

Penn Hall School

Penn Hall School, Vicarage Road, Penn, Wolverhampton, WV4 5HP

Inspection dates

14 March to 16 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

- Children and young people are safe and feel safe. They build strong and trusting relationships with care staff, managers and school staff.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are integrated and comprehensive. They ensure that children and young people are protected and that any concerns regarding their welfare or safety are immediately referred to external professionals.
- Care staff, leaders, managers, other professionals, parents and carers have exceptionally high aspirations for children and young people. Care staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of children's and young people's individual needs and vulnerabilities.
- Consultation with children and young people is a considerable strength of residency. Care staff work with children and young people, parents, carers and others to capture individual views and wishes. Children and young people are provided with genuine opportunities to make choices.
- Children and young people enjoy their time in residency and look forward to spending quality time with their friends. These relationships consistently support and assist their interpersonal social skills and emotional development.
- Children and young people participate in a varied and stimulating range of educational, social and leisure activities when in residency.
- The school and the residential provision are well integrated. The leadership team is united in its shared desire for continued improvement. It uses social care

research and published information to support ongoing improvements to the service.

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

This welfare-only inspection was completed following the appropriate notice period for this type of visit. A tour of the residential accommodation was undertaken. Two afternoons and early evenings were spent in the company of young people and staff. Several young people were spoken to and observed during the inspection. Two evening meals and two breakfasts were also observed. A range of records and documents, relating to the care provided, were examined. Discussions were held with members of the senior leadership team, managers, care staff, parents and carers.

Inspection team

Jo Stephenson

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Penn Hall is a Wolverhampton local authority community special school for pupils aged 3 to 19 years, whose special educational needs fall predominantly in the categories of physical disability and complex medical needs. Some pupils will have an associated learning difficulty related to their physical disability. An increasing number of pupils have communication delays and difficulty. The school is located on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. It can accommodate 85 pupils. The residential hostel on the school site can accommodate up to six pupils aged between 3 and 19 for overnight stays. All pupils are given the opportunity to take part in the residential experience.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

Young people make outstanding and sustainable progress in residency, in all aspects of their development. They receive bespoke care and nurture that reflect their individual needs, and take specific account of their abilities and vulnerabilities. Care routines are immensely well organised and focus on a 24-hour curriculum and learning model. This means that young people benefit from seamless, integrated and comprehensive care. Parents, teaching staff and other professionals recognise and praise the irrefutable positive impact that residency has on the development of young people's social, emotional, practical and educational skills. Young people consistently say that they 'love' residency because, for example, 'staff are great and staying over with friends is great'. One young person said, 'I really, really wish I could stay more often.'

Staff set young people challenging but achievable personal targets to encourage them to reach their full potential. Partnership working between care staff, parents, carers, medical staff and teaching staff means that young people thrive in residency. A can-do attitude is embedded in the ethos of the service. This helps young people to overcome any obstacles or barriers that they face, and ensures that they celebrate their achievements. One parent said, 'Nothing is allowed to stand in the way of the children's progress. There is nothing that they are not encouraged to try, from new food to new activities. Disabilities never prevent achievements.'

Young people are safe in residency because safeguarding procedures are robust, detailed and regularly reviewed. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of this aspect of residential care. They work in partnership with other agencies including local authority safeguarding teams, families and nursing staff to respond effectively to and manage any safety concerns. This robust approach is recognised by parents and carers. One parent said, 'It's really hard to leave your child with other people when you know they can't say if something is wrong, but here I know he's safe because I can feel it and see it on his face.' Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff and each other. The atmosphere is relaxed, friendly, warm and welcoming. The appropriate levels of physical contact and affection between young people and care staff mean that relationships are transparent and based on trust and respect. This further promotes young people's safety.

Educational and social activities are central to daily routines in residency. Young people consistently say that these are 'fun', 'exciting' and 'interesting'. Staff continually encourage young people to try new activities and learn new skills. The varied mix of internal and external activities is a considerable strength of the service. Staff devise activity plans in consultation with young people, and support them to express their likes and dislikes. This empowers young people to engage in activities and develops their interaction skills.

Staff meet young people's extremely complex and multifaceted health needs. They work in partnership with nursing services, health professionals and other agencies to ensure that medication is safely administered. Bespoke health plans mean that all aspects of

young people's physical and emotional well-being are supported.

School leaders and residential managers effectively monitor the service and highlight and address any identified shortfalls that potentially hinder young people's development. Monitoring systems review individual progress, and take account of feedback from others. Parents and others continually praise the residential experience for the positive impact that it has on young people's lives.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Young people thrive in residency because partnership working between care staff, teaching staff and other agencies is effective. All young people who access the school have the opportunity to access the residential service. This is a considerable strength and unique feature of the setting. It means that all young people can benefit from this provision regardless of their backgrounds, family circumstances or external funding considerations. Parents speak with praise and passion about this opportunity with one parent saying, 'The school knows the true meaning of equality, and all children have the same chances and opportunities, and we don't need to fight to access the service. That means a great deal.'

Personalised care plans ensure that young people's social and emotional needs are considered in line with their educational progress and personal circumstances. Their views, wishes and opinions are central to daily routines. Young people are well matched in residency, and their preferences are taken into account. Their transition into residency is well supported and decided between young people, their families and care staff. This reduces any anxieties that young people may experience.

Young people participate in a wide and varied range of stimulating activities. They embrace these opportunities and say that this is one of the best things about residency. Activities are age appropriate and inclusive; all young people, regardless of their skills and abilities are encouraged to take part. Young people develop their social interaction skills and form appropriate emotional connections and relationships with their peers through these shared experiences. This supports their personal growth and development.

Young people are supported to pursue a healthy lifestyle when in residency. The flexibility of the nursing service helps to ensure that medication administration systems are safe, effective and appropriately monitored.

Mealtimes are very relaxed and sociable occasions. Care staff and support staff act as good role models. Young people are consistently encouraged to display socially acceptable behaviours and, when required, staff help them with practical mealtime skills and tasks. Consideration is given to the nutritional value of meals along with individual dietary needs. Young people can try new food and staff offer 'taste plates' to stimulate their senses.

Residential accommodation is suitable. It is clean, tidy and maintained to an acceptable standard. The dining area has been refurbished in consultation with young people, and

this provides a bright, colourful and stimulating place. The accommodation is well managed and maintained despite the age and design of the buildings.

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

Leaders and managers demonstrate a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping young people safe. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and child protection, and their knowledge is confirmed through regular training and supervisions sessions. Staff are alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse and when necessary refer any concerns to designated officers. Safeguarding referral procedures are easy to follow and effective, and this gives staff confidence in reporting any concern that they note. Partnership working between senior managers, designated officers and external agencies means that any concerns are quickly responded to in young people's best interests.

Young people's cognitive abilities and complex disabilities mean that care staff are acutely aware of their individual risks and vulnerabilities. Interventions to manage risks are focused on safety but also promote opportunities to take age-appropriate risks, which are a part of their move towards greater independence. When young people require full personal care, this is planned and delivered with care and sensitivity. Staff are committed to promoting and respecting young people's dignity.

Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of young people's complexities, including any behavioural or communication needs. This understanding means that staff promote positive behaviours through verbal and signed praise. This replaces the need for sanctions or physical restraint. Young people's achievements, however large or small, are celebrated, and this promotes their self-esteem and confidence.

Recruitment procedures are effective. The selection and vetting of staff is robust, and monitoring systems detail employee references and any gaps in employment and verify relevant qualifications. All staff are subject to disclosure and barring service checks. This promotes children's safety and means that they work with suitably vetted adults.

Health and safety concerns and risk assessments are exceptionally well managed. Robust systems ensure that all specialist equipment and fire safety equipment are regularly tested and their safety monitored. This ensures that children remain safe in residency. Detailed risk assessments are completed to minimise risks to children, both on and off site.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

The head of care is highly competent and experienced. She is supported in her role by an immensely skilled and knowledgeable senior leadership team and a dedicated, stable and committed team of care staff. This stability enhances young people's experience in residency and promotes the family atmosphere within the setting.

Information relating to the residential provision defines the aims and objectives of the service. These are linked to young people's educational, emotional and social

development. Parents, carers, external professionals and other agencies understand the scope and remit of the residential provision. Teamwork across the service between care staff, school staff, senior leaders and specialist nursing staff is a considerable strength of the service. These professional relationships ensure that young people receive integrated and comprehensive care.

Residency has an immensely positive effect on young people's development. The impact of the service is regularly monitored and reviewed by the senior leadership team, head of care and governing body. This ensures that the service continues to meet young people's needs and continues to evolve in line with the wider school development plan.

Managers and care staff at all levels have high aspirations for young people. They receive regular and reflective supervision and say that they feel able to approach managers and leaders with any concerns or issues that they have. Regular team meetings and daily staff briefings mean that communication is fluid and effective and ensures that staff practice remains consistent. This promotes young people's safety and well-being. Care staff access a varied range of training and development opportunities that are also linked to the school's overall development and improvement agenda. Training and development needs are identified through an agreed programme of continuous professional development.

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 exceed the standard of good and result in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding, and the impact that 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 that children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, or their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	104417
Social care unique reference number	SC043187
DfE registration number	336/7012

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	82
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	3 to19
Headteacher	Mr David Parry
Date of previous boarding inspection	18 March 2015
Telephone number	01902 558355
Email address	admin@pennhall.co.uk

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