

Hamilton Lodge School

Hamilton Lodge School, 7–9 Walpole Road, Brighton BN2 0LS

Inspection dates

7 to 9 June 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

- The leadership team is committed to ensuring that children and young people are happy and thrive in the residential provision. One parent said that they could see that their child was very happy to go back to school. Children and young people express positively the difference that being part of the school community has made to them.
- Communication is a key strength of the school. Children and young people learn how to communicate confidently and this enables them to make good social and academic progress. Professionals comment 'The high standard of communication by the staff supports our professional relationship and so benefits children and young people' and 'I've been nothing but impressed with the really good communication.'
- There is strong and effective partnership working, both within the school across the multi-disciplinary teams and with external professionals. This serves to provide children and young people with coordinated services to meet individual needs.
- The skilled and competent staff team builds good-quality relationships with children and young people and supports them to develop peer friendships. Staff demonstrate a keen understanding of children's and young people's needs and the challenges that they face.
- Staff successfully promote children's and young people's health, safety and well-being.

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?

- Review the accommodation in one house with a view to providing space where children and young people can be alone if they wish.
- Clarify with placing authorities their position in respect of the restriction of the liberty of some young people on the basis of assessed risk.
- Develop personal evacuation plans to inform staff or the fire service about the particular support needs of individuals in the event of a fire.
- Review the recording systems to improve effective cross referencing.
- Consider how to improve the evaluation of monitoring undertaken with a view to identifying potential patterns and trends.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection with four hours' formal notice given. Inspection activities included observation of boarding practice over two evenings, informal discussions with young people during shared meals and during boarding time and meetings and discussions with the principal, the headteacher, the head of care, residential staff, the assistant head, staff responsible for health and safety and recruitment, specialist staff, the head of catering and two governors. These meetings were supported by interpreters where necessary. Inspectors observed staff handovers and a multi-disciplinary meeting. The lead inspector made contact with the local statutory safeguarding authority. Inspectors were shown the accommodation by pupils and reviewed the wide ranging documentation about boarding. There were no pupil or staff responses to Ofsted's point in time surveys. The parental contributions to Parent View were taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Maire Atherton	Lead social care inspector
Stephen Collett	Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Hamilton Lodge School is a non-maintained co-educational residential school, which caters for pupils between five and 18 years of age who are hearing impaired, with some pupils having additional specific needs. The main form of communication used is British Sign Language (BSL). English and Sign Supported English are also used. The school is situated in a residential area of Brighton.

Pupils board Monday to Friday in boarding houses which are adjacent to the main school site. At the time of this visit there were 52 children and young people resident. The social care provision was last inspected in October 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Children and young people talk positively about their boarding experience. Comments include 'You learn to communicate and build relationships', 'I like the level of trust and independence you can get here' and 'I love the school, staff support me really well'. Parents and professionals speak highly of the impact of boarding on outcomes for children and young people. A parent said, 'In a short time my child has improved her communication skills. She is initiating conversation which is more in depth and seems to be more willing to listen.' A social worker commented, 'I have been really impressed with how they promote well-being, they go above and beyond. She has progressed well with self-esteem and confidence, she has a place where she can be understood.'

Children and young people are enabled to engage very well with staff and relationships between them are good. Children and young people enjoy being part of a community that shares a common language, British Sign Language (BSL), which facilitates and develops their communication skills. This in turn enables them to build relationships with others. There are some strong friendships between independent young people. A parent described the benefits of positive role modelling by other children and young people on her child. There are occasions where communication through behaviour is making boarding a less enjoyable experience for some. Staff are aware of this and work with children and young people to change the communication style for the benefit of all.

Children and young people enjoy deaf studies classes, which promote a positive image of the deaf community that develops children's and young people's self-esteem and confidence. As a result of improved communication skills and enhanced self-esteem, children and young people make good progress socially and academically. One young person really appreciated learning BSL, which had opened up a new avenue of communication. At the time of the last inspection, at the beginning of this academic year, the leadership team introduced a new system for monitoring young people's social and academic progress. This system is in its infancy and is due for review to determine how effectively it evidences the impact that the residential facility has on young people's lives.

Children and young people benefit from the holistic and thorough approach to healthcare. Staff work with parents to ensure that known health needs are met and prompt action is taken to meet emerging needs. Children and young people are encouraged to make healthy choices and supported to take age-appropriate responsibility.

Children and young people who can identify risks know how to keep themselves safe, with their knowledge of e-safety a particular strength. Staff are vigilant in applying safeguarding measures where young people are unable to do this for themselves. There is always someone available to talk to children and young people, so they can share good things or any concerns.

The residential provision is well organised and run for the benefit of children and young people. They are at the centre of all that staff do. Staff deployment, training, supervision and support are focused on equipping them to meet the needs and wishes of children and young people, as far as possible. Staff support children and young people to

understand any changes in plans. Children and young people enjoy a range of activities, both off-site and on-site. At the time of this visit, the young people were particularly looking forward to their prom. Regular shopping trips, swimming and art were also popular. Staff at the school work effectively together to provide pastoral support to the whole family. This has included the provision of signing lessons, help with filling in forms and housing applications.

Children and young people are well prepared for engaging with the local and wider community. They are provided with opportunities to express their views and experiences to the hearing community, which promotes inclusion. This also forms part of acquiring a good range of independent living skills, which prepares them well for adult life. One young person said, 'I'm very proud of the cooking skills I've learnt here.' They are given age-appropriate free time, when indicated by a careful risk assessment.

Children and young people say that staff actively encourage them to express their views, wishes and feelings. They say that their suggestions are responded to, but progress can be slow. Staff ensure that they offer choices meaningfully so that children and young people can make informed decisions. They are enabled to contribute to their reviews. A social worker described the approach as 'very inclusive'.

The quality of care and support

Good

Staff have a strong understanding of the wide-ranging needs of the children and young people that they care for. The majority are skilled BSL signers and are also attuned to children's and young people's individual signs and communication methods. Children and young people are confident that they have someone that they can go to who will make time for and understand them. They spoke appreciatively of the key worker role and the majority named their key worker as the person that they would go to if they had any concerns. A new independent listener has been appointed and is due to start in September 2016, following the resignation of the previous person to take on a new role with the governing body.

Children, young people and a parent spoke positively about the arrangements for their introduction to boarding. It is well organised, sensitive to individual need and includes a trial period including an overnight visit. Leaders are proactive in seeking additional information to determine suitability of the school as a placement for a child or young person.

The staff team is mindful of the need to equip young people for moving on. There is a supported independence programme that effectively promotes the skills that each individual needs to underpin a smooth transition. Children and young people have opportunities to learn practical domestic skills and build up to independent activity in the community on a risk-assessed basis.

There are embedded, effective systems for information sharing between all staff working with children and young people. These include twice daily formal written handovers between education and care staff and weekly multi-disciplinary meetings for those children and young people receiving additional support. This equips staff to provide care that is sensitive to current and emerging issues for individual children and young people and supports their personal identity and development.

Five houses comprise the boarding accommodation, which is generally maintained to a

good standard to provide warm and comfortable living spaces. Most houses have excellent communal facilities, which give children and young people choice about what to do and where to do it. This is not the case in one house where the communal space is open plan. As the majority of bedrooms are shared, it can be a challenge for young people to find a space to be alone or to achieve privacy. There is evidence of action to change sleeping arrangements where staff have reservations about the mix of children or young people sharing a room, but this is not underpinned by written risk assessments.

Staff successfully engage children and young people in a range of enjoyable activities both off-site and on-site. They talk positively about what they have done, for example, in working towards and achieving the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, going to Rainbows as helpers, the feeling of success in rock climbing and the excitement of watching banger racing. Some young people have recently independently attended a youth group in the community, with staff close at hand if required. Staff also assist young people to maintain friendships in the community.

Children and young people confidently engage with staff, secure that their views and opinions are important and will be taken seriously. They participate in regular house meetings. Older young people are very positive about these and say that changes are made as a result, children are less certain. Staff advocate successfully to secure resources to provide what young people have asked for, for example actively fund raising for fitness equipment to provide a gym in one house.

The school nurse implements, in partnership with health professionals on-site and in the community, excellent systems that effectively meet the health needs of children and young people holistically. The comprehensive information and consent forms completed by parents inform detailed health plans. The systems for the safe management of medication are thorough, including for those young people who manage their own medication. Staff at the school have established a strong relationship with a satellite branch of the National Deaf Child and Adolescent Mental Health team. A health professional from this team observed, 'We work really well together, communication and staff knowledge is good. They think about individual needs and when we have plans we are reassured that these will be implemented and followed.'

Children and young people benefit from good education around their health needs. They demonstrate their knowledge of a healthy lifestyle, for example exercise, a healthy diet and not smoking, but admit some self-selection about which elements they act on. They are encouraged to participate in a range of activities and opportunities that promote exercise, for example five-a-side matches are planned mirroring the current European football tournament.

Children and young people enjoy food that is of good quality, varied and nutritious. Special diets are catered for and staff know their customers' needs and likes and dislikes. There are formal and informal systems for the catering staff to gain the views of children and young people. There is an established food committee, a postcard for each person to comment after each meal when a new menu is introduced or just letting the kitchen staff know what they think, as some have had BSL training.

Children and young people confirm that they keep in touch with family and friends and go home at weekends. The majority use their own electronic devices, but they also have access to school equipment if they wish to use this.

Staff promote equality of opportunity and celebrate diversity. For example, they enable

children and young people to actively follow their faith and safely support those exploring their identity. It is evident in practice that staff have a sound working knowledge of the support needs of individual children and young people. However, the written care plans are broad-brush and do not provide sufficient detail and/or guidance about how staff should provide support to children and young people. This misses opportunities to promote consistent approaches by the staff team. Older young people are getting more involved in setting their own targets to promote their ownership of their care plans. Children and young people are encouraged to actively contribute to their annual reviews. Staff contribution to these meetings is of a good standard, including written reports.

Staff are knowledgeable about the well-written policies and procedures that underpin their work and effectively use them in practice.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Staff have a good understanding of the holistic nature of safeguarding. They are trained in, familiar with and implement the policies and procedures that underpin the safety and well-being of children and young people. As a result, they generally feel and are safe at this school.

The head of care positively engages with the local authority designated safeguarding personnel, using established channels of communication to good effect. Senior staff act on advice sought from relevant external professionals and undertake any necessary internal investigations promptly and thoroughly. They also make referrals to placing authority social workers where this is an identified need.

Staff are knowledgeable about and effectively implement the strategies outlined in the relevant risk assessments for individual children and young people. This successfully minimises risks. Some young people have very limited authorised personal freedom in the community on the basis of the assessed risks. There is no evidence that placing authorities have considered whether or not this constitutes a deprivation of liberty. Children and young people rarely go missing. When this does occur, an absence is identified very quickly and the prompt action taken is in line with the statutory guidance. An external professional observed, 'They are ahead of safeguarding considerations, risks are well managed and planned for.'

Children and young people have a good understanding of how they should behave and the sanctions that may be applied on the occasions that they do not behave. They describe staff as consistent in their approach and the sanctions fair and proportionate. Some behaviour not intended as bullying may be perceived by other children and young people to be so. They benefit from support to learn how to express themselves in a socially acceptable way and are beginning to understand how their behaviour can make others feel. Written information for children, young people and staff is clear and easily accessible. All staff are trained in the agreed behaviour management model used in the school. Staff are vigilant in their work with children and young people and work to de-escalate behaviour in the first instance, using guidance outlined in individual behaviour management strategies. As a result, staff use physical intervention infrequently and record any such use thoroughly. The form used to record physical intervention has been updated in response to a point for improvement in the last inspection report.

Children and young people have many opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe using social media and the internet. Staff are trained in and implement robust practice in relation to e-safety and children and young people confidently share concerns that they have in this area. This provides a strong protective factor.

The recruitment policies are robust and soundly applied to ensure, as far as possible, that only suitable people are employed. There is good practice around the management of visitors and contractors who are on-site; for example by undertaking disclosure and barring service checks on regular contractors.

Sound health and safety policies and procedures are well implemented and so provide young people with a safe and secure environment. This is achieved by robust monitoring, maintenance and servicing that takes place as required. Fire safety is well managed, taking into account the needs of the children and young people, but there are no personal evacuation plans to inform staff or the fire service about the particular support needs of individuals in the event of a fire, particularly at night.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers Good

There is effective leadership of the residential provision by an established team that is suitably qualified and experienced for their respective roles. The majority of children and young people board at the school for four nights each week. There is an up-to-date, comprehensive statement of purpose, which accurately reflects the practice in the residential provision.

There are sufficient staff deployed to meet the needs of children and young people, with suitable on call arrangements in place. There is management review of staffing levels and changes are made when necessary, for example providing a waking night member of staff. Any shortfalls are addressed by use of permanent staff working overtime or bank staff. The successful deployment of staff supports the development and maintenance of good relationships between them and children and young people. It also enables the safe development of friendships between children and young people.

The staff team comprises a mix of long standing and new staff. The school has been successful in recruiting deaf staff who provide their experienced colleagues with an enhanced insight into the needs of boarders and are also strong role models for children and young people. Newly appointed staff benefit from a comprehensive induction. Staff receive training that equips them for their role and enables them to achieve the level 3 diploma in a timely manner, which most have done. Staff are encouraged to seek external courses to continue their professional development. Staff in specialist roles in the school, for example the nurse and the speech and language therapist, are appropriately qualified and registered and undertake training to maintain their registration. Staff receive regular support and supervision that promote good practice. An external professional described the team as, 'Reflective in their consideration of how they support children and young people.'

The governing body is active and takes its responsibilities seriously. For example, in addition to regular monitoring visits they schedule meetings with care staff to hear their views about the provision, based on the expectations outlined in the national minimum standards (NMS). They are also challenging of the leadership team in the exploration of

serious incidents. Outcomes from this scrutiny inform the development of the residential provision.

Monitoring by the headteacher, the head of care and the independent visitor takes place as required. The resulting reports do not make full use of the information reviewed and so miss opportunities to identify emerging patterns and trends. The school has received no formal complaints. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and take into account any updated guidance. Staff maintain the records required. The recording systems in place are stand alone, some may require staff to input similar information more than once. The systems do not facilitate cross referencing to gain a full picture of individual children and young people.

The management team uses its skills and knowledge to ensure that the school meets, and is striving to exceed, the NMS for the benefit of the children and young people. The points for improvement made in the last inspection report have been addressed.

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	114619
Social care unique reference number	SC050400
DfE registration number	846/7003

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	67
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	5 to 19
Headteacher	David Couch
Date of previous boarding inspection	30 September 2015
Telephone number	01273 682362
Email address	david.couch@hamiltonlsc.co.uk

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