

# Hebden Green Special School

1 Hebden Green Special School Grounds, WINSFORD, Cheshire, CW7 4EJ

## Inspection dates

Tuesday 8 December 2015 to  
Thursday 12 December 2015

## 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

- Staff enjoy their work and value the children and young people. Feedback from young people, parents and other professionals confirms that children and young people have exceptional relationships with staff. Children speak very positively about their residential experience. They make excellent academic and personal progress as a result of their time at this school.
- A committed and innovative senior leadership team leads this school. The team is dynamic in how it challenges a stable staff team to further improve their hands-on practice. The head of care provides exceptional care for children and young people and drives ongoing improvement in this setting.
- A wide range of after-school activities provides residential pupils with opportunities to try new experiences. This builds self-esteem and develops their social skills.
- Children benefit from an environment where residential staff work in effective collaboration with academic and therapy staff. Innovative and individualised communication systems maximise children and young people's decision making. Their views matter and influence the running of the home.
- Parents speak positively and passionately about the impact the school has had on their children both academically and personally. Children and young people and their families describe this service as 'perfect' and 'absolutely amazing'. It is a 'home from home' during stays.

## **Information about this inspection**

The school was given three hours' notice of the inspection. All the residential areas were visited. Children's feedback was obtained through shared meals and taking part in evening activities with boarders. The inspector met with the senior leadership team including the head of care and head teacher. Residential staff, the school nurse, business manager, the chair of governing body and the independent visitor were also interviewed. There were meetings with governors including residential and parent governors. Parents' feedback was obtained through group discussions and Parent View responses. Documents relating to the welfare and safety of children were sampled.

## **Inspection team**

Elaine Clare

Lead social care inspector

# Full Report

## Information about this school

Hebden Green Community Special School is a local authority maintained school for children with physical disabilities and associated medical and sensory needs. It educates children aged between two and 19 years. The residential provision caters only for those from Year 5 upwards. Different groups stay overnight between Monday and Thursday. Although the residential provision can accommodate up to 20 young people, the actual numbers in residence on any one night are less. The residential provision is staffed by care staff employed by the local authority, supported by a team of qualified nurses employed by East Cheshire National Health Service Trust. The residential provision of the school was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2014. In July 2014, Ofsted inspected the education provision, where all areas linked to education were judged to be outstanding.

## Inspection Judgements

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

**Outstanding**

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Sensitive care, alongside high levels of support assists residential pupils to prosper, socially, emotionally, physically and educationally. Strong, meaningful relationships are developed, with individual differences accepted and valued by all living and working in the school. This allows pupils to develop trusting relationships with appropriate role models.

Children and young people receive exceptional care in this school which adds considerably to their experiences, progress and development. Responses received by parents and other external sources are positive regarding the way pupils are looked after and supported. One parent said 'I can rest in the knowledge, that she is being cared for in a safe, 'home from home' environment by people whom I can trust. Something which is very important as a mum of a vulnerable young person.' A residential pupil encapsulated his own feelings and those of others by signing a thumbs up in response to whether he liked staying at the school. Another residential pupil smiled with delight and he giggled with glee when he heard his key worker talking to him.

Residential care staff are experienced, committed and understand the diverse needs of the residents in their care. For example one parent commented about the care staff ' They know the individual needs of my child.' This knowledge is used effectively for example, the high level of communication observed between staff and residential pupils. Communication with all pupils, no matter what difficulties they may experience, is not a barrier and does not impinge on their ability to make decisions about themselves. This is enhanced with on-going consultation between themselves and staff.

Personal development is promoted in an environment that is inclusive, allowing residential pupils to contribute positively during the time they are in residence. Records and photographs displayed around the school give insight into a whole range of areas where residential pupils contribute significantly to life in the residential unit.

Regular, daily consultation with residential pupils is a particular strength of the school. Staff work to ensure a sense of inclusion, identity and community within the residential provision. Parental views are reflected within the individualised plans and strategies which underpin evening and morning routines. This ensures care is personalised, with working practices put into place to meet the individual needs of pupils as well as those of the group.

An exceedingly nurturing and friendly environment enables children and young people to thrive and develop positive peer relationships. A parent said 'The Care Staff are hugely respectful of my daughter's needs, promoting her independence and encouraging her to socialise with her peers. We are also greatly supported as a family'.

The behaviour of residential pupils throughout the inspection was observed as excellent, with pupils being responsive to each other's needs and treating each other with respect, sensitivity and understanding. This relationship between peers leads to a strong sense of community which is apparent throughout the school.

The residential provision contributes significantly towards preparing pupils for life beyond the school. Pupils are encouraged to develop life skills. For example, older pupils are encouraged to make their own evening meal and socialise with their peers on age appropriate activities, in their own special adapted flat. As a result, this promotes residential pupils confidence, which in turn

provides a sound basis for later life.

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

## **Outstanding**

Residential pupils are very positive about the activities on offer. Good planning by the care staff team ensures that early evening activities, which are also available to day pupils, are successfully and safely facilitated. Engagement with the local community is promoted through regular use of leisure facilities and shopping excursions. On-site, residential pupils have access to a wide range of games, clubs, well maintained grounds and sports facilities. This provides them with new opportunities and experiences.

New 'Certificate of Personal Effectiveness' programs tailor specific targets for each pupil to work towards. Residential pupils make excellent progress in achieving their personal goals. Each term they spend time with staff reviewing together how they are getting on. One residential pupil said, 'I enjoy doing the COPE programme, it gives me opportunities to learn new skills.'

Residential house group meetings take place regularly. They provide a forum for residential pupils to raise issues and talk together. Records show that residential pupils raise a variety of matters ranging from menus, wanting more outdoor activities, and giving feedback on staff. Records consistently demonstrate all matters have been actioned by staff and residential pupils spoke about how satisfied were there with responses given. Residential pupils' views are also sought in a variety of other ways. For example, a ballot was completed on the recent change of the colour schemes of the accommodation areas and a menu survey. This demonstrates to residential pupils that their thoughts and opinions are valued.

Mealtimes are orderly, social occasions where residential pupils sit together with staff and talk about their day. Catering arrangements are good. Food is plentiful and individual diets are catered for. Residential pupils say they like the food and put forward their own meal ideas. They take turns to help with clearing up after a meal time, which helps them learn basic household skills.

Residential pupils are helped to keep in contact with family and friends appropriately. Parents confirm that they are kept up to date with how their child is progressing through regular contact with individual key workers. Arrangements for the administration of medication are safe and effective. The health needs of residential pupils are identified and met. The school has a number of health professionals that form a therapeutic team, this includes nurses and physiotherapists. There is also close liaison with external health professionals such as a child paediatrician and child and adolescent mental health services.

Residential pupils stay in good standard accommodation. They like their bedrooms and personalise their own spaces. For example, new boarders help to choose their own duvet sets and pictures for their walls. This assists with them settling into the boarding experience. Some children display their own artwork or have pictures of family and friends around them. This creates a colourful and unique space for each child. The school has a rolling programme of redecorating the residential area. Rooms which have been renovated so far benefit from new beds and matching furniture. This further enhances the sleeping accommodation. Communal areas have also been decorated and specialist equipment have been added. For example a room rarely used for play is now a purposely adapted kitchen with moveable sinks and cooker hobs so young people can easily access the space with their wheelchairs.

## How well children and young people are protected

**Outstanding**

Safeguarding practice is professional; policies are clear, robust and research-informed. Well trained staff understand safeguarding issues and procedures ensuring that children and young people are well protected.

Staff have an excellent understanding of children and young people's safety; they effectively identify, understand and manage risks. Clear, individualised risk assessments and behaviour guidelines are in place and include known triggers and intervention strategies that are followed by staff. Regular review and updating of these documents ensures that staff have relevant up to date information. Restraint is not used and any physical interventions are well-recorded with consistent management monitoring and oversight.

Comprehensive risk assessments in place enable children and young people to take risks appropriate to their individual level of understanding and ability. For example, some young people use sharp knives in food preparation with the appropriate supervision and specialist equipment identified in their individual risk assessments. Wherever possible, realistic and practical, staff enable children and young people to take managed risks to allow them to develop and learn.

In response to the wide range of individual needs of the children and young people who use the residential area, staff set individual and challenging goals. Staff hold regular and effective contact with parents, school staff and other professionals. They attend care planning meetings to enable collaborative working towards children and young people's goals. A teacher comments 'we work as a multi-disciplinary team for the child's best interest'.

Staff supervise children and young people according to their individual ability and understanding; staffing is in place according to individual need. Within the framework of required supervision and support, children and young people are encouraged to maximise their independence.

A parent comments 'they have taught him to dress himself and he has taken this on at home'. The quality of relationships between staff and children and young people is an immense strength of this school. Nurturing staff meet children and young people's holistic needs. A parent commented 'It's been absolutely amazing; he has excellent relationships with staff'.

The home has effective links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and utilise LSCB training. The manager and senior staff have recently attended child sexual exploitation training via the LSCB and use this resource to develop best practice within the school.

## The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

**Outstanding**

An experienced and well trained head teacher who is ambitious to maximise the outcomes for children and young people leads this school. The head has an innovative and creative approach, introducing new facilities and opportunities to ensure the highest quality care for children and young people.

The residential area of the school is well equipped, well maintained and homely. Facilities are up to date and offer a 'home from home' environment. The garden offers additional space and facilities. Both the head teacher and the head of care consistently strive to improve this setting to benefit children and young people.

The home is well staffed and resourced to meet the needs of children and young people receiving residential care. This ensures that children and young people receive the individualised

care that they require and enables them to effectively engage with the enriching experiences on offer during their overnight stays.

The independent visitor for the school actively and regularly monitors the quality of care provided. He has a thorough understanding of activity within the home, the children and young people who use the service and staff performance. Monitoring reports are very detailed, address any areas of weakness immediately and set goals for the ongoing improvement of this service.

Comprehensive, individualised and regularly reviewed care plans are in place. Staff have up to date information allowing them to meet the children and young people's individual needs. Observation of a staff handover demonstrated highly effective use of care plan information by staff in planning activities targeted to children and young people's individual goals.

Exceptional professional relationships between the home and partner agencies results in highly effective multi-disciplinary working to ensure the best possible care and experiences for children and young people.

Staff have impressive relationships with parents and carers. Parents and carers have regular opportunities to visit the school and understand the services it offers. There is always an 'open door policy'. The excellent communication in place ensures continuity of care for children and young people and allows parents to feel confident in this school. One parent said 'I was terrified of sending him here but it's been absolutely amazing. The transition was great, I had visits at home, and he had day visits and then stayed overnight. Communication is incredible. There's an open door policy I can always talk to them [staff] and he has excellent relationships with staff'. Another parent commented about the transition into school also, saying it 'enabled us and the young person to build relationships and for all involved to feel confident in the support they were providing and for the person and family to feel safe and cared for by people who had a good understanding of their needs.'

Fully trained staff meet the needs of the children and young people that they work with. Specialised training to meet individual children's complex needs is in place. Staff know and understand the children and young people in their care and are equipped to meet their specific needs.

Residential staff receive good support with a supervision and appraisal programme. Training for staff is on-going and all residential staff have gained, or about to gain, an appropriate professional qualification. This ensures staff possess the competences and skills to effectively meet the diverse needs of each pupil.

Residential pupils live in a caring, energetic, lively, supportive and child-centred environment. Staff work cohesively with families and other professionals to address young people's individual needs. Staff work with consistency to resolve issues and anxiety with pupils in a non-punitive way. They work through difficulties and challenges patiently, supportively and positively, recognising the needs of pupils and ensuring those needs are put first, addressed and then met.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111505
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC006614
<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>	101
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	8 to19
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Ashley
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	15/09/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01606 594221
<b>Email address</b>	admin@hebdengreen.cheshire.sch.uk

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