

Kite Ridge House Pupil Referral Unit

Kite Ridge Education Unit, Verney Avenue, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP12 3NE

Inspection dates	17/01/2017 to 19/01/2017	
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 boarding provision is good because

- Young people make good progress while accessing the boarding provision. Effective joint working between parents, education, and health and well-being professionals ensures that young people's needs are met to a high standard.
- Young people have the opportunity to try activities and experiences that they would not otherwise have access to in the family home. A key aspect of the boarding provision is that it positively supports young people to remain living with their families for the remainder of the week.
- Young people's actions and demeanour demonstrate that they feel safe in the boarding area. Staff are acutely aware of each young person's vulnerabilities and do all they can to support them to feel safe and secure.
- Young people's views and ideas are sought through various methods, including using thumbs up and thumbs down symbols, general discussion and choice boards. Young people have influenced change, including choosing items for the sensory room and the colour of the sofa in the corridor, but also in food choices and activities.
- Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's individual needs and skills. They ensure consistency in approach, so that young people know what is expected of them.

- Young people access a wide range of socially and emotionally stimulating activities, including swimming, trips to the beach, country parks and the theatre. Young people have the opportunity to access activities that they may not be able to experience with their family.
- The boarding provision is well managed and led by staff with appropriate experience. It is separate from the school that operates from the same site. However, this does not detrimentally impact on young people and the management is effective.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Devise and implement a policy for the use of viewing panes on young people's bedroom doors.
- Ensure that there are adequate levels of permanent staff working in the boarding provision at weekends.
- Ensure that documents in foreign languages are translated into English on staff files.
- Replace the broken bath panel immediately, as it is a hazard to young people.
- Ensure that staff act on all concerns that young people raise, including showing the process of what has been done for those who are sometimes known to say things that are not true, or misread situations.
- Update the development plan for the boarding provision to ensure that it remains relevant.

Information about this inspection

The inspection was announced via telephone, to the headteacher and head of boarding on the morning of the first day. On arrival, an initial meeting was held with the head of boarding. The inspector held discussions with the head of boarding, the headteacher, residential care staff, the member of staff in charge of health and safety, and young people. The residential area was observed and visited during the inspection. The inspector observed, and when appropriate, took part in activities with young people in addition to having individual discussions with many of them. The inspector held telephone discussions with the designated officer for child protection, the allocated education safeguarding lead, a governor who also holds a role in the local authority in social care relating to the boarding provision, and parents. A range of documents and records were also examined during the inspection. The boarding provision is managed separately from the school and was inspected as such at the direction of the headteacher, who is clear that he has no direct responsibility for the area.

Inspection team

Jennie Christopher

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Kite Ridge House is a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) which provides education and part-time boarding for young people aged from 10 to 19 years, who have learning difficulties and very challenging behaviour. All young people have Statements of Special Educational Need and many are on the autistic spectrum. As well as providing boarding for its own students, there are a number of 'feeder' schools which refer their pupils for places at the PRU. The boarding provision provides part-time boarding 362 nights per year. There are six beds in the boarding unit and no young person will be resident for more than 295 days per year. As residential places are part-time, there will be a maximum of 12 young people accessing the boarding provision. Buckinghamshire have contracted Action for Children to run the boarding on their behalf. The boarding provision is situated in a purpose-built unit.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Young people make progress while accessing the boarding provision. Effective joint working between parents, education, and health and well-being professionals ensures that young people's needs are met to a high standard. Young people have the opportunity to try activities and experiences that they would not otherwise have access to in the family home. A key aspect of the boarding provision is that it greatly impacts on the ability for young people to remain living with their families for the remainder of the week.

Young people's safety and well-being are given the highest priority. Any concerns or incidents are shared directly with social workers, the headteacher and designated officer when appropriate. Records are clear and show the action that has been taken in response to safeguarding concerns.

Young people are encouraged to engage with each other within the boarding provision, and when able, form positive bonds and relationships. Due to the specific needs of the young people, it is more often the case that they tolerate being in the same room, rather than form friendships. They do, however, have excellent relationships with the staff who care for them. Staff have an excellent understanding of each young person's needs, and follow agreed plans and programmes to ensure consistency and positive outcomes for young people.

Young people's views and ideas are sought through various methods, including using thumbs up and thumbs down symbols, general discussion and choice boards. There are many examples of the ways in which young people have influenced change in their environment or care. The service is continuing to explore ways in which it can seek young people's views for its reviews, and is working with the wider organisation in order to gain more skills in this area.

Young people have access to a wide range of leisure activities, both in the boarding provision and community. They enjoy opportunities to relax, often by themselves, and also learn life skills such as personal care and choosing their own meals. The boarding area is purpose built and provides good space for all those using it. Young people are able to be alone or with others, and appear relaxed in their surroundings.

A bath panel in one bathroom was noted to have come loose and presents a potential risk to young people.

Leaders and managers identify and tackle weaknesses and use an external visitor to ensure that they are providing a suitable service and monitoring safeguarding concerns effectively. The head of boarding knows what requires immediate change and will take any necessary action on a day-to-day basis. However, the development plan for the boarding provision has not been updated for several years, meaning an audit trail and evidence of forward planning are lacking.

The quality of care and support

Good

Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's individual needs and skills. They work as a team to ensure consistency in approach and so that young people know what is expected of them. Young people and their parents are complimentary of the service, and those who are unable to communicate their views demonstrate these through how comfortable they are in their surroundings, and approaching staff to help them or sit with them.

Staff work well with on-site education staff and link with the other schools that young people attend. Key workers regularly visit schools and share practice ideas with staff there. Weekly meetings between key staff in the on-site school ensure consistency in planning and approach. Additionally, each young person has a diary which the boarding provision, their home and school use to communicate with each other.

Young people are consistently treated with dignity and respect, and it is assumed that they can do tasks for themselves. They are supported to practise skills, to make sure their learning disability is as small a barrier as possible in their daily lives. They are supported to follow religious and cultural events as is their or their parents' wish. Young people are encouraged to be positive about themselves, and this is shown through how young people learn and develop while accessing the service. Examples include a young person now being able to communicate with others, while another is able to spend more time out of her bedroom.

Young people are able to access a wide range of socially and emotionally stimulating activities, including regular events such as swimming and youth club, but also trips to the beach, country parks and the theatre. Staff prepare young people for events well, often using social stories so they know what is going to happen and can enjoy the activity with minimal distress.

Young people's plans are clear and up to date. They reflect the needs of the individual young person and cross-reference with the daily records. For example, targets are pre-printed for each young person's daily notes. This enables staff to identify clearly what targets have been met. The information is used to produce quarterly evaluations, which help determine which areas require further development and where young people have succeeded in developing a new skill.

Policies and procedures are available for all staff and are regularly updated. These policies and procedures are independent from those of the school.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Young people's actions and demeanour clearly demonstrate that they feel safe in the boarding area. Staff recognise when individuals are becoming anxious or worried, and are proactive in supporting them in line with their agreed plans and strategies. Staff are acutely aware of each young person's vulnerabilities and do all they can to support them to feel safe and secure.

Allegations of suspicion of harm are handled quickly, but separately from the school. The headteacher is explicitly clear that the responsibility for following these up if they relate to boarding lies with the boarding provider and not the school, as the boarding provision is funded and run by a separate organisation. The designated officer in the local authority and the safeguarding for schools team are both complimentary of the school and boarding provisions, and confirm that they report any issues as required. Records within the boarding provision show that any allegations are taken seriously. However, where a young person may make allegations as part of their coping strategy, staff must remain vigilant of what is to be passed on or investigated further. The head of boarding amended the form for recording these issues during the inspection to identify what action has been taken.

Staff have regular safeguarding training, and recognise the extent to which those they care for are vulnerable. They have a good understanding of exploitation in all forms, including radicalisation. Young people do not go missing from the service and the building is fully secure. Staff know what to do should they lose sight of a young person in the community, but staffing ratios are intentionally high due to the vulnerability of those they are caring for. All staff have regular supervision where they are asked about any safeguarding concerns they may have. Staff have an excellent understanding of their role in protecting young people.

Young people are encouraged to take age-appropriate risks in line with their age and ability, and staff are not risk averse. Young people are afforded the opportunity to make mistakes and learn from them, as well as experience activities in which peers of their age might take part.

Viewing panels in bedroom doors have not been risk assessed and there is no policy in place regarding their use. Staff are clear on the reasons to use them, which can afford young people greater independence and ensure their safety.

Staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management and each young person's plan is clear. Staff were seen to be working well together to meet young people's needs and reduce their anxiety, especially in transitions between settings. Staff know what to do when young people become 'stuck' and work well with them to move to the next phase. Sanctions are not used, and young people are encouraged to learn what is acceptable through consistency. Restraint is used as a last resort and all measures of control are fully risk assessed.

Staff working in the home have all undergone pre-employment checks and vetting by the external organisation. One member of staff has a document in their file which has not been translated into English. It does not appear to be a key document, but this must be determined by translation of the information.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The boarding provision is well managed and led by staff with appropriate experience. Although inspected as a boarding school, this is being reviewed in the light of the clear separation of education and care: staff are employed and managed by different

organisations in the two distinct areas. This does not impact detrimentally on young people and management is effective. There remain high expectations and good levels of joint working between the school and boarding provision.

The boarding provision is mostly well staffed, but there are significant shortages on some weekends. The head of boarding is aware of this, and is seeking alternatives to ensure that this service is properly staffed at these times, rather than relying on regular agency staff. Members of the staff team are suitably qualified, with most holding the level 3 qualification in residential childcare or working towards it.

The head of boarding is seeking to improve the service and uses regular monitoring by an independent visitor, who completes a rigorous audit of the service, including reviewing safeguarding concerns. Recommendations from these visits are acted upon swiftly. Lessons are also learned from complaints, which are managed well, whether they are formal or low-level issues. There is not a current development plan in place; however, the service is being regularly maintained and improved where necessary.

Staff benefit from regular training, supervision and appraisal of their work. They say they can approach the managers and that they work well as team. Most staff commented on how well they work together and how this has helped them with consistency, but also improves outcomes for the 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	138102
Social care unique reference number	SC474566
DfE registration number	825/1105

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 boarding schools.

Type of school	Boarding school
Number of boarders on roll	9
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	10 to 19
Headteacher	Steven Sneesby
Date of previous boarding inspection	05 March 0214
Telephone number	01494448497
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