

Linden Lodge School

Linden Lodge School, 61 Princes Way, LONDON, SW19 6JB

Inspection dates	26/01/2016 to 28/01/2016	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
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	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The management team are highly skilled, dedicated and committed to the provision of good quality care to children and young people.
- The clinical lead provides good regulation of health care ensuring the delivery of good quality care to children and young people with multiple health and care needs.
- Staff work as a multi- disciplinary team building a holistic delivery of therapies to address the complex needs of the children and young people.
- Governors are accessible, engaged and highly committed. They provide excellent support to the development of the service.
- The school have worked closely with the local authority safeguarding board to address previous shortfalls in safeguarding.
- The children and young people love being in the residential setting. They develop friendships and learn important social and life skills.
- The residential setting have not fully developed an efficient evidencing of children and young people's progress.
- Some recording has not been complete leaving it unclear about outcomes of investigations or participants in an event.
- Monitoring of the residential setting benefits from the very involved governors but has not thoroughly met all requirements in national minimum standards.
- Health and safety checks are generally highly efficient and thorough. However, there are some areas for development in fire safety and risk management.

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.

NMS 14.1 Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the residential provision complete in writing once each year: a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for boarding pupils, in relation to: its Statement of Purpose; its staffing policy; the placement plans for individual children; and an internal assessment of its compliance with national minimum standards for residential special schools.
- Ensure that staff complete all records appropriately in line with policies and procedures, in particular records of restraints and complaints investigations.
- Ensure that written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the head teacher (or school equivalent) and where applicable the governing body, organisation, or partnership. Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body), within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary.
- Improve the tracking and evidencing of children and young people's progress in the residential setting.

Information about this inspection

The lead inspector contacted the school at 09:00 on 26 January 2016 and inspectors met with the principal, a governor and head of boarding at 13:00. During the inspection, inspectors met with: children and young people; residential staff; parents; governors; independent visitor; and those with responsibility for safeguarding; health and safety; catering; therapy; medical services; and administration of recruitment records. Inspectors made telephone contact with parents, and the local safeguarding team. Records scrutinised included: point in time surveys; Parent View; medication; recruitment records; children and young people's records; the single central record; and residential policies and procedures.

Inspection team

Angus Mackay

Lead social care inspector

Patrick Sullivan

Regulatory Inspection Manager

Full Report

Information about this school

This specialist residential school provides boarding and education for 141 children and young people, 41 of whom are residential pupils, with a wide range of visual and other sensory impairment and other very complex needs. These needs include deaf-blind multi-sensory impairment, severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties, multi disabled visually impaired. All children and young people have a statement of special educational need. This is a maintained school, which provides weekly or part-time residential accommodation for the maximum of 35 children and young people in three residential units, on separate floors, in one building. The school was last inspected on 4 February 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

The overall experiences and progress of young people are good. Parents say that their children make educational progress due to their time in residential. Some children and young people said that not having to travel helped them to engage better in school. They also have space and resources to aid with any homework, including access to the excellent school facilities and library. The school has not fully analysed the benefits of the residential experience to young people's educational attainment

Young people have structured targets, which they work towards. They have highly personalised reviews of these targets incorporating their views about their progress and achievement. The celebration of achievement reviews are beautifully constructed incorporating photographs of the young person engaged in achieving their targets. Young people make good progress, through these targeted activities, in a wide range of developmental needs including improving confidence; developing self-help skills; and building friendships appropriately. The residential manager is exploring methods of improving the tracking of children and young people's progress to aid their continuous development. One parent said, 'They are always looking to improve and better their system.'

The children and young people join in a wide range of activities designed to improve their health and wellbeing. They actively engage in physical activities including swimming, football and use of the fantastic resources in the school. They enjoy healthy meals and where necessary control over portions and liquid intake. They make good progress with their health or maintain their level where their condition may have reached a plateau.

Children and young people develop personal self-esteem and confidence through their engagement in-group activities. Parents gave excellent examples of the significant progress their children have made with the support of staff. One parent said, 'He gets a lot of diversity in activities there and has come out of himself. He had been self-conscious about himself and they have given him a lot of self-confidence.'

Staff routinely seek the views of children and young people and involve them in decision making wherever possible. During the inspection, a number of children and young people met with inspectors and with staff support had the confidence to ask their own questions about inspectors and the process. Many of the children and young people, and all parents, know how to make a complaint. For some children and young people, with limited communication, staff often act as advocates for them. Senior staff generally ensure that they fully investigate and respond to complaints. However, one complaint from last year, highlighted by the independent visitor, did not have all details of the outcome including the parental view. The principal completed this during the inspection.

Children and young people learn appropriate behaviour and how to interact safely in social situations. Staff aid them in understanding appropriate behaviour and acceptable boundaries. They benefit from advice from staff and their use of police and other

emergency services to enhance messages of community safety and safe travel. They experience happy events such as birthday parties with friends, often for the first time in their lives. One parent commented, 'They do tell him no and set good boundaries he can discuss this and learn from it. He is now able to empathise with other children. They have identified issues for him developing friendships and appropriate interaction with adults. He can now talk to people in an appropriate way.'

The quality of care and support

Good

The quality of care and support is good. Staff provide patient, kind and thoughtful care to the children and young people. Children and young people have implicit trust in staff and thoroughly enjoy their company. One young person said, 'You can trust the staff here they are lovely. They look after us.' A parent commented, 'The care is excellent it is what I could be doing as a parent. He absolutely loves being here and has warm caring relationships with staff.'

Staff training prepares them to meet the often complex needs of the children and young people. Where individuals have particular health needs, staff complete training to enable them to fully meet their needs. Managers have recognised the immense stress involved in caring for some children and young people, particularly those with life limiting conditions. Consequently, the school provide excellent training and support to staff, as well as access to counselling services, enabling them to better care for the children and young people.

Recent changes to the provision of health and therapy has enhanced the service. Staff competency based training in medication allied to the governance by the health team has improved the safe receipt, storage issuing and transfer of medication. One parent said, 'They have changed the policy on medication and this has improved it quite a bit. I am completely confident that they look after my son's health care needs.' Staff have now commenced training in the delivery of aspects of children and young people's targets in speech and language, occupational therapy and physiotherapy. This approach includes staff in the school setting ensuring a more holistic approach to the delivery of care and treatment to the children and young people. The health care team are making further changes to ensure continuity in the delivery of immunisations and health education programmes to children and young people.

Parents praise the level of contact made with them by the home and to their children when in residency. Parents feel fully involved in the home and often work on shared targets. One parent commented on contact, 'Communication is excellent if there is an issue they will call us. We get on well with the staff they are so welcoming and friendly.'

The school prepare meals centrally in a well manage hygienic kitchen. The head cook ensures that, meals are healthy, diverse and take account of the multiple health, cultural and religious requirements of the children and young people. Staff provide patient and dedicated support to children and young people who require specialised eating programmes or merely assistance with meals. Staff plan and deliver meals excellently,

ensuring no child or young person is rushed or treated with anything less than complete respect.

Staff are innovative in the activities, which they provide to children and young people. In addition to their use of the fantastic resources in the school, they are constantly seeking to break down barriers for the young people to their social inclusion and exposure to culturally diverse activities. In particular, children and young people are encouraged to develop friendships and build social networks. Young people enjoy the activities but say they love going out into the community to the youth club and the theatre.

How well children and young people are protected

Requires improvement

How well children and young people are protected requires improvement. The residential setting has a rigorous appointments process, which includes well-structured and meticulously recorded interviews. This interview process benefits from the frequent involvement of the highly committed governors and the young people. All appropriate checks are included in the recruitment policy. However, two randomly selected files did not comply with safer recruitment guidelines. In particular, references had either not been obtained or any concerns resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment was confirmed.

Staff focus on encouraging positive behaviour in children and young people. During the inspection, they displayed excellent behaviour and positive engagement with adults including the inspectors. Staff are skilled in the managing behaviour programme taught and use these skills to de-escalate any potential incidents. Consequently, there has been only one recorded incident of restraint/ holding since the last inspection. Staff recorded the incident in detail but did not make it clear who was involved in the holding.

Young people all have a generic personal evacuation plan for emergency situations. The residential setting have recognised the need for personalised evacuation plans and have commenced putting these in place. In addition, during the inspection, they devised instant access information for the fire brigade to show the location and primary risks for each young person. The residential setting works closely with the local emergency services and engages in many activities with them. These activities benefit the safe care of the young people and give them a positive view of police and fire services.

The school commissioned an audit of all safeguarding from the local authority safeguarding board. Staff are currently implementing actions from this review. In particular, managers have updated policies, procedures and staff training in safeguarding. They constantly reinforce the messages from this training, increasing staff awareness of threats to children and young people. The school have developed good policies on safeguarding in line with keeping children safe in education guidelines. This includes guidance on the threat of radicalisation for children in this setting. The principal drives the message to staff that safeguarding underpins the ethos of the school. To broaden the accessibility to safeguarding guidance the school have made all policies accessible to parents on their web site. In addition, during the inspection the head of

boarding put up posters advertising the children's commissioner to enhance safeguards for children and young people.

The school has a highly detailed and effective health and safety policy. The business support manager has implemented a range of health and safety checks and appropriate risk assessments. However, there is no risk assessment for the lift in the residential setting. There is a maintenance contract, providing six monthly servicing and additional checks, minimising the risk to the safety of staff and young people.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers **Good**

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers is good. The residential setting has an experienced and suitably qualified manager. She has managed the service for eleven years and enjoys the respect and support of the staff team and parents. The manager has high expectations and has generally achieved excellent inspection outcomes.

The service benefits from highly committed governors who take an active role in the monitoring of the service. They have recently completed a review of their terms of reference, which identifies priorities in their drive for excellence. Currently they receive regular reports from the residential service and ratify all policy changes. They are due to ratify a new statement of purpose, which clearly defines the progressions in the residential setting. The manager regularly reviews and revises all policies and procedures as required by the governing board. For example during the inspection, she made a minor change to the policy on intimate care to ensure it better regulated practice. There are some omissions in the evaluation of the residential service, which governors have identified and included in their terms of reference as required evidence for the residential committee.

Governors take their role extremely seriously and conduct regular visits to the residential setting. As previously mentioned they are also involved in staff appointments evidencing their positive engagement to all staff. They have appointed an independent person who conducts six visits to the residential setting each year. The visitor has a good understanding of residential settings and conducts his visits in a timely and thorough manner. The reports have commented on some of the issues identified during this inspection. Currently the visitor's reports go to the head of residential care for a factual accuracy check prior to going to governors. This process potentially compromises the integrity and independence of these reports.

The management team monitor training and development activities ensuring they provide effective development of staff. They focus training activities on providing a safe environment for children and young people and in enhancing staff competencies in caring for them. Further training in speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy has commenced. The enhanced training is creating a more holistic and effective approach to the delivery of therapies to young people under the careful and rigorous scrutiny of the health service.

Following the last inspection, the manager has implemented a supervision and appraisal matrix for all staff including support staff. This evidences the appropriate professional support and development of all staff.

Managers have listened carefully to feedback on the service and acted with impressive thoroughness to address concerns from parents, staff and regulators. A major initiative to support the health and well-being of staff has resulted from the analyses of concerns. The approach allows the setting to provide support and counselling to staff in dealing with high stress situations including bereavement

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

Unique reference number	101093
Social care unique reference number	SC010255
DfE registration number	212/7067

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	41
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	6 to19
Headteacher	
Date of previous boarding inspection	04/02/2015
Telephone number	020 87880107
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