

Harbour House

The Harbour School, Tipner Lane, PORTSMOUTH, PO2 8RA

Inspection dates	04/02/2015	
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

- Young people make excellent progress in most aspects of their lives which is exceptional given their starting points. Harbour House offers young people a unique residential experience that assists them to reflect, develop and strengthen relationships with their parents/carers.
- The school ensures young people thrive within a culture of safety. Child protection underpins practice, and young people are assisted to make excellent progress in reducing the risks they present when living at the school and when they return home. The health and safety of young people is taken seriously within an ethos that encourages them to take appropriate risks in the school and the wider community.
- Residential care is well organised and firmly embedded in the culture of the school. A number of improvements have been made since the last inspection, building on already high standards of care that places the specific needs of young people first.
- Young people speak positively about the school in general and have nothing but high praise for their experience of living here. They acknowledge they have made considerable progress in their learning, behaviour and improved relationships with people who are important to them. Parents/carers felt Harbour House provides extremely high levels of individualised care that supports young people to make outstanding progress.
- Harbour House meets all of the national minimum standards and indeed exceeds many of them. The one area for improvement identified at the last inspection has been addressed. No recommendations or areas for improvement have been identified at this inspection.

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 notified of the inspection on the day it commenced. There is one residential house situated on the school site itself. The views of all young people living at the school during the course of the three day inspection were obtained both on an individual and group basis; this amounts to approximately 80% of the total residential population. The views of all care staff were obtained regarding the care they provide and the support they receive. As part of the inspection process, a range of documents and records were also examined. Management were kept fully apprised of the findings obtained on a daily basis and were provided with every opportunity to comment.

Inspection team

Kevin Whatley

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

The Harbour School is a special school that became fully operational in September 2007. Harbour House is the school's residential facility which can accommodate up to 8 pupils in single rooms. Harbour House aims to provide a safe and stimulating environment that will support young people in their educational, personal and social development. While most of Harbour House residents attend the Harbour School, placements can be referred from any Portsmouth school. The residential facility consists of a self-contained unit attached to the school. Staff and young people at Harbour House can access many of the school's facilities. Harbour House operates on a Monday to Friday basis, with young people returning home each weekend. Young people are cared for by a dedicated team of residential staff. The school is located in a quiet coastal location on the outskirts of Portsmouth.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for young people are outstanding. Harbour House provides a unique opportunity for young people to move forward in their lives which they take wholeheartedly. The approach in helping young people and their parents/carers to re-build and develop better relationships is an exemplar of best practice. Young people benefit hugely from positive relationships with staff in an environment that is nurturing and supportive. In doing so they are able to engage in their education, develop a greater sense of self, gain confidence and improve their home situations. Young people say Harbour House is, 'great...it helps you take time out to deal with things that are going on...I love it here'.

Young people enjoy living in a vibrant, energetic and positive environment which supports them to make excellent progress. They are fully supported in their learning with a cohesive approach ensuring they improve and sustain levels of attendance to education both in the on-site school or in mainstream placements. This supportive environment successfully assists young people to re-engage in their schooling and their local community.

Young people are assisted to take appropriate risks, and to enjoy new and exciting experiences at the school and in the local community. This in turn enables them to develop skills, increase levels of independence and challenge themselves.

Young people are encouraged to live together with understanding and appreciation of others. The culture of the school promotes equality and diversity with no young person raising concerns of bullying, harassment or prejudice. Staff work tirelessly to encourage appropriate behaviour and impose appropriate boundaries and routines. The small but significant residential provision is held in high regard and plays an important role in the overall ethos of the school. Such a positive standing culminates in a residential provision that exudes an atmosphere of belonging and inclusion.

Young people are provided with a number of avenues to express how they feel and say they are listened to. Their opinions influence the day-to-day running of the residential provision: young people have a voice. Most recently this has resulted in young people being fully engaged in changing the name of the house from the, 'Hostel' to Harbour House. Interactions between staff and young people were relaxed and open with young people clearly at ease in the company of the adults who look after them.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of the residential provision is outstanding. An excellent standard of pastoral support is offered to young people through a committed team of staff who care greatly about them. Information is shared easily between education and care staff leading to young people receiving consistent support, care and guidance in all areas of school life. The quality of relationships between staff and young people is a core strength of the residential provision and one which assists young people to make significant progress. Young people said, 'staff are lovely...they really do care', while parents/carers said Harbour House is, 'absolutely brilliant'.

An outstanding approach to admitting young people ensures the individual needs of each young person and the living group as whole can be met. Referrals to Harbour House are assessed in detail and always involve the head of care in deciding their suitability. A core aspect of the process is to observe the young person in question within their education setting. This enables staff to gain valuable insight as to the needs of the young person, how they present in a classroom environment and how they interact with their peers. Such an approach enables a full

assessment of needs to be completed before a decision is made and greatly enhances the matching process. Young people and their parents/carers are able to visit the school with moves being planned sensitively and with the young person in mind. The outcome of this approach can be best seen in the current group of young people, who despite having differing needs and personalities, are extremely settled, support each other and live together in relative harmony.

A robust process of care planning ensures staff are guided by detailed plans which they follow in practice. Care plans take account of the cultural, diverse, educational, emotional, behavioural and social and needs of the young person concerned. Such plans assist staff to gain knowledge of what approach is needed to ensure young people have their specific needs supported and developed. Such planning is implemented consistently with young people having their cultural needs respected and met. The staff group work closely together to provide excellent standards of care which are underpinned by meaningful relationships.

Young people receive excellent support to develop their academic abilities. Attendance rates are consistently high with care and education staff working closely together to provide a cohesive approach to education. Young people who have previously been out of education for a considerable period of time now attend routinely and some have transitioned back into mainstream schooling. The overriding sense is one of supporting young people to achieve to the best of their abilities within a culture that promotes learning at every opportunity.

Harbour House provides young people and their parents/carers with excellent levels of support and intervention which affords families valuable opportunities to improve their relationships. The school has a parent-and-families co-ordinator who plays a crucial role in working with parents/carers on issues that affect them, such as problematic behaviour at home and breakdowns in communication. Support can include direct work between parents/carers and the young person concerned. The approach aims to resolve differences, provide advice and guide parents/carers to utilise strategies that work for the young person in school back in the home environment. Parents/carers can also access support groups during the week. Parents/carers and young people themselves speak most highly of this initiative stating, 'this has helped me get on so much better with my (name of parent)'. It is clear that this valuable service combined with the time young people spend at the residential provision has helped stabilise family situations, repair difficult relationships and ultimately improve the lives of young people.

A large and varied level of activities and pursuits are made available to young people. They can choose from a range of interesting and stimulating activities which match their wishes and interests. Young people are able to pursue their own interests without being limited by group living. Regular excursions take place to leisure centres and places of interest. Young people have ready access to the schools state of the art sports hall which includes a climbing wall, dance studio and fitness suite.

As young people only stay during the week their general health care needs remain the responsibility of their parents/carers. All care staff are trained in first aid with clear protocols in place should a young person fall ill. Robust systems ensure that medication is recorded and administered accurately. Healthy living is continually encouraged through exercise and diet. Staff participate fully in activities alongside young people such as going swimming and do so with enthusiasm and energy. This in turn creates a culture in which active pursuits are seen as positive and a normal part of daily life.

Young people say they really enjoy the food and there is always a good selection of home cooked meals available. Mealtimes are well organised; young people eating together creating a relaxed and important aspect of the day.

Young people are well supported to develop their individual living skills and gain increased levels

of independence. This includes young people undertaking their own laundry tasks and planning and cooking a weeks menu on a budget. Young people have benefitted considerably from these programmes and have significantly improved their confidence and self-care skills.

Residential accommodation is of a high standard throughout. The house is comfortable and maintained to a suitable and homely condition. Young people are able to personalise their own rooms and do so with posters and photographs. Young people appear very comfortable in their living environments and invest in maintaining it's condition with no evidence of damage or graffiti. The family atmosphere of the house has been enhanced by each young person having their faces imposed on individual modern canvases which are displayed in the lounge area. These simple but affective touches add a sense of belonging and community where young people can feel a part of the environment in which they live.

Young people confirmed they are able to keep in touch with families, carers and friends via a number of routes including by internet and phone. Contact with parents/carers is seen as vital with young people supported and encouraged to speak to parents/carers about any needs or issues they may have while away from home. Parents/carers said, 'communication is excellent...they always keep me informed of how my son is getting on... I get texts from staff every day telling me how they are'.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The school's approach for promoting young people's safety and well-being is outstanding. Young people are protected from the risks of harm without limiting their opportunities to engage fully in school life or the local community. Robust recruitment procedures are effectively implemented which ensures that only adults who have been checked as being appropriate to work with children are employed.

The safeguarding of young people is a priority within the school. Designated persons are in place to take the lead for child protection. All staff receive up-to-date training in safeguarding and display a sound understanding of key policies and protocols. Robust links are in place with external safeguarding partners including the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. These close working relationships ensure that the schools own policies and procedures are agreed and match the expectations of local and national protocols. No child protection matters have occurred at Harbour House since the last inspection.

Young people say they feel, 'safe' and, 'looked after'. No bullying-type behaviours have been reported and no young person raised concerns that this was a problem. Young people are assisted to live together with respect and an appreciation of each others differences. Young people clearly develop meaningful friendships and benefit from the camaraderie of the residential community.

A rigorous approach ensures situations where young people leave the school without permission are considered from the point at which they are admitted. Staff are mindful of what to do in such situations with clear protocols in place. Young people with histories of running away have been helped to choose more appropriate options like going for a walk in the school grounds when they are angry or frustrated. As a result there have been no episodes of young people leaving the house without permission since the last inspection.

Young people benefit greatly from a staff team who work tirelessly to support them in addressing their most difficult behaviours. As a result young people make excellent progress in reducing their challenging and risk taking behaviours. Staff are trained in the use of physical interventions and only apply them when necessary. Expectations of behaviour are consistently applied with staff utilising their relationships with young people to help them find more appropriate ways to deal

with their feelings. This culminates in an environment where poor behaviour is challenged swiftly and appropriately and where young people themselves set group expectations. Harbour House has an extremely settled and relaxed atmosphere which is borne out in the fact that no restraints have been recorded since the last inspection and indeed none have taken place in the last two years.

The school promotes positive behaviour with expectations made clear throughout the school. Staff work hard to assist young people to behave well with all of them reducing their most difficult behaviours and attitudes over time. Behaviour management is linked across the school with education and care staff co-ordinating closely in producing individual plans which encompass the whole school environment. Such a 'joined up' approach enables the effectiveness of intervention programmes to be reviewed and when required amended to meet individual needs. Behaviour observed during the inspection was exemplary.

Parents/carers confirm the efforts made by the school lead to young people making excellent progress with improving their behaviour. They also acknowledge that the complex needs of the young people often mean this process can take a while before such progress is obvious. Staff maintain high levels of communication with parents/carers which results in all parties being aware of the behaviours of young people and the attempts made to keep them safe.

There is an inventive sanctions policy which allows young people opportunities to learn from their inappropriate behaviour. Young people say they understand the rules and that the use of sanctions was fair and they understand why they are given. Very few punitive sanctions are implemented with young people provided with excellent opportunities to take short periods of time out to calm down and reflect on their actions. For example a young person becoming agitated during dinner was offered the chance to leave the table for a very short period of time, they could choose where they went. After a few minutes they were encouraged to discuss why they had been asked to leave and were subsequently able to accept responsibility and continued on with their meal. Young people noted that this approach was, 'great' as it, 'helps us to think about our behaviour before we go too far'.

The health and safety of young people and staff alike is taken seriously resulting in an environment where the welfare of all is addressed appropriately. Fire safety precautions are checked on a regular basis, including the servicing of fire fighting equipment, testing of alarms and the undertaking of evacuation drills. Close liaison with health and safety experts inform an improvement agenda. For instance in seeking advice from the local fire safety service during the planning phase for fire door release mechanisms to be installed. Risk assessments are routinely reviewed, updated and endorsed; these assessments include environmental checks as well as on-site and off-site activities. Strategies to manage risk and how to support young people are written into placement plans. The premises are secure with the school having comprehensive systems in place to ensure the safety of all.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

Leadership and management is outstanding with Harbour House seen as fundamental to the ethos of the school. Clear lines of responsibility are in place with the governing body committed to supporting the continued development and progress of residential care. The high status of residential care is further enhanced with the involvement of the head of care as a member of the senior management team.

Effective and efficient leadership ensures the needs of young people remain the guiding principle of practice. Excellent levels of communication across the school results in a cohesive approach where the holistic needs of young people are met consistently. The school promotes difference and nurtures the notion of mutual respect and understanding. Young people engage particularly

well in this approach which contributes to them making significant progress in their learning and personal development. The importance of Harbour House was echoed by parents/carers, one called the provision 'a God send'.

The school provides clear information regarding its aims and objectives which are subsequently followed in practice. The guiding principles and aims of the school are contained on their website and within the Statement of Purpose. Parents/carers said they were given detailed information before young people were admitted and state this was very useful and accurate.

The school implement a clear procedure that ensures young people and their parents/carers are aware of how to complain. Complaints are taken most seriously being responded to swiftly and in a rigorous manner. Records of complaints confirm an appropriate response with details including the nature of the issue and their outcome. No complaints have been made since the last inspection.

Young people benefit from living in an environment with clear routines and boundaries. The ethos of Harbour House promotes the development of tolerance and understanding of each other's behaviour. Diverse needs are catered for sensitively and this results in fair and equal treatment for all young people. Young people say the rules are, 'firm but fair'.

Extremely good staffing levels ensure the individual needs of young people are met. Young people say staff are always around both night and day and confirmed they are approachable whenever they need them. As noted previously staff and young people share positive and meaningful relationships which is further supported through the small and stable team of dedicated staff. Staff work tirelessly to meet the challenges and complexities presented by the young people in their care and do so with skill, vigour and enthusiasm.

Young people are cared for by a team of qualified and motivated staff who receive excellent support, guidance and training. All staff hold the required qualification in care or above with very good training opportunities made available which matches the needs of young people in their care. Compulsory training includes child protection and the use of physical intervention. Recent training has encompassed relevant issues with experts providing valuable learning opportunities in child sexual exploitation and internet awareness and safety. Staff said they are given excellent formal support and guidance and were most positive about the improvements they see in young people's lives.

Standards of care are monitored well with a clear focus on seeking to improve the provision of care. The head of care undertakes routine reviews of care which assists in developing the quality of service provision. For example by closely monitoring the progress of young people against the aims of their placement and introducing increased stock control checks of medication. Monitoring visits by a link governor take place at least half-termly. The visits assess standards of care practice and always involve gaining the views of young people themselves.

The one area for improvement identified at the last inspection has been addressed. The recording format for restraints has been improved and now contains a section for young people to add their comments or views.

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	135308
Social care unique reference number	SC012026
DfE registration number	851/7472

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 Krishna Purbhoo
Date of previous boarding inspection	24/02/2014
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