

Grateley House School

Grateley House School, Pond Lane, Grateley, ANDOVER, Hampshire, SP11 8TA

Inspection dates	18/11/2015 to 20/11/2015	
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	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The quality of care provided is excellent. Young people benefit socially and educationally from their residential experience. They learn new skills such as independent skills and how to spend time away from their parents. Effective liaison with multi-disciplinary therapy team promotes positive emotional and physical well-being.
- The school ensures learning disability is not a barrier to achievement. Educational outcomes are excellent. Residential monitoring systems are of a good quality and centred upon the outcomes for each young person. All students are able to make their views, wishes and feelings known through key work sessions, individual meetings and the school council.
- Pre-placement planning is strong and transitions to further education and adulthood are of particularly high standard. Young people progress to a wide range of educational provisions and links with further education providers is key to their continued success. Tracking and monitoring of students demonstrates many continue on to higher education and employment.
- Young people engage in a wide range of socially and emotionally stimulating activities both on site and in the community. These include parkour, swimming and using outdoor play equipment such as scooters and go-karts and boys and girls groups. Young people say they like the range of activities on offer and are also able to relax, play computer games and watch television.
- Young people say they feel safe in the residential provision. Their behaviour and demeanour demonstrates they are comfortable with staff. Residential staff have an excellent understanding of each individual's vulnerabilities. They have a good

knowledge of safeguarding and child protection, reporting concerns accordingly. There is a prompt response to safeguarding concerns with swift referral to child protection services.

- Leadership and management within the residential provision are strong and consistent. Established systems and routines ensure the residential provision runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The committed staff work consistently and support each other as a team. Staff are well trained to meet the needs of the children they care for. There are shortfalls in staff retention, and changes in staff are beginning to impact on young people. Management in the wider organisation has been slow in responding to this concern.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

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

- Staff working within the school know and implement the school's policy, and where relevant the local authority's policy, in relation to children going missing and their role in implementing that policy. Staff actively search for children who are missing, including working with the police where appropriate. (NMS 12.8)
- There is continuity of staff such that children's relationships are not overly disrupted. No more than half the staff on duty at any one time by day or night at the school are external agency staff or temporary staff who do not know the children very well. (NMS 15.7)

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Revise individual risk assessments to explain how to respond to and mitigate the risks identified.
- Improve records of decisions made in response to complaints made by students and reasons for those conclusions.
- Review how messages and decisions are shared with students. This includes informing them of activities and trips in advance and reasons for unwanted behaviour.
- Ensure all night staff are clear on their roles and responsibilities and prioritising care of students. This is specifically in regard to timing of household tasks they complete overnight, such as laundry.

Information about this inspection

The inspection was announced, by telephone, to the Executive Principal of school on the morning of the first day. An initial meeting was held with the Executive Principal, deputy head of school for teaching and deputy head of school for care (head of care) and transitions manager. Inspectors held discussions with residential care staff, including night staff; the senior leadership team; the administration manager; the domestic bursar; the psychiatrist and clinical psychologist; speech and language therapists and the school nurse. Inspectors observed, and when appropriate took part in, activities with young people in addition to having group and individual discussions with them. Inspectors held telephone discussions with the Local Authority Designated Officer, social workers, parents and the deputy managing director for education within the organisation. A range of documents and records were also examined during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jennie Christopher

Lead social care inspector

Melissa McMillan

Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Grateley House is an independent residential special school that is part of the Cambian Group, a national company that specialises in providing residential care and education for young people on the autistic spectrum. The school provides co-educational, termly residential care and education for students from 9 to 19 years of age with Asperger's Syndrome and associated difficulties within the autistic spectrum. There are currently 37 residential pupils within the school who are based in residential accommodation provided in seven separate areas within the main school site. A further 10 residential places are also available within a Care Quality Commission registered home in Salisbury. The school is located within the village of Grateley in Hampshire. The residential provision's last full inspection was in December 2014.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Young people make excellent progress as a result of accessing the residential provision. The school ensures learning disabilities are not a barrier to personal and academic achievement. Residential monitoring systems are of a good quality and centred upon the outcomes for each young person. Progress includes being able to talk to others and act in socially acceptable ways, making friends with other students and feeling confident to express exploration of sexuality and gender identity.

Young people have the opportunity to build strong relationships with staff and each other. An individual commented that it was the first time they have real friends at school. They enjoy positive relationships with staff who are genuinely keen to understand each individual and support them to reach their full potential. All students are able to share their views, wishes and feelings through key work sessions, individual meetings and the school council.

Pre-placement planning is strong, affording young people access to the residential provision at their pace. A parent commented that 'the transition into school was excellent, considering he has not been away from home before'. Transitions to further education and adulthood are of a particularly high standard. Young people progress to a wide range of educational provisions and links with further education providers is key to individual's continued success. Tracking and monitoring of students demonstrates many continue on to higher education and employment.

Safety is paramount within the school. All concerns are reported promptly to external agencies as necessary. Young people say they feel safe and that bullying is dealt with promptly. Multi-disciplinary meetings provide a forum for key staff across the school to discuss any concerning behaviours and consider how best to support individuals.

Health and well-being is managed effectively within the school and residential provision. The school nurse and therapies team liaise to create a protective environment, promoting both physical and emotional well-being. Further joint working with external health professionals ensures specialist care is available to those attending the school.

Leaders and managers within the school are aware of weaknesses as a result of a high turnover of staff. They recognise this is beginning to have an impact on young people, who comment about having to build new relationships with staff. They have raised their concerns to senior managers within the wider organisation, who have been slow in response.

The quality of care and support

Good

The quality of care provided is excellent. Young people benefit socially and educationally from their residential experience. They form positive relationships with the caring and nurturing staff. A social worker reflecting on a student they had placed felt they were

'confident that she has a good relationship with staff, and they manage attachment well'. Young people are also consistently positive about their relationships with staff, confirming that they feel supported both emotionally and academically. Young people develop essential skills, promoting their independence through spending time away from their families. Placement plans are highly individualised and clearly identify agreed goals and targets. Young people's progress is effectively monitored and recorded within the plans. Sessions with key workers inform goals and targets in addition to agreements at statutory reviews. Young people comment though that messages and decisions are not always shared with them. This includes not informing them in advance of activities and trips or exploring their reasons for unwanted behaviour before contacting parents and carers.

Young people are respected as individual's and are afforded the opportunity to express themselves and explore their identity. Staff have an excellent understanding of individual's communication styles and advocate for those who struggle to express themselves verbally. Young people respect each other and bullying is not highlighted as an ongoing concern. Students are aware of the independent listener and some have used this to great effect. The listener shares young peoples concerns with the school and is proactive at supporting them to make complaints.

Young people benefit from a cohesive approach to care across the school and residential day. The school adopts a genuinely 'whole school' approach to learning and care. Effective liaison through weekly meetings and drop in sessions for key workers with the multi-disciplinary therapy team promotes positive emotional and physical well-being. The swift response to those young people who are identified as a high priority ensures they receive extra support. Close liaison with external specialist services, such as child and adolescent mental health teams further ensures all receive the care they require.

Young people engage in a wide range of socially and emotionally stimulating activities both on site and in the community. These include parkour, swimming, fencing and using outdoor play equipment such as scooters and go-karts and boys and girls groups with links to the therapies team. Young people say they like the range of activities on offer and they are also able to relax and play computer games and watch television. Access to the school's Wi-Fi is monitored and available at set times to encourage participation in other available activities.

Young people are encouraged to follow healthy lifestyles and recognise what this means for them. Food is freshly made and of a good standard. Whenever possible, it is freshly prepared on site. There is a wide choice of meals on offer and young people also have the opportunity to cook for themselves and the group. The head of catering meets with students at least once a term to review the menu. Catering staff understand all young people's dietary needs and preferences and ensure there is always an option they will like.

Accommodation is of a good quality and there is an ongoing refurbishment programme across the site. Communal areas are decorated in a homely style and bedrooms can be personalised. Some young people have pets they bring from home, such as rats and snakes. Young people have access to telephones and Skype in order to contact their family and friends while staying at the school.

Young people say they feel safe in the residential provision. Their behaviour and demeanour demonstrates they are comfortable with staff. Residential staff have an excellent understanding of individual's vulnerabilities and students care plans reflect this. Individual risk assessments explain what circumstances and situations may cause a concern, but do not identify how to respond to and mitigate the risks identified.

Staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding and child protection. They are knowledgeable of the processes and report any concerns accordingly. There is a prompt response to safeguarding concerns with swift referral to child protection services. Records are mostly clear and monitored by the safeguarding team and independent visitor. Records of an incident that was not reported to the local authority safeguarding team, while clearly thought through with the individual's therapist and key staff, are not sufficiently clear in the reasoning for not reporting on. The local authority safeguarding lead is confident in the school's ability to recognise areas of concerns and feels key staff liaise with them effectively.

Young people engage in a range of activities and lessons to increase their knowledge of safety and how to keep themselves safe. Weekly house meetings and circle time offer the space to discuss topics such as bullying, e-safety and exploitation. Posters and displays in the residential areas remind young people of risks they could face on line and provide details of various external helplines and services they can contact if they are concerned for their or a friend's safety.

Positive behaviour is promoted through consistency in approach to unwanted and inappropriate behaviours. Incidents of concern are monitored through weekly multi-disciplinary meetings, and new strategies and approaches agreed as necessary. All staff have training in a recognised behaviour management technique during their induction period. Young people are given space and time to express themselves and responses to unwanted behaviour allow individuals to consider their actions, negotiate with staff or respond differently. Staff have a keen understanding of each young person's anxieties and situations that may cause them to become worried or distressed. Close liaison with the therapy team ensures individual concerns and behaviours are respected and understood and only challenged when it is the individual's best interests to do so.

Young people rarely go missing from the school. The school's policy is generic and individual plans do not detail at what point staff should contact the police if they cannot locate a young person. Staff working within the school do not know or implement the school's policy, and where relevant the local authority's policy, in relation to children going missing. However, staff actively search for young people on the rare occasion they are missing, and do not cease searching until they find them.

Young people who display behaviours that place them or others at risk of harm or who have been previously exploited due to their vulnerability, benefit from high levels of supervision in order to keep them safe. Night staff are not necessarily clear on their roles and responsibilities and have not always prioritised the care of students, which has led to a serious safeguarding concern. This is specifically with regard to the timing of household tasks they complete overnight, such as laundry being completed before all have fully settled.

Young people are safe from avoidable hazards through regular checks of the building and grounds and firefighting equipment. They engage in fire drills termly, including night time evacuations, where those with pets also consider how they could protect them, if safe to do so. Safer recruitment is practiced when employing new staff and extra checks are sought for applicants who have recently lived overseas.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement

Leadership and management within the residential provision are strong and consistent. Established systems and routines ensure the residential provision runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Young people are central to plans and the development of the service, ensuring plans and improvements are in their interests. Students are consulted on many aspects of the school and residential provision, including through the school council and key work sessions. Their progress is regularly reviewed and systems within the school adapted to continue to meet their needs.

Staff are incredibly committed to the young people they support. They work consistently as a team, although constant changes in personnel have hampered this at times. Staff feel supported by the leaders within the school and are well trained to meet the needs of the students they care for. The opportunity for further growth and development are limited though. Staff benefit from regular, constructive supervision and annual appraisals of their performance.

Staff retention is an on-going concern, with a high turnover of personnel. Changes in the residential staff team is beginning to impact on young people, with some commenting they have to keep building new relationships. Management within the school have analysed the staffing situation and reasons for the high turnover, reporting this to seniors within the wider organisation. While change is now taking place, they have been slow to respond to this major shortfall.

Communication between teams within the school is a particular strength. Weekly meetings with leaders, managers and therapists highlight young people who may need extra support; staff have the opportunity to meet with therapists during weekly drop in sessions and morning briefings ensure staff are aware of key information. Handovers at the beginning and end of the school day provide the opportunity for information sharing on students' progress and well-being, ensuring any issues can be addressed through the whole school approach. Liaison and communication with external services and professionals further supports young people's growth and development. Parents are positive about the communication they have with staff in the school, and any lapses in communication rectified promptly.

Young people are aware of the complaints process and have exercised this when they have felt the need to. Staff and the independent listener have supported them to make complaints when necessary. Responses are usually clear and provide individuals with a clear reasoning to any decision made. The records of one issue are not implicitly clear and do not detail why the complaint was not raised as a safeguarding concern to the local authority. The records rely on staff understanding and knowledge of the individual's behaviour rather than detailing this in the response.

Policies and procedures within the school are regularly updated. They are clear and accessible for all staff. The missing from care policy is ambiguous and not reflective of practice. Young people have not been placed at risk as a result of this shortfall though. The independent visitor provides rigorous challenge to the leadership and management of the school, and in particular the residential provision. Responses to highlighted shortfalls are swift and robust.

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	116588
Social care unique reference number	SC012450
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	50
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	9 to 19
Headteacher	
Date of previous boarding inspection	01/12/2014
Telephone number	01264 889751
Email address	grateley.admin@cambianguroup.com

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