

Fountaindale School

Nottingham Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG18 5BA

Inspection dates

19/10/2015 to 21/10/2015

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding **1**

The quality of care and support

Outstanding 1

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding 1

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding 1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Young people flourish at this school, making significant progress with regards to their personal care, communication and independent living skills. They thoroughly enjoy their residential experience, particularly the activities and making new friends.
- The safety of young people is at the heart of this school. Staff know the young people very well, the risks they are exposed to and how to manage and reduce those risks effectively.
- The views and experiences of young people are at the heart of all residential practice. The voice of young people is highly valued in the school and they make mature contributions to the delivery of their care and the residential provision.
- The school has a strong, highly qualified and experienced management team which has effective monitoring systems. These contribute to their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Recommendations to improve the school from the previous inspection have been robustly addressed. This is a school that continually strives to improve the service offered to young people.
- The school could improve further by reviewing how they respond to young people who believe role play activities are real life situations. They could also look at how the residential activities can complement themes current in the school such as 'Keeping Safe' week.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consider the implications of activities based on role play where young people believe them to be a real life situation.

- Consider planning activities to complement current school themes such as 'Keeping Safe' week.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was announced on the morning of the start of the inspection. The inspector visited the residential accommodation and spoke to young people in residence and staff, including key staff with responsibility for the residential provision. The inspector also observed practice in the residential provision and scrutinised school policies and records. Information gathered from Parent View was very positive.

Inspection team

Jo Vyas

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

This is a co-educational residential special school for physically disabled and sensory impaired children and young people aged from 3 to 19 years. The school is operated by Nottinghamshire County Council. The school is situated in wooded parkland on the outskirts of Mansfield and has just moved into newly built premises on the same site as the old school. The boarding accommodation is specially adapted to meet the physical needs of the children and young people and is located in the main school building but is separate from the main school. Residential care is provided two nights a week during term time for pupils aged from 14 to 19 years. Residential pupils stay for one night a week for a period of 10 weeks to promote independence skills, communication and social skills. There are 58 pupils on roll at the school with up to four residents each night.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

Young people thoroughly enjoy the residential experience. They make exceptional progress, particularly with regards to their personal care, communication and independent living skills. For example, a young person who has problems sleeping overnight has made tremendous progress in a short period of time. He will now stay in bed when he wakes and only woke once the last time he came into residence. This ensures that the young person has better access to learning. Parents report that young people transfer their newly acquired skills to home, although one young person said he would not do the washing up at home, only in residence, and laughed! A parent said, 'His progress since he's been at this school has been amazing. His conversational skills, understanding of the world has increased so much. They have helped him to look at the future in a positive light.'

There is a strong management team which is effective at identifying and tackling shortfalls and securing improvement to ensure young people are provided with the best care and education possible. The safety of young people is central to all practice. There are robust and effective arrangements for safeguarding young people. As a consequence, young people have a strong sense of how to keep themselves safe.

Young people have strong, trusted relationships with each other and staff. The ethos of respect for individuality is highly valued throughout the school. Young people are well behaved and ready to access their education. Their views are significant and staff take time to ensure young people are able to communicate them effectively.

Young people enjoy the activities on offer. They fully engage in the activities, which offer good educational opportunities especially towards learning independent skills. Young people develop the skills and confidence they need to successfully make the transition into adulthood.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Young people and their families have access to a highly informative induction into residence. This helps to give parents and young people confidence in the residential team and provision. Young people settle into the residential provision quickly. They enjoy the residential experience, particularly the activities and meeting up with their friends. They have strong relationships with staff.

Staff know and understand the young people very well. This is particularly important due to the complex needs of the young people in their care. Care plans, which take account of privacy and dignity, provide clear and detailed information for staff. Young people are consistently and centrally involved in the planning and review of their care. Most young people struggle with communication but staff excel in understanding each young person's way of communicating. Their views are highly valued, whether they are someone who relies on technology to communicate or someone who communicates verbally.

All young people are treated with the utmost dignity and respect. They clearly model this behaviour back towards staff and each other. They experience care and support that is sensitive and responsive to their individuality. This enables them to develop a positive self-view and build on their emotional resilience and sense of identity. Staff fully include young people in all

decisions about the way they want staff to help them. Young people are fully consulted about the way they communicate, how personal care is provided and day-to-day decisions; for example, a member of staff asked a young person if she could remove her apron and waited for her response before doing so.

Young people are encouraged to keep themselves fit and healthy. Activities they participate in often include healthy options at mealtimes. Staff work closely with healthcare professionals to promote young people's physical, emotional and psychological health.

Parents and young people consistently provide outstanding feedback about the quality of care provided in the residential provision. A young person wrote a thank you card which said: 'A very BIG thank you for looking after me and making Ressie such a fun time. I would like to come again.' A parent said: 'Staying in residence has given him so much more confidence. He knows about ordering from a menu; how much things cost. Life skills really. This place is just amazing.'

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities which are focused on providing learning opportunities while having fun. They participate in activities such as cooking and art as well as accessing the local community. They have also had visits from the local fire station, and visits from the police are planned. Young people decide what activities they would like to do at the beginning of their stay when they discuss their targets. Activities are inclusive, well planned and executed. All young people are encouraged to complete the activity as independently as possible, ably and sensitively supported by staff. However, staff should consider the implications of activities based on role play where young people believe these to be real life situations.

The residential accommodation is still quite new. It is secure and offers a purpose-built space that is well equipped to meet the physical needs of the young people. Young people personalise their rooms with posters that they make and are very proud of. The corridor is also decorated with their displays. Young people no longer have their tea in the small dining area but now eat in the school hall, which is made more homely for the young people in residence. This means that staff can now comfortably eat with the young people, making mealtimes a relaxed and sociable occasion.

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

The safety of young people is paramount at this school. Policies and procedures are robust and implemented to a high standard. Safety is a thread that runs through all practice. Staff are highly trained and experienced. They report all concerns, as they understand the vulnerability of the young people they look after. Young people have a strong sense of safety and well-being.

Young people are very well behaved in this school. They are respectful towards each other and staff. Young people do not report bullying as an issue. However, staff are vigilant and available for young people should they wish to discuss any concerns. Staff do not use physical intervention or sanctions. Young people do not go missing from this school but staff have a good understanding of the procedures to follow should this occur. The school works closely with outside agencies and parents to ensure a holistic approach is taken with regard to keeping young people safe.

Young people are learning about how to keep themselves safe in school. They will learn how to say 'No' as well as tackle more complex issues such as sexual exploitation, grooming, and radicalisation, dependent on their learning needs. However, this very important theme was not complemented within the residential activities for this week. Nevertheless, keeping safe is a universal theme that runs throughout all activities.

Systematic risk assessments provide good clear instruction for staff to keep young people and staff safe from injury. Risk assessments are routinely reviewed and updated in response to the young people in residence.

Vetting procedures are strong and help to keep young people safe from unsuitable adults. Health and safety systems are robust, helping to keep young people safe from hazards.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

There is a strong management team which provides effective leadership. Managers are inspirational and always striving for improvement. They lead by example and generate creative ideas to ensure the highest quality care is provided for young people. The head of the residential provision is qualified and experienced. Since coming into post she has effectively implemented changes to improve the residential service. These have included a more in-depth induction for young people and their parents which involves the whole staff team. She has also implemented a more effective staff induction system as well as forging close working relationships with a short break facility that a number of the young people also attend. This has led to sharing good practice and a more consistent approach between the two provisions.

Staff are highly skilled, committed and enthusiastic about offering the best service they can provide. They have access to excellent support and training opportunities. Staff also receive specialist training specific to the needs of the young people, such as epilepsy awareness, gastrostomy care, medication and postural awareness care. This training ensures staff have the right skills to support the vulnerable young people in their care.

Monitoring systems offer a high level of challenge, which enables the management team to continually strive for improvement. The residential provision is an important part of this school. The chair of governors visits the provision regularly and completes a report for the governors. The extended services coordinator also visits the residential provision regularly and reports on her observations of activities and discussions with young people. Together, these reports provide a robust monitoring tool for the management team and governors. The management team has a good understanding of the provision's strengths and weaknesses and has effective and strategic plans in place to address any shortfalls. Currently, the management team is looking at the possibility of building an extension to the residential dining room and is in consultation with the local authority about opening the residential provision for more days of the week.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	122947
Social care unique reference number	SC402858
DfE registration number	

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	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	58
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	3 to19
Headteacher	Mr Mark Dengel
Date of previous boarding inspection	25/02/2015
Telephone number	01623 792671
Email address	m.dengel@fountaindale.notts.sch.uk

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