

Holbrook School for Autism

Holbrook School for Autism, Port Way, Holbrook, BELPER, Derbyshire, DE56 0TE

Inspection dates

12/01/2016 to 14/01/2016

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

- Care, education and external professionals work very closely with pupils and parents. Consequently, pupils benefit from a cohesive education, health, and care service.
- Meticulously tailored and detailed care plans provide an accurate reflection of each pupil's expected levels of care.
- Highly accomplished residential staff implement high standards of personalised care. They consistently monitor the development of pupil's social and educational progress, through formal mechanisms and in partnership with parents and pupils. This ensures clarity about the expectations, necessary steps to achieve developmental targets, and rewards for achievement.
- Safeguarding policy, procedure and practice is outstanding. Pupils' safety is paramount and embedded within the up to date policies and procedures. All staff, including leaders and governors, have engaged in a diverse range of safeguarding training. Staff are highly vigilant to safeguarding concerns and have a very clear understanding of what action to take in a wide range of scenarios. The effectiveness of safeguarding systems is reflected excellent behaviour

management practice.

- The passionate and committed senior management team strive to ensure all pupils benefit from exceptional levels of care to enable excellent progress in their social, personal and educational development. The headteacher and head of care work collaboratively to ensure the residential experience is an integral aspect of school life and well embedded across the school community. The management and leadership team have clear determination to continue to raise standards and promote improvement.

- Partnership work with parents and professionals is a particular strength of this residential school. Parents were keen to provide their views for the inspection, with views such as, 'they are brilliant', 'our life has totally changed for the better', 'our family has benefitted so much from the positive changes they have made to my child's life', and, 'I commend them – they are brilliant.'

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Information about this inspection

One inspector conducted a three day inspection following a one-hour notice period. Inspection activities included analysis of a range of files and case files, safety records and a tour of the premises. Discussions with the senior management team, governors, the independent visitor, care staff and health/therapeutic professionals took place throughout the inspection. Time with the pupils included the inspector observing evening and morning routines and activities. Additionally, the inspector spent time discussing residential provision with a new pupil and an established pupil. There were insufficient responses from the Parent View site, however the inspector spoke with several parents, both face to face and in telephone discussions.

Inspection team

Amanda Ellis

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Holbrook Residential School is a Derbyshire County Council local authority maintained residential special school.

There are 107 mix-gender pupils on roll, whose ages range from five to 19. All pupils have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans (EHCP) and a diagnosis of autism. Most pupils also, have severe learning difficulties, except for a small group of primary age pupils who have autism and of average ability. The residential service operates from Monday to Thursday, term time with a total of seven pupils residing at the school during the week. There are seven single occupancy bedrooms in two separate self-contained units. At this inspection a total of 26 pupils use the residential service during the week. Pupils have their meals, except lunch, in their units.

The school is located in a rural suburb of Derbyshire. Pupils access facilities within the community using the school's own transport.

The residential provision was last inspected 18 February 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

The overall experiences and progress of residential pupils are outstanding. Parents, professionals and staff state that pupils make excellent progress across all aspects of their lives. One parent said: 'This home is not a one size fits all. When you speak to the staff you feel that they know your child as well as you. When something positive happens, staff are so excited and rewarded in seeing this progress.' Another parent said: 'My son has come on leaps and bounds. I have no hesitation in residential provision – they know his needs, his needs are fully met, he is happy and wants to be a residential pupil.'

Relationships between pupils in residential provision are highly positive. This is because compatibility assessments ensure that pupils have overnight stays with the most suitable peer groups. As a result, group dynamics are positive and pupils enjoy supportive relationships. One parent said: 'My child is with friends on the evenings he comes. He absolutely loves it and wants to stay.' Another parent stated: 'It is brilliant! My son loves it. He mixes with other young people which he would not have done otherwise.' Through consultation and discussion pupils say they thoroughly enjoy their stays, feel happy, safe and look forward to their overnight stays.

The impact of the residential provision on the progress and outcomes of residential pupils is clearly reflected in the views of parents. For example, a parent commented: 'Since staying he is less anxious and this means we can access lots more in the community. This has a massive impact on family life – it makes daily living significantly easier. We can be sociable and go out or go on holidays.' Another parent said: 'His progression has been very good. He is now more independent, we can take him into the community, he is better at showering and toilet skills, he can now feed himself, his behaviours have improved – he has more self-control. They keep him safe. I am very happy with the placement. The routines are directly transferable to the home.' All parents and social care professionals spoken to commended the highly effective care

practice of the residential provision in supporting pupils to progress their personal, social and educational development.

Residential pupils have excellent school attendance and make exceptional progress in education. One social worker said: 'Communication is fantastic in school and education. This is essential to promote achievement both educationally and socially.' School reports are positive and reflect the social and academic progress of residential pupils. Education records illustrate that, in literacy, science and mathematics, pupils make very good incremental progress in each subject. Education and social care staff ensure support, guidance and effective daily communication regarding young people. As a result, young people consistently exceed their expected educational outcomes.

The residential provision is exceptionally effective in supporting residential pupils to learn to become independent. One parent said: 'The stable staff team have fabulous rapport with the children and they can push them to achieve. This is sometimes out of their comfort zones, but is important in establishing the skills they need for life and to transition to post 16 provision.' A social worker from the children's disability team said: 'Residential staff are brilliant in promoting independence.' In addition, residential pupils and their families benefit from residential staff taking a proactive role in regards to transition to adult services. They play an active role in their transition plans. As a result, residential pupils can express choice about their futures and feel well prepared for the next stage in their lives as young adults.

The residential provision is very much informed by evidence based research. This is pivotal to informing and directing care practice in relation to autistic spectrum disorders. Staff have links with a range of specialist agencies, including the Autistic Society, NSPCC, and a variety of professional institutes. Additionally, staff utilise a well-resourced library, which is available to education, social care, and outreach staff. Consequently, direct work with pupils and their families stems from 'best practice'.

A highly effective senior management team and governing body oversee the delivery of consistently excellent standards of care. The management team continually strive to achieve better outcomes for the residential pupils. Rigorous and effective internal and

external monitoring processes support continuous improvement. The focus on driving up standards and progression is an outstanding strength of this service.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

The quality of care within the residential provision is exceptional. Care plans, health plans and risk assessments are exceptionally comprehensive, detailed, and up to date. Staff develop plans with the full involvement of parents and pupils. This ensures needs are fully understood. Care provision has an explicit focus on meeting the unique needs of each individual, with systematic reviews to adapt care provision to changing need. Monitoring activities are highly individualised, with bench marks, targets and goals reviewed and adjusted as required. Monitoring systems identify any concerns, patterns or trends. These processes ensure that care provision is consistently in line with the needs of the pupil and that the staff team has clarity to provide effective support.

Communication with residential pupils is a particular strength of this home and has a significant impact in supporting progress. Pupils benefit from individualised communication strategies that utilise a range of non-verbal communication methods. This means they are more self-assured because they can understand and communicate about their daily care, education and experiences. Residential pupils feel empowered because they are consulted and participate in decision making.

Residential pupils receive an outstanding service that clearly focuses on their physical and emotional well-being and health needs. The well trained staff team effectively meet individual health needs. Up to date and comprehensive health records underpin this care provision. Strong links with multi-disciplinary health care services effectively support physical, emotional and psychological needs. Staff are trained in a variety of health matters including the safe handling and administration of medicines. This ensures a rigorous approach in relation to medication practices. These combined processes mean holistic health care needs are consistently met.

Residential staff plan and support a diverse range of recreational and social activities. All pupils routinely benefit from leisure and learning activities, which extend their horizons and allow them to enjoy and achieve to their maximum potential. Activity planning is meaningful to the needs and preferences of individuals. For example, some activities link to developmental targets, which add motivation to pupils in their social learning. A parent governor described them as: 'Exceptionally extensive, stimulating and varied.' Examples of routine activities include swimming, bowling, walking, climbing centres, mainstream scouting, circus, pantomime, cinema, and trips to an indoor ski-centre. Other activities include trips to Youth Hostel Accommodation in the Peak district, safari parks, and adventure parks. For families, this 'wraparound' provision enables some pupils to access a range of activities which they would not normally experience. Residential pupils also participate in local community celebrations, such as making an entry for the local annual scarecrow competition. Some pupils have benefited from a holiday to France in 2015. The trip was educative and recreational because it supported pupils to learn more about World War Two.

Excellent relationships and highly effective dialogue with parents, carers and families contribute to pupils making exceptional progress in all areas of their lives. Good communication enables identification of any concerns and celebration of achievements. Importantly, it also ensures that parents and other family members are reassured that their child is well cared for. One parent said, 'staff are excellent at communicating and reassuring parents.' Another said: 'Feedback is excellent with verbal updates and daily updates in the home/school diary. Staff are really approachable and we talk very easily.' Residential pupil's development is progressed because of effective partnership working with parents in all aspects of care provision and service delivery.

Collaborative work with partner agencies ensures that residential pupils benefit from multi-disciplinary care, support and guidance. A practitioner from the child and adolescent mental health service said: 'From a multi-agency perspective the staff are highly collaborative. They are keen to provide joined up care, with open channels of communication. The staff have the skills and knowledge to manage profound communication needs, specifically those associated with autistic spectrum disorders and learning disabilities.' A social worker said: 'I cannot thank the residential staff enough for

their patience and professionalism with this parent. It is making such a difference to her and her child's life. They plan, put targets in place and focus on what will benefit the young person and the family. They have given the parent the confidence to make changes. The staff let the young person know he can achieve and they persevere with this. Communication is fantastic in school and education. Staff are welcoming, helpful, professional and knowledgeable.' These excellent relationships with a range of external agencies ensure that the needs of the residential pupils are a shared priority.

Residential accommodation comprises of two 'family style' homes within the main building of the school. These separate units provide each pupil with their own bedroom, which is personalised according to their individual tastes and preferences. The communal areas offer a safe and comfortable space for pupils to engage in learning, play and activities. The accommodation also offers space to ensure pupils can have privacy. The exterior of the home offers secure play areas, expansive grounds, and sports pitches.

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

The safety of residential pupils is of paramount importance, it is the 'golden thread' embedded throughout all child care practice. The head of care has led a raft of initiatives to ensure that policy, training and staff practice exemplify the very best in child protection and safeguarding. Policy and procedure are translated into practice and implemented by the highly experienced and skilled staff and management team. Since the last inspection there have been no child protection or safeguarding incidents, no allegations against staff, no incidents of pupils missing from care or education, and no complaints from pupils, parents or professionals. The designated safeguarding officer, social care professionals, parents and governors confirm that safeguarding concerns are not a feature of this residential provision.

Residential pupils have expressed both verbally and non-verbally to staff, professionals, parents/carers, and the inspector that they are safe and that they feel safe in the home. An exceptionally skilled staff team keep pupils safe from harm in the home and when out on trips or activities. During the inspection, pupils presented as feeling safe and happy. Stringent work practices and comprehensive, regularly updated, risk assessments ensure

that all pupils are safe. Staff have a solid understanding of safeguarding issues and consistently review safe working practices. This ensures safeguarding practice meets the individual needs of young people.

Safeguarding practice is excellent because the senior management team ensure that staff have up to date knowledge of developments in statutory and local guidance, regulation, legislation, and issues specific to the needs of pupils with learning disabilities. The schools safeguarding procedures reflect a diverse range of contemporary safeguarding issues, of importance both regionally and nationally.

The senior management team, governors and staff have all participated in wide ranging training programmes that encompass very diverse safeguarding issues. This means all staff are highly vigilant to safeguarding concerns and have a very clear understanding of what action to take in a wide range of scenarios. Staff have a very clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, including whistle blowing, should they have concerns about another professionals' care practice.

The residential provision has a very well established and stable workforce, with new recruits being very rare. However, the recruitment files for both new and established staff demonstrate rigorous vetting and monitoring practice. The school ensures that recruitment panels always include an individual trained in Safer Recruitment. This further enhances recruitment practice.

The head of care is the physical intervention instructor for both the school staff and the residential provision. This provides continuity of behaviour management techniques across the school. In addition, the head of care has undertaken three years of study in advanced behaviour management training to identify the root causes of challenging behaviour. This enables in depth analysis of the particular behaviours of individuals, with the aim of ensuring effective behaviour management planning. Strong monitoring processes are utilised to identify patterns and trends. This ensures continual evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions.

The home is safe and well maintained. It has a continual programme of maintenance,

which ensures timely remedial work and significant improvements to infrastructure. Most recently, this includes a new electrical installation and updated fire alarm system. Health and safety checks are current. External contractors are quality assured, therefore ensuring the highest standards of safety for staff and young people.

The pupils take part in regular fire drills. At the previous inspection it was a recommendation that the school maintain a record of the names of pupils taking part in fire drills during residential time. This recommendation was acted upon very quickly, therefore improving monitoring of fire evacuations.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers **Outstanding**

A school governor said of the leadership and management team: 'The staff and leadership do not rest on their laurels, they are consistently pushing that high standard – this is something that the governors are really proud of.' A parent said: 'The head of care is brilliant! She works very well with the team and the head teacher. The two leaders of this school set improvement and high standards. They have focus and motivation to drive continual improvements.' The independent visitor stated: 'The leadership and management within the home is forward looking and innovative. They are keen to ensure that they don't stand still.' Each individual consulted with during this inspection commended the excellent child care practice. They additionally highlighted the effective collaboration of the head of care and head teacher in ensuring 'seamless' care and education provision.

Management arrangements are both supportive and instructive. Staff are enthusiastic about their managers and feel supported to progress their own professional skills and knowledge. A programme of consistent and meaningful supervision and appraisal, alongside a comprehensive training package provides opportunities to develop their existing knowledge. The highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce ensures residential pupils benefit from exemplary standards of care and improved outcomes.

The senior leadership team have a clear vision and shared commitment for continual

improvement in the school and residential provision. They utilise a range of effective monitoring systems to ensure the pursuit of continual improvement. They have conducted rigorous internal self-evaluation, which identifies current areas of strength and those where improvement is possible. Managers use a two year self-improvement plan to map key priorities and aims. Consequently, rigorous critical analysis and systematic reviews of care provision promote continuous improvement.

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	1023320
Social care unique reference number	SC058960
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	107
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	5 to19
Headteacher	
Date of previous boarding inspection	18/02/2015
Telephone number	01332 880 208
Email address	headteacher@holbrookautism.derbyshire.sch.uk

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