

Gretton School

Manor Farm Road, Girton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB3 0RX

Inspection dates 03/03/2015 to 04/03/2015

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
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	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Residential pupils benefit from exceptionally well promoted equality of opportunity, personal growth and academic support. Staff strive to overcome barriers and disabilities, enabling pupils to thrive and progress.
- There are central and robust safeguarding procedures, which are consistently implemented by staff throughout the school.
- Staff treat each pupil as a valued individual. The quality of care is fully inclusive and responsive in meeting the unique needs of each residential pupil.
- Parents hold the school in exceptionally high regard. They praise the residential staff and the life changing impact the school has on their children.
- Significant progress has been made since the last inspection. Scrutiny and review of practice against individual pupil progress ensures that the development plans further enhance the quality of the care provided.

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 standalone inspection began four hours following announcement. The inspection included observation of the residential provision, observation of practice, scrutiny of documents, discussion with staff and telephone calls with parents. The inspectors met with residential pupils and staff. There were no recent Ofsted surveys or Parent View survey responses to inform the inspection.

Inspection team

Deirdra Keating	Lead social care inspector
Louisa Bayley	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Gretton school is an independent residential special school for pupils of mixed gender aged between 5 and 19 years. It is privately owned by Cavendish Education and has 72 pupils on roll. Eight of these pupils reside at the school for four nights a week. The residential accommodation is provided in two houses and one bungalow located on the school site. The school is situated in Girton village on the outskirts of Cambridge. The residential provision was last inspected in November 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop systems to consult with parents and pupils on a regular basis and use feedback to drive improvement.
- Develop a system to evidence and record individual progress to demonstrate the impact of the residential provision on residential pupil development.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

The outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Relationships between pupils and staff unquestionably enhance pupils' residential experience. Residential pupils demonstrate acceptance and tolerance of one another; they live alongside one another amicably. Meal times are relaxed and representative of a family home. One parent said: 'The understanding of living with others in a family home type environment has made an amazing difference to our own family life.'

Residential pupils have made radical changes since being at the school. Pupils who had lost confidence in their abilities and had low self-esteem are growing into well rounded, happy individuals. They are able to recognise their talents and skills and have opportunities to develop these. For example, pupils have arranged charity events for the school and have developed a wealth of living skills that enable them to gain autonomy and feel equal to peers.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, welcoming and hospitable to visitors. Table etiquette is excellent; pupils prepare food for one another and enjoy debate and conversation over meal times. They routinely help with chores, making a valued contribution to the running of the houses.

Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to share their views about the provision. Staff actively welcome opinions and ideas, providing regular forums for discussion. Pupils' likes and preferences are evident in décor themes, meal choices, groceries, activities and rules. They input into care planning and present their views during their reviews. Pupils who initially lacked confidence articulate their views and share them in the knowledge that these are valued and sought by the staff. This teaches pupils how to make their needs known and empowers them, raising their self-confidence.

Pupils learn extensively about healthy eating and how to prepare balanced meal options. They cook food from fresh raw ingredients, understanding nutrition, budgeting and food hygiene during the process. A comprehensive and dynamic life skills programme has enabled them to practise domestic chores, manage money, use public transport and organise time. This prepares pupils extremely well for transition to adult life. One parent said: 'He has come on in leaps and bounds; to have the skills and hopes for the future he has is very good.'

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of the residential provision is outstanding. Seamless links between school and residential staff ensure pupils' changing needs are comprehensively met. Staff are vigilant and proactive, using daily information from school staff and parents to plan each evening. This intuitive understanding of individuals minimises behavioural incidents and is reflected in the harmonious atmosphere in the houses.

The experience and calibre of residential staff is pivotal in pupils' enjoyment and experience of the provision. The observations of practice show that staff have warm, easy and relaxed relationships with pupils. Staff have an in-depth understanding of the diverse needs of the pupils, which underpins their solid relationships and provides highly positive role modelling. This helps pupils to develop tolerance of their peers, regardless of their unique characteristics.

Staff are extremely skilled in supporting pupils; interventions are natural and unobtrusive. Staff treat pupils equally and respectfully, again, providing excellent role models. One parent said, about the staff: 'The pupils are so wonderfully taken care of by you all, you are all outstanding.'

Staff facilitate an array of exciting activities tailored exceptionally well to individual and specific interests. Pupils visit special interest shops and buy film memorabilia; they regularly swim, shop, and attend local clubs. Staff facilitate social visits, supporting pupils to have external friendships.

Individual placement plans and health plans are comprehensive and detailed. These incorporate pupils' ideas and views, guiding staff in individual care and enabling pupils to contribute to their own care planning. This gives pupils autonomy and responsibility as they reach adolescence. Staff address pupils' personal safety, emerging sexuality and mental health openly. The school provide therapists for pupils, to support them and help them address the difficulties they face. A parent spoken to said that the support from the school has been life changing: 'He was so isolated and fragile, they have turned him into a well-rounded individual. This has made a huge difference to our lives, they get it and they understand him.'

Staff shop, cook and prepare food with pupils, providing them with an abundance of skills for adulthood. Food is extremely healthy; processed food is minimal and the small well equipped kitchen facilities enable pupils to prepare food safely following hygiene guidelines.

Accommodation is superb. Small houses promote a domestic family home environment. Houses are clean, homely and combine individual décor preferences with neutral shades and soft furnishings. The result is small, clean, cosy accommodation. All pupils have their own rooms and these are highly personalised. Pupils have privacy and space; they are clearly relaxed and at home. One parent said: 'He would live there if he could, he really enjoys it.'

Residential pupils' safety

Good

The safety of residential pupils is good. Robust recruitment checks are completed for potential staff. Pupils are involved in the staff interview process and give their feedback about candidates prior to appointment. This ensures pupils are aware of staff changes and lets them know that their views influence new appointments.

The school has effective policies to guide staff in ensuring pupil safety and wellbeing. Policies work very well in practice. Parents have absolute confidence that pupils are safe at the school and pupils all say that they feel safe. To corroborate this, are no bullying incidents in the residential provision and pupils do not leave the school site without prior agreement. They practise learning about personal safety. Good risk management has enabled pupils to; safely visit local amenities alone, ride a bicycle without an adult, understand stranger danger and negotiate traffic. This enables pupils to feel confident and builds increased independence using real experiences.

Positive behaviour is supported using planned strategies implemented by skilled, unobtrusive staff. The behaviour in residential time is very good; pupils tolerate one another because staff help them to understand each other's differences. Individual behaviour management plans guide staff responses and detail bespoke interventions. Staff rarely use sanctions or physical intervention, the latter is only used to prevent injury and promote individual safety. Records are comprehensive and link to behaviour management plans. This demonstrates effective reflection on incidents and outcomes of behavioural strategies. This is key to the successful behaviour management in the school. There is a positive impact on pupils, increasing their ability to manage their responses and build positive self-esteem.

There are comprehensive health and safety checks in place to assure the physical safety of the building for pupils, staff and visitors. The site is safe and secure; visitors to the site adhere to the established visitor protocol. This protects pupils from hazards and promotes their safety.

Allegations are managed appropriately in line with local and organisational procedures.

Precautionary procedures are understood by all staff and direction as to how to manage potential incidents is displayed clearly. This safeguards pupils and staff against potential harm.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. Clear aims translate smoothly into practice. This results in pupils who thrive, achieve and progress. There is an inherent culture of overcoming obstacles, barriers and disabilities to ensure that pupils enjoy equality of access to opportunities, activities and experiences.

Management of the provision is innovative and efficient. The head of care has a comprehensive level of oversight of the residential provision and fully understands the strengths and weaknesses. Feedback from parents highlights communication between the school and parents as excellent.

There is a comprehensive level of scrutiny and thorough review of the boarding practice. Regular assessment against the national minimum standards identifies areas for improvement, informing future plans. While pupil progress is unquestionable, evidence to support this is dispersed and lacks a central overview.

The independent visits to the school take place on a termly basis and are in line with the minimum requirements. The head of care is clear that she would like deeper scrutiny of the residential provision in order to help inform improvement and has highlighted this as an area for development.

Pupils are supported by a core team of well-established residential staff, providing consistent care. There are contingencies in place and deployment of staff ensures that residential pupils' needs are consistently met.

Staff are well equipped and trained for the role. They are qualified or working towards an appropriate qualification. This promotes a good knowledge base within the residential staff team. Staff have good levels of training to support them in their roles. They complete mandatory training, and specialist training to support their understanding of working with pupils who have autism. They receive very good supervision and induction. They have an annual appraisal and individual learning and development plans. The plans dovetail with the improvement agenda in the school and residence. Staff training needs are identified and professional development is driven through clear actions that closely link to improving the care that the pupils receive.

There has been no survey consultation with residential pupils since October 2013, which was prior to the last inspection. This does not provide opportunities to link pupils' views in with improvement plans.

The leadership and management are outstanding because there are robust systems in place to drive improvement. Individual professional development, oversight of the welfare provision, and identification of areas for development all continue to evolve and improve. The staff team is highly committed to all of the pupils; their dedication is evident in the provision, leading to outstanding outcomes for residential 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	136047
Social care unique reference number	SC425708
DfE registration number	873/6048

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	Independent residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	8
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	12 to 17
Headteacher	Ms Tina Harris
Date of previous boarding inspection	12/11/2013
Telephone number	01223 277438

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