

The Springfields Academy

Springfields School, Curzon Street, CALNE, Wiltshire, SN11 0DS

Inspection dates	28/09/2015 to 30/09/2015	
The overall experiences and progress of children and pupils	Inadequate	4
The quality of care and support	Requires improvement	3
How well children and pupils are protected	Inadequate	4
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is inadequate because

- The newly-appointed senior leaders have not been in post long enough to implement sustainable improvements to the home.
- Staff fail to keep pupils safe or to respond effectively to pupils' complaints. Staff do not always report safeguarding matters to the academy's designated officers.
- The academy's designated safeguarding officers are not up to date with their mandatory safeguarding and safer recruitment training. The safer recruitment policy is out of date and does not provide the staff team with the latest guidance, leaving pupils at risk of harm.
- The quality of risk management is poor because risk assessments fail to identify pupils' needs. Personal emergency evacuation plans are not securely based upon good quality risk assessments. Staff members lack the necessary guidance to manage and de-escalate pupils' challenging and risk-taking behaviour.
- Current practice in relation to the administration and recording of medication is unsafe, placing pupils at risk. Staff have not received sufficient training in the management and administration of medication. As a result, poor practice is taking place.
- Staff supervision does not lead to improvements in the quality of care because it does not enable care staff to reflect on their practice.
- The leaders, managers and governors do not effectively monitor the quality of care provided to pupils and ensure that the national minimum standards are met.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

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

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:

- 3.6 The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of children who are unwell, and ensures that children's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing is promoted. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, administration of medicines (including controlled drugs) and dealing with medical emergencies. Policies for administration of medication should reflect guidance provided by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (Handling of Medicines in Social Care).
- 5.1 Suitable sleeping accommodation is provided for children. It is well organised and managed with risk assessments undertaken and the findings acted upon to reduce risk for all children. Where children are aged 8 years or over, sleeping accommodation for boys is separate from sleeping accommodation for girls.
- 6.3 The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- 11.1 The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 12.4 Methods to de-escalate confrontations or potentially challenging behaviour are used wherever appropriate to avoid use of restraint, including reasonable force. Restraint, including reasonable force, is only used in exceptional circumstances, to prevent injury to any person, including the child, or to prevent serious damage to the property of any person, including the child's, or to prevent the child leaving the school's premises where this may lead to the child injuring themselves or others. Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate.
- 12.5 All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) within 24 hours incidents of restraint, including reasonable force, they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by.
- 12.6 A written record is kept of major sanctions and the use of any reasonable force. Records include the information in Appendix 2 (use of reasonable force). The record is made within 24 hours and is legible. Children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records. The school regularly reviews any instances of the use of reasonable force and examines trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and learn in a way that will inform future practice.
- 13.1 The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.
- 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.

- 13.9 The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.
- 14.1 Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 18.1 The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory requirements.
- 20.1 The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who is independent of the management of the school, to visit the school six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the head teacher (or school equivalent).
- 21.2 Each child has at least one key worker (or similar person) within the school who provides individual guidance and support to the child. They regularly make time available to the child to enable the child to seek guidance, advice and support on any matter. They monitor the school's compliance on a day to day basis with the child's placement plan.
- 21.3 The child's wishes are sought and taken into account in the selection of their key worker/s and if they request a change of key worker.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Listen and respond effectively to pupils' complaints in respect of their safety.
- Ensure that all staff, including volunteers, are recruited in line with current safer recruitment policies.
- Improve the quality of individual risk assessments, including ensuring that personal evacuation plans are fully risk-assessed.
- Ensure that all staff receive additional training in the use of de-escalation and restraint and observe correct and proportionate practice at all times.
- Ensure that all staff that manage medication receive training in the safe administration of medicines and follow correct guidelines at all times.
- Ensure that supervision and appraisal enable all staff to reflect on their practice and lead to improvements in the quality of care provided to pupils.
- Ensure that the leaders, managers and governors monitor the quality of care provided to pupils to ensure weaknesses in provision are identified and dealt with such that the national minimum standards are met.

Information about this inspection

The academy was contacted on the morning of the planned inspection. The inspectors arrived at the school at 11.00. On the second day, the social care inspectors were accompanied by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors who undertook a monitoring inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and leadership and management at the academy.

Inspectors scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. Inspectors met with senior leaders of the school and residential provision, members of the governing body, staff and parents. They spoke to students. Behaviour was observed at meal times, break times and in classrooms. Records relating to pupils' behaviour, incidents, sanctions and risk assessment were reviewed. Inspectors spoke to the local authority designated officer (LADO) and a representative of the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

Inspection team

Sharron Escott
Paula Lahey

Lead social care inspector
Senior social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

The school received academy status in September 2011. Springfields Academy offers provision for pupils experiencing difficulties in mainstream education as a result of a combination of emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. It also provides tuition in externally accredited vocational subjects for day pupils. Springfields can provide residential accommodation for pupils of both genders at any one time, ranging in age from nine to 16 years. At the time of the inspection, 55 pupils were resident. Three out of the four residential units on the academy site are in use. All residential pupils return home at weekends and during academy holidays. The academy is situated in a rural town in Wiltshire. Since the previous inspection, the acting headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the head of care have been confirmed as permanent employees. Currently, the academy is restructuring the care provision; this includes reviewing roles and responsibilities of house managers, the deputy head of each residential unit and a full-time nurse. The previous full inspection of the residential provision was in March 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and pupils **Inadequate**

The overall experiences and progress of pupils are inadequate because the academy fails to keep them safe and act upon their concerns. Not all complaints made by pupils in respect of their safety are managed effectively.

Leaders and managers fail to ensure that documentation relating to pupils' care is accurate and up to date. For example, risk assessment and risk management documentation fails accurately to reflect the current needs of pupils or strategies to manage their behaviours, resulting in pupils receiving care of varying quality.

Arrangements in place for medication are not safe or effective. Records have not been well maintained. As a result, some pupils do not receive medication at the prescribed times and the care staff who dispense and administer medication do not always follow pharmaceutical guidelines, placing pupils at risk of harm. Some pupils have complex health needs. The staff team engages well with external health care professionals, such as mental health services, and provides the targeted support required to pupils with complex health needs.

The pupils engaged well with the inspectors and shared their views about their experiences at the academy. Pupils state that they like being at the academy and get along with most staff and other pupils. In general, pupils demonstrated consideration, tolerance and kindness to each other.

Transition arrangements for pupils entering and leaving the academy have improved. Pupils are supported and encouraged by staff to develop the skills they require for a smooth transition into adulthood. Some pupils said that they enjoyed cooking whilst others stated that they enjoyed spending time going out on their own, and attending college.

The headteacher has improved some aspects of consultation with children. The pupils' incentive scheme has been reviewed and changes implemented. Pupils are engaged in this process and are keen to earn vouchers in recognition of their positive behaviour.

The quality of care and support

Requires improvement

Care and health plans are of poor quality. Key information regarding each pupil is missing, impacting negatively on the quality of care provided. A significant number of documents lack key information about pupils, others include out-of-date information. They also lack information about the impact of pupils' specific medical diagnoses and fail to identify clear targets for behavioural improvement.

Formal procedures are not in place to consider compatibility, safety and personal preferences with regard to sleeping arrangements of pupils. For example, female pupils' toilet and bathing facilities are located too far from their rooms and near bedrooms occupied by male pupils.

Not all pupils are afforded comfortable and nurturing homes to live in. Ongoing

refurbishment plans are in place; however, the academy has been unsuccessful in securing sufficient funding to make all necessary improvements and therefore, progress is slow. As a result, leaders and managers decided to close one of the four residential houses.

Pupils are encouraged to personalise their own living areas. Some pupils choose to display pictures, posters and treasured personal items. Residential pupils confirm that their possessions are safe and secure.

Some pupils who visit college during the week miss out on the main meal as it is usually served at lunchtime. Although they take a packed lunch with them, some pupils would prefer the option of being able to purchase items at the college canteen, in the same way as their peers. During meal times, a mixture of plastic and earthenware crockery is provided. The plastic options do not support the adult meal time experience that the school wishes to promote.

The pupils enjoy wholesome and nutritious food. Determined efforts are made to increase the range of foods that pupils eat and their individual dietary needs are catered for well. This year, pupils have tried a range of different fish and seafood. The chef says, 'I am glad to say each time more children take up a taster; and the consumption of fish is increasing'.

The academy has a designated transition team that ensures that pupils join and leave the school in a planned and well managed way. The team provides good support to families and this includes home visits where appropriate. Families gave positive feedback about this service.

Care staff support pupils' learning and development. Literacy and numeracy activities are threaded throughout the evening activities enabling pupils to continue learning in a fun and interactive way. Pupils are supported to develop skills for independent living. Goals are individualised to enable pupils to progress within their individual capabilities.

How well children and pupils are protected

Inadequate

Senior leaders, managers and governors have failed to manage safeguarding in a consistently effective way. Although there are improvements in working with external agencies, there are weaknesses in the overall management and oversight of child protection. Staff do not always follow due process, leaving pupils at risk of harm.

Leaders, managers and governors fail to ensure that all child protection concerns are fully investigated. During investigations, they fail to prioritise pupils' safety, potentially leaving pupils at risk of harm.

Not all staff understand their duty to manage risk and share concerns. Although care staff record observations, incidents and disclosures about pupils, they do not always ensure that the information is dealt with appropriately and in line with legislation. As a result, pupils are at risk of harm. The failure to follow guidelines limits the designated

officers' ability to oversee individual cases properly and ensure that any required action or intervention is carried out.

The designated officers who manage safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints have not attended safeguarding refresher training to undertake their role. The headteacher took effective action to remedy this during the inspection.

The academy failed to ensure that safer recruitment practices were followed when it appointed an independent visitor and a volunteer, both of whom have regular and unsupervised contact with pupils. Disclosure and barring checks are carried out, but other vetting processes such as obtaining references, checking employment history and interviews are not completed. The safer recruitment policy is out of date and has not been reviewed to ensure it is in line with current guidance. However, leaders and managers have ensured that staff recruitment records have improved. Gaps in employment histories are explored prior to newly appointed staff commencing work.

Records of significant incidents lack clarity and detail. The management oversight and monitoring of these records is poor. Records indicate that at times some pupils are held face down on the floor in response to challenging behaviour. On one occasion, this hold lasted for ten minutes. It is not clear whether all staff use sufficient de-escalation techniques to prevent these restrictive practices being used. During the inspection the headteacher stated that the use of these holds would cease. Managers do not provide staff, pupils and those who witness a restraint the opportunity to discuss the incident afterwards. Managers do not seek pupils' views on their feelings about being held; however, they are encouraged to sign the incident record. Care staff do not have the opportunity to reflect on their practice.

Managers have failed to assess the risks pupils may present to each other when living together. Staff use their knowledge of risks posed by individual pupils but do not record this information formally, leading to staff taking different approaches to the same incidents, potentially placing pupils at risk of harm.

Care staff have not received sufficient training in the administration of medication. For example, staff do not routinely wash their hands before handling medicines and do not place medication in a sterile container before administering it to pupils. There are discrepancies between the medicine administration record and the prescribed medication. As a result, one young person was not receiving their prescribed dosage. A nurse was previously responsible for administering the majority of medication but this post has been vacant since the start of the autumn term 2015.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Inadequate

Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to the senior leadership team. As yet the new leadership team have failed to embed sustainable improvement, but there is evidence of their determination and commitment to do so.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that effective systems are in place to keep the pupils safe. For example, they have failed to monitor incidents of poor behaviour

that would provide them with the information needed to make safe decisions about pupils' future care.

The governors, senior leaders and managers have failed to monitor and have effective oversight of the operation of the residential provision. National benchmarks and minimum standards are not used to help managers assess the quality of the home's performance. A significant number of national minimum standards are not met. This has had a direct negative impact on the quality of pupils' experience and safety.

Managers deal differently with complaints raised by the public and parents and those raised by pupils. Complaints raised by the public and parents are recognised and responded to appropriately. Complaints made by pupils are not all afforded the same level of attention. The academy fails to respond fully to pupils' complaints and does not learn from them.

Leaders and managers fail to ensure that the arrangements in place for supervision of staff lead to improvements in practice. Although care staff state that they receive formal supervision, it is not reflective, child-centred or target-driven. Not all staff who have supervisory responsibilities have received the appropriate training to undertake this role. As a result, supervisory meetings do not encourage care staff to evaluate their dealings with pupils.

Staff have received a range of training this year, including in the prevention of child sexual exploitation and 'Prevent' training. This training supports their work with pupils. Most care staff have formal care qualifications or are studying for them.

The newly-appointed senior leadership team is aware of the provision's weaknesses and demonstrates the vision, determination and drive necessary to improve the quality and standard of care provided to residential pupils. A full restructuring of teaching staff and residential staff has commenced.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and 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 children and pupils consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and 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. Children and 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 pupil's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and pupils are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and 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

Unique reference number	137470
Social care unique reference number	SC039093
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	55
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	9 to16
Headteacher	Mr J Hamp
Date of previous boarding inspection	16/03/2015
Telephone number	01249 814125
Email address	admin@springfields.wilts.sch.uk

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