

# Archers Brook Sebd Residential School

Chester Road, Great Sutton, ELLESMERE PORT, CH66 2NA

<b>Inspection dates</b>	12/03/2015	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is outstanding because

- Residential pupils relish the opportunities to stay at the school. They say the school is 'amazing', they 'love it' and it is 'the best school ever'. The staff are great and we have lots of fun here.
- Residential pupils say they are safe and feel safe here. This is because they are confident to talk to staff about any issues which are concerning them and know staff will support them.
- The care provision is exceptionally well led by the highly committed head of care, and care staff. It is enshrined within the school and is effectively supported by the governing body, headteacher and senior management team. It is evident that nothing is too much trouble for them and their priority is to enable residential pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- As a result of their stays residential pupils have a much greater confidence in their own abilities. Consequently, this has massively increased their self-esteem. They are much more able to manage challenging situations and are more able to engage with their education.
- The school meets and is exceeding the national minimum standards. There are minor shortfalls within some records and steps have been taken immediately to rectify these.

### 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

The school was contacted on the morning of day one by the lead inspector to announce the inspection.

The inspection took place over three days with feedback provided on the afternoon of day three. During the inspection records and documentation were examined.

Interviews took place with the residential pupils, head of care, headteacher, care staff and school staff to secure their views upon the quality of care provided.

A tour of the premises and grounds was undertaken. Evening activities were also observed over two nights.

## Inspection team

Chris Scully

Lead social care inspector

# **Full report**

## **Information about this school**

Archers Brook Sebd Residential School is maintained by the local authority and provides special education for up to 62 children between the ages of 11 and 16 who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The majority of children are day pupils. There are currently 64 children. Of these 24 children use the residential provision. This comprises of 21 males and three female pupils.

The residential provision is available four nights a week from Monday to Thursday. Residential pupils stay for a variety of nights. There is also a range of after-school clubs available to both day pupils and residential pupils.

The school provides residential accommodation on the main site. The residential provision was last inspected 21 March 2014.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- enhance further the monitoring of records to ensure they are consistently well recorded; in particular those relating to physical interventions, risk assessments and records of consequences issued
- consider the use of language used in some records to quantify the action of the residential pupils and to further encourage residential pupils to record their views in their own words.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Pupils relish the opportunities to stay on residence. They clearly enjoy all the opportunities afforded to them during their stay. Pupils say they can talk to staff about anything and know that they listen to them. They enjoy the opportunities to spend time with their peers in a relaxed social environment. Friendships are flourishing and strong bonds are developing between the pupils. Residential pupils show an exceptional improvement with regard to their independence and self-esteem.

Residential pupils are much more able to manage their own behaviours. For example, instead of hitting out they are now able to explain why they are upset. They are confident to challenge others in a constructive manner when they feel their behaviour is not what it should be. For example, assisting others to keep each other's language in check by reminding them not to swear. As a result pupils are increasing in maturity and are effectively transferring strategies learnt in school into their leisure time.

Residential pupils welcome the opportunities to choose and engage in a wide range of activities such as swimming, football, youth clubs and cadets. Pupils eagerly tell visitors about the team challenges in youth club and regale them with tales of the blind food tasting they undertook last week. Pupils said some of the food was 'ok' but 'the chillies, definitely not.' Pupils are eagerly anticipating the next team challenge.

Pupils are increasingly tolerant of one another. They acknowledge that at times some pupils may need some space and accept that they all need this at times. They offer constructive support and guidance to others, such as how to generate additional lives on games consoles. They enjoy the friendly rivalry of supporting different football teams. Residential pupils say they are pleased with the new radios in their bedrooms. This means they can listen to the football matches, but say it would be better to watch them on the television.

Residential pupils' views are of paramount importance to all staff and senior leaders. Their views are highly sought on all aspects of their care and support. Regular meetings mean pupils have a say in the care and support they receive such as the activities on offer and the planning of menus. Residential pupils are more aware of their own health care needs. They understand the need to eat a healthy, well-balanced diet. A pupil said 'I do try some new foods but I am just a very fussy eater.' Pupils enjoy the opportunities to stay fit and healthy and take part in a range of sports and physical exercise such as trampolining, swimming and football.

Residential pupils are being prepared well for independence and the transition into adulthood. They undertake a range of chores each day such as helping to set and clear away the table at mealtimes; they are becoming more confident to prepare their own snacks and to keep their rooms tidy. In the bungalow more able pupils are able to practice a wide variety of independent skills, such as doing their own laundry, planning menus, shopping for ingredients and cooking their evening meal in a safe supportive environment. A number of young people and their families who have moved on keep in regular contact with staff and will ring them for further advice and support. This reflects the positive relationships that have been established as pupils have moved through their school experience and the commitment to support successful transition.

### Quality of residential provision and care

### Outstanding

The quality of care provided to the residential pupils is of a very high standard. Pupils are supported by an experienced and very stable staff team who know them very well. Sensitive

pastoral care of the pupils means that the pupils are able to share their personal thoughts and any concerns safe in the knowledge that staff always listen carefully to them. Care staff are enthusiastic in supporting the residential pupils to enjoy life at the school to the full. This is highly valued by the residential pupils. A pupil said, 'everyone should come to a school like this.'

All admissions to the residential unit are carried out with sensitivity and careful planning involving the parents and the child. Robust, personalised induction procedures means young people look forward to coming to the residence. They settle quickly and enjoy very positive relationships with staff which are built upon mutual trust and respect. For example, pupils enjoy lively appropriate banter with staff. They relish the opportunities to 'tell tales' on staff and laugh at their reactions. They are very quick to point out that they were only joking.

Care planning is comprehensive and is highly personalised. Young people are involved in the care planning and often sign to say that they agree with the targets set for their personal development. A pupil wrote that they will 'try and think about what I say to others but, I may need some help from the staff.' This demonstrates the pupil's commitment to changing their behaviour while acknowledging that they may need some support when they get it wrong.

A key strength of the school is effective communication between the residential unit and school. All staff consistently aim high for pupils, and help them to achieve their best. The introduction of the new homework club has been generally well received. Pupils admit that they do not always want to do it, but acknowledge that it does get it out of the way and then they can enjoy their evening. Staff have undertaken additional training in ICT, literacy and numeracy to further support the pupils learning.

Young people's health care needs are met well. They are effectively supported by a range of health care professional such as child and adolescent mental health teams, paediatricians, school nurses and a range of therapists and counsellors. Residential pupil say staff look after them when they are ill and they feel confident to ask to see the doctor. A doctor said 'this is much more than a school, the staff often go above and beyond what is expected of them to ensure pupils get the right help and support.'

Staff are strong advocates for residential pupils. For example they effectively sought additional medical advice when a young person said they felt, 'as flat as a pancake.' This resulted in a change in medication which has had a positive impact upon the young person's moods and outlook.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks. The high standards of meals provided support the aim of encouraging a healthy lifestyle. Pupils enjoy a relaxed 'family' meal of an evening. This is because they are actively involved in serving the meals and helping to clear away afterwards. It is here where pupils engage in lively interactions and discussions around a range of topics including quizzing visitors on their role and putting forward their views in a constructive and confident manner.

Residential pupils are very pleased with the recent changes in the décor. They are particularly proud of the new 'fire place' which was erected as part of the Christmas decorations. They have since told the head of care that they want it to stay. Some bathrooms have been upgraded since the last inspection and tentative plans are underway for the other bathrooms and the refurbishment of the kitchen area in Ash. The Bungalow has proved to be a 'big hit' with the pupils who enjoy the opportunities to practice their independent skills in a warm homely environment.

Pupils say they are in regular contact with their families throughout their stay. They say we can

ring them each night after they have been on their activities. Staff have also supported some pupils in using interactive applications to have visual contact with family members. Parents enjoy positive relationships with staff who keep in regular contact with them. Parents are confident to call the head of care to talk through issues with him and seek additional advice and support. This is very much part of the schools ethos that they for the whole family.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

## **Outstanding**

All staff have an excellent understanding of the schools safeguarding procedures. They are fully aware of who to speak to should they have concerns about a pupil and ensure the appropriate referrals are made. This means pupils are kept safe. Excellent multi-agency working means nothing is missed. The head of care and headteacher ensure the safety and well-being of the pupils is of paramount importance. They robustly challenge professionals to ensure residential pupils and their families get the support that they need.

Missing from care is not an issue for residential pupils. They may wander of in the grounds but remain within the sight of staff. Clear procedures are in place should a young person go missing which are known and understood by staff.

Residential pupils say bullying is not an issue for them. They say it does happen occasionally and confidently explain the 'three strikes' system should this occur. They say that any issues are dealt with quickly by staff. Pupils have a sound understanding of what constitutes bullying such as name calling, racist or homophobic remarks and acknowledge that this can happen when on social media sites or through text messages. They are very aware of what to do should they receive an inappropriate message as they confidently explain that they would use the 'stop' button and report this to the staff and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP).

Staff are highly skilled at managing the wide range of behaviours presented by pupils. They have an innate understanding of each pupil's needs and vulnerabilities. As a result they are able to quickly identify when they are becoming anxious and effectively implement a range of strategies to reduce the pupil's anxieties. This means the use of physical interventions in residence are very rare.

Pupils are aware that there may be consequences to their behaviour and say these are fair and reasonable. A pupil said that they have received a 'strike' the previous night and that was 'ok' because they had been rude to staff. Consequently pupils are much more able to identify poor behaviour, reflect upon this and consider more productive ways in which to manage this.

There are clear risk management systems in place for the buildings and grounds. Residential pupils are kept safe through robust checks on all fire-safety equipment and through regular practice of fire evacuation procedures. Pupils are confident about how to evacuate in an emergency, and demonstrated their knowledge to visitors as they explain the process. This was effectively demonstrated during the inspection when the fire alarm was set off. Pupils calmly and sensibly evacuated the building and waited until being given the all clear before re-entering the building. The head of care oversees the whole school risk assessments for pupils that define their vulnerabilities and identify strategies to minimise the risks to pupil's safety and welfare.

Managers follow comprehensive recruitment and selection procedures to ensure that only staff who are suitable to work with residential pupils are appointed. All required checks are undertaken before a staff member begins work.

## **Leadership and management of the residential provision** Outstanding

The headteacher and head of care ensure that the residential community is at the heart of the school. The highly insightful management by senior managers actively promotes a culture that ensures pupils are always listened to and respected as individuals. This ensures that nothing no matter how minor is missed.

Senior managers are highly committed to the ongoing development of the residential provision. The school has an excellent track record of continuous development. For example, ensuring governors visit every half term and compile a report as to the effectiveness of the service. This enables the head of care and staff to consider further improvements to the service. Governors are very active within the school community. They have a secure understanding of the residential setting and value the impact this is having upon pupil's confidence, self-esteem, behaviour and engagement in education.

Records and documentation are stored securely and provide useful insight into each pupil's experiences and progress. There are some inconsistencies in records. For example: risk assessments are not always dated and signed; the one physical intervention that had taken place was recorded in the wrong year book and some health care plans lacked clarity with regards to some medical conditions. Also the language used in some records, such as the consequences book, is subjective and does not quantify the behaviour displayed.

Pupils are encouraged to have their views recorded but on occasion it is not immediately transparent as to whether they have been asked or have simply declined to make comment. These issues do not impact negatively upon the excellent care and support provided to pupils on a daily basis.

Staff effectively create a culture where residential pupils rights as individuals are respected and their differences are accepted. Staff are enthusiastic, competent and well managed. They demonstrate a strong professional commitment to their work. There is always sufficient staff available at all times to ensure the efficient operation of the residence and to meet the care needs of the pupils. All staff are trained to the required level in order to carry out their roles and responsibilities. The management of the school is committed to ensuring staff are supported to develop their skills through regular supervision and training.

The headteacher and head of care's visionary approach inspires others to continually improve upon the service they provide to residential pupils. Nothing is too much for staff who thoroughly enjoy their work and take great pleasure in the achievements of the residential pupils. Staff willingly go above and beyond what is expected of them to ensure each residential pupil has exactly what they need to achieve their personal goals. This makes a massive difference to their lives and is reflected in the excellent outcomes they are achieving.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111517
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC006621
<b>DfE registration number</b>	896/7208

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>	
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Samantha Myers-Whittaker
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	21/03/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 3382141
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