

The Grange Therapeutic School

The Grange Therapeutic School, 15–17 Somerby Road, Knossington, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 8LY

Inspection dates	01 March 2016 to 03 March 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

- Exemplary management and leadership arrangements ensure that there is meticulous attention to detail. This means operational systems are flawless.
- Effective monitoring of the home underpins continual improvement. Extensive internal and external quality assurance promote the continued development of care provision.
- Safeguarding pupils is paramount in this school. Families and social workers commend the residential staff for their ability to keep pupils safe.
- Exceptionally skilled and knowledgeable care staff collaborate effectively with education and therapy colleagues. Consequently, pupils benefit from a cohesive education, health and care service.
- Pupils thrive because of excellent standards of care.
- Partnership work with parents and external professionals is a particular strength of this residential school.

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 two-hour notice period. Inspection activities included analysis of a range of files and safety records, and a tour of the premises. Discussions with the senior management team, the independent visitor, care staff and social care 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 the residential provision with pupils. Responses to the Parent View site, alongside telephone discussions with several parents and carers, were key considerations in this inspection.

Inspection team

Amanda Ellis

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

The Grange is an independent residential special school owned by Acorn Care and Education. It provides education for 79 boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties, 13 of whom reside at the school during the week. The residential provision has two houses, one for younger pupils and one for older pupils. The school is located in a rural village close to the towns of Oakham and Melton Mowbray, and within easy reach of Peterborough and Leicester.

The residential provision was last inspected in January 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

Management arrangements are very strong, ensuring that pupils receive excellent care. Consequently, pupils achieve significantly improved outcomes. A focus on continual improvement is a key strength of this service.

Pupils are safe and protected from harm. Policies and procedures are up to date and understood by the well-trained multi-disciplinary staff team. Safeguarding incidents are rare, which is testament to a settled group of pupils and to vigilant staff practice.

Parents and professionals are unequivocal in stating that pupils make excellent progress across all aspects of their lives. Comments from parents include: 'I believe this school has helped my son turn his life around and has saved him from a path I feared he was going down', 'They are committed to enabling my child to reach his full potential', 'They are faultless! I cannot make one criticism' and 'Staff are excellent on all matters'. Social care professionals are equally as positive. For example, social workers said: 'I cannot fault them' and 'I only have praise for this home, I have nothing negative whatsoever to say about them.'

Relationships between staff and pupils are at the heart of pupils' progress. One social worker said: 'His relationship with his personal support worker is so strong. She really cares for him and he senses that. This makes him feel very secure.' A pupil said: 'All of the staff look after us, care for us and help us. They are all great. I don't have any favourites.' Staff ensure that consistency and firm boundaries are well balanced by nurture and care. From this position of stability, pupils are able to turn their attention to their personal, social and educational development.

Pupils report that they are happy, enjoy their time in the homes and mostly have very positive relationships with each other. All staff are skilled in subtly monitoring the dynamics of relationships between pupils. Where difficulties arise, staff work effectively to resolve tension and conflict. Pupils learn how to manage conflict and maintain healthy

friendships. Observations within this inspection were of pupils enjoying time in their houses, sharing, playing and relaxing together.

A recurring theme raised by parents and carers is the progress that pupils make in learning to regulate and manage their behaviours. Examples include reductions in anger, learning to express feelings verbally, and greater emotional maturity. Parents cite these improvements as being pivotal to improved relationships within their families. One parent said: 'I got my son back! This is because of the care provided and the progress he has made. It has changed our relationship so much.'

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Pupils benefit from highly individualised and well-planned care, based on a rigorous assessment of their unique needs. The multi-disciplinary team supports and encourages all pupils to achieve their goals. Consequently, pupils thrive and reach their full potential. One parent said, 'My son is happy! He has progressed so much behaviourally, socially and educationally. This progress is because of this home.'

Exceptional quality of care contributes to outstanding outcomes in education. Care staff support the school curriculum throughout the day and after school. They provide support during lessons, in exams and in after-school activities. This wraparound provision leads to excellent levels of attendance and significantly improved educational outcomes. Consequently, pupils progress into further education so that they can continue their academic and vocational studies.

Health promotion work is given a very high priority and health care arrangements are highly effective. Care staff work diligently with a range of health professionals, including the provider's own therapists, to support the physical, emotional and psychological health needs of all pupils. Communication with parents promotes consistency in relation to medication and emotional issues. Care staff are trained in a variety of health matters, including the safe handling and administration of medicines. This ensures that there is a rigorous approach to medication practices.

Pupils were keen to tell the inspector about the activities they enjoy. They have opportunities to participate regularly in a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities, as well as having had a recent holiday in Wales. The home has a new play area, which is popular with younger pupils. The care homes have table tennis and snooker tables, as well as an extensive range of board and computer games. Pupils are able to go cycling, swimming, bowling, skating and to the cinema. Some pupils are members of local clubs, such as Scouts and football clubs. Care staff run a fishing academy, which is a popular choice for some pupils. Staff ensure that there is a range of structured and enjoyable activities to support individual choice fully.

Participation of pupils is central to the operation of the home. Pupils routinely express their wishes and feelings about their care. For example, pupils now chair and minute their pupil meetings. They have been involved in menu planning, decisions about how group funds are spent, and in requesting activities. In addition, pupils complete a feedback form each term to give their views about how the home is running, and what could be better. Regular consultation empowers pupils to make a positive contribution.

The standard of accommodation is exceptional. The care homes are modern and bright. They are furnished and decorated to the highest standards. The care homes are exceptionally comfortable environments and provide good communal and private spaces. Pupils personalise their bedrooms to their own tastes and preferences. Dedicated housekeepers ensure that pristine standards of cleanliness and hygiene are maintained.

The positive outcomes that pupils achieve with the support of the residential provision underpin improved long-term family stability. Parents and professionals describe how they are now able to cope much better with the pressures that come with emotional and behavioural difficulties. One parent said: 'As a family, we have vastly improved family relationships. This is because the care staff have provided strong boundaries, a good routine and care. This is now transferred back home.'

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

The highly experienced staff and management team effectively implement up-to-date safeguarding policy and procedure. Risk assessments are proportionate and regularly reviewed so that they enable pupils to develop new skills while remaining safe. Staff are highly knowledgeable about pupils and ensure that safety is the paramount consideration.

The head of care has well-established links with local safeguarding agencies. This ensures that there is cohesive, multi-agency collaboration that protects pupils. Social care professionals and parents all confirm that pupils' safety significantly improves because of care provision in this school.

Since the last inspection, there have been no significant child protection or safeguarding incidents, allegations against staff, incidents of pupils missing from care or complaints. The designated safeguarding officer, social care professionals, parents and the independent visitor confirm that safeguarding concerns are not a feature of this residential provision.

The senior management team and staff have participated in a wide range of safeguarding training programmes. Recent training in radicalisation and extremism means that managers and staff have a very clear understanding of what action to take in such a scenario. Staff share their knowledge with pupils, and they engage them in discussions on topics such as British values and child sexual exploitation. Staff have a very clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, including whistle blowing, should they have concerns about another professional's care practice.

The monitoring of visitors to the school is rigorous and all visitors are required to sign in and out of each building. Stringent recruitment practice also safeguards pupils. The meticulous screening of personnel files and vetting of new employees provides pupils with a high degree of protection from exposure to potentially harmful individuals.

Estate management arrangements ensure that there is a safe environment. The buildings and grounds have a continual programme of maintenance. There are timely remedial works and significant improvements to the home's structure and infrastructure.

This includes the recent extension and renovation of the care homes. Health and safety checks are systematically completed, including fire safety audits.

Arrangements to enable pupils to be safe and feel safe are multi-faceted and highly effective. Residential pupils work alongside designated care staff to undertake personal support work. This direct work enables regular discussions about school and residential life. Care staff act on any worries or concerns by implementing action plans across care, education and therapy teams. Additionally, pupils have access to children's rights advocates and an independent visitor. Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe.

Behaviour management practice is highly effective, with minimal use of physical intervention. One of the senior team leaders is the physical intervention instructor for both the school staff and the residential provision. This ensures consistency of behaviour management techniques across education, care and therapy. Staff use both electronic and manual methods to record all incidents, including bullying, sanctions, physical interventions and significant events. Managers analyse this data to identify patterns and trends. This ensures that there is continual evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

The principal, head of care, and the senior leadership team work collaboratively to ensure that the residential experience is a valued and integral aspect of school life. The head of care thoroughly understands the strengths and weaknesses of this provision and is proactive in implementing plans to ensure continual development. There is a clear determination to continue to raise standards.

The head of care brings an abundance of experience to the leadership role, underpinned by exceptionally up-to-date knowledge. She brings professional leadership to the dedicated senior management team. She has a strong focus on raising standards and inspires her team to be aspirational for all pupils.

A range of monitoring systems help to drive continual improvement. The school's

independent visitor said: 'The management and staff never feel that they have "got there"! They always strive for better.'

Staff say that they receive excellent professional support from managers. Supervision and annual appraisal ensure that staff performance is rigorously monitored and evaluated. Additionally, a comprehensive training programme enables the continuous professional development of staff.

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	120330
Social care unique reference number	SC001831
DfE registration number	855/6010

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	79
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	8 to 17
Headteacher	Bob Batten
Date of previous boarding inspection	27 January 2015
Telephone number	01664 454264
Email address	office@knossington.rutland.sch.uk

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