

Parkwood Hall Co-Operative Academy

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

Inspection dates

17 to 19 May 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

Good

2

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because:

- Leadership and management are strong. The principal and senior managers invest in consultations with specialists to develop the residential provision further. An ethos of continuous learning and reflection underpins improvements.
- Consultation with pupils is a strength of the residential provision. Staff listen to them and act on their wishes. Weekly house meetings are chaired by pupils and are effective in ensuring that all who attend have a chance to contribute.
- Staff are nurturing of pupils and develop excellent relationships. They create calm and relaxed environments in which the pupils feel safe. Close liaison with parents and carers enable staff to work with them, and with specialist therapists, to support pupils to progress in all areas, including social presentation, self-care and independence skills.
- The residential provision plays a significant part in, and makes an essential contribution towards, the positive outcomes attained by pupils. These are successfully measured by individual, achievable targets identified by staff and motivated pupils.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consult with the local area designated officer on all cases of safeguarding or professional concern.
- Embed revised risk assessments processes, and ensure that all are updated following any change of risk.
- Ensure an equal standard of accommodation for all residential pupils.
- Increase the number of residential staff with a first-aid qualification.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection with three hours' notice. Inspection activities included visits to all the residential areas over two evenings and informal discussion with pupils during shared meals and residential time. Meetings were held with the principal, the designated child protection officer, the head of care, the business manager, governors, the school nurse, therapists, and residential staff. Interviews were also held with the site manager, the catering manager and staff responsible for recruitment records. Contact was made with the local authority designated officer. There was scrutiny of the wide-ranging documentation about the residential provision. The views of parents and carers were sought.

Inspection team

Suzy Lemmy

Lead social care inspector

Anna Williams

Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Parkwood Hall became a cooperative 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 seven and 19 years. There are currently 24 residential pupils who board on a weekly basis. The residential accommodation is provided in five separate areas, four of which are located in the main school building and one in a separate house in the main grounds. The school is situated in Swanley, Kent. It is a school for pupils with special speech, language and communication needs. Some pupils also have autistic spectrum disorders and varying degrees of learning disabilities. Some have complex health and medical needs.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Residential pupils make significant progress measured by targets agreed with staff. Targets are repeated to embed skills gained. Initiatives like Behaviour, Attitude, Effort equals Merits (BEAM) are effective. Pupils work towards 'gold' to gain prizes. As a result, one pupil is now able to say how she feels, which has improved her self-esteem and self-confidence; another pupil is now able to take more responsibility for his medication.

Consultation with pupils is a strength of the residential provision. Pupils spoken to are able to name someone to whom they can talk to about concerns. They also report that they can talk to all staff. House meetings are well attended and are chaired by residential pupils. All pupils are encouraged to contribute. Residential pupils report that staff listen to them and respond to any requests. One pupil said, 'Things don't hang round here, they get sorted.'

Staff demonstrate an excellent understanding of the wide range of needs presented by residential pupils. They communicate effectively with pupils using a range of communication methods, including talking mats, picture exchange cards and Makaton. There is an effective Makaton tutor group run by staff and pupils to teach all pupils to communicate with their peers who use sign language. Staff in conjunction with speech and language therapists devise social stories for residential pupils, tailored to their level of communication and understanding, to reduce their anxieties about new situations.

Pupils report that they enjoy attending the residential provision. They were observed to interact positively with each other, helping and respecting each other. One residential pupil said, 'I will miss everyone here, all of you, staff and children. I'll be sad to leave'. Another residential pupil said, 'I feel sorry for the day pupils because they are missing out, it is fun here.' Parents give good feedback about the residential provision. One parent commented, 'I couldn't ask for a better school. It is like it was made for him.' Another parent said, 'When he was at home, he had high anxiety and was very challenging. He has settled beautifully. Staff are extremely proactive every step of the way.'

The refurbished residential accommodation in the main building looks homely and is of an acceptable standard. Staff and residential pupils make good use of the available space. Residential pupils have their own bedrooms and are able to personalise them. This enables them to feel that they belong and encourages responsibility for their own space. The residential house in the grounds has a good atmosphere and family feel. However, the standard of decoration is poor. A working party has been organised to ensure that a plan is in place to rectify this by the next school year.

Residential pupils enjoy a range of activities in the school, the local community and further afield. Staff have devised a detailed activity plan to ensure that pupils can access the community safely. Staff implement revised risk assessments and take personal responsibility for residential pupil's safety. Their safety is paramount. Alternative activities are available within the school grounds if an activity cannot be safely accessed, for example, outside gym, forest activities and sensory garden. Staff consult with occupational therapy colleagues in relation to the development and improvement of pupils' motor co-ordination during activities. Residential pupils continually improve their

motor function during play.

Learning through drama is a strength of the school. Residential pupils perform in Starlight Players, participate in a Shakespeare for Schools initiative and attend local drama groups. They are keen to contribute to the wider community by fundraising for charities, for example, during 'wobble week'. They also attend a variety of activities, for example, visits to a specialist cycle park, local swimming pools and holidays abroad. They learn how to manage group activities and social situations.

Residential pupils are developing meaningful friendships, for example, by inviting each other to their respective houses for tea. Young people value opportunities to mix socially with their peers.

The quality of care and support

Good

Staff work across both settings enhancing their shared knowledge of residential pupils' needs. Links between therapists and support staff are excellent, ensuring common strategies are shared with residential staff. Senior management have implemented a shared assessment framework and integrated systems; thus communication between all school staff is of an excellent quality ensuring young people benefit from consistently high standards of care.

The promotion of residential pupils' independence skills are a particular strength of the school. The Open College Network programme enables them to gain qualifications recognised by further education colleges and employers. A 'pathway to independence' form charts progress. Residential pupils' abilities on admission are assessed and their development of a range of self-care and independence skills can be evidenced. One residential pupil can now do her own laundry and iron her clothes, which she was unable to do a year ago. Staff also promote budgeting skills. The residential pupils visit the local supermarket to purchase snacks independently. They are ambitious and talk about their plans for when they leave school. One residential pupil wants to be a mechanic, another a footballer, others discussed further education courses. A parent reported that, 'The staff look at the individual child. They promote their independence and ensure they are well equipped for the future.'

Residential pupils' health needs are valued. The qualified nurse on site is able to give guidance about important health issues, such as sexual health and medication use. She works effectively with external health services, including paediatricians and the child and adolescent mental health team. The school nurse provides teaching and consultations with pupils and training for staff. She works proactively with parents and carers to ensure that they are aware of, and involved with, their children's healthcare while at school.

Residential pupils benefit from a balanced, varied diet with a range of choices. The catering team is responsive to their dietary and cultural needs. Residential pupils know the catering manager well and give him regular feedback. He has devised a more formal evaluation form to ensure that the menu remains popular. Residential pupils enjoy the social side of mealtimes. Older pupils act as role models for the younger pupils and ensure that they adhere to acceptable table manners. Occupational therapists provide pupils with specialist equipment to support them with any motor coordination difficulties. Staff are trained to help pupils with specific feeding difficulties ensuring safe practice.

The staff team is deployed effectively, providing opportunities for one-to-one support if necessary. One residential pupil is able to make his own meals in the evening, with supervision, as part of his care plan. Staff monitor another residential pupil closely due to his complex health needs.

Staff enjoy working with residential pupils. One staff member said that she applied for a permanent post because her first shift was spent 'smiling all day'. Another member of staff reports that she, 'Fell in love with the job. We all work together as a staff team.'

Staff facilitate contact with parents and carers. Residential pupils are able to access telephones and the use of Skype is being introduced. Staff use a system of recording photographs to share with parents on a weekly basis in addition to written reports. A parent reported, 'The staff talk to me all the time, share information in the home/school book and provide photographs. I can't praise them enough.'

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Strong links exist between senior leaders and allocated social workers. Residential pupils, their parents and carers report that pupils are safe in the residential provision. The principal has reviewed and updated safeguarding and behaviour management policies and procedures. This ensures that staff have accessible, up-to-date information. Staff adhere to safeguarding processes and are vigilant in reporting any child protection concerns, which senior managers refer to external agencies as appropriate. Senior staff, on one occasion, did not consult with the local authority designated officer in regards to a staffing issue. This was recognised as a shortfall and actioned during the inspection.

Staff have received training about safe internet use and promote this with residential pupils. Senior staff are further developing a programme to improve this further. Three levels of competency have been identified to review residential pupils' knowledge and target teaching at their cognitive levels.

There have been no incidents of residential pupils going missing. Staff are able to implement an appropriate policy to safeguard them if such an event did occur. In instances where a residential pupil is absent without permission pupils are usually located within the school or nearby. Although they are debriefed by staff afterwards, these conversations are not routinely recorded to inform future care plans and behaviour plans.

Instances of bullying are rare. Residential pupils are able to talk openly about bullying and how to recognise this and what to do if it happens. With effective role modelling by staff and the celebration of good behaviour through rewards and incentives, they are motivated to behave in a socially acceptable manner. Pupils become good role models to each other. A buddying system at lunchtime further promotes this ethos within the school. The more mature young people help younger or less confident pupils to understand appropriate behaviour. One residential pupil initiated drawing up a list of rules under the heading 'RESPECT', which he explained, all rules come under.

Pupils regularly practise fire evacuations. The management team ensures that there is a suitably qualified person on site to test portable appliances. Staff devise personal emergency evacuation plans for those residential pupils who are identified as needing them. Residential pupils live in a safe environment and are aware of fire safety

measures.

Risks to individual residential pupils are well identified, as are the strategies to minimise these. Staff have simplified risk assessment documents. However, not all risk assessments are updated immediately following an incident. Although staff are told about changes in care plans during de-briefing sessions at the beginning and end of the school day, not all staff attend these meetings.

Extremely positive relationships between staff and residential pupils, along with staff's knowledge of them and their triggers, means that there has been only one restraint at the residential provision. A new restraint form has been devised to capture restraint information more fully, including related incidents. This seeks to ensure that any physical interventions are more easily evaluated and analysed.

Residential pupils are protected by good recruitment systems that scrutinise and check adults who work in the school. The safer recruitment policy has been revised since the previous inspection and now includes references to current statutory guidance. This is followed effectively in practice. Supervision levels of staff and visitors are clearly distinguished by the wearing of different coloured lanyards. Visitors to the school are not allowed to be unaccompanied while in the school grounds.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The residential provision is well managed by an experienced head of care, who is suitably qualified. She is supported by a strong senior management and staff team that focuses on developing the service to the highest level. The senior leadership team is constructively challenged by a committed governing body that brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to drive improvements further. The principal has sought consultations with professionals in the field, regarding improvements to recording systems, care plans and marketing. There is a strong ethos of continuous improvement. This secures a fundamental understanding of areas of strength within the service and of where improvements would be beneficial.

Overall, the staff group is a stable, secure team that is focused on meeting residential pupils' individual needs to the highest standard. Reflection and learning from experiences is the culture in this residential school. Communication between staff is excellent. There is cohesive working in a supportive culture. Regular debriefing meetings ensure that staff remain up to date with residential pupils' care plans and any staffing issues. A shared email system between care and teaching staff ensures that all have access to the same information.

Staff benefit from excellent training; they are experienced and well equipped to provide a good standard of care. However, while the head of care ensures that there are staff who are first aid qualified on each shift, there is a low overall percentage of staff with this qualification. This could compromise the response times to minor injuries.

All complaints are taken seriously. Staff take robust action to address any issues in a timely manner. No complaints in relation to the residential provision have been received since the last inspection. However, there is evidence that historic complaints from parents are taken seriously and dealt with using the correct procedures. Communication with parents is excellent. A parent reported, 'Residential staff are an extension of our family.' Another parent said, 'They meet regularly to help to find out what's best for him

and help me at home too. Everything about the care is brilliant.’ The residential provision is an essential and valued part of the school. Staff have effective, regular supervision informally and formally, which focuses on the residential pupils as well as staff performance and development. Accountability and reflection underpin the learning for supervisees and managers, which increases their sense of responsibility and confidence. Staff morale is strong. Feedback from staff surveys was positive with the majority saying that they either strongly agree or agree that they feel valued, and can develop professionally and know what the school is trying to achieve.

Leaders and managers have successfully addressed the recommendations for improvements from the last inspection.

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 exceed the standard of good and result in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact that the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services that 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 that children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or that their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

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.

Type of school	Residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	24
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	Eight to 19
Headteacher	Mr. Nick White
Date of previous boarding inspection	7 July 2015
Telephone number	01322 664441
Email address	Nick.White@parkwoodhall.rbkc.sch.uk

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