by the team is the in depth knowledge they have about the residential pupils they

care for. This is supported by comprehensive, individualised plans which clearly identify pupil's individual needs and how the staff team will meet these. This detail ensures the care provided is consistent. These plans have recently been reviewed by the managers so that they now clearly reflect all of the work the staff undertake. Residential pupils are consulted on all aspects of their care which they value.

The referral and admission process is very detailed. The gathering of comprehensive documentation, pre admission visits both to the pupil's current school and home and visits to the school all help familiarise the staff team with the pupils needs. In addition it also enables the staff to establish partnership working with families. All of these approaches help to reduce the stress of the move to a new school for all involved. Once at the school new pupils are placed in the nurture unit which gives them the time to settle and get use to the school routines and expectations. This approach is highly effective. Pupils said they found this very helpful as 'it can be scary to be put straight in with everyone else. This way is better and you get to know people first'.

The staff team provide residential pupils with an excellent range of extra curricular activities. These enable residential pupils to develop self confidence, independence skills, working cooperatively with others and have fun. Some also access youth groups and sports teams in the local community. This enables them to develop their social skills and social networks. All pupils spoken too said activities were one of the best things about the school. They also appreciated that staff consult with them about what activities should be arranged.

Within the school there are many examples of innovative practice which support young people to make progress in every aspect of their lives. Positive reinforcement of good behaviours is central to the schools ethos. The reward system is very effective in this area. Residential pupils were very happy with this system as it is clear and consistent across the whole school. It also fosters healthy competition between the pupils and the houses. The daily school assemblies recognise individual achievements. Both of these systems encourage pupils to take pride in their achievements and themselves. This approach promotes individuals self esteem, self worth and self confidence.

Health care arrangements at the school are very effective. All health records are well maintained which ensure residential pupils health care needs are met. Medication is stored appropriately to safeguard pupils. Although all asthma inhalers have residential pupils names on them, not all have the administration instructions. This information is on the box but these can deteriorate or become damaged. Currently this does not affect the well being of the pupils.

The majority of the staff team are first aid trained and there is a registered nurse on site during certain period of the day. This cover ensures should there be a medical emergency appropriately qualified personnel are always available.

The health care provision at the school is further enhanced by the team of therapists on site. Residential pupils benefit from being able to access psychological guidance and support from appropriately qualified practitioners. These practitioners also provide support and input for the staff team when they are developing individual plans and strategies for pupils some of whom have very complex needs.

Residential accommodation across the school is of a very high standard. The staff team have overcome the challenges of old traditional, in some cases listed, buildings to provide residential pupils with a comfortable, welcoming and stimulation environment in which to be nurtured and subsequently develop.

The catering provision at the school is exceptional. All residential pupils dietary needs are catered

for by the varied nutritious meals provided. Residential pupils are involved in the development of the menus and in the preparation of some evening meals. By doing this they learn practical skills and the importance of a healthy balanced diet. These events are also used to introduce residential pupils to different cultures through food. The school has extensive grounds part of which is used to grow produce. Residential pupils are involved in this and are able to grow and tend the produce, harvested and cooked it. In addition to this there are chickens on the school site and residential pupils help to care for them gather eggs and consume or sell these. Both these activities give residential pupils a understanding of where food comes from. Residential pupils are very positive about the meals provided.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

There are robust safeguarding policies and procedures which are closely adhere to in practice to ensure residential pupils safety. Child protection is given a high priority at the school with staff receiving frequent training in this area as do the school Governors. In interviews with staff they demonstrated a good working knowledge of these procedures. The staff have good links with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO reported positively on the safeguarding process at the school and has no concerns about their work in this area. The LADO commented that the school regularly hosts seminars and forums on safeguarding which allows for a network of safeguarding leads to meet. Residential pupils commented that they feel very safe at the school and could name a number of people they would talk too, including one of the Governors, if they had any concerns.

Linked to safeguarding is the recruitment and vetting of staff. The current procedure is comprehensive and protects residential pupils from adults who may wish to cause them harm. Recruitment records inspected evidence that robustly implemented.

Staff consistently implement positive behaviour strategies to support residential pupils. These enable residential pupils to identify negative behaviours and the triggers for these. They then work with staff and therapists to develop self management strategies to address these. There is a very effective points system which operates across the school. This rewards good behaviours and the residential pupils are very positive about this system. Throughout the inspection the pupils behaviours observed were very good.

There has been very innovative work within the school around the issue of bullying. This included the involvement of the whole school in anti bullying week. During this time residential pupils created songs, raps and videos to get their anti bullying messages across. These are very powerful. There are very clear effective policies and procedures for addressing the issue of bullying. Residential pupils reported that there is very little bullying at the school. If it does happen it is quickly addressed. Pupils said that in the past they have been the subject of bullying and think this school is 'brilliant at sorting any bullying out very quickly'. Some other residential pupils admitted that they had been bullies in the past but the staff have made them understand the effect this behaviours has on other so they no longer bully.

Physical intervention is very rarely used. Where it is used appropriate records are maintained. There are minor inconsistencies in these records. These are the use of language which is vague thus the antecedence to the restraint is not always clear. This has already been highlighted by the head of pastoral care and training has been scheduled to address this. The head of pastoral care monitors these records to identify any trends or themes. This information is then used to review and improve practice.

Incidents of residential pupils going missing are minimal. Where a risk of this has been identified it is clearly recorded in the pupils individual risk assessment with associated strategies to combat

this. Where pupils have left the school site without permission detailed policies and procedures are in place and well known to the staff team. Appropriate records are maintained of these events which include work with the pupil to reduce the risk of a reoccurrence.

There is an extensive risk assessment procedure in place to minimise the risk to pupils and staff. Pupil individual risk assessments clearly identify risks and strategies to combat these. These documents are frequently monitored to ensure they reflect the pupil's current situation. The same process is used for environmental and activity risk assessments which ensures pupils safety.

Health and safety is given a high priority at the school so as to protect residential pupil from harm. Routine and annual testing of all gas, electrical and mechanical appliances is completed as are regular fire checks and drills to ensure the environment is safe.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

Leadership and management of the residential provision is good. The leadership team at the school clearly understand the strengths and areas for improvement. At the last inspection of the school four recommendations were made. These have all been met. There have also been a number of improvements to practice. These include the review and development of residential pupils individual plans, improvements in the monitoring of records by the head of pastoral care, improvements in the furnishing and decor of the residential provision, the cessation of the use of the padded 'blue room' as part of behaviour management strategies, the provision of a new music room and the change in the on line recording system which enables the leadership to retrieve data that then subsequently influence practice.

The leadership and staff team are very committed to the residential pupils they care for. Since the last inspection they have demonstrated their commitment to developing the residential provision which is viewed as the heart of the school. Further development is evidence in the schools detailed development plans. There are very clear aims and objectives which reflect current practice which is based in pupils at least reaching and where possible exceeding expectations. Feedback from parents is very positive and they praise the staff for their dedication to the pupils and the positive outcomes they achieve.

There is a good self evaluation system in place. This includes input from the staff parents and fellow professionals. Information and results of the consultation is used to further develop the practices at the school.

Staff levels at the school are very good. This enables staff not only to work with groups of residential pupils but allows space for one to one work. Staff receive good quality training which includes frequent updates to ensure their practice is in line with developments in the sector. This coupled with the level of staff means that residential pupils receive a very good standard of care and their individual needs are met.

The staff team receive both formal and informal supervision. This coupled with the daily handover meeting, regular team meeting and the availability of leaders and managers at the school means staff feel very well supported and practice is maintained to a high standard. Records of formal supervision and appraisal are appropriate but are currently under review. The head of pastoral care is carrying out this review so they provide more detailed information on staff practice, review of practice and thus staff development. Staff retention at the school is high. Staff interviewed are very happy in their work and committed to it. This level of staff retention ensures the resident pupils receive consistency of care.

There is a strong Governing body at the school who are very committed. Governors regularly report on the work the school undertakes. There are minor gaps in these reports due to illness.

This has not had a negative impact on the care the residential pupils receive. This was addressed by the leadership team during the inspection.

Internal monitoring systems have improved since the last inspection. The head of pastoral care regularly monitors the schools records. The implementation of a new online recording system has enhanced this process. This could be further improved by an increase in the clarity of the audit trail where minor gaps in records have been identified.

Information the school provides in its policies, procedures, prospectus and web site reflect current practice. These documents provide pupils, parents and fellow professional with a clear understanding of the aims, objectives and ethos of the school. The house blog section of the website provides an insight into the activities and events at the school.

All of the required policies are in place and current. The leadership team and Governors work together to ensure these reflect current practice at the school as well as changes to legislation or developments in the education and social care practice.

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	115812
Social care unique reference number	SC040533
DfE registration number	916/7005

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	
Gender of boarders	
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Mr C Clarke
Date of previous boarding inspection	04/03/2014
Telephone number	01285 712308

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