

Penn Hall School

Penn Hall School, Vicarage Road, Penn, WOLVERHAMPTON WV4 5HP

Inspection dates	05/12/2016 to 07/12/2016	
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

- Young people are safe and feel safe. Leaders, managers and care staff prioritise young people's safety and embed this ethos into the daily routines of residential provision. Relationships between young people and care staff are immensely positive, and breed a culture of trust and respect.
- Managers ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive and straightforward for care staff to follow and implement. Care staff understand fully their responsibilities and immediately refer any concerns regarding young people's welfare or safety to safeguarding teams in the local authority.
- The residential provision is an inclusive environment where disability is not a barrier that curtails young people's experiences. Residential care staff, leaders and managers have exceptionally high aspirations for young people.
- Young people enjoy their time in the residential provision and look forward to spending quality time with their friends and peers. These relationships support young people to develop their interpersonal social skills. This means that they grow in confidence.
- Regular consultation is a considerable strength of this residential provision. Care staff work with families and teaching staff to capture young people's views and wishes. Young people are encouraged to make genuine choices that enhance their stay in residency.
- The school and the residential provision are integrated well. School leaders and

residential managers work together in their shared aspiration to make sure that the service continually evolves to reflect young people's needs.

- The school's leaders and residential managers use research relating to young people's educational and social development to underpin practice.

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?

There were no areas identified on this inspection.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted completed this welfare-only inspection following the appropriate notice period for this type of visit. A tour of the residential accommodation was undertaken. Inspectors spent two afternoons and two early evenings in the company of young people and staff. Inspectors spoke with and observed several young people during the inspection and observed two evening meals and two breakfasts. Inspectors examined a range of records and documents relating to the care provided by the service, and held interviews with members of the senior leadership team, managers, care staff, parents and carers.

Inspection team

Jo Stephenson

Lead social care inspector

Lisa Walsh

Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Penn Hall is a Wolverhampton Local Authority Community Special School for young people aged 3 to 19 years, whose special educational needs fall predominantly in the category of physical disability and complex medical needs. Some young people have an associated learning difficulty related to their physical disability. An increasing number of young people have communication difficulties. The school is located on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. It can accommodate 84 young people. The residential provision is on the school site. Six young people stay overnight at any one time. All young people attending the school are able to stay at the residential provision.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

Young people make excellent progress in all aspects of their development because of the outstanding care and support they receive. Staff deliver highly personalised and tailored care that reflects each young person's skills, abilities, preferences, vulnerabilities and complex medical needs. Well-organised and child-centred residential routines mean that young people move smoothly from school to residency and they understand that this is a continuation of their care. This creates an ethos of continued learning that supports young people to grasp the importance of building confidence through social interactions, leisure activities and secure emotional attachments and friendships.

Care staff work effectively in partnership with young people's families, teaching staff and health professionals to set young people's developmental targets. These help young people to focus on specific developmental areas, such as communication, dexterity and empathy. The head of care and care staff review these targets to ensure that these are achievable but equally challenging. This promotes the constructive culture evident across the service and inspires young people to reach their potential.

Young people have complex health needs. Care staff, nursing staff and other health professionals work together to make sure that young people receive consistent and personalised care. Joint planning by all professionals means that young people are able to enjoy their stays, regardless of their health requirements needs. Young people's specific health needs do not exclude them from spending quality time with their friends.

Care staff make sure that leisure activities offered when young people are staying are both educational and social. Young people consistently say that their 'favourite' thing about residency is the 'fun activities'. One young person said, 'We make the decisions and suggest things we want to do. We always do really good stuff.' Care staff provide young people with an eclectic mix of 'home based' and external activities that support their development and build their confidence.

Safeguarding young people and protecting them from harm is a school priority. Care staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and recognise that the additional challenges young people face potentially increases their vulnerability. The care staff make sure that they achieve a balance between safeguarding young people and allowing them to take age appropriate responsibility. This enables young people to have a sense of positive self-direction in relation to the choices and challenges of everyday life.

School leaders and residential managers regularly monitor the service through self-assessment, reflective service reviews and data comparisons. These monitoring systems help managers to review young people's individual progress and evaluate the impact the service has on young people's social, emotional and physical development.

Young people refer to their time in residency as 'Amazing', 'Wonderful' and 'Cool'. Parents and families, along with teaching staff and other professionals, continually praise the 'absolutely excellent' care and support that young people receive. One parent said,

'My shy and anxious little boy has grown into a confident and social young man. He has got so much out of the service.'

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

All young people make remarkable progress because of their opportunities to stay at the residential provision. This is because of the close and professional working partnerships between care staff, young people, their families, health and education professionals and other agencies when appropriate. This integrated approach to supporting young people means that their care plans are personalised. Care plans take account of young people's communication needs, complex medical needs, educational targets and achievements, and social interaction skills.

Care staff make sure that they incorporate young people's views, feelings and opinions into care planning. This includes taking account of young people's preferences when assessing group compatibility for overnight stays. Young people say that they enjoy being able to spend time with their friends. One young person said, 'It's a big sleepover with my friends and I love it. We just hang out, chat and laugh.' Parents praise the service and speak with passion and enthusiasm about the benefits and positive impact the residential provision has on their child's development.

Working relationships between care and nursing staff are extremely positive and effective. Nursing staff support the administration of medication and audit processes, and make sure that care staff have the skills they need to meet young people's unique health needs. Since the last inspection, bespoke nursing arrangements have enabled a young person who requires overnight nursing care to access the residential provision. This means that the residential service is now accessible to all young people.

The residential accommodation is suitable. It is clean, tidy and well maintained. Young people are encouraged to personalise their 'bed space' with pictures, cushions and personalised bedding. The main activity area is light, bright and provides young people with a stimulating and interesting environment. They benefit from easy access to board games, computers, computer games, and arts and crafts equipment. Young people regularly participate in external activities such as attending a local disco, visiting shopping centres and enjoying meals in the community. All activities are available to all young people. Care staff continually demonstrate a determination to make sure that young people's disabilities do not curtail their activity options. This strong culture of inclusion supports young people's personal growth and development.

Care staff make sure that meal times are positive social occasions and use these times to support young people to develop their interaction skills as well as their practical skills. Young people say that they 'really, really love' the food and enjoy the variety of dishes on offer. Meals are nutritionally balanced and they reflect young people's individual dietary and cultural needs. Care staff encourage young people to try new foods with different textures. This enhances their mealtime experience.

The safety and protection of young people is paramount in the school and in the residential provision. School leaders, residential managers and care staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and work in partnership with other agencies to implement these when necessary. The designated safeguarding officer for the school liaises daily with residential managers. Together, they continually review, assess and discuss young people's progress and are alert to any behavioural, physical or emotional changes. This enables the teaching and care staff to maintain a professional curiosity that helps to keep young people safe. When concerns are raised, these are referred swiftly. Senior managers immediately address any concerns, working with the local authority designated officer for managing allegations against people who work with children, and other child protection professionals when appropriate. This unified approach to protecting young people continually promotes their safety and welfare.

Young people have a varied range of complex needs, which require a number of different specialist approaches. These include specific health requirements, behavioural characteristics associated with their diagnosed disabilities and bespoke communication needs. Care staff fully understand young people's unique conditions. They are extremely skilled in the use of various forms of sign language and symbol exchange systems, and use these skills very effectively to form positive relationships with the young people. Trust and respect are the foundations of these relationships. For example, care staff deliver personal care with sensitivity, warmth and thoughtfulness. This promotes young people's dignity and safety. The strength and appropriateness of relationships between care staff and young people means that they respond well to verbal and signed praise. Consequently, sanctions or physical restraint to manage behaviour are not required.

Care staff recognise the additional risks associated with young people's specific complex disabilities and how these potentially impede their cognitive abilities. However, this knowledge is only used to manage identified risks and not to curtail young people's enjoyment, experiences or personal development. This proportionate approach to risk management enables young people to move towards independence and gain practical and emotional skills that will support their journey towards adulthood.

The residential provision gives young people a safe and secure environment because health and safety considerations are paramount. Maintenance staff and facilities managers complete detailed risk assessments to minimise any potential risk to young people. They implement a range of monitoring systems to make sure that all specialist equipment, such as fire safety equipment, track hoists and mobile hoists, are regularly checked and serviced.

Procedures for the selection and vetting of all staff are robust. All staff are subject to disclosure and barring service checks and school leaders discuss and verify any gaps in employment with potential candidates. This promotes young people's safety and means that they work with suitably vetted adults.

School leaders and residential managers are passionate and inspirational about maximising young people's experiences so that they thrive educationally, physically, emotionally and socially. They have high aspirations for young people and the culture of the service celebrates the 'can do' ethos embedded in all areas of practice. Experienced school leaders and senior managers support the head of care in her role. She, in turn, supports a committed, dedicated and stable team of care staff through regular practice-related formal supervision and access to reflective and relevant training. This enhances their knowledge and means that care staff have the necessary skills to support young people. Regular team meetings, handover sessions and discussions about young people's progress mean that staff practice is consistent. As a result, young people are the focus of the service and they continually make excellent progress in all aspects of their development.

All staff in the school's residential provision strive to provide young people with exceptional care and support. The school's leaders and managers use research to help them to improve practice. This includes research on attainment and progress. Parents, families and other professionals receive clear information about the residential provision. This defines the aims and objectives of the service and means that all parties understand the scope and remit of the residential provision. The school has established its own multi-agency team who meet regularly. These meetings enable the leaders and managers to discuss practice. This can include examining statutory guidance, such as keeping children safe in education. As a result, the school keeps up to date with practice and national guidance.

There have been no formal complaints from young people, their families or others since the last inspection. Complaints procedures are clear and transparent, and parents are encouraged to use a range of methods to communicate with the school and to express their views and opinions. Furthermore, a full range of statutory and complementary policies and procedures are in place to support young people's development and these are accessible on the school's website.

Governors, school leaders and residential managers evaluate the aims and objectives of the service against young people's progress and development. Monitoring tools are effective and include the views and opinions of young people, their families and other agencies.

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	104417
Social care unique reference number	SC043187
DfE registration number	336/7012

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	84
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	3 to 19
Headteacher	Mr David Parry
Date of previous boarding inspection	14/03/2016
Telephone number	01902 558 355
Email address	admin@pennhall.co.uk

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