

Parkwood Hall Co-Operative Academy

Parkwood Hall School, Beechenlea Lane, SWANLEY, Kent, BR8 8DR

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| Inspection dates | 07/07/2015 to 09/07/2015 | |
| The overall experiences and progress of children and young people | Requires improvement | 3 |
| The quality of care and support | Good | 2 |
| How well children and young people are protected | Requires improvement | 3 |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings

The residential provision requires improvement because

- The residential provision provides pupils with good quality care, guidance and support but the judgement for the overall experiences and progress of pupils is requires improvement. Leaders and managers understand the areas of weakness but their plans have not yet become embedded.
- Staff members understand the presenting welfare concerns for individual pupils but these are not consistently recorded within a central document, such as a written welfare plan. This shortfall compromises the delivery and monitoring of a consistent approach from all staff involved with the care and support needs of individual pupils.
- Some written risk assessments do not fully capture the presenting risks for pupils. Staff members do not always receive clear and explicit guidance in order to successfully manage challenging or risk-taking behaviour or to avoid their occurrence by recognising potential triggers.
- Some areas of safeguarding policies require updating in order to provide the staff team with accurate, up-to-date guidance. Spontaneity and appropriate risk-taking are currently prevented by the over-reliance on, and extreme use of, guidance on lone-working and surveillance.

- Recent changes and additions to the senior leadership team and governing body are yet to become embedded and so cannot be fully evaluated.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

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

- Where necessary, a child has a clear individual health and welfare plan or similar record, containing relevant health and welfare information provided by parents/carers and recording significant health and welfare needs and issues (NMS 3.12)
- The school ensures that the welfare of pupils 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 (NMS 6.3)

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review and update safeguarding policy and guidance in respect of lone working and the use of surveillance devices.
- Review current guidance and practice with regards to allowing pupils to take appropriate risks. This is with particular regards to on-line and internet safety.
- Update safer recruitment policy guidance in order that it is in line with up-to-date legislative changes.
- Ensure all physical restraint records are completed to a good standard.
- Keep under review the school's admission criteria and training programme to ensure the workforce maintains the skills, qualifications and expertise necessary to meet all pupils' presenting needs.
- Conduct regular reviews of staffing levels to ensure these do not impact negatively upon activity provision.

Information about this inspection

The school was given three hours' notice of the inspection. All of the residential areas were visited. Pupils spoke with the inspectors alone and in groups. Inspectors joined the pupils for activities and meals and the drama group were proud to invite the inspectors to a wonderful performance of Bugsy Malone. Parents and carers were notified by the school once the inspection was announced; a number spoke directly with the inspectors. Documents relating to the health, welfare and safety of the pupils were sampled, alongside a selection of individual care plans. Meetings were held with the principal, chair of governors, school nurse, therapy manager, designated child protection officer, catering manager, head of care, residential staff members and business manager.

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| Sophie Wood | Lead social care inspector |
| Anna Williams | Social care inspector |

Full Report

Information about this school

Parkwood Hall became a Co-operative Academy on 1 May 2015. It is inspected as a residential special school and provides day and residential placements to boys and girls aged between 7 – 19 years. There are currently 28 residential pupils who board on a weekly basis. The residential accommodation is provided in five separate areas; four of which are located within the main school building and a separate house within the main grounds. The school is situated in Swanley, Kent. It is a school for pupils with speech, language and communication needs. Some pupils also have autism and varying degrees of learning disabilities; some have complex health and medical needs. This is the school's first full welfare inspection since it became a Co-operative Academy.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Requires improvement

Residential pupils experience positive and meaningful relationships with the staff and each other. Feedback about their experiences is overwhelmingly positive. They say, 'I'm really happy here, I enjoy boarding' and 'I like being with my friends when I board'. New residential pupils and those who are homesick receive sensitive help and guidance. Individual key worker and personal tutor times are skilfully used to provide bespoke support. Pupils frequently talk of the school nurse as a trusted confidante and say, '[name of nurse] always listens and helps me to feel better'.

Pupils make good progress with regards to their confidence, self-esteem, and social and life skills. The school places a strong focus upon developing pupils' independence which takes into account their individual needs and abilities. Parents say, 'my child has flourished at this school, they are doing things I never thought possible' and '[pupil's name] is happy but sad to be moving onto college. They will miss everyone but they are well prepared, excited about the future and more grown up'.

The whole school community enjoys a rich mix of pupils and staff from diverse backgrounds. Pupils' unique personalities and needs are celebrated and embraced. Friendships are made and thrive within this culture of acceptance. Older and more established pupils are quick to support and befriend newcomers and those with more complex needs than their own.

Senior leaders are aware of the challenges faced by a staff team which is charged with meeting the needs of such a diverse group. Consequently, a skills and training audit is on-going, though not yet fully completed. This requires further development to ensure that all pupils' support plans are implemented to enable pupils to achieve maximum development and positive experiences of all the school has to offer.

A new job role, recently introduced, is aimed at achieving greater consistency and cohesion between the school day and residential provision. Such staff members work a variety of shift patterns in order to support individual pupils throughout the entirety of the extended curriculum. The continuity and impact of the education and residential provision is being strengthened for the benefit of the pupils. Although in its infancy, the role is already positively received by staff, parents, carers, and the pupils.

Safeguarding procedures and practices are improving but there are examples of poorer quality risk assessments which do not fully protect the well-being of some individual pupils.

The senior leadership team is strengthened by the introduction of two new deputy principal positions and the governing body's increasing membership. Key lines of responsibility and accountability are clear. Staff members across all levels are supportive

yet challenging of each other. This breeds a culture of continuing improvement which has high aspirations for the pupils.

The quality of care and support

Good

Staff members know the residential pupils extremely well. They can describe their needs, personalities and unique character traits in great detail. This aspect positively impacts on pupils' feelings of self-worth. They feel valued and respected. Pupils have a strong voice. They are effectively listened to. One recent example demonstrates excellent consultation which enabled pupils to choose their own key workers.

Collaborative partnership working starts with the pre-admissions process. The views of parents, carers, prospective pupils and professionals reliably inform the care planning process. Staff members say they find the 'top ten tips about my child' an invaluable new tool added to the admissions information. Introductory visits are used to identify emerging needs, resulting in excellent bespoke arrangements. One recent example demonstrates how an entirely separate provision within the residential facility is the start of a pupil's own journey towards more fully integrating with their peers and the 24 hour curriculum. Senior leaders record and agree such plans, and any on-going amendments with parents and carers to ensure that all parties remain fully involved in decision-making processes.

The introduction of the new education support assistant role is being combined with a newly introduced care planning tool. Its structure requires tighter and more formal communication between education, residential and therapy staff. Individual goals and targets are shaped by a collaborative approach which fully includes the pupils and crosses all areas of their development and progress. Comments from pupils include, 'I'm doing my own ironing' and 'I'm learning about road safety'. One pupil laughed and said, 'I've learnt to wash up by hand because the dishwasher was broken!'

A recent and on-going therapy audit and review included the information held in all pupils' individual statements of need and their education, health and welfare plans. Thorough and diligent planning ensures pupils receive the prescribed speech and language therapy they need. Focus is currently underway on a similar piece of work with regards to other therapies.

In conjunction with these reviews, a staff training and skills audit is also progressing. This focus is enabling senior leaders to effectively update the staff training matrix. One staff member stated, 'the specific self-harm training has really enhanced my understanding and practice'. The diligent monitoring approach by the therapy team ensures that staff members' on-going competence, for example with regards to managing conditions, such as dysphagia, is being measured and maintained.

A similar approach by the school nurse ensures pupils' health and medical care needs

are effectively supported. A core group of residential staff members receive training, guidance and routine competency checks from the nurse who maintains clear and diligent auditing systems. This keeps errors to an absolute minimum. Staff members adopt a precautionary approach and are quick to seek additional advice in the spirit of reducing any room for error.

There are some pupils who have complex health and medical care needs. The engagement of external professionals, such as mental health services, is providing pupils with targeted support. They are learning to develop the skills they need to cope with their difficulties. However, the absence of dedicated welfare plans means that staff members involved in the pupils care are not always aware of changes as soon as they occur. The ability to robustly monitor the impact of the staff team's collective support is inhibited because there is no central planning or reviewing tool.

Pupils give a mixed response with regards to the quality of meals provided by the catering team. Inspectors found a wide range of healthy choices which are routinely influenced by pupil feedback and surveys. An innovative catering manager strives to include pupils' preferences alongside special dietary requirements, medical needs and liaison with parents, carers and health professionals with regards to menu planning.

Many pupils offer positive comments about the range and frequency of the activities they enjoy. Their comments include, 'playing football, making cakes and going to the Cyclo-park'. Others said, 'I like playing football and swimming'. A high number of pupils relish the opportunities they are given to perform centre stage. The school is extremely proud of its steel band which was attending a national event during the inspection. In addition, the drama group delivered a stunning performance of Bugsy Malone. The entire production showcased the combined skills of this group. Those pupils less interested in singing, dancing and acting, gave fantastic backstage support in the form of music, lighting and props.

Good quality residential accommodation provides comfortable living areas and plenty of space. On-going refurbishment plans are targeting specific areas, such as bedrooms. Some of these are currently small, cubicle arrangements which pupils can and do personalise with pictures, posters and treasured personal items from home. Individual sleeping arrangements are reviewed at the end of each term to ensure a focus is maintained upon pupils' safety, preferences and the need to be close to specific resources, such as sleep-in staff and bathrooms. Residential pupils confirm that the safety of their possessions is assured.

How well children and young people are protected

Requires improvement

The school's safeguarding arrangements require improvement. Pupils say they feel safe at school but some examples of individual risk assessments linked to behaviour

management plans lack the prescriptive guidance needed by the staff team. Inconsistent approaches sometimes result. Staff members are not always able to recognise potential triggers in order or take swift and effective action in response to risky situations.

Staff members are well trained in the use of physical restraint techniques and rely more upon de-escalation methods. Comments from staff members include, 'it's horrible to restrict a child's movement' and 'it has got to be an absolute last resort'. The use of physical restraint is rare within the residential provision. It is used in accordance with the school's behaviour management guidance. There are some examples of incomplete or poorly written records which are completed following an incident. This shortfall restricts the ability of senior managers to robustly examine potential patterns and trends, and take appropriate action.

Recent changes to safeguarding policies and guidance have strengthened the school's relationship with its host local authority. This comes from meetings and liaison with the local authority designated officer (LADO) who describes the school's practice as, 'effective and swift in the event of any concerns about an adult's practice'. Staff members understand their responsibilities. They challenge each other about practice issues before these become significant shortfalls and utilise whistle blowing procedures in the spirit of protecting the pupils.

Further revisions to the school's own safeguarding policies include the addition of local authority and police protocols, for example, in responding to pupils who may go missing or absent. Such occurrences have happened and the swift application of such guidance has resulted in their quick and safe return.

Other developments include the provision of designated person's training for more members of the senior leadership team. The school has recognised the need to strengthen the knowledge and understanding of all matters relating to child protection at this senior level. This is indicative of good succession planning and ensures the provision of a pool of suitably qualified designated child protection officers (DCPO's) across the school.

Staff members diligently implement pupil's safeguarding protocols and care plans. They say this is particularly necessary to ensure the safety of the pupils; particularly those whose complex needs and disabilities make them increasingly vulnerable. Staff members say, 'if you can't communicate or have physical disabilities, you are at a much higher risk. We always use two staff when assisting pupils with their personal care needs'. Additional guidance with regards to appropriate touch and the use of CCTV in communal areas reassures staff in the event that an allegation could be made. However, there are occasions where individual staff members are pre-occupied with placing themselves within the camera range and never allowing themselves to be alone with a pupil. Too much caution restricts spontaneous and natural interaction between staff and pupils. This is unrealistic particularly when the guidance on the use of surveillance methods is unclear. It does not provide staff, parents and carers, and placing authorities with

sufficient information.

Pupils provide a mixed response with regards to learning about keeping themselves safe. All pupils said they feel safe at school but some believe they are over protected. This concurs with feedback from some of the staff members, who use examples, such as internet and on-line safety. Their comments include, 'we need to reduce the filters and blocks and teach pupils how to keep themselves safe'. Other staff members say, 'this is a really difficult balance to strike. Some pupils are much more at risk than others'. This example illustrates the extensive range of needs and differences among the residential pupils. Senior leaders need to ensure that systems and care plans allow each pupil to maximise their own potential in learning to protect themselves.

Pupils identify a range of adults they would turn to for support such as, 'lots of staff, our activity leader and night staff'. One young person also said, 'we have got 'phone numbers for things like Child Line but I don't know anyone who would feel the need to use it'. Pupils were also able to describe the role of the school's independent listener but again said that they would prefer to talk to staff if they had a problem.

Robust recruitment processes serve to protect the pupils from potentially unsafe adults. Core checks and references are completed before new staff members join the school. Visitors are diligently monitored. Their status is made clearly visible to staff and pupils through the requirement to wear coloured lanyards while on the premises. The school's current recruitment policy does not accurately reflect updated safer recruitment guidance, although its actual practice is sound. For example, the most recent staff appointments have involved pupils in the decision-making process.

The extensive buildings and grounds of the school typically provide safety and security for the pupils. One specific area within the grounds was identified by inspectors as a potential hazard and immediate remedial action was taken. A dedicated maintenance team conducts regular health and safety checks and responds swiftly to repair and maintenance requests. The school is working in close liaison with the local fire officer and in response to a disability access audit, completed earlier this year. Personal evacuation plans for all residential pupils are being completed and records demonstrate all fire safety checks remain up-to-date. Revised sleeping arrangements follow the fire officer's guidance and pupils confirm that fire evacuation is routinely practised.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement

A well planned and inclusive consultation process resulted in the school's recent transition to its current Academy status. Parents, carers and external stakeholders positively support this decision which secures senior leaders' ability to make creative decisions about the future operating model of the school.

Immediate decisions have resulted in a diligent re-think about the structure and role of

the senior leadership team. Examples of recent changes include the revision of the head of care position. Two explicitly clear deputy principal positions now replace this post which supports the principal's decision to delegate operational decisions to enable him to focus upon more strategic oversight. The impact of this restructure cannot be fully evaluated at this stage and will be assessed in more detail at the next inspection.

No complaints have been received since the school's transition. However, in terms of learning lessons, senior leaders and the governing body have effectively used previous complaints information to revise policies and guidance. Prescriptive processes and timelines now clearly outline and set out the timescales and responsibilities of the school's complaint's procedures. A more pro-active approach which seeks parental feedback at regular intervals engages parents and carers to work in partnership with the school. Comments from parents include, 'they tell me everything, even the difficult stuff. That is why I trust them'.

Appropriate staffing levels are routinely implemented to meet the needs of the pupils. Occasional shortages are as a result of staff absences combined with a busy residential activity schedule. Contingency planning results in the minimal use of agency staff. This is positive but a more pro-active approach would ensure that activities are only cancelled or re-organised in extreme circumstances.

Staff members speak very favourably about the supervision and support they receive from senior managers. Written records demonstrate that staff supervision is child focused and performance driven. Staff members are held to account and are supported in equal measure. An ambitious target of monthly supervision is sometimes difficult to achieve with such a large staff team; senior leaders are considering a fresh focus upon quality rather than quantity.

New staff members receive thorough induction support which takes them through the whole school provision. They quickly understand everyone's roles and responsibilities and how these impact upon their own job role. All members of the residential staff team, including waking night staff members, have completed, or are studying for Level 3 Diplomas. Those with additional responsibilities, such as supporting pupils with specific health needs, receive additional training, such as mental health. A team of staff who strives to maintain their competence, skills and expertise provide good quality support to pupils.

The governing body provides support and effective challenge to senior leaders. This governing body is growing in membership and having an impact. Governors conduct unannounced visits to the residential provision and produce reports which focus upon areas to improve. Parent-governance is also strong and impacts positively upon decisions and the monitoring role of the governing body. The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses. Clear and measurable development plans are under continuing monitoring and review. One example of on-going update is the school's website. New and revised policies and procedures are being added as each of these pass through the scrutiny and

ratification of the governing body.

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

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| Unique reference number | 100548 |
| Social care unique reference number | 1159380 |
| 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.

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|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Residential Special School |
| Number of boarders on roll | 28 |
| Gender of boarders | Mixed |
| Age range of boarders | 8 to 19 |
| Headteacher | Mr Nick White |
| Date of previous boarding inspection | N/A |
| Telephone number | 01322 664441 |
| Email address | Nick.White@parkwoodhall.rbkc.sch.uk |

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