

Royal School for the Deaf Derby

Royal School for the Deaf, 180 Ashbourne Road, DERBY, DE22 3BH

Inspection dates	01/12/2014 to 03/12/2014	
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	4
Outcomes for residential pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of residential provision and care	Inadequate	4
Residential pupils' safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is inadequate because

- This provision is judged inadequate overall and across all judgement areas of the service. A number of National Minimum Standards are not met and there are significant concerns about the leadership and safeguarding throughout the school.
- Residential pupils are not safe due to the Principal's failure to carry out designated safeguarding officer responsibilities. Staff have demonstrated their lack of confidence in the Principal's ability to take robust action to safeguard pupils; this is evidenced through the number of whistle blowing incidents that staff have made.
- Quality of care is inadequate because staff efforts to place pupils' welfare at the centre of their practice fail due to safeguarding concerns and poor leadership in the setting.
- The Principal did not share child protection or safeguarding concerns within the school or partner safeguarding agencies. This failure to respond to staff concerns directly impacted upon pupils as they were placed at risk of potential grooming and child sexual exploitation.
- Alternative safeguarding arrangements are now in place at the school due to the Principal being suspended from their post. Concerns about the shortfalls and leadership in the school have been notified to the Department for Education. Interim arrangements for the Head of Care to cover the designated safeguarding officer role were put in place at the time of this inspection.

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

This inspection was completed by one inspector, with a British Sign Language interpreter, following a three-hour notice period. Time was spent over two days in the residential accommodation and several pupils contributed their views and experiences and helped with a tour of the accommodation. A range of care, staffing and health and safety records were examined. Discussions were held with members of the management team, care staff, the designated safeguarding officer, chair of governors and parents.

Inspection team

Elaine Cray

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

The Royal School for the Deaf Derby is a non-maintained residential special school. There are 131 pupils on roll, whose ages range from 3 to 19. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage with some pupils from ethnic minority groups. All pupils have statements of special educational need for hearing impairment and some have complex special needs.

The residential service operates from Monday to Thursday and 39 pupils stay at the school, either on a full-time or part-time basis during the week. The residential accommodation is provided across four residential facilities ranging from family style houses to purpose built blocks. The school is a signing and speaking community where the languages and cultures of both deaf and hearing people are valued.

The school is situated in the city of Derby. The residential provision was last inspected October 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review the arrangements for pupils' access to an independent person who they can voice their concerns to.
- Improve the organisation of information contained in staff recruitment files
- Bring all residential accommodation to the same standard and consider ways to personalise children's rooms to give them a sense of nurture when they are living away from home.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
 - The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 11)
 - There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of residential and care provision in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff. The school's governing body or proprietor has a system to monitor care and welfare provision in the school. (NMS 13.1)
 - Staff with management responsibilities have an adequate level of experience or training in the management and practice of boarding to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. (NMS 13.2)
 - Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school. (NMS 19.1)
 - Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the Headteacher (or school equivalent) and where applicable the governing body, organisation, or partnership. Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body), within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary. (NMS 20.3)
 - The Headteacher (or school equivalent), governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school carries out, and records in writing, once each year: a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's

welfare provision for boarding pupils, in relation to: its Statement of Purpose, its staffing policy, the placement plans for individual children; and an internal assessment of its compliance with these Standards. Where appropriate such a report may be incorporated within a review of the whole school. (NMS 20.4)

- The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who does not work at, or directly manage, the school, to visit the school once every half term and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the Headteacher (or school equivalent). (NMS 20.1)
- Every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress which can be read by the child at any time (except where the data controller is not obliged to supply the information to the child), and add personal statements or statements correcting errors. (NMS 22.1)
- Any individual pupil records are kept by the school for a period of 25 years after the date of birth of the child or are passed to the next school and a receipt obtained. This retention period is the minimum period that any pupil file should be kept. (NMS 22.3)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Inadequate

Outcomes for residential pupils are inadequate.

Residential pupils are at risk of child sexual exploitation and grooming. Safeguarding allegations have not been listened to and acted upon and pupils remain at risk of significant harm.

Residential pupils' sense of safety is compromised because they are aware that safeguarding issues raised by their peers have not been actioned. This lack of action compromises their security about what responsible adults in the school should do when individuals harm and place children at risk.

Living in and feeling part of a thriving and inclusive deaf community helps pupils learn in education and develop socially. Pupils say staying at the school helps their education because they get support with homework and all the staff can communicate using sign language. They make friends and enjoy a range of activities. All residential pupils take part in a range of sporting activities and this helps them keep fit and healthy.

Residential pupils feel valued by the residential staff. They like having weekly meetings to discuss activities, what is happening in school and how they will share responsibilities for the running of each the residential houses. Pupils were particularly involved in and enthusiastic about decorating their houses for Christmas during this inspection.

Residential pupils also enjoy the food on offer, they have a varied and healthy diet with a good choice of meals. Catering and care staff provide 'themed nights' and these are enjoyed by pupils and staff alike. For example, the Principal arranged a pirates' party during this inspection that was enjoyed by all.

Staff assist young people to develop an understanding and tolerance of each other. Daily chat time and weekly meetings with staff enables pupils to think about group living and the experiences of others. The meetings contribute to an anti-bullying culture and residential pupils say they have no concerns about bullying in the school.

Quality of residential provision and care

Inadequate

The quality of the residential provision is inadequate.

Standards in the residential accommodation vary dependent on the blocks pupils reside in. For example corridors and bedrooms in one of the purpose-built blocks present as shabby, with damaged décor. Communal living space and bedrooms lack personalisation and a sense of homeliness. These standards are in stark contrast to the block of residence for older pupils and the younger boys' accommodation.

The newly developed care planning framework promotes scope to assess, meet and monitor progress for the broad, varied and complex needs presented by the residential pupils. However, lack of rigorous safeguarding undermines effective care planning and partnership working between care and education staff.

Sharing of care plans and education targets demonstrates good communication between care and education staff. Residential pupils develop educationally because staff capture and celebrate the progress and achievements of the residential pupils. For example, after-school enrichment sessions run by both care and education staff give pupils good opportunities to work on

communication and development challenges. Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy joining in word games, chess groups and dancing sessions. They have fun, make friends and learn at the same time. However inadequate safeguarding outcomes erode these education outcomes for some pupils.

Residential and education staff work closely with school nurses to monitor and promote all pupils' health needs. Good catering arrangements complement pupils' health. Catering staff use a range of monitoring processes to ensure meals are balanced, healthy and meet the specific medical and cultural needs of pupils. Catering staff have received a national catering award and this area of work is a real strength within the school.

Transition planning enables pupils to settle quickly, enjoy their residential experience and make friends. Individual transition planning includes visits to the residential houses a gradual experience of travelling to and from school, staying later after school and then sleeping over. A buddying system also enables new pupils to feel accepted and existing pupils grow in confidence as they are given buddying responsibilities.

The dedicated and experienced staff team have a good and varied knowledge about the backgrounds, complexities and communication abilities of the pupils staying at the setting. They demonstrate a good insight and understand the individual identities and needs of pupils. Pupils develop independence skills as a result of using the residential provision. Practical and useful behaviour related risk assessment enables residential pupils to enjoy a range of activities and learn new skills. For example, individualised risk assessments for older pupils promotes independence for cooking. Safer appliances replace cookers which may present risk to pupils with disabilities. Pupils with ADHD have detailed risk assessments that enable them to enjoy high risk activities such as canoeing.

When pupils want to contact somebody independent about concerns, information is clearly available to explain how they can do this. At the moment, due to changes in personnel, a governor carries out this role and therefore, the arrangements are not fully independent. These arrangements are an interim measure until the new independent visitor is available to take over this role in the near future.

Residential pupils' safety

Inadequate

The safety of residential pupils is inadequate. Safeguarding processes fail to protect pupils because the Principal has not taken effective action to safeguard residential pupils. The Principal has failed to follow safeguarding procedures and this has left pupils vulnerable and at risk of harm.

Inadequate risk assessment and risk management means that pupils are left at risk of harm. While leaders, managers and staff are aware of pupils who are at risk of harm,; there is limited evidence of strategic and documented responses as to how the school as a whole, manages these risks and promotes the safety of pupils.

While staff can articulate and record a good understanding of indicators of grooming and child sexual exploitation, written reports and challenges by the residential staff have gone unheeded by the Principal. Not only was this information not passed to safeguarding agencies, the placing authorities for children looked after were not aware of critical information. This has resulted in social workers and independent reviewing officers attempting to make crucial decisions about the welfare of children looked after without full information before them.

The Principal was the sole designated safeguarding officer for the school. All concerns have been channelled through this same individual. Lack of documented risk profiles and connectivity

between a series of events in and outside the school has totally compromised the effectiveness of safeguarding. The Principal's lack of integrity and competence has impacted negatively on the safeguarding of pupils throughout the school.

The Human Resources Manager has a good grasp of the role of safer recruitment practices in promoting the safety of pupils. Allowing pupils to be involved in the recruitment process is an example of good practice in the school. While vetting and background checks are carried out, the organisation of some information is poor. Retrieving actual reference documentation in order to cross reference to the school's central register for staff, proved to be time consuming as information was not always stored on individual staff files.

Regular health and safety checks promote the safety of pupils in the residential accommodation. Fire drills and good information sharing makes sure residential pupils know what to do in the event of the fire.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Inadequate

The leadership and management of the residential provision are inadequate.

The Principal has failed to promote the safeguarding needs of pupils within the school. This has resulted in some pupils being at risk of harm and their safety not assured.

The Principal has not shared essential safeguarding information and this has impacted negatively on the quality of leadership within the remaining management team. Selective sharing, recording and tampering of information and records by the Principal has compromised the operation and monitoring of the school.

The school's updated Statement of Purpose and pupils' handbook provides pupils and families with current information about the school and residential provision. The school's Statement of Purpose sets out the aims of the school. Managers and staff work hard to develop and enrich the learning and communication of deaf pupils with additional complex and related needs.

Staff hold the required qualifications in caring for children and young people. However, lack of training in grooming and child sexual exploitation undermines current safeguarding practice and responses in the school.

Monitoring visits to check the welfare of residential pupils are carried out by one of the governors. These visits have failed to pick up staff concerns and the risks faced by pupils.

Poor recording, including inaccurate information about safeguarding incidents, has led to failures to act upon risk to pupils. In particular, the Principal has failed to ensure safeguarding agencies are aware of significant risks and therefore able to respond effectively to safeguard pupils.

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	113044
Social care unique reference number	SC002015
DfE registration number	831/7023

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	39
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	8 to 19
Headteacher	Principal - Ms Cheryll Ford
Date of previous boarding inspection	17/10/2013
Telephone number	01332 362512
Email address	principal@rsdd.org.uk

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