

# Springfield House School

Springfield House School, Kenilworth Road, Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 0AJ

<b>Inspection dates</b>	02/02/2016 to 04/02/2016	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is good because

- Children enjoy being in residence, they develop social skills and are consistently supported with their education. Children highlight activities as being key to their enjoyment and they also state they get on well with the staff working with them.
- Care planning is appropriate and highlights pertinent areas where children require support. Staff have a good knowledge of plans and are involved with reviews on a regular basis.
- Children's health is consistently supported. A good range of services linked to supporting children's health is used by the school, including both physical and mental health services. Medication is well administered.
- Staff work well with parents, sharing information about residential experiences and home life. Contact between children and their families is encouraged to ensure that they are settled in residence.
- Good safeguarding systems are well known by the staff team and concerns responded to swiftly by senior staff.
- Positive behaviours are consistently promoted and good procedures encourage children to be aware of how their behaviours affect others. Reward systems further support children's behavioural development.
- A small yet consistent team appropriately staff residence. They work well together and are supported by the management team.
- Children's views are not consistently recorded within care planning or restraint

records. Differing terms used when children are absent from staff could cause confusion. A clearer development plan for residence needs to be understood by staff. These issues do not affect the care received by the children.

### **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?

- Ensure that children's views are sought and recorded within care planning and restraint records.
- Develop a clarity of terms with regard to children that go missing either within school or off the school site.
- Improve planning for residence to increase staff's awareness of the developing provision.

## Information about this inspection

The school was given four hours' notice of the inspection. Due to the school's recent education inspection some areas were not examined fully as these are reported on within their report. The visit was also shortened to two inspection days. Meetings were held with; the executive headteacher and head of school, head of residential care, residential staff, music therapist, external support staff and the speech and language therapist. Three parents, a governor and the independent visitor were also spoken to on the telephone. Two evenings were spent in the residential accommodation observing staff and children's interactions and activities. The inspector joined children for two meals in the evenings.

## Inspection team

Andrew Hewston

Lead social care inspector

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

Springfield House School is a maintained school operated by Birmingham City Council. It is a residential Community Special School for boys and girls, aged 4 to 11, with a range of special educational needs. The majority have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties; some have learning difficulties. The school currently has 92 pupils and is open on weekdays and term time only. The school is in a rural position near Knowle, Solihull and can accommodate 18 children in The Lodge. There are two adjoining corridors that operate with separate small groups. The residential provision is a flexible 12-week arrangement for up to four nights a week. The residential provision was last inspected in December 2014.

## Inspection Judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Children enjoy being in residence and talk confidently about differing positive aspects of staying, including 'being able to spend time with your mates' and enjoying the activities. They progress in their social skills and gain rewards in response to the new behaviour management system, encouraging children to get on with their peers. The close links between school and residence ensures that there is a consistent approach to learning and staff are aware of the differing approaches that work well to allow them to progress academically. Targets are set for the development of children. These are monitored on a regular basis, with children being aware of the areas they need to develop further to achieve.

The children enjoy a good range of activities, with all given choices in how they would prefer to spend their evenings. Residence is well resourced, with a games room, use of the school gym and extensive grounds to play in.

Good arrangements are in place to support the health and well-being of children. Links to external health professionals are strong and the staff work well with parents to encourage a healthy lifestyle. Medication administration systems suitably protect children's health.

Safeguarding arrangements are sufficiently robust to ensure the safety of children within both school and residence. Staff are confident in reporting concerns and the designated leads work well with the local safeguarding board to examine concerning issues. Regular checks to the premises help to keep both children and staff safe.

All children can state particular staff that they could talk to if they had a worry, additional visitors to residence include the half-termly governor and the independent visitor. Both of these take time to discuss issues with the children. Behaviour management is appropriate, with children being aware of expected behaviours. A good system for children meeting behavioural targets results in regular rewards. However, recordings of restraints need development to show that children's voice is included.

Staffing is consistent within residence, with all working well together. Good links are in place with the education provision, and they often support the teaching staff. Staff receive regular training and meet with the senior team to examine the ways that they are working with the children.

Children are supported in moving on from the school, being involved with visits and having a staff team that is knowledgeable about the differing provisions that they are moving to. This helps to support both the children and their parents. Parents are positive about residence and state that communication from the staff is good. Professionals that are linked to the school also report that they work well with the staff team and information is shared appropriately.

Staff have a good awareness of the differing needs of the children through care records and good interactions with both the children and their parents. Staff work well with a range of differing professionals, both within the school and externally, to build up a picture of how best to work with the children and subsequently children make progress while in residence. Children state that they like being in residence and that the staff are good at looking after them.

Information is shared between care and education staff, developing a consistent level of care. Computerised systems help staff to examine children's day in school and possible evening issues. Care staff regularly work within school, supporting both residential and day students, further enhancing their awareness of the differing needs of the children.

Children enjoy a good level of accommodation. All have their own rooms and are encouraged to personalise their own space. One child's plan includes supporting him to bring in his own quilt cover each week. Pleasant and homely communal areas give children a place to relax and watch television.

Good arrangements are in place to support a range of activities when they are in residence. The school site allows children to experience tree climbing, den building and bike riding. One parent commented that; 'its great that they can just play, they can't do that round by us, because of their behaviour and worries about the neighbourhood.' Trips off site are regularly arranged, including local community parks. A good range of games and activities are available and used by children during their residential areas. This help build friendships and develops new skills which in turn gives them enjoyment and socialisation.

Healthcare arrangements consistently respond to the differing needs that children bring to residence. Strong links are in place with professionals such as the school nurse, music and speech and language therapists. The school works well to develop services for both the physical and mental health of the children. One therapist stated that; 'it's great that the school encourages different support services, they make sure that we feel part of the school and share information about the children.'

Meals have improved, with new slow and rice cookers replacing the use of hotplates for the evening meals. Good systems allow children to comment on the meals served and they are also encouraged to put forward suggestions for menus. Mealtimes are pleasant social occasions, with discussions about their day and the evening to come.

Individual plans are in place for all children. Differing plans are used, depending on the length of their planned stay in residence, giving staff an awareness of the differing needs of the children and how the school will respond to these. Good target setting responds to these differing needs, linking to a well organised reward structure. Plans and targets are regularly reviewed. Children's views are not consistently recorded within the planning documentation, decreasing their ability to be fully involved with their time in residence. Children's backgrounds including their ethnicity, faith and disability are key within the care planning documentation. This helps to ensure that they receive the appropriate care and support from the residential team.

Good daily records show that children are consistently talked to about their views and feelings regarding being in residence, their families and life at the school. Basic termly questionnaires encourage children to consider their time in residence and raise any issues that may be of concern to them.

Contact arrangements between children and their families are good. Phones are available for them to use in private as well as in the offices if they require additional support.

## **How well children and young people are protected**

**Good**

Children state that they feel safe with the staff and their peers. Good arrangements are in place to respond to safeguarding and child protection concerns decreasing possible risks to them. Their safety is enhanced further by individualised risk assessments relating to children's behaviours are examined regularly. Where safeguarding concerns are raised they are responded to swiftly. The school has a range of designated leads in child protection, and all staff receive safeguarding training annually, making sure that they are up to date with current practice. Where concerns are raised they are fully recorded and available within a designated cabinet for those with safeguarding responsibilities, supporting children's privacy. Good support systems are in place for staff involved with safeguarding incidents, minutes of meetings are shared and they are kept up to date with outcomes of discussions held. Recordings within the school's computerised system are developing, with some minor issues being responded to, to make sure that records are clear.

An independent visitor offers a good external level of support for children, being involved with activities and making themselves available for children to discuss concerns or issues relating to the school and residence.

Arrangements to respond to concerns about children that go missing from staff or the school grounds are robust and incidents are exceptionally rare. Risk assessments regarding such behaviours are in place, and also noted within care planning to increase staff's awareness and ensure a consistent approach. Minor discrepancies within computer records relate to the way that timings of incidents are recorded and are being responded to. The differing language between school, the Police and regulations may cause confusion and clarity is required regarding what is 'missing', 'absconding' and 'absent.'

Discriminatory behaviours are unacceptable and challenged. Responses to bullying behaviours are swift, with all parties being involved with discussions to decrease any further issues. Risks relating to the internet are decreased through teaching and care staff giving consistent messages. Children are aware of how to raise their worries about the internet or messages that they get.

Positive behaviours are encouraged throughout their time in school and residence. Where negative behaviours are displayed they are responded to appropriately with clear expectations and boundaries. Children are able to discuss the residential rewards

structure, one stating that, 'it's good that it is the same as in school, you don't have to learn anything new.' Staff are trained in the use of distraction and de-escalation techniques to diffuse concerning behaviours. Restraints are appropriate and only used when other options have been exhausted. The computerised system highlights some minor errors in records that could affect overall monitoring of behaviours in residence. Not all records of restraints include the views of children, decreasing their ability to comment on possible ways to decrease any further such incident.

Staff vetting procedures help to support the welfare of children. Robust health and safety checks decrease risks to both children and staff, including effective fire safety drills and monitoring of gas and electrical resources.

### **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers** Good

A good leadership team effectively manages residence. The residential provision is integral to the experiences offered to children at the school. Leaders are experienced and trained in the services offered to children.

Residence is staffed to meet the needs of the children. The team have worked together for a considerable period and are highly aware of the differing ways that they work, effectively complimenting each other with their differing skills. They are unilaterally positive about time that they are able to spend together to discuss the development of residence and the children that use the service. There is a consistent expectation that children's experience of residence is positive, enabling them to progress in aspects of their behaviour and social skills.

Monitoring structures are in place to examine the development of the children through the review process. The schools development plan is in place, including residence. A clear examination of the strengths and necessary development within residential practice is not in place, to improve further the experiences of children using the service. A governor visits residence on a half termly basis, examining the records available, talking to children and assessing the effectiveness of residence. These are subsequently used by the governing body to discuss residence and its role within the school.

Supervision and appraisal systems ensure that staff continually examine their own development. They are supported through meetings to discuss their responsibilities, examine the development of children and improving practice. Individual developmental targets form a regular part of these meetings.

Training of residential staff is good. They are involved with both whole school staff training and have time as a team to examine the differing needs of the children. The schools recent federated arrangements to a senior school for young people with similar needs allows staff to increase the range of their training. All staff are qualified up to level three standard.

Good arrangements are in place to respond to complaints that received by the school. Either through the children or external parties. No complaints have been received since the school's last inspection. Parents report that communication between the residential



staff and themselves is good. They state that they are always able to get through to residence and that staff are able to talk about how they are getting on within the residential area.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103623
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC042411
<b>DfE registration number</b>	

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Residential Special School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	92
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	5 to12
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Collins
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	04/12/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01564 772772
<b>Email address</b>	janet.collins@spfldhs.bham.sch.uk

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