

Springfield House School

Springfield House School, Kenilworth Road, Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 0AJ

Inspection dates	04/12/2014 to 06/01/2015	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Residential pupils are at the centre of all practice and make outstanding progress during their time at the school. They are consistently supported by an experienced and well-trained care staff team that have key responsibilities for developing children's positive outcomes.
- All residential pupils have plans that support the delivery of care and these include assessments and targets for development.
- A good range of activities, meals, positive staff relationships and clear behavioural boundaries ensure that residential pupils enjoy a structured provision. Residence is well resourced. Accommodation is well cared for and provides a homely environment.
- Good safeguarding processes are well known by the whole staff team and are used effectively to support the wellbeing of residential pupils.
- Leadership and management arrangements within the school continue to be outstanding. The residential provision is a fundamental part of the school and staff fully understand their individual roles in meeting each pupil's unique needs.

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

Ofsted carried out this inspection with three hours' notice. Inspection activities included: observation of residential care practice over two evenings in the single residential unit; shared meals and informal discussions with children during activities; meetings and discussions with a range of residential, teaching and therapeutic 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 telephone calls to parents. Information was also gained from the local safeguarding board.

Inspection team

Andrew Hewston

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Springfield House School is a maintained school operated by Birmingham City Council. It is a residential Community Special School for boys and girls, aged 4 to 11, with a range of special educational needs. The majority have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties; some have learning difficulties and some are diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorders. The school currently has 82 pupils and is open on weekdays and term time only. The school is in a rural position near Knowle, Solihull and can accommodate 10 children in The Lodge. There are two adjoining corridors that operate with separate small groups. The residential provision is a flexible 12-week arrangement for up to four nights a week. The residential provision was last inspected in December 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop care plans that are sufficiently detailed to include all important aspects of residential pupils care and how specific needs are to be met.
- Increase the clarity of safeguarding records to ensure that all concerns are seen to be responded to.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupils at the school enjoy significantly improved outcomes due to the strong relationships they have with the staff team. Parents and professionals involved with residence state that the experience has had a positive effect on children. Residential pupils enjoy being in residence stating that: 'it is a great time to just play with your mates.'

Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy the relaxed yet structured aspects of residence. One child stated, 'it feels just like being in a family when you are here.' Parents say that residence has made a difference their child, as they: 'have become more sensible and listen a lot better than they did.' Effective assessment systems have been developed to highlight the personal development that is being achieved through their residential placements. Residential staff report that residential pupils develop in their maturity and confidence while being in residence due to 'the structure and high expectations' of them at the school.

Children's negative behaviours decrease during residence. All staff have a substantial level of experience of working with residential pupils and are able to manage behaviours consistently as a team. This leads to residential pupils developing an awareness of their expected behaviours and they respond well to these. Residential pupils state that they have: 'learnt how to behave well, much better than I used to at my old school.' They enjoy a wide range of activities and try new and exciting skills. At the time of the inspection residential pupils discussed that evening's night-time den building and camp fire with effusive praise.

Children's health is consistently supported through regular input from health professionals into the residential experience. Careful consideration is given to children's mental health and creative interventions such as the 'peace mobile' allow residential pupils to examine their own wellbeing and develop supportive strategies to improve their outlook and behaviour.

Transition arrangements are fully supported by staff whose dedicated role is to help both residential pupils and their families leave the school and move to placements that best meet the needs of the child. Parents state that the staff have been 'excellent' at helping them to find a new school for their child.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

The quality of the care provided is good. The delivery of care is consistently strong and residential pupils enjoy being with the adults that care for them. Referrals to residence are carefully considered to ensure the needs of young people can be met. A year-round admission process enables residential pupils to move in at a time that is right for them without the need to wait for the start of a term. Detailed planning includes assessing all of their specific educational, behavioural and emotional needs. Residential pupils are fully supported from the point of their admission across educational and care staff. There is also good awareness that an external independent person is available at all times. All residential pupils are encouraged to contact their parents on a regular basis and private areas are available for them to use the telephone to keep in touch with family life.

Children's health needs are met through a structured system of information sharing between the school, parents and health professionals. A dedicated school nursing area has been developed since the last inspection and arrangements for the administration of medication are well thought through, supporting the safety of the children. Health is addressed within care planning but this information is at a basic level and could be more detailed. Meals provided for residential pupils

are of an excellent quality. They comment positively about the food and recognise they have enjoyed items they would not previously have tried.

Care planning for residential pupils is appropriate and contains information regarding individual likes and dislikes. Some information relating to cultural needs and preferences in foods is not consistently recorded within the care plans, although the catering teams are aware of these differing needs. The residential staff are in the process of developing specific residential targets based on a detailed 'outcome wheel' assessment. This helps to support the flexible residential arrangements and ensure that the residence is geared towards individual needs. Links are in place between the education and residential provisions. Residential staff are consistently involved within the school environment to ensure that there is a consistency in responses to the behaviours of children.

Activities are enjoyed by all residential pupils and planned well by the staff team. Funding arrangements for the after-school provision means that residential pupils enjoy a more flexible approach to activities, allowing them to be involved in a greater range of events within the school and the local community. Accommodation is provided within a purpose-built block: all residential pupils have their own rooms which are spacious and well maintained. They are encouraged to personalise their areas and communal areas are comfortable and homely.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

Safeguarding arrangements within the school are good. Residential pupils feel safe in their accommodation areas and across the school as a whole. The importance placed on caring for residential pupil's safely is embedded in practice across the school. The school has an appropriate policy and procedure in place to use in the event that a child is missing or absent from the premises without permission.

Safeguarding is a priority within the school. Designated safeguarding staff take the lead for child protection. All staff display a sound understanding of key policies and protocols. Staff are proactive in promoting and protecting the welfare of pupils and effectively implement the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. The system for reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns is in place, although the clarity of recording of low-level concerns that do not meet child protection referral thresholds requires some development.

Residential pupils have a strong awareness of how to behave in residence and this is consistently encouraged by the staff team. Levels of restraint and sanctions are low and staff are trained in behaviour management techniques. Records of all behaviour management strategies are fully completed and an increased level of recording has been brought in regarding the use of 'calming rooms' following the last inspection to support the safety of children. Detailed data is kept of incidents requiring physical intervention which is then analysed to highlight patterns or themes. This enables the effectiveness of intervention strategies to be assessed and where necessary amended to meet the needs of the child concerned.

Fire precautions and fire equipment are checked and fire drills are held regularly. All residential pupils are aware of fire safety and evacuation procedures. Risk assessments are in place, audited, updated and endorsed by senior members of staff. These risk assessments include environmental checks as well as on-site and off-site activities. Strategies to manage risk and how to support residential pupils are known and used. The school has comprehensive systems in place to ensure the safety of all residential pupils is maintained to a good standard. Recruitment and vetting checks for staff are robust. Clear records are kept of how safe recruitment decisions are made. This protects residential pupils from unsuitable adults working within the school.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The ethos of the school promotes and nurtures a culture of mutual respect. Care practice demonstrates a clear determination to support residential pupils to be the best they can be. The headteacher is supported by a committed and experienced management team. Her direct leadership provides a robust oversight and a clear vision for the future of the school as a whole. The residential provision is an integral component of life at the school.

The residential management team have been in post for a substantial period and are experienced in their roles. They have a very strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and are constantly seeking ways in which to improve residential pupils' experiences. The initiative to develop a residential provision that is not dependant on the 'statement' process allows a greater number of residential pupils to experience and benefit from residence and the support of the care staff.

Staff receive good quality, regular, structured support, guidance and appraisal. As a result, the care provided to the residential pupils remains of a high standard. Staff receive regular training in key safe caring topics such as safeguarding, and medication administration. This provides them with the skills necessary to care for the individual needs of residential pupils at the school. Additional specialised training in areas such as assessment processes is also completed, to ensure that the residential experience is as positive as possible for the children.

Regular reports from the independent visitor provide sufficient challenge and insight into practice. Governors actively seek the views of pupils through regular visits. Staff ensure parents and carers are fully informed of the progress and developments of their child. Parents are invited to the school for formal meetings to discuss both school developments and their children's progress. Regular telephone calls from care staff to parents and carers ensure everyone is kept up-to-date with any events in the week and achievements made. One child's parents stated that they: 'don't know what we would have done without the support of the staff, they have been a rock to us.'

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	103623
Social care unique reference number	SC042411
DfE registration number	330/7047

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	82
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	4 to 11
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Collins
Date of previous boarding inspection	09/12/2013
Telephone number	01564 772772
Email address	janet.collins@spfldhs.bham.sch.uk

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