

# Holly House School

Holly House School, Church Street North, Old Whittington, CHESTERFIELD, Derbyshire, S41 9QR

**Inspection dates** 8 March 2016 to 9 March 2016

**The overall experiences and progress of children and young people** **Outstanding** **1**

The quality of care and support Outstanding 1

How well Pupils are protected Outstanding 1

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers Outstanding 1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is outstanding because

- Pupils experience outstanding progress at this residential provision. This is because their experiences are highly positive and enjoyable, and they look forward to their overnight stays.
- Exceedingly innovative and skilled care staff provide dynamic and stimulating opportunities for pupils to experience opportunities they would not otherwise access.
- Meticulous risk assessment and supervision of activities enable pupils to take age-appropriate risks, while learning and having fun.
- Creative approaches to education and learning are the 'golden thread' which runs through the school and residential provision.
- The residential experience provides a fantastic foundation for life after leaving school. Independence is encouraged and life skills are taught.
- Wider issues of equality and diversity are effectively integrated into care practice. This means that pupils are knowledgeable, tolerant and understanding of difference.

- Care, education and external professionals successfully collaborate and support parents and carers. Parents and carers are extremely complimentary about the residential provision and the school's success in enabling pupils to flourish and to achieve their potential.
- Safeguarding of pupils is paramount. There have been no significant safeguarding incidents since the last inspection.
- Leadership and management arrangements are of a very high standard. Leaders continue to strive to improve and develop the provision for the benefit of pupils and their families.

#### **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 two-day inspection following a one-hour notice period. Inspection activities included analysis of a range of files and case records, safety records and a tour of the premises. Discussions with the senior management team, governors and care staff 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 number of pupils, including a new pupil and an established pupil. There were insufficient responses from the Parent View site. However, the inspector spoke with several parents via telephone discussions.

## **Inspection team**

Amanda Ellis

Lead social care inspector

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

Holly House School is a maintained residential community special school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school provides education for 40 pupils aged from seven to 14 years who have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans. The school is located in Chesterfield, Derbyshire. The residential unit is located in an annexe to the main school and is on two floors, each floor being self-contained. The unit provides accommodation for up to eight pupils each night from Monday to Thursday during term time. Pupils access the service on a voluntary basis and follow a variety of placement arrangements according to their needs. The residential provision was last inspected in November 2014.

## Inspection Judgements

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

**Outstanding**

Meticulous leadership and management of this residential provision ensure that pupils benefit from exceptional standards of care. Senior managers and dedicated staff work in partnership as a highly effective team. Consequently, strategic and operational performance is efficient and effective. This provides an excellent residential resource to enable pupils to progress and to develop educationally, socially and behaviourally.

Safety is a top priority for this provision and is therefore outstanding. Policies and procedures are up to date, understood and implemented by the well-trained, multidisciplinary staff team. There have been no safeguarding incidents since the last inspection. This is a result of having a settled group of pupils and vigilant staff practice.

Parents consistently state that pupils make excellent progress across all aspects of their lives. Comments from parents include: 'Staff know the children and teach them to reach their potential', and, 'He has come on leaps and bounds.' One parent spoke of the rapid progress her son has made since attending the school and residential provision: 'The change in my son is amazing. I hardly recognise the same person. I cannot praise the staff enough. His skills and growth in confidence mean he can now access things he was previously unable to.' This level and pace of progress supports pupils to become more independent and to be prepared for life when they leave school.

Relationships between staff and pupils are at the core of pupils' progress. One parent said: 'Relationships are the key to their success with children and young people.' A pupil said: 'All of the staff are great. They are like a second family to me.' Other pupils used the terms 'amazing' and 'awesome' when describing the staff. Pupils respect staff and feel well cared for. One parent summed up her feelings by saying: 'My son loves them to bits. He raves about his stays. He feels loved – he has found people who like him and want to do things with him. He skips out of the door in the morning when he has a residential stay.' These positive relationships form the cornerstone of enabling pupils to accept consistent boundaries. They can then focus their attention on enjoyment and

having fun in activities which promote their personal, social and educational development.

### **The quality of care and support**

### **Outstanding**

Pupils benefit from bespoke and well-planned care. A highly skilled and experienced multidisciplinary staff team undertake rigorous assessments of individual needs. These assessments form a basis to encourage all pupils to achieve their individual targets. Pupils flourish and respond to incentives which reward their efforts and achievements. One parent said: 'The incentive system is very effective in motivating them.'

Residential provision enables pupils to benefit from significantly improved outcomes in education. The interface between education and residential care is characterised by highly developed communication systems. Consequently, care and education staff implement individualised programmes where pupils are experiencing difficulties. One parent said: 'They use every single opportunity to educate young people and teach them valuable lessons. They are creative and use "hands on" methods and outdoor education when pupils struggle in the classroom.' This responsive approach ensures that pupils gain the most benefit from their education, resulting in outstanding attendance and significantly improved educational outcomes. Consequently, pupils develop in confidence and self-esteem for their transition to alternative education provision when they are 14.

Pupils access a wide range of stimulating social activities during their residential stays. Activities include: outdoor survival, circus skills, swimming, football, skating, climbing, 'den' building, cycling and a wide range of indoor activities. Additionally, pupils enjoy trips to theme and animal parks. Staff take pupils on holidays, including trips to the seaside and a recent trip to Paris. One parent said: 'He loves it! He does lots of activities. They keep him busy, really busy!' All of the pupils excitedly told the inspector about the activities they enjoy. Moreover, the inspection did not interrupt the busy activity schedule. For some pupils, this means they experience activities which they might not be able to do without this service.

Participation of all pupils is central to the operation of the home. Through a range of communication methods, pupils routinely express their wishes and feelings about their care and thus contribute to the home. They engage in residents' meetings and discuss what activities they want to do. A suggestions box is available for their comments and views. An independent visitor is available to come and talk with them, if they choose. Following residential visits, pupils complete a feedback form to express how the visit went and what could be better. These combined processes enable all pupils to feel empowered and included within their own care provision.

The positive outcomes and progress that pupils make because of their residential stays underpin improved long-term outcomes for family stability. Parents described how improvements in their children's overall development enable families to cope much better with the pressures that come with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Comments included: 'They are a lifeline for my family and for the young people', 'Staff work with me and the behaviours at home to find solutions', 'Amazing support to us as a family. Fantastic place!' and, 'They provide support for me and my family and give him the one-to-one he so very much needs.'

The residential homes are pristine in maintenance, decoration and furnishings. Bedrooms have been decorated with themes, such as a jungle, skateboard, racing cars and a circus. The environment is stimulating, creative and homely. Pupils say that they love their bedrooms and take pride in keeping them in excellent condition.

### **How well Pupils are protected**

### **Outstanding**

Safeguarding practice in this provision is flawless. 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 from pupils, parents or professionals. The designated safeguarding officer, parents and governors confirm that safeguarding

concerns are not a feature of this residential provision.

Managers and staff have a comprehensive knowledge of safeguarding and child protection procedures. The provision has a number of fully trained senior designated safeguarding officers, including education and care senior managers. This ensures that there is always a senior trained person in the school. The school has good links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and designated safeguarding officer. When safeguarding matters occur, managers attend and contribute to relevant meetings. This multi-agency approach to safeguarding provides a comprehensive safeguarding package for pupils.

Highly detailed and regularly reviewed risk assessments provide staff with the clarity to ensure pupil safety. Risk assessments detail individual risks and risk management strategies. Risk assessments are proportionate and responsive to changing needs. This enables pupils to experience new challenges and to develop new skills while remaining safe. One parent commended this school on their proportionate approach to risk assessment. She said: 'My son is safe. At his old school he could not go out on trips as he was risk assessed to be such a high risk. He now accesses everything.' Staff are highly knowledgeable about individual pupils. They implement risk assessments effectively, which ensures that safety is the paramount consideration.

Behaviour management is highly effective in this provision. This is because of consistency in rules and routines. One parent said: 'They keep my son safe because he has such a structured routine, he cannot get bored or distracted – he is really active and busy, doing stuff all the time.' Staff have up-to-date physical intervention training. However, physical interventions are not a feature of the residential provision and are only used when a real risk of harm is identified.

Parents and pupils agree that they are safe at this school. Bullying is not an issue in residence. Information on issues including bullying, homophobia, racism and a range of discriminatory beliefs are discussed and debated. This contributes to a healthy and tolerant residential environment. Pupils learn about issues such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. This means that they learn how to keep



themselves safe.

Health and safety arrangements are rigorous and ensure that there is a safe and secure environment. The buildings and grounds have a continual programme of maintenance, which ensures timely remedial work and significant improvements to the home's structure and infrastructure. Health and safety checks, including fire equipment and drills, are current, and environmental risks assessments are in place. External contractors are quality assured, therefore ensuring the highest standards of safety for pupils.

There have been no new staff recruited since the last inspection. However, there are effective procedures in place for the safe recruitment of staff, which ensure the safety of pupils.

The chair of governors said: 'The residential provision is a very valuable part of the school. It provides a unique identity. We are committed to ensuring that excellence continues throughout the residential and school provision.' Since the last inspection, the previous headteacher has retired. An established deputy headteacher is currently overseeing the leadership of the school. Recruitment for a permanent headteacher is progressing. However, the succession plans have provided a seamless handover, and therefore there has been a continuation of the excellent management arrangements.

The acting headteacher and head of care 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 growth. The cohesive management team have a clear determination to continue to raise standards and promote improvement throughout the school provision.

Pupils benefit from care provided by a highly trained and well-supported staff team. Staff receive excellent levels of professional support, supervision, appraisal and training. These combined processes ensure that residential pupils benefit from exemplary standards of care and their outcomes significantly improve.

Effective management and monitoring of the home ensure that there is a pursuit of continual improvement. Extensive internal and external quality assurance processes act as monitoring systems to ensure the quality of service and identify areas for improvement. Additionally, the management team routinely analyses information relating to the home and pupils to identify any concerns, patterns or trends. Consequently, rigorous critical analysis shapes and influences service delivery.

Partnerships with parents and carers are exceptionally effective and ensure that pupils receive the care and support that they need. It is testament to the excellent partnerships that there have been no complaints since the last inspection. One parent said: 'Amazing! They are the best thing since sliced bread. I can't thank them enough.'

## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of Pupils 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 Pupils consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by Pupils 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. Pupils 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 Pupils are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean Pupils 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>	131322
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC056234
<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>	40
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	7 to 14
<b>Headteacher</b>	
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	7 November 2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 450530
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:pbrandt@hollyhouse.derbyshire.sch.uk">pbrandt@hollyhouse.derbyshire.sch.uk</a>

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