

Millgate School

Millgate School, 18 Scott Street, LEICESTER, LE2 6DW

Inspection dates	17/01/2017 to 19/01/2017	
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

- Children and young people enjoy using the residential provision known as The Flat. A young person said: 'It's just wicked!'
- The ethos of the school, 'Transforming lives, inspiring futures' is something that all staff aim for all children and young people to experience. Staff use creative approaches to inspire and motivate children and young people.
- Staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic about providing a high-quality service for children and young people.
- Leaders inspire, motivate, support and challenge both the children and young people and the staff at the school. They fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have effective plans to address shortfalls and continually improve the provision.
- Children and young people make exceptional progress from their starting points with regards to their academic achievement, confidence, self-esteem, and ability to form positive relationships and to keep themselves safe.
- The safety of children and young people is of paramount importance to staff, but they will also help them to take age-appropriate risks as part of their growth and development.
- The voice of the child is highly valued. Children and young people feel listened to and have helped make significant changes within the school.
- Staff go above and beyond in supporting children, young people and their families in the family home. For example, staff will call parents, who are struggling, to offer practical help, they have accommodated children and young people whose families are in crisis, and have visited the most vulnerable children and young people on Christmas Eve.

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?

- Ensure that all complaints are recorded, including those that are made verbally.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was announced on the morning of the start of the inspection. The inspector visited the residential accommodation and spoke to young people and staff, including key staff with responsibility for the residential provision. The inspector also observed practice in the residential provision and scrutinised school policies and records. The inspector was unable to gather information from Parent View as not enough had been completed to be viewed.

Inspection team

Joanne Vyas

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Millgate School is a maintained residential special school run by Leicester City Council. It caters for 71 boys with social, emotional, and mental health issues, aged between 11 and 16. The school has a residential facility which is currently operating for five nights a week, term time only, and can accommodate up to 10 students. There are also facilities within the residence for students to attend an extended day provision. The residential accommodation is situated on the first floor of the school. The school is in a residential area on the outskirts of the city.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

A young person said: 'We are one big happy family.' This sentiment was reiterated by other children and young people and staff alike throughout the school. The children and young people enjoy boarding in the residential provision known as 'The Flat'. A young person said: 'It's really cool because if you live far from your friends, it's like sleeping over at your mate's house.' A parent said: 'I have nothing but flags and banners to say about this place.'

Children and young people make exceptional progress with regards to their esteem, confidence, ability to form positive relationships, ability to keep themselves safe, academic achievement and how they view themselves. A young person said: 'This school has had a positive effect on my life. I did an early GCSE in food tech and got an A*.' The Flat provides a safe space where children and young people can have fun but also have a good night's sleep, good quality food and feel cared for, ensuring that they are ready to access learning the next day. Furthermore, staff provide exam support for young people in The Flat. Young people taking exams can stay in The Flat to ensure that they have a quiet space and support prior to exams. The residential provision clearly has a significant positive impact on their overall academic progress compared with their peers who do not use the residential provision.

Staff are passionate about their role in the lives of the children and young people that they work with. A senior member of staff said: 'We want to make a difference to these young people. When they have a belief in themselves, their outcomes improve.' This was reiterated by other staff throughout the school.

Staff have warm and nurturing relationships with children and young people. They believe that positive relationships are pivotal to the progress and experiences that children and young people have. Staff have a high regard for children and young people, as well as high aspirations for them. To reinforce this message, positive affirmation posters can be found all around the school. These are posters of current children and young people with positive comments on them, such as 'trust', 'brave' and 'adventure'. Children and young people spoke positively about the school and the staff.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Children and young people and their families have access to a highly informative induction into The Flat. This helps to give them confidence in the residential team and the provision. Children and young people settle into The Flat quickly. They enjoy the residential experience, particularly the activities and meeting up with their friends. They are relaxed and happy around staff.

Children and young people make a significant contribution to their care, the school and The Flat. There is an active student council who have made decisions about the animals to keep on site, activities, menus, residential furnishings, school uniform and the school's motto, 'Transforming lives and inspiring futures!', something the school certainly lives up

to.

Residential staff complete welfare visits for all children and young people who reside in The Flat. This provides significant support for families and ensures consistency across school and the home. Parents will reach out and ask for help from staff, if needed, due to the positive relationships they have with staff. For example, staff have signposted parents who need financial help and support to the relevant services and made available extra nights for children and young people whose families are in crisis. The school also seeks donations from local businesses so they can provide all their children and young people with Christmas presents. Additionally, staff visit their most vulnerable children and young people on Christmas Eve. This exceptional work not only helps to keep children and young people safe but also lets them know that they are thought of and cared about.

Children and young people are provided with high quality food at mealtimes. It is freshly cooked, nutritious and healthy. They have the opportunity to change the menu, and if they don't like what's on offer something else will be provided. Food is seen as a much-valued part of nurturing the child. Mealtimes are relaxed and sociable occasions. Kitchen staff also provide valuable opportunities for young people to have work experience. This provides young people with confidence to explore external work experience opportunities.

Residential trips and activities provide children and young people with excellent opportunities to have experiences they have not encountered before. For example, they enjoy completing the National Trust '50 things to do before you are 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ '. Activities include catching a leaf, rolling down a really big hill and jumping over waves. Staff are working through this, in conjunction with a university, with children and young people as they believe it helps to plug the gaps in childhood, enabling the child to grow and thrive. Additionally, staff have created a reading tent in The Flat to help children and young people to enjoy the experience of reading. This school enables children and young people to learn to enjoy the experience of learning.

Young people find the experience of leaving the school difficult. Staff provide good support by teaching children and young people independence skills such as cooking, budgeting and shopping. Residential staff also recognise the need to wean young people gradually from the intense support provided. This is done sensitively and at the young person's pace, supporting them to transition successfully to their next educational or work placement. Staff also continue to support young people and their families when they leave the school.

Employment of a counsellor has given children and young people direct access to counselling sessions. The counsellor is starting to review the emotional health of all the children and young people to enable her to respond to individual needs and understand the prevalent issues within the school.

Managers and staff fully appreciate the financial issues that the parents of the children and young people face. To try to alleviate some of these pressures, some children and young people are provided with their uniform and toiletries when they stay at The Flat. This provision ensures that they are not seen as having less than others and may also

reduce bullying.

Staff promote British values, including tolerance and respect. For example, external speakers have visited the school who have first-hand experience of being a victim of terrorism, but preach tolerance. Children and young people have been involved in charitable work, such as visiting a local homeless shelter and decorating a refugee family's home. Furthermore, they have been able to add their thoughts about British values to a poster in The Flat, which demonstrates their own understanding.

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

The safety of children and young people is paramount at this school. Policies and procedures are robust and implemented to a high standard. Safety is a thread that runs through all practice. Nevertheless, children and young people are encouraged to take age-appropriate risks as part of their growth and development. Staff are highly trained and experienced. They report all safeguarding concerns, as they understand the vulnerability of the children and young people they look after.

Children and young people learn a strong sense of safety and well-being. Staff provide tailored support to give them the protective factors they require to help them to overcome adversity within their lives and subsequently access learning. They accomplish this by supporting children and young people to achieve and then celebrating those achievements. Children and young people have participated in charitable work, such as helping a Syrian refugee family move into their new home and visiting the local homeless shelter. They help look after the school's animals, such as the alpacas, hens and guinea pigs. They participate in activities that help to build their resilience, such as camping. These activities help children and young people to feel a sense of pride and enable them to build on their self-confidence and self-belief. A young person said that he had been on the wrong path prior to coming to this school. He now has a bright future and is extremely proud of his achievements.

Positive behaviour is highly promoted. Children and young people have a good understanding of the reward system. They enjoy spending the points that they have collected on the 'Prize Cabinet' or at the local shops. 'VIPs' are 'students of the week' who have done something exceptional and sit in prominent, comfy chairs during assembly. Children and young people will also be assigned a bronze, silver, gold or prefect status dependent on their behaviour during the week. Their status affects their freedom around the school and mealtime privileges, such as how quickly they can go up for their dinner. Older students model good behaviour, encouraging younger students to follow their example.

Physical intervention is not used often in the residential provision. Staff are highly trained and skilled in de-escalating challenging situations. This is aided by the strength of their relationships with children and young people. Children and young people who have been held in a restraint have generally only been held once. This demonstrates that the behaviour of children and young people improves over time. All incidents of physical intervention are generally well documented.

Partnership working with external agencies ensures that each child has the support they

require to help keep them safe. This may include intensive work with families in which staff play a big part. They build strong positive relationships with parents, some of whom have been previously wary of professionals. This helps to keep children and young people safe and prevent risk-taking behaviours and subsequently becoming part of the criminal justice system or the child protection system. A parent said: 'I was made redundant. They helped me by giving me numbers for money advice, food banks, etc. They were happy for my son to stop in for extra nights if he wanted to. They would phone and ask how I was doing, which was really appreciated.'

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

The school's senior leadership team provides strong and supportive leadership. Its members are inspirational and always striving for improvement. They lead by example and generate creative ideas to ensure that the highest quality care is provided for children and young people.

The head of the residential provision is vastly experienced, and leads and supports a staff team that is highly skilled, motivated, passionate and caring. Mostly though, the staff are experts at creating opportunities for children and young people that enable them to have positive memories of school and make exceptional progress. The staff are highly valued by the senior leadership team whose members excel in their work, ensuring that practice is research based, innovative and creative. A parent said: 'All staff have been fantastic, friendly and welcoming.' A young person said: 'The staff here go above and beyond.'

Staff have access to excellent support and training opportunities. This training ensures that they have the right skills to care for the vulnerable children and young people in their care. Furthermore, training also provides staff with skills to give children and young people creative opportunities; for example, some staff have completed a bushcraft course.

Parents know how to make complaints through the school. No complaints have been recorded. However, minor verbal complaints from parents are not currently recorded. This would be good practice to demonstrate how effective the school is in responding to complaints.

Staff work collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people. For example, teaching staff work in The Flat and residential staff work in the school. Together with visits to the family home, this provides staff with a holistic view of the children and young people. Furthermore, staff work in partnership with external agencies. A psychologist said: 'The staff and management of the school demonstrate a care and consideration of their pupils' needs which is laudable. The local authority values the school highly and the way in which it works collaboratively.'

Monitoring systems offer a high level of challenge. The residential provision is central to this school. The Chair of Governors visits the provision regularly and completes a report for governors. Reports provide a robust monitoring tool for the leadership team and

governors. The leadership team fully understands the provision's strengths and weaknesses and has strategic, effective plans to address any shortfalls, as well as continually striving to provide the best outcomes for children and young people.

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 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	120362
Social care unique reference number	SC006452
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	54
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	11 to 16
Headteacher	Mark Oldman
Date of previous boarding inspection	03/02/2016
Telephone number	0116 2704922
Email address	moldman@klms.leicester.sch.uk

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