

Lindsworth School

Monyhull Hall Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, West Midlands, B30 3QA

Inspection dates

30/11/2015 to 02/12/2015

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

- Children and young people's school attendance and achievement improve as a result of staying at the residential provision.
- Wide ranging activities both on site and in the community develop children and young people socially and emotionally. They are very enthusiastic about the activities on offer and enjoy themselves.
- The quality of care provided is good because care planning celebrates the individuality of each child and young person. They are placed at the centre of the running of the house and feel valued because their views and ideas are listened to.
- Safeguarding is robust with rigorous monitoring of staff practice and children and young people's outcomes. They feel safe and trust the staff who care for them.
- Managers explore, embrace and value partnership working. They work with a range of agencies to meet children and young people's needs, support families and provide a range of new opportunities during the residential experience.
- Behaviour management is a clear strength. Improved behaviour enables children and young people to improve their relationships with peers, family, teachers and agencies that can support their potential.
- Children and young people thrive due to good physical health care and a strong focus on their emotional welfare.
- Leadership is strong and forges positive connections across the school. Working together is effective and covers all aspects of children and young people's needs.
- Quality assurance and monitoring systems are robust and centred around improving the experiences and outcomes for each young person.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

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

7.1 The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the cook consults with children and young people about changes to the menu.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of residential and welfare arrangements took place following the appropriate notice period for this type of visit. One inspector carried out the visit and reviewed the policies, documentation, residential provision and organisation over a period of three days. The inspector spoke to key staff and managers, young people and the designated officer for the local authority in which the school is situated. In addition, observations of residential routines and practices were made at different times of the day and evening as well as gaining feedback from some parents.

Inspection team

Elaine Cray

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Lindsworth School is a maintained residential special school catering for boys and girls with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It currently offers education for pupils aged 11 to 16 years. Currently the school accommodates 86 boys, of which 14 are residential pupils. Boarding is predominantly offered four nights a week. The residential provision is situated in a large detached house, spread over two floors and located close to the main school. Residential pupils can also use the school's sporting facilities during residential time. The residential provision at was last inspected in January 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Children and young people make good progress both socially and emotionally in comparison to their individual starting points. They thoroughly enjoy their residential experience and are proud of their improvements in education attendance and achievement.

Stability in the residential provision enable children and young people to maintain attendance and achievement at school when other aspects of their lives may be challenging. Good indicators of individual development in learning, academic achievement, behaviour and health outcomes show this residential provision meets the school's philosophy and ethos.

Children and young people have a strong sense of belonging as they stay in a community atmosphere. They demonstrate good levels of attachment, respect and consideration for their peers and the staff who care for them.

Strong staff commitment provides children and young people with nurture. Staff insight into and sensitivity to children and young people's own personal circumstances give them security and they feel understood. These meaningful relationships and experiences increase children and young people's self-esteem and confidence. As a result they become very proficient at expressing their views and concerns because they feel listened to.

There are a variety of ways for children and young people to represent their views. Daily meetings over a drink and snack involve them in the day-to-day running of the residential service. The meetings enable children and young people to use a range of negotiation skills and improve peer relationships. They work together to decide on activities, take turns in the laundry and sort out arrangements for the evening meal.

Representations to the school council also gives children and young people an opportunity to express their views and ideas. While formal complaints are few; they clearly understand and use the residential service's complaints procedure. This process has helped staff and young people sort out concerns about bullying and now everyone is confident that bullying is not allowed. Children and young people are confident they are safe from bullying.

Children and young people's health needs are consistently met. Wrap-around care meets their physical, emotional and mental health needs and they have a good sense of well-being. Children and young people are healthier and fitter because staff promote good diets and regular exercise.

Developing self-responsibility and independence skills are an important aspect of the residential provision. Children and young people develop good domestic skills because they are responsible for their rooms, laundry and chores around the house. Rewards, praise and the pupil of the week award are important factors and motivators for children

and young people to do well and help each other and the staff. Incentives are a great focus to address some significant behavioural challenges. Children and young people are very proud in the improvements in their behaviour.

Children and young people develop according to their starting points and needs because their progress is tracked and monitored. An established assessment and evaluation programme and good communication with parents and teachers informs residential staff about the areas of greatest need. This insight helps to shape direct work and results in children and young people feeling safe and cared for as their needs are systematically met.

Residential staff, teachers and connections to a range of outside agencies work together to ensure the school approach is inclusive and supportive. Parents and carers are positive about their child's residential experiences. They say their children are, 'on an upward curve and doing much better.' and 'he feels safe and that is a major thing.' Police officers state the school is 'a very welcoming school and we work together really well. It has opened up the police eyes about how young people can be helped.'

Activities are a clear favourite of children and young people and a clear strength of the residential provision. A range of stimulating after-school activities compliment children and young people's educational timetable. They thoroughly enjoy and value the opportunity to try activities they may be unable to access at home. This enjoyment is maximised with enthusiastic engagement and involvement by staff. Children and young people learn new skills, interests and how to interact positively with others in a range of group sports and activities.

Children and young people do well across all aspects of their lives because the residential provision is well managed. The residential week is organised in a manner that promotes children and young people's needs, safety and well-being. The experienced and committed head of care leads a team of dedicated residential staff, who work alongside educational staff for part of the residential evening. This varied staffing compliment means children and young people can receive quality one-to-one support with homework, emotional well-being and a range of fun activities.

The quality of care and support

Good

Staff work well together, they are thorough in gathering and sharing information with parents, carers, teaching staff, social work, safeguarding and health professionals. Good communication and partnership working result in effective transition planning, child protection, school attendance and behaviour management. Children and young people are provided with tailored support that helps them to prepare for change and face challenges.

Meaningful gathering and assessment of information results in effective matching of children and young people over the four-night residential period. Staff are able to provide the right support and response to individual children and young people when

they arrive at the provision.

Residential and school staff work strategically to promote positive peer groups. This is particularly evident for year 9 pupils where the renovation of their classroom, relationships in residence and being educated as a group promote positive education and social outcomes. These young people learn and socialise better and have a greater investment in the ethos of the school. This combination results in good self-esteem, a strong sense of belonging and a greater ability to learn and behave well.

The comprehensive care planning framework responds to individual need and promotes good overall quality of care. The care framework includes individual profile and background, a health care plan, risk assessment, behaviour management and education plans. Children and young people are placed at the centre of the care planning framework; both in terms of how plans are written and to include their views and wishes.

Children and young people's health needs are consistently recorded, met and reviewed. Wrap-around care meets their physical, emotional and mental health needs so they have a good sense of well-being. Children and young people are healthier and fitter because staff promote good diets and regular exercise. Morning and evening routines support young people to maintain good personal hygiene. Robust medication procedures promote young people's health, particularly those with complex health needs such as epilepsy.

Staff training in mental health and additional funding from mental health programmes ensure children and young receive good support with their mental and emotional health. For example, staff are quick to identify emotional fragility and respond well to issues such as self-injurious behaviours.

Working in partnership extends to working with health agencies, school nurse and drugs agencies. This multi-disciplinary approach gives a meaningful response to the complex health, social and safeguarding needs presented by some young people.

Children and young people live a homely environment and their accommodation is clean, tidy and comfortable. Living areas are personalised and young people love lounging and relaxing on large comfy settees and bean bags. Bedrooms are personalised and have en-suite bathroom facilities to promote good levels of privacy.

Children and young people can and do keep in touch with people who are important to them during their residential stays. Arrangements for contact are well known and staff are mindful of the importance some children and young people place on keeping in-touch with family. Staff are also very aware of those children and young people who need extra support because they are struggling emotionally as a result of living away from home during the week.

Mealtimes are sociable occasions where everyone eats and chat together. Manners are very good and staff act as good role models, reminding children and young people to be polite and how to conduct themselves in this social situation. Children and young people are usually involved in menu planning, but on this occasion the cook had changed the menu without their consultation.

Attention to the update of the school's fire risk assessment is the only element that requires improvement in order to promote the full protection of individuals living, working and visiting the residential provision.

Staff shortages and lack of partnership working from the local authority property services had resulted in the school's fire risk assessment being out of date. On this inspection the site manager, head of care and executive head were quick and efficient in addressing issues in the residential setting. Fixing fire extinguishers to walls after re-decoration and re-fitting a lock ensured children and young people were not at risk. The residential manager was also quick to update her own risk assessment of the residential provision and carry out an additional fire drill.

Children and young people's health and safety is otherwise promoted well. The implementation of a range risk assessments that relate to the school building, external grounds as well as on and off site activities help to keep everyone safe. Improvements include a new fire safety system across the whole school to include the residential provision. Regular checks of fire prevention systems, electrical, water and gas installations further ensure the school is a safe place to be.

Children and young people's behaviour, interactions and relationships with staff demonstrate that they feel comfortable and secure in their residential accommodation.

Staff are aware of each child's vulnerabilities and work proactively and in partnership to meet safeguarding plans and strategies. Staff benefit from experienced leadership and effective monitoring which is underpinned by safeguarding and child protection procedures, briefings and training. Staff, including ancillary staff, are confident in keeping children and young people safe and work in a way that promotes everyone's safety and welfare.

Staff and managers are quick to report any concerns or worries about a child's safety or well-being; with immediate referral to external safeguarding agencies. Staff also liaise well with parents and are willing to have some challenging discussions in order to make sure children and young people are safe in their home settings. Information is noted and gathered by residential staff which helps inform the school's safeguarding manager and lead agencies in determining appropriate actions where needed.

Partnership working with police is both proactive and effective. Children and young people develop greater respect for the police due to their regular and positive presence in the school. Police hold 'clinics' at the school and this enables young people to extend their understanding of the seriousness and potential criminalisation for some of their behaviours. For example, children and young people may be encouraged to think about reparation or gain understanding they will be charged for more serious offences.

Trying new activities in residential time gives some children and young people the opportunity to think about more positive choices for how they spend their out of school time. Finding out they are good at and enjoy activities such as keeping fit, playing football and outward bounds activities give them a better chance of combating the pull to get involved in gang culture in their local communities.

Up to date staff knowledge and training contributes to the promotion and monitoring of children and young people's safety. For example, staff insight into children and young people's cultural identity, coupled with relevant training, equip staff to respond to children and young people who may be vulnerable to the risks of radicalisation.

No safeguarding or child protection matters have occurred at the school since the last inspection and no referrals to the local designated officer have been necessary.

Bespoke risk management plans flag up individual risk and put effective staff supervision in place both inside and outside the provision. The head of care and staff work well with the police and safeguarding agencies to ensure inter-agency missing from home and care protocols are met. As a result, children and young people do not go missing from the residential provision and there are no concerns regarding their sexual exploitation.

Children and young people enjoy sound relationships and generally interact positively with each other. They state that staff are fair and they know what is expected of them. Displays about rules and how to treat each other and the house were used as points of reference during this inspection. Children and young people have a clear benchmark and good level of respect for the rules, boundaries and expectations agreed with staff. Incentive programmes have a considerable impact on children and young people's motivation to improve and maintain positive behaviour.

When behaviour difficulties occur; the staff team's training in behaviour management and physical intervention leads to early interventions and de-escalation of most behaviours. When this is not effective, records show that physical restraint is only used as a last resort. Staff are trained in behaviour management practices including safe methods for physical restraint. Detailed recording when physical intervention occurs clearly shows how seriously staff take this action and how the child is central to their practice. De-briefs for children, young people and staff enable all parties to reflect on incidents, feelings and how to avoid re-occurrence.

Detailed and frequent monitoring of behaviour management embeds into the culture of the school. Managers and staff competently input and use an online system where they can analyse and evaluate incidents and responses to difficult and risky behaviours. Identifying patterns or trends in behaviour and the impact of staff practice contributes to the ongoing review of how staff are working with children and young people. Information can be translated into charts and diagrams and sharing this information with individual children and young people is extremely useful. Young people can identify when there more challenging behaviours occurs and discuss and agree on support strategies. Most importantly children and young people have a visual reference for the significant improvements for their behaviour. They like this visual reinforcement, which in turn motivates them to do even better.

High regard for, and rigorous implementation of, safer recruitment processes protect

children and young people.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The residential provision is well managed by an experienced and suitably qualified head of care. She leads a diverse team of new and long serving staff. The head of care is part of the school's senior leadership team and is directly supervised and supported by the head of school.

All leaders, managers and staff have high aspirations for the children and young people in their care. Leaders and staff not only work hard to enable children and young people to fully benefit the school day and residential stay; but also to combat children and young people's challenging home circumstances and risks in their local communities.

The statement of principles and purpose of the residential provision are clear and staff and parents understand the role of residential in improving children's outcomes. Good information about the service and communication with staff reassure parents about their children staying away from home. Children and young people settle well because they receive well written and easy to understand information about the residential provision. They can also learn about routines from other young people as staff take time to let them visit and settle according to their needs.

Staffing levels reflect the range of needs and numbers being accommodated. Staff reflect a nurturing and patient approach to care that places children and young people at the centre of their practice. The team are supportive of each other. Arrangements respond to the individual needs and group compatibility of children and young people. This means children and young people receive sufficient staff attention to be safe and work towards reaching their potential both educationally and socially.

Staff benefit from regular supervision and appreciate well organised and regularly refreshed training and annual appraisal. Staff have access to a varied range of training and development opportunities which respond to individual needs and the school's overall development and improvement plans.

Managers have a good insight into how well children and young people are being looked after. They continue to improve and develop the service. The head of care has met all the recommendations from the previous inspection. Care plans are now clear and provide comprehensive information to residential staff about how best to support children and young people. Clarity regarding the restraint policy and recording of house meetings are also addressed. Managerial and external monitoring visits drive improvement. Shortfalls are quickly addressed by the management team so outcomes for children and young people continually improve.

Leaders and staff are outward looking. They explore, embrace and fully value the

positive impact of partnership working. This approach promotes improvement, keeps practice contemporary and promotes children and young people welfare within the school, at home and in their local communities.

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	103632
Social care unique reference number	SC017171
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	14
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to16
Headteacher	Janet Collins
Date of previous boarding inspection	22/01/2015
Telephone number	0121 693 5363
Email address	enquiry@lindsworth.bham.sch.uk

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