

Windlestone School

Chilton, Ferryhill, Co Durham, DL17 0HP

Inspection dates	13/10/2015 to 15/10/2015	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Good	2
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Residential care is making a significant improvement to the life chances of young people. They and their parents and carers said this helps them feel calmer, better-behaved, more sociable and mature.
- The residential accommodation is well-designed, comfortable, clean and well-equipped. Young people benefit from single occupancy ensuite accommodation which they take a pride in and enjoy using.
- The residential staff are skilled and highly-experienced. The staff turnover is negligible and the same staff are on duty each night of the week. This provides a high level of consistency and helps young people feel secure.
- Young people behave well. They are courteous to each other, to the staff and to visitors. They are proud of the residential facilities and enjoy being there.
- Young people are safe and feel safe. There is no bullying and the staff are very fair. The premises are kept safe by robust health and safety procedures.
- Effective arrangements are in place to promote good health. The staff adhere to government guidance concerning administration of all types of medication. The school's written policy on medication is not fully robust because it does not cover the administration of controlled drugs.
- Outcomes of investigations into complaints and allegations are not always clear because the records do not indicate whether the concern was upheld or not.
- The school's policies regarding recruitment, child protection and use of reasonable force have not yet been updated to reflect the government's most recent guidance.
- Young people's risk assessments are not fully effective because the measures to be taken to reduce significant risks are not recorded clearly.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools:

3.6 The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of children who are unwell, and ensures that children's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing is promoted. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, administration of medicines (including controlled drugs) and dealing with medical emergencies. Policies for administration of medication should reflect guidance provided by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (Handling of Medicines in Social Care).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- When recording the outcome of any investigation into a complaint or allegation, make clear whether the concern was upheld, partly upheld or not upheld.
- Ensure the policies relating to child protection, safe recruitment and use of reasonable force reflect up-to-date government guidance.
- Revise young people's risk assessments to ensure that the measures to be taken in order to reduce significant risks are recorded clearly.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted gave the school 15 minutes notice of the inspection. It conducted an inspection of education at the same time as the inspection of residential care. Evidence came from one-to-one and group discussions with young people; analysis of written surveys received from 12 young people; discussions with parents, residential staff, the headteacher and the head of care; assessment of the school's policies, records and young people's case files; a tour of both residential houses and observations of the residential routines.

Inspection team

Mr Steve Pearson

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Windlestone School is a residential special school maintained by Durham County Council for 74 children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is situated in a semi-rural environment in Chilton, County Durham. The school provides 20 residential places on weekdays for boys and girls, aged from 11 to 16 years old. Accommodation comprises a purpose-built residential block with two ten-bedded mixed gender units. Most bedrooms are single-bedded and all bedrooms have ensuite showers and toilets. Residential students have access to the extended day facilities provided at the school until 7.30pm each weekday. The residential provision was last inspected in December 2014.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Young people make good progress as a result of the care they receive in the residential provision. At the inspection they were unanimous in saying the quality of care is very high. This was summed up by one young person who said, 'It's ace here. I love it.' And another said, 'I'm a lot calmer since I started staying here. I don't kick off so much and I do my homework now.'

Young people get on well with each other and with the staff. Several young people said, 'The best thing about here is the staff. They help us sort things out and they listen. It helps us to calm down and not get so angry.' The young people socialise with each other and mix with all age groups. This helps them develop social skills and confidence. One said, 'I get on well with the others, we all get on well together.' Young people are happy and relaxed in the residential environment. They have a significant say in how the residential provision is run and organised. This helps them feel empowered and responsible.

The staff are effective in promoting young people's welfare and keeping them safe. A robust health and safety system ensures the premises are safe. The staff are knowledgeable about child protection procedures. They assess the risks of any hazards that may affect young people.

Staffing levels are good and ensure high levels of consistency for young people. This helps them feel secure. Healthcare arrangements are also effective. Staff have received training in the administration of medication and first aid. The records of administration of medication are accurate and provide full accountability.

The quality of care and support

Good

The staff are effective in meeting the needs of young people. These are recorded in their residential care plans. Each young person has a key worker who meets with them regularly. Together they agree targets regarding their development and they discuss progress and any concerns. This system helps young people to develop positively and ensures they can raise any worries or concerns.

The premises are in good order, clean and comfortable. Young people have ensuite single accommodation which they value. One young person said, 'I love my bedroom. I can make it my own. I've got everything I need in there and like having my own toilet.' They also have access to the internet on their own computer. This enables them to access useful information which enhances their knowledge and development. Appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent access to unsuitable websites.

The staff are effective in promoting good health. They have warm, nurturing relationships with young people and know them well. Good levels of staffing help to

ensure they can spend enough one-to-one time with young people when necessary to help them discuss any concerns or worries. This helps young people feel more relaxed and supported.

The staff are effective in promoting physical health as well as emotional health. All staff have training in the administration of first aid and medication. The school have designated staff who are responsible for administration of medication and they follow the guidance of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS). The school's own medication policy is not fully robust because it does not include the administration of controlled drugs. This leaves staff vulnerable if an error is made or if they are unsure about official procedures.

The staff are fair and listen to what young people suggest or say. They consider and respond appropriately to the needs of all young people. There is no discrimination between the needs of boys and girls or between older or younger children. One girl summed this up saying, 'The staff are fair and help us do the things we want to do even if it's different to what the boys want to do.'

The staff enable the young people to have a full say in the running of the residential provision. Young people from the two houses attend the school council meetings and make suggestions and give their opinions. The residential staff, house leaders and head of care also have ongoing good relationships with young people and listen and respond to their views. One young person summed this up saying, 'The staff listen to us and try to do what we ask for as long as it's not too much.' An independent visitor also visits the school. The young people have good relationships with the visitor and know her well.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

The management and staff are effective in promoting young people's safety and protecting them from harm.

All staff are aware of the procedures to follow if there are any allegations, suspicions or evidence of abuse. They also receive training in child protection and this is updated regularly. The head teacher and head of child protection have established links with relevant child protection professionals in the local authority. They contact them for advice when necessary. The procedures in place for responding to allegations and complaints are not fully robust. This is because after each issue has been investigated, the records do not show whether the concern was valid (upheld) or not.

Young people in the residential provision said there is no bullying. One young person said, 'We usually get on well but not always. Sometimes we fall out but that's normal. But there's no bullying and if there was we'd tell the staff and they'd sort it out.' Another young person said, 'The staff treat us well, and they are fair. Nobody gets treated better than anyone else.'

Behaviour in the residential provision is good. Young people are courteous and considerate of others. A parent said, 'My child behaves much better now. Their manners are better and they get on with other people better.'

The staff very rarely need to use physical intervention or sanctions in response to challenging behaviour. A member of staff said, 'We use the skills taught to us to help resolve conflicts amicably without the need for physical restraints.' A young person said, 'I'm a lot calmer since I came into the residence. I don't get so angry and if I do I don't lose my temper. The staff never have to restrain any of us. We like living here, it's good.'

A thorough health and safety system is implemented across the site. Professional technicians regularly service the electrical equipment, gas appliances and equipment for preventing, detecting and extinguishing fires. Fire drills are conducted at regular intervals. These measures help protect young people's safety.

The school has the necessary policies in place regarding promotion of safety and these are available on its website. Several policies reflect historic versions of government guidance and have not been updated with advice released within the past year. This shortfall is minor and has no significant impact for young people's welfare.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The leadership and management are effective in promoting young people's welfare and development. The residential provision is led and managed well.

The staff team are highly experienced. Staff turnover is negligible and weekly rotas are identical each week. This high level of consistency helps young people feel settled and secure. Staffing levels are good and are effective in meeting young people's needs. A young person said, 'There are always enough staff on duty. We know them well and we know what nights they work as it's the same every week. This is good because we can plan what to do or who we want to see.'

The head of care has a high level qualification in care and management. Nearly all the residential staff are also suitably qualified. Those who do not yet have the level three diploma are studying for this. One member of staff summarised the quality of training saying, 'If there is any training we want to do the head of care does what he can to arrange it for us.' The head teacher is also pro-active in creating opportunities for further development.

At the previous inspection Ofsted suggested a point for improvement regarding the recording of young people's risk assessments. The school has not yet implemented this recommendation in full. The measures to be taken to reduce significant risks are still not clearly recorded in the documentation. Consequently this aspect of the point for improvement has been repeated at this inspection.

Effective arrangements are in place if any young person wishes to raise a concern or make a complaint. The young people know the independent visitor well and she visits regularly to complete monitoring visits in line with the national minimum standards for residential special schools. This monitoring is thorough and the independent visitor makes recommendations where necessary. The head teacher also conducts an annual summary of the residential provision and assesses how well the national minimum

standards for residential special schools are being met. This evaluation is also in-depth and accurate. Monitoring by staff and the management is effective at identifying where young people are doing well or where there are shortfalls.

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	114347
Social care unique reference number	SC007615
DfE registration number	840/7030

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	74
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to16
Headteacher	Mr Tim Bennett
Date of previous boarding inspection	09/12/2014
Telephone number	01388 720337
Email address	t.bennett@durhamlearning.net

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