

Hailey Hall School

Hailey Hall Academy, Hailey Lane, HERTFORD, SG13 7PB

Inspection dates

01/02/2016 to 03/02/2016

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

- Children and young people thrive in this residential provision and each makes exceptional progress across all areas of their development.
- The creative introduction of new experiences for children and young people encourages aspiration and significantly improves self-confidence and esteem.
- A stable staff team deliver imaginative care with enthusiasm and vigour, consistently going above and beyond to promote positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Staff meticulously balance care and safety, and reliably implement robust and effective safeguarding procedures in a non-oppressive way.
- Seamless links exist between home, school and the residential provision; this guarantees a cohesive and informed approach to dynamic care delivery.
- Leaders strive to achieve continuous improvement; their rigorous monitoring ensures the provision evolves in line with children and young peoples' changing needs.
- There are no shortfalls against the national minimum standards. Two aspects were identified to further enhance the outstanding practice: involvement of young people in meal planning and production and enhancing the safe use of the internet policy.

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?

- Consider further expanding the involvement of young people in meal planning, food shopping and meal preparation.
- Consider devising a policy for the safe use of internet ready mobile phones and devices by children and young people to consolidate the existing staff approach to this.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of the three boarding houses took place within two hours of announcement. The inspection methodology included the review of Parent View and online surveys; observation of residential care routines and practice; scrutiny of policies and records; discussion with parents by telephone; meetings with residential pupils. Discussions took place with a range of staff responsible for leading, managing and delivering residential care, including residential staff, support staff, the head of care, the headteacher, the school governor with responsibility for residential provision and the chair of governors. Discussions also took place with external professionals, including the local authority designated officer.

Inspection team

Angie Bishop

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Hailey Hall School is a residential and day special school for boys aged 11 to 16 with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Hoddesdon. The school is an academy. All young people who attend the school have a statement of special educational needs or and education, health and care plan. A small number are looked after by the local authority. The residential facilities can accommodate a maximum of 20 boarders. At the time of the inspection, 17 boys were staying between one and four nights a week, Monday to Friday during term time only. Some boys also receive extended day opportunities. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

Staff encourage children and young people to be aspirational. As a starting point, they introduce a broad range of group and individual experiences to nurture increasing self-confidence. All staff seamlessly integrate life and independence skills into the care they provide, this supplements the more formal life skills programme that staff deliver in the school. As a result, those who disengage from the formal program still develop core life skills. Achievement is central to the residential experience. Staff recognise progress and consistently reward it; children and young people thrive in this environment.

Staff deliver dependable care characterised by consistent boundaries and guidance, consequently, children and young people begin to modify their behaviour. The significant change in behaviour quickly reduces barriers for learning. This means that from comparable starting points, the attainment of children and young people who stay here exceeds that of their non-residential peers. Family relationships also improve as children and young people develop an awareness of their own behaviour and its impact on others. A parent said: 'When my son started boarding, all I could see for his future was death or imprisonment. He will be leaving the provision soon and has a bright future ahead of him.'

Staff concentrate on making admission a positive experience. Working with parents, carers and professionals, they carefully plan transitions into the residential accommodation. A new support worker offers a familiarisation summer school for pupils joining at the start of the academic year. She visits the children and young people at home, meets them in their current schools and begins to profile their needs prior to their admission. Staff are acutely aware that, for many children and young people, residential stays are their first experience of peer relationships. A warm welcome embraces new admissions on their day of arrival. They have already met their residential peers and integrate very quickly. One parent said: 'Due to his autism, my son did not have any friends outside of the family network. Since staying here, he has so many friends and is so happy when he contacts me from school. He is full of stories when he comes home and he is always laughing and joking.'

Leaders and staff carefully plan transitions from the residential provision, whatever the stage of the transition. They liaise extensively with key professionals and family members to develop a cohesive approach to follow on care, support and education. Once they move on, staff visit children and young people in their new settings to maximise the opportunity for them to settle. Children and young people know that staff invest in them and this promotes their ongoing commitment to succeed.

Staff adopt a robust approach to safeguarding; they underpin their practice with regular training and use of comprehensive policies and procedures. By developing and maintaining open lines of communication with parents and carers, staff are able to identify potential concerns at the earliest opportunity. Responses to concerns are thorough, appropriate and timely.

All children and young people have a comprehensive care plan, which identifies their unique personalities alongside their additional needs. Staff involve children and young people along with professionals, families and carers, to identify and frequently review targets, aims and objectives. This enables staff to measure the efficacy and impact of residential stays. Staff recognise achievements using a points led reward system. Children and young people are eager to invest in this system and thoroughly enjoy celebrating their own and each other's achievements. One parent said: 'My son even wants to go to boarding on days when he is really poorly, he enjoys it so much and doesn't want to miss out, he didn't want to go to school before he started his stays.'

Communication between residential staff, school and home is continuous; this allows all staff to quickly attune to children and young peoples' changeable presentation. Staff use their extensive knowledge and understanding of children and young people to calmly support them through periods of crisis. These consistent responses, boundaries and routines allow them to develop trust in the care they receive. Staff do not pressure children and young people to conform and appreciate their unique needs and life experiences. As a result, children and young people begin to accept intervention and support from staff whilst developing an increasing awareness of themselves.

The residential provision is warm, clean and well presented. Children and young people personalise the space and refer to it as 'home from home'. They enjoy sharing the dormitory space with their peers and this improves their ability to live comfortably alongside family members when they return home. Leaders utilise formal and informal processes to regularly seek children's and young peoples' views, wishes and feelings. They combine these views with extensive monitoring to inform and assess change. Leaders and staff always feedback to children and young people and innovatively seek solutions to issues, in conjunction with them. Since the last inspection, there is greater privacy in the sleeping accommodation for children and young people because of their requests.

Strong relationships exist between staff and agencies responsible for the physical and emotional health of children and young people. Comprehensive sharing of information informs practice, and training from these agencies equips staff to effectively meet children and young peoples' health needs. Staff underpin their practice with robust medical policies, practice and procedures, which they implement efficiently. A parent said: 'I was really anxious about my son being away from me, he has health needs and nobody else has cared for him apart from me. I did not need to worry as the staff do it all.'

A broad range of activities are available to children and young people. Activities are age appropriate and focus on enhancing health, social skills and peer and community interaction. Staff seek ongoing feedback from children and young people to decide which new activities they would like. This enables staff to ensure that children gain multiple social and emotional benefits from the activities on offer. Staff do not allow children and young people to entrench themselves in single activities; they continually encourage the pushing of boundaries and enhancing of life experiences. One activity children and young people particularly enjoy is spending time with the school dog, Bella. Children and young people frequently communicate their feelings using Bella and this enables staff to gain an invaluable insight into children and young peoples' worlds. A parent said: 'Our

son has done some things we could not imagine him doing, things he could not do at home with us. It is fantastic, staff understand him, and he is a different boy since he started staying there. It has boosted his confidence and made him realise he can make something of himself.'

A weekly group takes place, which explores a topical or current affairs issue. The aim is to broaden children and young peoples' understanding of the wider world outside of their own. External people visit this group to enhance the experience and boost engagement. One young person said: 'We got to wear beer goggles and drive a remote control car, it made us realise what it feels like to be drunk, it was really scary to think people drive like that.'

Children and young people enjoy an array of food when staying here. The chef involves them in menu planning and balances their likes alongside healthy choices. Where there are health, medical or preference led dietary needs, the chef and staff integrate the meals sensitively, without identifying any difference amongst peers. A young person said: 'I love the food here; the chef is great, he knows what we like and takes the time to listen to us. I would really like to do more cooking and get more involved in it.' An area for further improvement is to further expand the involvement of young people in meal planning, food shopping and meal preparation.

Staff facilitate contact between children and young people and their parents and carers. They do this using the residential telephone in private. Leaders and staff welcome parents and carers to join meal times in the residential provision. A parent said: 'I know my son can contact me and I can call or visit him. He does not want me to as he has so much fun being away from home I would be encroaching on his time. This is reassuring as a parent.'

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

Leaders and staff collaborate with external agencies to maintain a comprehensive and dynamic approach to risk management and safeguarding. There is a regular review of policies and procedures and staff understand and implement them confidently. Constant vigilance and regular sharing of concerns means that staff identify issues at the earliest opportunity. They respond to them in a timely and appropriate manner and often prevent escalation of harm that would be detrimental to children and young people. Staff precisely balance care and safety to make certain safeguarding does not become oppressive or limit children and young peoples' experiences.

Leaders carefully consider risk before they offer a child or young person a place in the residential provision. There has been a recent increase in children and young people joining part way through their senior school life. Leaders realise that this can unsettle and destabilise existing residential children and young people. Leaders do not accept new admissions to the boarding provision without full consideration of the potential impact. If risks or behaviours are likely to compromise others' safety admissions are not agreed.

There have been no restrictive physical interventions since the last inspection. Staff attribute this to a changing approach to behaviour management. Leaders, care staff and school staff use a new system to record and alert each other of any behavioural issues.

Use of this system complements the comprehensive twice daily verbal and written handovers between school and the residential provision. Leaders and staff monitor and scrutinise incidents to identify patterns of behaviour and adapt their approaches to safely explore triggers with children and young people and their families.

Staff target ongoing activities to introduce and celebrate difference. Children and young people explore the impact of bullying and discrimination on individuals and groups of people. Staff encourage them to embrace their own and others' identities and educate them in line with the school's zero tolerance of bullying. No children, young people or their parents, spoken to during the inspection, identify bullying as an issue.

Children and young people do not go missing from this residential provision. During offsite activities, staff implement appropriate staffing ratios and apply thorough risk assessments at all times.

Safer recruitment processes are in operation across the school and residential provision. The headteacher, head of care and school manager use their safer recruitment training to implement a clear and concise safer recruitment policy. Robust agreements require non-school employees living on site to adhere to a number of requirements, which focus on the protection of the children in the school. Nobody has unauthorised access to the residential accommodation or school site.

The recent introduction of fire pictures to block exits during evacuation drills makes children and young people identify and use alternate fire escape routes. This is an invaluable experience as it ensures children and young people do not become complacent about fire evacuations.

An area identified for further improvement is to devise a policy for the safe use of internet ready mobile phones and devices by children and young people, to consolidate the existing staff approach to this.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

Along with an experienced governing body, school and residential leaders understand the residential provision and champion aspirational aims for children and young people. They use a range of ongoing monitoring tools and feedback from children, young people, their families and professionals to inform decision making. Collectively, the leadership team strive to improve children and young peoples' residential experiences. They constantly seek innovative ways to promote short and long term outcomes. All leaders live and breathe the ethos and aims of the provision. As a result, the positive impact of residential stays is vast.

The leadership team regularly review and update policies, procedures and guidance to ensure they meet the changing needs of children and young people. There is close management oversight of how staff implement policies and the impact of this on care delivery.

All staff receive regular supervision, which enables them to explore practice and personal issues. Staff say managers are approachable and always available to them. This ensures that staff receive support and advice when they need it. Likewise, leaders are available

to children and young people, who do not view them as part of a hierarchy. A young person said: 'I know who the head of care is and the headteacher but they are like one family. I know they are in charge but they are just like the other staff and always listen to us.'

Leaders and staff receive weekly training from both in house and external providers. They are eager to learn and all underpin their practice with a strong theoretical base. Limitless development opportunities exist for residential staff. Accordingly, they are enthusiastic and excited about the impact their own growth and advancement will have on the provision.

There have been no complaints in respect of the residential provision. A parent said: 'I have never needed to complain, if I need to talk about anything I can just pick up the phone and speak to the head of care or headteacher. We have a fantastic relationship with all of the staff and this really helps.'

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	117673
Social care unique reference number	SC056397
DfE registration number	919/7014P

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	17
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	11 to16
Headteacher	Heather Boardman
Date of previous boarding inspection	05/03/2015
Telephone number	01992 465208
Email address	admin@haileyhall.herts.sch.uk

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