

Hamilton Lodge School

Hamilton Lodge School, 7-9 Walpole Road, BRIGHTON, BN2 0LS

Inspection dates	30/09/2015 to 02/10/2015	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Outstanding	1
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

- The residential provision is fully integrated and an integral part of the services delivered by the school. Good communication channels between education and care staff ensures consistency for young people.
- A strong emphasis on helping young people to improve their communication skills enables them to make good social and academic progress.
- There are robust policies and procedures for ensuring young people are kept safe. These are implemented in practice and protect young people from coming to harm. Engagement with the local safeguarding children network ensures best practice is maintained.
- Young people's needs are carefully assessed and progress is monitored. Good links with a range of specialist services ensures young people are referred promptly and provided with appropriate support.
- The residential provision is well managed and young people are provided with an excellent standard of care by a committed and stable staff team.
- Young people enjoy the residential experience. They learn social skills and build lasting relationships with their peers, preventing a sense of isolation.
- There is a strong commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles and young people needing medical attention benefit from accessing excellent medical facilities.
- The views and opinions of young people are valued, and they have a strong voice in how the residential provision can be developed. This ensures young people feel

valued and fully integrated into the school community.

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?

- Review the process for sharing information regarding a young person's welfare with the appropriate authorities, in a timely manner.
- Consider additional training opportunities for staff in relation to the use of physical restraint and supporting young people on the autistic spectrum.
- Review the process for updating and records cross referencing records when there is new information about a young person's circumstances.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection with four hours' notice. Inspection activities included; formal and informal discussions with residential pupils, sharing meals with pupils and observing a school council meeting. Discussions took place with the headteacher, head of care, the special educational needs co-ordinator, the nurse and several members of care staff. One governor was interviewed, and a telephone discussion took place with the independent visitor. A wide range of documentation concerning the residential provision was scrutinised. Responses on 'Parent View' were reviewed and taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Stephen Collett

Lead social care inspector

Keith Riley

Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Hamilton Lodge School is a co-educational residential school which caters for pupils between 5 and 18 years of age who are hearing impaired, with some pupils having additional specific needs. The main form of communication used is British Sign Language (BSL). English and Sign Supported English are also used. The school is situated in a residential area of Brighton. The boarding houses are adjacent to the main school site.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Young people speak positively about the residential provision. They feel happy, safe and well cared for. One young person stated 'I feel safe living here, I like to be with my friends; living here is like having a sleepover'. Young people develop positive relationships with staff, who are good role models. Some of these, like the young people, are hearing impaired. All staff are able to communicate, to varying degrees, using British sign language.

Staff have a thorough understanding of the needs of young people, and adopt a sensitive, caring approach to meeting these. A member of staff was observed offering support and guidance to a young person experiencing high levels of anxiety, using a range of skills to calm and reassure her.

Young people develop their social skills and build firm friendships with their peers. For some young people this is a new experience, as they have often experienced isolation before entering the residential facility. Staff monitor young people's relationships and intervene if they have any concerns. This ensures a safe environment is maintained. One young person said 'I have lived here for five years, and never seen any bullying'.

This positive living environment provides young people with the stability and security needed to achieve well. Young people make excellent progress in developing their communication skills. A parent commented that since being admitted to the residential provision the young person's sign language skills 'quickly improved, and this has really helped his self-esteem'. Improved communication skills enable young people to make steady progress towards meeting their academic targets.

Older young people acquire a good range of independent living skills, which prepares them well for adult life. They are given age appropriate free time, which is carefully risk assessed before being implemented. This helps young people to safely become more integrated into the local community.

Through good monitoring and evaluation of the services delivered, leaders and managers identify any weaknesses and areas for improvement. This process has resulted in a new system being implemented for monitoring young people's social and academic progress. It also enables any gaps in service provision to be quickly identified. It is anticipated that as the system becomes embedded, more detailed evidence of the impact the residential facility has on young people's lives will be obtained.

Effective management of the residential provision prioritises young people's safety and well-being. Staff are well supervised and supported in their role. This ensures they are motivated to provide good quality care which meets the needs of the young people.

Young people are treated with dignity and respect. They feel valued and part of a community, which listens to their views and addresses their concerns. Young people were observed to engage enthusiastically at a school council meeting, having the confidence to share their views on how the residential experience could be still further improved.

A range of activities provides young people with the opportunity to gain new experiences and develop their interests. The residential houses are well ordered, providing young people with an environment where they feel at ease and can relax in the evenings.

The residential provision is a fully integrated element of the school. The care and nurturing support young people receive helps them develop improved self-esteem and the confidence to take on new experiences and challenges.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Staff have a thorough understanding of the individual needs of residential pupils. Their needs are clearly defined in care plans which are regularly reviewed and implemented in practice. Internal multi-disciplinary meetings provides an effective forum for information sharing and assessing whether care plans need amending. These meetings also ensure young people needing specialist support services are quickly identified and referred in a timely manner.

Young people benefit from receiving sensitive, individualised care which takes account of their emerging identities. Staff treat them with dignity and respect and ensure their hearing impairment does not compromise this. For example, systems are in place to alert young people when a member of staff wants to enter their bedroom, ensuring appropriate privacy is maintained.

The admissions process to the residential provision is sensitive and takes account of young people's anxieties and vulnerabilities. They are provided with a residential pupil's guide, which provides them with information about who they can speak to, both within the school and externally, if they have any concerns. Young people have access to an independent listener who regularly visits the school, providing an additional avenue for external support for those pupils who require it.

Young people reside in comfortable, well maintained houses in close proximity to the school. They are consulted about sharing bedrooms, and their views are taken into account when these are allocated. Bedrooms can be personalised, and young people say they feel safe and comfortable, and generally sleep well.

All young people are allocated a key-worker. Key-work sessions are regular and focused on assisting young people to meet their goals. Young people are encouraged to express their views on how they are being cared for and educated. In addition, there are more formal arrangements for consulting young people, such as weekly school council meetings and young people's house meetings. One young person commented that 'we have a big say in what goes on here'.

A range of after school activities are offered, giving young people the opportunity to pursue personal interests and take exercise. These include football, hockey, swimming and rock climbing. Outings are also arranged to local events, such as banger racing. Young people have the opportunity to engage in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. This facilitates engagement with the wider community, giving pupils the opportunity to build relationships with non-hearing impaired peers. Young people who engage in the programme develop increased self-esteem and confidence. Their achievements are celebrated, making them feel valued within the school community.

Health care arrangements are excellent, both in terms of facilities and practice. An experienced and committed nurse ensures young people's health plans are monitored and updated as required. Arrangements for recording and administering medication are robust. Well established links with the national deaf children and families mental health service (NDCAMHS), ensures that young people access specialist support to improve their psychological well-being. Care managers and staff are able to access regular consultation with NDCAMHS professionals, which ensures vulnerable young people receive care that is sensitive to their emotional and psychological well-

being.

Catering arrangements ensure young people receive good quality food, with a variety of nourishing meals on offer. Special dietary needs are met, and any cultural or religious requirements relating to diet are respected. There are also facilities in each of the residential houses enabling the preparation of light meals and snacks. Meal times are sociable occasions, which are well ordered and managed. Young people were observed to be courteous and well-behaved throughout.

Staff encourage young people to maintain regular contact with family and carers while in residence. They can do this by a variety of means, using their own electronic devices, or accessing school equipment if necessary. Care staff ensure parents and carers are kept well informed of young people's progress and any concerns that may arise. One parent commented that 'communication is good, and even the senior managers can be contacted out of hours if necessary'. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection expressed confidence that their young people were safe and being well cared for.

The excellent standard of care young people receive is underpinned by effective, well monitored policies and procedures. These are understood and implemented by a motivated staff team. This ensures a safe, happy environment where young people are able to make good progress socially and academically.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Managers and staff prioritise the safety and well-being of young people. They have a good understanding of each young person's vulnerabilities, which assists them to plan and deliver care that protects them from harm. Staff are familiar with the risks associated with sexual exploitation, radicalisation and unsafe use of the internet. Young people receive excellent support and guidance on how to keep safe on social media sites, and internet security software minimises the risk of young people accessing inappropriate websites. When young people are identified as being particularly vulnerable to exploitation or unsafe use of the internet, monitoring and increased levels of supervision are implemented.

Young people consistently say that they feel safe in the residential provision, and all those spoken to could identify a member of staff they would speak to if they had concerns. Referring to a member of staff, a young person stated 'he's a lovely man, he has helped me a lot in the past. He has a good heart'. Staff and the independent listener are vigilant to any signs of bullying, and young people are given consistent advice on how to report any incidents. Consequently, young people do not identify bullying as a concern, and feel that any bickering or disputes amongst pupils is quickly addressed.

The head of care is one of two designated leads for child protection in the school. He maintains an overview of the effectiveness of policies and procedures to protect young people from harm, and closely monitors the arrangements for young people who are looked after, or have child in need or child protection plan. A Local Authority Team Manager reported that the head of care 'engages positively with the local safeguarding children network'. This ensures that local authority plans for protecting individual children are fully implemented within the residential facility.

Good partnership working with the local authority has ensured that the safety and welfare of residential pupils is prioritised, and examples of good practice are shared amongst professionals. The school has engaged positively with the local authority safeguarding audit process. This has

provided managers and staff with an additional opportunity to review practice and identify areas for development. Steady progress is being made on implementing the actions identified through the auditing process.

There is a well-established procedure for staff to report any concerns they have for a young person's well-being. This is generally effective, although on one occasion this did not result in information being shared with the appropriate agency in a timely manner. This did not result in the young person coming to harm, and is not indicative of the overall standard of practice. A child protection conference Chairperson confirmed that usually 'concerns are reported straight away'.

Consultation takes place with the Local Authority Designated Officer whenever any concerns arise, or allegations are made against a member of staff. Managers co-operate well with any subsequent investigations. There have been no such allegations about existing members of staff since the last inspection. Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all staff are carefully vetted, which minimises the risk of unsuitable adults being employed.

No young people have gone missing while resident at the school. Staff identify those young people who could potentially go missing, and undertake risk assessments where needed. The missing from care policy is regularly reviewed and updated, taking into account local police protocols on responding to missing episodes.

Managers and staff are aware of those young people who may present unsafe behaviours, such as self-harm. A detailed record is kept of any such incident. This identifies action staff have taken to minimise the risk, such as consultation and referral to the DCAMHS. Occasionally, some records, such as risk assessments, are not updated or cross referenced to other documents when new information comes to light. However, this administrative shortfall has not placed young people at risk of further harm, or prevented them from receiving specialist support.

Young people are supported and encouraged to maintain positive behaviour. Excellent communication between education and care staff ensures that a consistent approach is taken to behaviour management. The use of de-escalation techniques is prioritised over the use of sanctions, and the majority of young people respond positively to this approach. Physical restraint is only used as a last resort, and the duration is kept to a minimum. When this occurs, young people are given the opportunity to discuss and reflect on the event, and their health and well-being is monitored.

Staff receive training on physical restraint techniques. However, the level of training delivered does not prepare them to practice 'recovery to ground' techniques, which became necessary on one occasion.

Regular training in child protection and wider safeguarding issues raises staff awareness of the risks to young people's welfare. Staff are able to identify signs that indicate a young person is being exploited or harmed. They benefit from receiving well-structured supervision, which enables them to explore any concerns they may have for a young person, while also identifying their own professional development needs. The head of care receives supervision from an external consultant, which also has a strong focus on keeping young people safe.

Effective systems ensure health and safety requirements are monitored, and prompt action is taken to address any deficits. Fire safety risk assessments are reviewed and updated, and all safety equipment and domestic installations are regularly serviced. This ensures that young people reside in a safe physical environment.

The residential provision is effectively managed by an experienced head of care, who holds the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare. There is a stable and consistent team of care staff, who are all suitably qualified to undertake the role. Staff morale is good, and the team work in a collaborative manner. Effective communication channels ensures education and care staff share information and contribute to the planning process for each young person. Consequently, young people receive consistent care and are familiar with the boundaries and expectations of communal living.

Staff feel well supported by leaders and managers, and consistently express the view that this has improved over the last year. This is achieved through regular supervision and team meetings, where practice and individual performance issues are addressed. A range of training opportunities further aids professional development. The specific needs of young people are taken into account by managers sourcing relevant training courses. Recently, this has included training on supporting young people who self-harm. However, the current training programme does not include training for working with young people on the autistic spectrum.

Robust monitoring systems identify the strengths and weaknesses of the residential provision. A self-evaluation process identifies areas for development, and associated action plans are monitored. An external independent visitor provides detailed reports which indicate an effective level of scrutiny and challenge. He communicates effectively with the chair of governors regarding the performance of leaders and managers. Governors meetings regularly analyse the actions taken, and progress made, towards improving the quality of care and ensuring young people are protected from harm.

Monitoring processes have recently identified that staff have insufficient knowledge of young people's receptiveness and understanding of British sign language. This resulted in individual assessments of young people being undertaken. Subsequently, extra support was given to those needing to develop their skills. This has resulted in many young people being able to communicate more effectively, and is indicative of the schools high level of aspiration for young people.

Young people, parents, carers and external stakeholders are encouraged to give feedback on the quality of services delivered. Parents and carers providing feedback via the Ofsted 'Parent View' on line facility, consistently express a positive view of the care delivered and the social and academic progress made by young people. There have been no complaints made by young people or other stakeholders since the last inspection.

Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. Key documents, such as the child protection, behaviour management and care policies are reviewed on an annual basis. Best practice and changes to legislation are taken into account during the review process. As a result policies are relevant and reflect changing circumstances, such as the potential for young people to become targeted for radicalisation.

Excellent working relationships are maintained with the local authority and placing authorities. An Independent Reviewing Officer commented that leaders and managers provide effective and appropriate challenge to professionals when they perceive a young person's best interests are not being met.

Leaders and managers have a positive approach to regulatory inspection, and see this as an opportunity to promote continuous improvement. The recommendation made at the last inspection, to review the organisation of care plans, has been acted upon. New recording formats have been introduced to capture and evidence young people's needs and progress. This inspection

took place before there has been sufficient time for these new systems to become firmly embedded in practice.

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 114619

Social care unique reference number SC050400

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 52

Gender of boarders Mixed

Age range of boarders 5 to19

Headteacher David Couch

Date of previous boarding inspection 21/01/2015

Telephone number 01273 682362

Email address david.couch@hamiltonlodgeschool.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/ofsted." If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

if you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.co.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2015

