

Royal School for the Deaf Derby

Royal School for the Deaf, 180 Ashbourne Road, Derby DE22 3BH

Inspection dates	01/03/2017 to 03/03/2017	
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	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Children and young people make good progress, particularly towards their independent living skills. They enjoy the residential experience. They particularly like the staff and socialising with their friends.
- Children and young people are treated with dignity and respect. Living and being educated within a deaf community helps them to build a strong sense of identity and builds their confidence and resilience.
- Parents think highly of the residential provision. Staff work closely with parents and external professionals. This provides a cohesive and consistent approach that helps children and young people to make good progress.
- The emotional and physical health of children and young people is good due to the help and support that they receive from appropriate internal and external professionals.
- Staff follow good safeguarding procedures that help to keep children and young people safe. The safety of children and young people is central to all practice.
- Staff are competent signers so are able to communicate effectively with children and young people.
- Leaders are committed to improving the residential provision. They are supported by a strong governing body and an experienced and caring staff team. This has brought about significant improvement since the last inspection. However, some areas for improvement have been identified in relation to the monitoring of records, recording, risk assessments, performance management, analysis of data, staff training, consultation with children and young people and the homeliness of accommodation.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:

- 13.9 The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.
- 22.1 Every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress, which can be read by the child at any time (except where the data controller is not obliged to supply the information to the child), and they can add personal statements or statements correcting errors.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consider providing training for staff on sexually harmful behaviours and sexualised behaviour in children and young people.
 - Consider quantifying and analysing data on safeguarding referrals involving the use of digital technology. This information could also be shared with partner agencies to inform multi-agency interventions, to help to reduce incidents.
 - Ensure that action is taken to address issues identified through supervision, and that supervision provides staff with the opportunity to reflect on their practice.
 - Consider closely monitoring the staffing arrangements to ensure that they are adequate to ensure the safety of children and young people.
 - Improve communication with children and young people to ensure that they are kept informed of action being taken about their complaints, concerns and suggestions.
 - Improve the accommodation to ensure that it is more homely in all areas.
 - Ensure that written risk assessments are individualised and promptly updated following new information. Furthermore, ensure that risk assessments for young people over the age of 18 cover risks specific to this age group.
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Information about this inspection

This inspection was announced on the morning of the inspection. The inspectors visited the residential accommodation and spoke to residential students and staff, including key staff with responsibility for the residential provision. The inspectors also observed practice in the residential provision and scrutinised school policies and records. The inspectors were able to gather limited information from 'Parent View'.

Inspection team

Joanne Vyas	Lead social care inspector
Cathey Moriarty	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

The Royal School for the Deaf Derby is a non-maintained residential special school. There are 116 pupils on roll, whose ages range from three to 19. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, and some pupils are from ethnic minority groups. All pupils have a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care plan for hearing impairment, and some have complex special needs. The residential service operates weekdays only as all children and young people go home at weekends. There are 23 pupils who stay at the school, either on a full-time or part-time basis during the week. The residential accommodation is provided across two residential facilities that are purpose-built blocks. The school is a signing and speaking community where the languages and cultures of both deaf and hearing people are valued. The school is situated in the city of Derby.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Children and young people make good progress from their starting points. For example, they are supported to learn independent living skills. A parent commented that they were shocked (and pleased) when their son started to do his own laundry and help in the house after being in residence for only two weeks. Children and young people said that they enjoy learning how to cook for themselves.

Children and young people enjoy their residential experiences. They particularly like the staff. A young person said: 'I like the staff. We have fun. We joke with each other.' Another said: 'I like the staff as they are always very helpful with homework and problems.'

Attendance in school is very good, and achievement is generally appropriate to the children's and young people's special educational needs. Residential staff support children and young people in the school, thereby creating better links between care and education. Young people are supported to go on to college and are making good progress towards their qualifications.

Leaders are starting to provide good oversight and have plans to implement more rigorous monitoring tools in the near future. The staff team is established and experienced. The team provides a good, consistent and nurturing service that benefits children and young people. This helps them to successfully transition into adulthood. A parent said: 'I do think highly of the residential staff.'

The quality of care and support

Good

Staff have a very good understanding of the needs of the children and young people. They are competent signers, which enables them to be able to communicate effectively with children and young people. Children and young people said that they feel well looked after by staff. Staff have warm and nurturing relationships with children and young people.

Staff work closely with academic staff, parents and external professionals. This helps them to care for children and young people holistically and to ensure that practice is consistent across home and school. Parents appreciate the high level of communication that they receive from staff. One said, 'Staff are brilliant.' Another parent said: 'It's home from home. I just can't praise them enough. Any problems, I know I can ring them.'

Children and young people are treated with dignity and respect. Living and being educated within a deaf community helps them to build a strong sense of identity and to build their confidence and resilience.

Children and young people benefit from a wide range of activities that they enjoy. Activities include roller skating, football, sports and social clubs, the gym, swimming and crafts. This also helps to build their confidence and self-esteem. They also enjoy spending time with their friends.

Children and young people have access to good healthcare, helping to promote their physical and emotional health. Qualified nurses are available to them during the school day. Nurses write healthcare plans and provide healthcare training to staff. They also assess the competency of staff in administering medication. This ensures that children and young people are looked after by well-trained staff. Children and young people have good access to mental health services and a counselling service for the deaf.

Children and young people like their individual bedrooms, which they can personalise if they wish. They said that the temperature of the showers fluctuates and that some rooms are too hot or too cold, especially at night. The school leaders are aware of these issues and are currently investigating them. Children and young people have access to comfortable communal areas and a student club, where they access computers and watch films. They have experienced difficulties with access to wi-fi connections and the digital television packages that the school provides. The school leaders are aware of these issues and are trying to resolve them.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Children and young people develop strong relationships with staff and feel safe and secure. They become increasingly safe because of the actions taken to support and protect them, for example, the response to concerns about harm and online safety. They do not go missing from the school, and risky behaviours are well managed. Some children and young people report low-level bullying issues, but said that staff resolve these quickly.

Staff have a good understanding of the school's child protection policies and procedures, making appropriate referrals to external agencies. They use specialist services to support children and young people, such as counselling services for the deaf. Furthermore, an independent person regularly visits the children and young people. This gives them another adult whom they can talk to about any concerns. Children and young people agreed that there are plenty of people around the school to whom they feel comfortable talking about any problems or concerns that they may have.

Positive behaviour is promoted. Staff build strong and nurturing relationships with the children and young people. Behaviour in the residential houses is generally good. There are structures, routines and clear boundaries to support children and young people and keep them safe. They have a clear understanding of the rules and know what the consequences are if they break the rules. Most said that the rules are fair. They are respectful and helpful towards each other, staff and visitors.

Managers contribute to child protection and child looked after planning meetings. They respond effectively to actions and recommendations from the meetings. Governors regularly review the school's safeguarding practice.

Health and safety procedures help to protect children and young people from hazards. Children and young people know the fire evacuation procedures and have practised these. Each room is appropriately equipped to ensure that children and young people are aware when the fire alarms are set off. Vetting procedures ensure that unsuitable

adults do not work with children and young people.

The school has a good relationship with the police who regularly visit to work with the children and young people about online safety and concerns such as sexting.

There are good anti-bullying procedures and, in most cases, staff respond effectively to the concerns that children and young people have raised. However, in a minority of cases, some concerns that children and young people refer to as bullying, staff assess as minor conflicts rather than bullying. This may leave children and young people feeling frustrated.

There has been one report of inappropriate sexualised behaviour. Procedures were followed by staff and managers, and it was subject to investigation. The outcome was that there was no evidence to substantiate the concern. However, staff and managers would benefit from more specialised training regarding children who may present risks of sexualised and sexually harmful behaviour.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement

Significant changes have been made to the school's management team and governing body in the last few years. Managers and governors are continually striving to make improvements to the school, despite budgetary pressures. Managers and governors are developing the service to ensure that there are efficiencies, without impacting on the care of children and young people.

Children and young people feel that their concerns are not always acted on promptly. However, records confirm that staff respond to concerns quickly. Thus, communication with children and young people could be improved to ensure that they are kept informed of action being taken in response to their complaints and suggestions. Managers have been slow to respond to some requests made by children and young people. For example, children and young people requested extra pillows, stating that they were uncomfortable. This was noted in a governors' report in December 2016. Managers responded quickly when this was identified by inspectors at the inspection.

Senior staff have failed to act on information shared by a member of staff that potentially was an allegation against staff. Consequently, the incident has not been assessed or reviewed. This demonstrates a weakness in management oversight of records.

Staff effectively respond to areas of risk, such as online safety and sexualised behaviour. However, their skills and knowledge would be strengthened by receiving training about sexualised behaviour and sexually harmful behaviour. Staff do, however, have access to a good training programme that has a focus on safeguarding children and young people who have disabilities.

Managers are concerned about online safety and respond accordingly to each individual incident. They would gain a better understanding of the issue by quantifying and analysing the information that they have. This information could be shared with partner agencies to inform multi-agency interventions.

Effective management of risks helps to keep children and young people safe. However, written risk assessments are not individualised and are not promptly updated when new information is received. In addition, risk assessments for young people over the age of 18 do not cover risks specific to this age group when these young people are placed with younger children.

Staff supervision is regular, but actions are not always raised when issues are identified by staff. Furthermore, supervision does not offer staff the opportunity to reflect on practice. This contributes to low staff morale, frustration and high levels of sickness.

Staffing shortages are currently prevalent due to staff sickness and staff who have left but have not yet been replaced. School staff tend to cover shifts, so that there is sufficient capacity. This ensures that children and young people are adequately supervised. It also ensures that there is continuity for children and young people who have familiar staff working with them. However, staffing levels at night have recently been reduced, so that one member of staff oversees two houses and there is one member of staff sleeping in each house. Consideration should be given to monitoring this situation closely, so that managers and staff can be reassured that the current arrangements for staffing during the night keep children and young people safe.

Records are not individualised for each child and they contain words that are unhelpful to the readers' understanding of what the issues were at the time. Furthermore, children and young people reading their records now or in the future may be concerned by the terminology used.

Currently, the first floors of houses are not as comfortable and homely as the ground floors. For example, bathrooms are bare. Additionally, there is damage to walls in one house that children and young people said should be addressed. It does not provide a homely appearance. Managers have not effectively monitored the condition of the building.

There has been a recent appointment to the residential leadership team, which is already having a positive impact. The new manager is enthusiastic and highly motivated to provide a good service to children and young people. Governors visit the residential provision regularly and provide appropriate support and challenge that is helping to move the service forward.

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, 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's 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 their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Social care unique reference number	SC002015
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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	Non Maintained Residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	23
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	Three to19
Date of previous boarding inspection	22/06/2015
Telephone number	01332 362512
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