

Frewen College

Frewen Educational Trust Ltd, Frewen College Brickwall, Rye Road, Northiam, RYE, East Sussex, TN31 6NL

Inspection dates	09/12/2015 to 11/12/2015	
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	Requires improvement	3
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Boarders thoroughly enjoy their residential experience. They engage fully in the life of the boarding community and thrive in its family-like environment.
- They make significant improvement in their social skills, independence, confidence and self-esteem which has a positive impact on their learning and improves their future life chances.
- Boarders develop positive, trusting relationships with staff and each other, knowing they are valued as individuals. Interactions are mutually respectful and boarders' behaviour is exemplary.
- Safeguarding boarders' welfare and well-being is central to practice. Safeguarding arrangements are robust. All staff understand their safeguarding role and implement appropriate action to protect boarders.
- Strong, effective leadership and management and commitment from the staff team ensures boarders' needs are met.
- Although behaviour management is highly effective and staff do not resort to using physical intervention, they have not been trained to use this method of dealing with challenging behaviour safely, if such a situation occurs.
- Parents and carers do not receive regular feedback on boarders' experience and progress. Consequently, opportunities may be missed for consolidating their progress at home.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

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

12.3 Staff receive appropriate training and support to recognise and deal with incidences of challenging behaviour or bullying. This training should include assistance in managing staff members' responses and feelings arising from working with children who have emotional difficulties which result in challenging behaviour. Staff training is regularly refreshed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve communication with boarders' parents and carers to provide regular updates on their progress and experience.

Information about this inspection

The school was given four hours' notice of the inspection. The inspector met with the Principal, heads of care, designated child protection officer, matron, residential staff, assistant bursar and boarders. The inspector spent time in each residential unit, observed evening activities and joined boarders for lunch and evening meals. Documents and records were examined and information from surveys considered.

Inspection team

Jan Hunnam

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Frewen College is an independent day and residential special school for boys and girls aged between seven and 18 years of age. Boarders are able to stay at the school for weekends if they choose. The school provides specialist education for young people with dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, sensory integration, speech and language difficulties. Boys stay in the main school building and girls in a separate house within the school grounds. The school is a registered charity managed by a governing body. The school's residential provision was last inspected in February 2015. At the time of this inspection there were 37 boarders.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Boarders enjoy their time within the residential provision and appreciate the family-like environment commenting that they 'love boarding', 'it's like a second family' and 'boarding is like one big family'. Parents remark similarly, that boarding 'is a surrogate family with surrogate siblings' and that their child 'feels very much at home there'.

As a result of staff's nurturing and responsive care within a calm and supportive environment, boarders develop warm, trusting relationships with staff. They enjoy being in the company of staff and their peers and develop confidence and self-esteem from being valued as individuals. A boarder commented that at a previous school she 'had been made to feel very bad about herself for not being able to spell but here she is accepted and feels much better about herself'. Parents recognise their children's 'greater self-confidence' and how boarding is promoting their maturity.

Preparing boarders for being more independent commences at an early stage. Younger boarders help with daily chores, whilst older boarders gradually become more responsible for themselves at a pace appropriate to their level of confidence and ability. Boarders progress to planning, shopping and cooking meals, managing money and travelling independently. In addition to practical tasks, boarders are developing social skills, personal organisation, self-care and life skills in preparation for the transition to adulthood.

Strong and effective leadership and management along with the commitment of staff ensures boarders' needs are met. The welfare of boarders is central to practice. Staff protect them, promote their well-being and implement strategies to advance their development.

The quality of care and support

Good

Boarders have individual plans which identify their particular needs with strategies and specific targets to promote their development. Staff know all boarders very well, recognise their vulnerabilities and provide appropriate support to assist them in achieving positive outcomes. The matron oversees boarders' health and medical needs ensuring boarding staff have comprehensive information relating to any specific medical and emotional needs. Boarders with specific health needs have detailed health plans. Boarders' emotional health is well monitored. Liaison with external health professionals, such as the child and adolescent mental health service, ensures boarders receive the specialist support they require.

All boarders have a key worker who consults with them individually each evening to check on their well-being and provide them with an opportunity for expressing their views. Fortnightly boarding meetings provide a more structured forum for them to put

forward suggestions to improve their boarding experience. Managers and staff act on their proposals, such as providing basketball activities, demonstrating to boarders that their views and opinions are important and that staff listen. Boarders have representatives on the school council who discuss issues relating to boarding in addition to matters that affect the wider school. Questionnaires capture boarders' views on their experience, again demonstrating that staff value their opinions.

Staff organise a wide variety of structured evening activities from which boarders can choose to participate according to their individual interests. These activities range from sporting activities to computers and mindfulness. Boarders have various ways to relax and enjoy their leisure time while at the same time improving their social skills. Weekend activities include visits to local towns, the cinema and bowling thus extending boarders' social experiences into the wider community. Boarders enjoy their activities and engage positively with staff and peers.

Accommodation for boarders is comfortable and suited to their needs. Common areas are spacious with games equipment and areas for relaxation. Boarders personalise their rooms and have access to kitchen facilities to make snacks. They enjoy healthy and nutritious meals with an excellent range of options. Catering staff make provision for boarders' special dietary needs.

Boarders are able to contact their family and friends easily using the house phone or their own mobile phones. Parents report that they are able to contact staff without difficulty.

How well children and young people are protected

Requires improvement

Managers and staff are effective in promoting boarders' safety and protecting them from harm. Boarders confirmed they feel safe within boarding and parents report they have no concerns about their child's safety. A parent commented that he 'has no qualms or concerns' about his son boarding and commented on the family-like environment.

Staff are knowledgeable and well-trained in safeguarding issues. They are confident in their role of protecting boarders, alert to any concerns and aware of the process for referring any concerns to senior staff. There are two trained designated safeguarding officers and all staff have received external training. Staff are aware of current issues posing risks to boarders such as child sexual exploitation, e-safety and radicalisation. There is a robust procedure for considering any welfare issue affecting boarders. Weekly meetings attended by senior staff review all safeguarding matters that have arisen to ensure staff take appropriate action to protect boarders. Effective liaison takes place between the designated safeguarding officer and external agencies.

Boarders' behaviour is excellent. Within an ethos of mutual trust and respect, staff have high expectations of boarders who respond respectfully to staff and each other. Staff model caring, co-operative conduct so boarders learn and develop an understanding of appropriate, considerate behaviour. Boarders report 'there is zero tolerance of bullying'. Staff positively acknowledge and reward boarders who demonstrate high levels of co-

operation and good behaviour. Consequently, within the boarding provision the use of sanctions for poor behaviour is extremely rare and there have been no incidents requiring physical intervention by staff. Leaders and managers recognise that there may be occasions when physical intervention is required to protect boarders. However, staff have not received training to manage such incidents safely and this could potentially affect their welfare. There have been no incidents of boarders leaving the premises without permission. An appropriate policy is in place to safeguard boarders if such an event occurs.

Rigorous systems for monitoring health and safety protect boarders. Appropriate fire checks, including regular fire drills and risk assessments are routinely applied. Recruitment practice is now more robust to safeguard boarders from unsuitable adults working with them.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The recently appointed Principal and heads of boarding are well established and are correctly focusing on continuous improvement to maintain high standards of care for boarders. Managers have addressed the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection in full. Both heads of boarding provide effective leadership and management enabling staff to create a safe, supportive environment where boarders learn to respect each other and develop social skills.

Part of the ethos of the boarding provision is to provide each boarder with a calm, caring and supportive extended family environment in their boarding house. Both heads of boarding have close contact with boarders and staff on a day-to-day basis and are directly involved in boarding life, role modelling good pastoral care and promoting the welfare of boarders. Boarding staff report that managers are 'very supportive and understand the individual needs of boarders'. Staff comment positively on how the boarding provision is 'like a family', 'is homely with boarders supporting each other'.

Boarders benefit from competent staff who receive relevant training to keep them safe and promote their development. Staff receive regular supervision and appraisal to improve their practice. New staff, including gap year volunteers, undertake appropriate induction and training programmes to work confidently with boarders to meet their individual needs.

Effective monitoring systems ensure the provision maintains high standards of care and provides opportunities for boarders to develop and make progress. Independent visitor reports contribute to this monitoring process. Following an evaluation of the boarding provision the Principal is re-structuring the management of the school to promote closer collaborative working between therapists, education staff and boarding staff. This happened within the context of a drive for improvement and ensuring pupils achieve the highest level of success possible. Such closer integration will mean boarders benefit from a greater consistency of approach to meet their specific needs and allow for further opportunities for boarders to make progress.

Parents report positively on the care provided by the heads of boarding and the boarding team, remarking they 'go above and beyond' to assist. Boarding staff are introducing a newsletter informing families of the highlights of the term, which provides interesting information about activities boarders have been involved in. However, boarding staff do not provide regular reports or feedback to families specifically on their child's progress and experience. Consequently, there may be missed opportunities for boarders to benefit from parents and carers using successful strategies at home. There have been no complaints relating to the residential provision.

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	114635
Social care unique reference number	SC049345
DfE registration number	845/6002

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	37
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to18
Headteacher	Nick Goodman
Date of previous boarding inspection	09/02/2015
Telephone number	01797 252494
Email address	office@frewencollege.co.uk

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