

The Springfields Academy

Springfields School, Curzon Street, CALNE, Wiltshire, SN11 0DS

Inspection dates	16/03/2015 to 18/03/2015	
Overall effectiveness	Adequate	3
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Adequate	3
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Adequate	3

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is adequate because

- The residential provision is well managed and leaders, managers and staff work well together. However, two national minimum standards have not been met. These relate to the monitoring of the academy by independent visitors and the acting principal, and the quality of the residential accommodation
- In addition, further improvement is required in a number of areas. These include: ensuring that robust audit trails are maintained when addressing matters relating to safeguarding and complaints; ensuring that children's views are recorded in the academy's records and, ensuring that the duration of a sanction is always recorded when they are imposed. In addition, record keeping of staff supervision discussions, and the regular monitoring of these documents, require improvement.
- The governing body has failed to ensure that it undertakes regular monitoring visits of the academy and formally reports on the findings. Current monitoring visits are not formalised or effective. They lack sufficient rigour in identifying shortfalls and do not provide an analysis of trends and patterns or identify areas of improvement to enhance the boarding experience. The acting principal has not produced an annual review of the the academy's boarding provision and services.
- Some areas of the residential provision require significant improvement so that all areas of accommodation are well maintained and provide a welcoming, homely environment. The acting principal and governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses at the academy. They are committed to improving the services and have developed an action plan to deal with these significant shortfalls.
- There has been improvement in collecting and analysing data about the use of restraint. All staff have been trained in the academy's chosen method of approaches to calm potentially disruptive behaviour and restraint. In addition, leaders and managers and all residential staff have received safeguarding training consistent with their role.

- Residential pupils are supported by a committed and experienced staff team who have a good understanding of their individual needs. There are good relationships between residential pupils and staff. Residential pupils say that they feel safe at the academy and enjoy a wide variety of social, recreation and leisure opportunities.

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

The academy was contacted on the morning of the planned inspection. The Inspectors arrived at the academy early afternoon. The inspectors visited all the residential provision in school, observed staff interaction, routines, including evening activities and had a meal with boarders. The inspectors spoke to the acting principal, head of care, residential pupils, residential staff, person responsible for medicines, health and safety and behaviour management/data collection and the parent liaison lead. They also briefly spoke to governors. The inspectors met with one parent and had telephone contact with one other. In addition, the inspector scrutinised a variety of records, documents and policies and procedures.

Inspection team

David Kidner	Lead social care inspector
Sharron Escott	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

The school became an academy in September 2011. Springfields Academy offers provision for pupils experiencing difficulties in mainstream education due to a combination of emotional, behavioural, learning difficulties and complex needs. It also provides tuition in externally credited vocational courses for day pupils. Springfields Academy has a specialism in sports.

The academy currently provides residential accommodation for up to 72 pupils of both genders at any one time, ranging in age from 9 to 16 years. There are four residential accommodation areas on the academy site. All residential pupils return home at weekends and during academy holidays. The academy is situated in a rural town in Wiltshire.

The last full inspection of the residential provision was in March 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- review the arrangements for parents and other interested stakeholders to make telephone contact with their children in the residential accommodation
- review the record keeping arrangements to evidence a robust audit trail when addressing safeguarding matters and concerns
- ensure that all records of restraint include full details of the behaviours leading up to the use of any restraint
- ensure that the duration of a sanction and the views of children are recorded when sanctions have been imposed
- review the arrangements for the monitoring of all records as identified in Appendix 2 of the residential special schools national minimum standards
- ensure that any gaps in employment history are clearly recorded in staff recruitment records
- review the record keeping arrangements of action taken to address all complaints in order to evidence a robust audit trail and the outcome
- ensure residential staff receive training in matters relating to child sexual exploitation
- ensure that all staff supervision records clearly evidence discussions, self-reflection, matters discussed about individual children and their needs, and agreed outcomes and personal development needs.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
 - Suitable toilet and washing facilities which are reasonably accessible from the sleeping accommodation are provided for children. Separate toilet facilities are provided for boys and girls unless each toilet facility is provided in a separate room intended for use by one pupil at a time, the door to which is capable of being secured from inside. Toilet and washing facilities provide appropriate privacy for children. (NMS 5.3)
 - Accommodation is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any children with restricted mobility. The accommodation contains suitable specialist facilities to support children whose disabilities require them. (NMS 5.4)
 - Accommodation is suitably furnished and of sufficient size for the number, needs

and ages of children accommodated, with appropriate protection and separation between genders, age groups and accommodation for adults. Bedding is clean and suitable, and is sufficiently warm. (NMS 5.5)

- 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)
- Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of physical interventions, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish). (NMS 20.2)
- 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)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Good

Outcomes for students are good. Residential pupils state that they enjoy staying at the academy. They say that they feel well cared for and valued because they have good relationships with staff and other pupils. They say that they feel safe and can speak to staff if they are worried in the day or unwell during the night.

The residential staff encourage residential pupils to lead a healthy lifestyle and encourage them to take part in exercise and are provided with healthy and nutritious food. Their good health is promoted and they have access to specialist services to meet their individual needs.

Residential pupils engaged well with inspectors and willingly shared their views during the visit. This demonstrates that residential pupils are confident in expressing themselves and ensuring that they have a voice. Residential pupils show good progress in developing their self-esteem, independence and emotional resilience.

Residential pupils behave well and are supported to manage and improve their behaviour. They demonstrate kindness and consideration to others and are respectful and accepting of other pupils' individual needs.

Residential pupils feel listened to and are able to voice their views and opinions. They have opportunities to access regularly a wide range of social and leisure opportunities within the academy and the wider community. They are complimentary of the activities that are on offer; for example, ice skating, cinema and cycle rides.

Residential pupils understand the importance of developing life skills and are keen to learn. They are encouraged and have good opportunities to develop their skills in cooking, shopping and going out on their own.

Attendance at school is high and as a result they achieve well in their education. Good transition planning ensures that when residential pupils are due to leave the academy, they continue their learning by securing placements at colleges and or on vocational courses.

Quality of residential provision and care

Adequate

The quality of care is adequate due to a number of shortfalls in the quality of some of the residential accommodation. These include: communal areas, bedrooms and bathing and showering facilities which require redecoration and refurbishment. On-going maintenance problems with some showering facilities results in limited availability of these facilities which is not sufficient to meet the number of residential pupils' needs. Residential pupils and staff confirmed that the facilities provided require significant improvement. Some pupils said that, at times, the residential accommodation is too hot, in particular in the summer months, and that there is limited ventilation.

A comprehensive survey of the residential provision was conducted in 2014 and targets were set to improve the residential facilities. Some improvements have been made. However, progress in the implementation of these improvements is too slow and requires immediate review to ensure that these shortfalls are remedied without delay. The national minimum standard relating to the residential accommodation has not been met.

Residential pupils are able to keep in contact with their families and friends. However, some parents and residential pupils consider that communication could be further improved if parents

could ring the residential accommodation directly. Leaders and managers acknowledge this and agreed to consider options to enhance communication between parents and their children.

Residential pupils receive good quality individual support and pastoral care. Care plans are detailed and are supported by good risk assessments that are regularly reviewed. The academy has a 24-hour curriculum. Academic and residential staff work closely together to promote continuity and consistency of care. Residential care staff report that the recent introduction of a life and social skills assessment tool that sets personal targets and goals for the residential pupils has enhanced the quality of care provided.

Residential pupils are proud of their achievements and told inspectors that they had learnt new skills. One said: 'I have learnt new independence skills, such as social skills, shopping, cleaning, going out on my own and cooking'. A number of other residential pupils also agreed with this. Another said: 'my English and maths have really improved'. Residential staff can recognise significant improvements in residential pupils' social and life skills. One staff member said: 'one residential pupil's confidence has significantly improved and there is an increase in his independence skills; he is now interacting with others and learning to trust adults'.

Residential pupils benefit from good arrangements for healthcare and the management of medicines. Residential pupils said that they feel well looked after and are able to raise staff awareness during the night if they are feeling unwell. They have access to therapeutic services, if required.

Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy and benefit from a wide variety of social, leisure and recreational facilities which include: swimming, ice skating, football, arts and crafts, running and dodge ball. One residential pupil said: 'we do lots of activities and we are always kept busy and active; that is why we are fit'. Some residential pupils gave 10/10 for how much they enjoy the activities.

Good quality food is provided which includes a good variety of choices. The vast majority of residential pupils speak very highly of the quality of the food that is provided. Residential pupils can prepare simple snacks and prepare drinks. This assists in developing their independence and skills. At mealtimes, residential pupils are encouraged to lay and clear away tables. Good table manners are promoted.

Residential pupils said that they felt listened to and gave a rating of 8/10 for how good they feel they are listened to.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

The safety of residential pupils is good. The academy has detailed policies and procedures in place to keep residential pupils safe. The designated safeguarding leads and the governor who has the lead for safeguarding have all undertaken the higher level of safeguarding training as required for their role. In addition, all residential staff have received safeguarding training.

The child protection policy is detailed and in line with national minimum standards. Any allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly and quickly. The academy ensures that these are reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and, where appropriate, to the local multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH). However, leaders and managers do not always ensure that they keep detailed records of the contact made, and the outcomes following advice and discussions. This does not clearly record the action taken and provide a robust audit trail. Where leaders and managers have undertaken internal investigations following consultation with the LADO, they follow the academy's

disciplinary policies, procedures and protocols.

Residential pupils spoken with as part of this inspection are unanimous in their view that they feel safe at the academy, and that there are staff that they can speak to if they are worried. There are mixed views about the safety of pupils expressed by parents who had completed the online parent view. However, no specific safeguarding concerns were raised by parents to Ofsted during the inspection, other than matters that the academy had previously acknowledged, and was in the process of addressing.

There has been a improvement in the collection of data in the use of restraint across the academy since the previous inspection. The academy has recently introduced a computer based system. This provides leaders and managers with a clearer overview of the number of restraints, where these are occurring and which pupils are subject to the use of restraint. Senior staff within the academy have been identified to monitor the levels of restraint and to report incidents to the principal and other senior staff. Leaders and managers said that they plan to introduce a more complex computer based monitoring system in the very near future to gather more detailed information that will assist in closer scrutiny.

Restraint is used as a last resort and although the use of restraint is minimal, there has been a small increase in the records regarding the use of restraint in the residential provision since the previous inspection This is not the result of an increase in behaviour that requires intervention, but the result of better recording of the use of restraint.

The vast majority of the restraint records detailed information about the intervention. However, a very small number of records do not fully include the behaviours that were exhibited prior to the use of the restraint. Consequently, when auditing and evaluating the records, senior managers are unable to ascertain if the restraint was appropriate and proportionate to the behaviours being exhibited, or explore preventative strategies. Leaders and managers agree that these records should be further improved.

All residential staff receive training in the academy's chosen method of de-escalation and restraint. They have a good knowledge of pupils' individual needs and known triggers. Residential staff said 'pupils are relaxed and the relationships between pupils and care staff are positive because these interventions are rare'. One member of staff said 'it's about relationships and trust'. Care and support plans identify known risks and provide staff detail in how to manage specific behaviours. Behaviour support plans are implemented and reviewed when needed.

Staff adopt positive approaches to the management of behaviours and set appropriate boundaries when managing pupil's behaviours. Residential pupils behave well and are considerate towards each other. The majority of residential pupils spoken with are happy with the rewards system that is in place to promote positive behaviour and are motivated to improve their behaviour. Sanctions are imposed where appropriate and records are kept and evaluated. However, not all records include the agreed duration of the sanction or the residential pupils views on the sanctions imposed.

Bullying is taken seriously and staff deal with incidents appropriately. One residential pupil said 'staff do something about it; they are really hard on bullying'. A group of residential pupils said: 'anti-bullying is managed well at the school'. In addition, there are many posters and prompts in the residential accommodation giving guidance on positive behaviour and anti-bullying, including anti-homophobic bullying.

Leaders and managers treat complaints from residential pupils and parents seriously and take swift action when complaints are brought to their attention. However, not all records

relating to complaints clearly evidence the action that has been taken and the outcomes of the complaint to demonstrate their good practice and a robust audit trail.

Leaders and managers who recruit staff have undertaken 'safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education' training. However, the inspection identified that recording processes did not always detail the action taken to ensure full employment histories are obtained. The deficiencies identified were rectified immediately during the inspection. Staff do not commence employment until there has been a satisfactory response from the disclosure and barring service.

The academy provides a secure and safe environment. Robust and effective systems are in place to monitor and promote health and safety. Leaders and managers ensure that regular checks are undertaken on the gas and electrical services. In addition, detailed environmental risk assessments are conducted and regularly reviewed. The academy ensures that fire prevention procedures are robust. Residential pupils are knowledgeable of the fire escape routes; they know how to respond in an emergency and take part in regular fire drills..

Leadership and management of the residential provision Adequate

Leadership and management is adequate. Since the previous inspection, a new senior leadership team has been introduced and the acting principal remains in post. The senior leadership team is committed to improving the service it delivers to the residential pupils. The acting principal acknowledges that the new senior leadership team requires time to become established and effective.

Governors undertake some unannounced monitoring visits and report on various aspects of the conduct of the academy such as accommodation, health and safety matters and bullying. However, governors have failed to ensure that other records such as, complaints, sanctions and the use of physical intervention are scrutinised and reported upon. The monitoring of these records does not take place half termly, and are not formalised. These processes lack sufficient rigour in identifying shortfalls, and do not provide an analysis of trends and patterns or identify areas of improvement and development. The governing body acknowledged this and said that it will review the process for reporting to ensure monitoring is effective and demonstrates rigour and challenge.

The acting principal monitors a number of safeguarding records such as bullying, physical interventions and complaints. He also regularly reports on the services that are provided at the academy. However, the acting principal has not produced a written annual review of the operation and the resourcing of the academy's welfare arrangements in respect of the statement of purpose, its staffing policy and the placement plans for individual pupils. The principal acknowledges this and stated that immediate action will be taken to address this shortfall.

The acting principal is committed to driving service improvement. He has recently commissioned an independent review of safeguarding and behaviour and has completed the Wiltshire school safeguarding audit. To strengthen service improvement, he has commissioned a school improvement partner and undertaken a performance review of the senior leadership team. The head of care now links with another residential special school for advice and support.

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have taken action to deal with the vast majority of areas identified for improvement. This has resulted in all staff being trained in the use of de-escalation and restraint, acting upon recommendations from the legionella survey, introducing personal evacuation plans for residential pupils where required, and undertaking portable appliance testing.

Although not all staff have received training in the safe use of medicines, a date has been arranged to complete this. Two areas for improvement were identified at the previous inspection relating to the residential accommodation. In particular, improving the showering facilities in one accommodation area and commencing the plans for the redecoration and refurbishment across the residential provision. The showering facilities have been completed and although some redecoration and refurbishment has taken place, considerable further improvement is still required.

The academy has the required policies and procedures in place and has recently reviewed a number of these. Significant events at the academy are notified the appropriate authorities. These include events relating to the safeguarding and well-being of residential pupils.

Residential staff speak very highly of the acting principal and of the senior leadership team. They said that they feel valued and very well supported. They said 'staff who are undertaking senior duty responsibilities in the evenings are 'visible' and this includes senior staff from education'. One group of staff said 'we are going forward, reflecting on our practice and continue to move forward'. Another group of staff commented that they are confident with the new leadership team and that they have been successful in introducing positive changes within the academy.

A new system has been introduced to ensure that all staff receive regular supervision and an annual appraisal. Residential staff consider that their supervision is supportive and that in addition they attend regular team meetings that give them the opportunity to reflect on their practice. However, supervision records vary in the quality of the recording of the main discussion points and do not always identify agreed outcomes of discussions, agreed action points and personal development needs.

Residential staff report that there are good training opportunities. All staff have received training in child protection and in the academy's chosen method of de-escalation and restraint, for example, there is now better reporting of the use of restraint. In addition, leaders and managers ensure that all staff have a good awareness of child protection policies, procedures and protocols.

The academy has recently provided training to pupils about child sexual exploitation and keeping themselves safe. However, this has not been provided to residential staff.

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	137470
Social care unique reference number	SC039093
DfE registration number	865/7015

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	70
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Vacant
Date of previous boarding inspection	18/03/2015
Telephone number	01249 814125
Email address	admin@springfields.wilts.sch.uk

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