

# Oaklands Park School

John Nash Drive, Dawlish, Devon EX7 9SF

<b>Inspection dates</b>	28 June 2016 to 30 June 2016	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of care and support	Requires improvement	3
How well children and young people are protected	Requires improvement	3
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision requires improvement because

- The school is in a period of transition from a children's home to a residential special school. There is uncertainty in relation to leaders and managers. It is unclear who will have management responsibility for the residential provision from September 2016.
- Leaders and managers do not monitor records with rigour to identify shortfalls that impact on the welfare of children and young people.
- Leaders and managers have not identified an 'independent person' who children and young people can contact about personal problems or concerns.
- Records detailing how to meet the needs of children and young people such as placement plans, behaviour support plans, transition plans and risk assessments contain basic information. Progress and development of children is not well recorded and there is no record of individual work carried out with children.
- Systems in place to safeguard children and young people are fragmented. Leaders and managers share the designated safeguarding lead role. There is no central log to record safeguarding concerns or complaints.
- Systems in place to improve the residential provision need time to embed.

### Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

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

special schools:

- 2.2 The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who children may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. This person may be known as the 'independent person'. Children are informed who this person is and how to contact them and they are easily accessible. Children are also provided with one or more appropriate helpline(s) or outside contact numbers, including the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England, to ring in case of problems or distress.
- 13.2 There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of residential and care provision in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.
- 21.1 The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day-to-day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan, there is appropriate consultation. Where applicable, the plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Where feasible, children in the school are aware of the content of their placement plans, and confirm that the school is providing care for them that is consistent with the plans.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that all safeguarding concerns and complaints are recorded in a central log.
- Ensure that key working sessions with children and young people are recorded on their files.

## Information about this inspection

The school was given five hours' notice of this inspection. The inspectors met all the children and young people currently residing at the school at the time of the inspection and spent time interacting with them.

Inspection activities included observation of care practice over two evenings, meetings with the acting executive headteacher, manager of the residential provision, designated safeguarding leads, chair of trustees and meetings with residential staff. Before the inspection, feedback was obtained from the local authority in relation to safeguarding.

All three residential houses were visited and there was scrutiny over a wide range of policies and records. Responses on Parent View were taken into consideration.

## Inspection team

Nicola Lownds	Lead social care regulatory inspector
Lucy Martin	Her Majesty's Inspector social care

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

This residential special school is a local authority provision for children and young people aged between five and 18 years. There are 47 children and young people currently receiving education at this school, 10 of whom stay in the residential provision.

The school was previously registered as a children's home. Following de-registration in April 2016, the school is now a residential special school. There are other changes planned, a public consultation has taken place in relation to new proposals.

There are three residential houses all close to each other and within the grounds of the school. Children and young people have their own bedrooms and suitable facilities. Children and young people are of mixed gender and diagnosed with a disability, many of whom have been identified as being on the autistic spectrum. The school is located in a coastal town in South Devon. It is now federated to its local neighbouring residential special schools. An aligned inspection took place in February 2016 with education and social care inspecting the children's home. Previously, children's home inspections were carried out in October 2015 and August 2015. This is the first inspection as a residential special school.

## Inspection Judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Requires improvement**

The residential provision is in a period of change following the closure of the children's home. The residential provision has no clear leader identified to drive improvement children's and young people's experiences. While the headteacher has a management structure set out in plans, there is nobody appointed to lead the residential provisions.

Safeguarding systems in place have improved and children and young people are safer because of this. Leaders and managers have established basic core principles and responses to safeguard children and young people. However, the system requires further improvement. One person does not have oversight of safeguarding concerns for the school and residential provision. There is no central log where leaders and managers can easily identify trends and patterns.

Leaders and managers do not evidence the progress of children and young people well. Achievements such as accredited life skills do not link into placement plans and educational targets. There is no 24-hour curriculum in place. It is difficult to measure the impact, progress and achievements of children's and young people. Leaders and managers can describe transition planning well, but records do not detail successful outcomes for children and young people moving on.

The children and young people have resided here for some time. They have established positive relationships with staff and each other. There is a good range of activities on offer, which children and young people can engage in. These include local community groups, leisure activities, youth club and cinema, as well as planned activities in the residential provision.

### The quality of care and support

**Requires improvement**

The quality of records such as placement plans, behaviour support plans and risk assessments are poor. These records do not identify the complex needs of children and young people and how best to meet them. In most cases, the minimum amount of information is available to distinguish basic care needs.

Similarly, this shortfall replicates itself in children's and young people's healthcare plans. The impact of specific health needs to children and young people is not detailed in records. Emergency health protocols are in place. However, some plans do not detail at what point this needs instigating or the impact the condition may have on the child or young person. The administration and arrangements for medication are robust. There is a clear medication policy and an internal and external audit procedure that has minimised the opportunity of medication errors.

Day-to-day progress that children and young people make is not reflected in records to evidence achievements and how these improve outcomes. Task-related progress in a certificated scheme does show some progress, but the link to how this impacts on the lives of children and young people is not evident.

There is a lack of creativity in the approach to helping children and young people to communicate and to identify their views and feelings. Children and young people have key workers identified, but they fail to provide them with one-to-one sessions in which feelings are explored. House meetings take place topics are generic and do not cover a diverse range of subject areas.

A vast amount of change is ongoing following the closure of the children's home. A number of young people have moved on and ongoing transitions for two young people will end this process. Staff articulate the transition plans well and support new carers to build relationships with young people. The residential provision has received compliments from parents and new care providers about their support in helping young people move on successfully. Records do not detail this good work.

The houses are maintained to a good standard and there is a clear plan for ongoing refurbishment. Children and young people have their own bedroom. Bedrooms are personalised spaces. All homes have a kitchen, dining and living spaces. A significant amount of refurbishment has been completed to make the houses and gardens inviting and comfortable spaces for children and young people.

Staff are attuned to the needs of children and young people, they clearly know them well. Inspectors throughout the inspection observed positive interactions between staff and young people. There is a feeling of excitement as activities are planned and children and young people make choices about their evening ahead. Children and young people mix well with each other and go out on activities that suit their interests.

There has been an oversight in making arrangements for an independent person to visit the residential provision. Currently, there is no plan in place for this to take place and as a result, this is a failure of the national minimum standards.

### **How well children and young people are protected**

### **Requires improvement**

Arrangements in place to safeguard children and young people keep them suitably safe. Significant improvements have been made to achieve this. Staff understand their responsibility to safeguard and know how to report a concern to leaders and managers. Leaders and managers take effective action and liaise with appropriate safeguarding professionals. However, the detail in these records requires improvement. Safeguarding records do not always record the outcome of referrals.

The school lacks a system that holds a central safeguarding log, enabling leaders and managers to identify trends and patterns. The role of designated safeguarding lead is shared between the senior leadership team, without one sole person taking overall responsibility.

The quality of relationships between children and young people is improving. Incidents of children and young people physically hurting one another have diminished. Staff assess the needs of children and young people in relation to their compatibility to live together prior to any moves within the houses.

Behaviour support plans provide basic information about how to promote positive behaviour. When children and young people display behaviour that challenges, staff use effective de-escalation techniques to diffuse the situation. There has been a reduction in

the number of physical interventions and those used have all been at a low level. Behaviour management records provide a clear description of the behaviour displayed and the support that staff provide to children and young people. Leaders and managers review these records with rigour and show reflection and analysis in their monitoring.

Children and young people have individual risk assessments in place, which provide some basic strategies to staff to minimise risk. Staff have a good understanding of risk as they assess children and young people in relation to their day-to-day care. This level of care does not reflect in written risk assessments, which lack significance and impact to children and young people.

Leaders and managers recruit staff using safer recruitment techniques, including the verification of references and exploring gaps in employment. Staff recruited via an agency are vetted accordingly.

### **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

### **Requires improvement**

This is a period of instability as the residential provision recently changed to become a residential special school instead of being registered as a children's home. As a result of this change, a number of children and young people have moved on. There are imminent changes to staffing, including the leadership and management team. Consultation is ongoing, but with no identified head of care currently in post for September 2016, there remains some uncertainty to the quality and impact of leaders and managers for the future. The executive head identifies this as an area to improve and aims to have a clear structure by September 2016.

Monitoring systems are not yet good. While there is significant improvement in the monitoring of behaviour management, there remain shortfalls in other areas. Monitoring and audits of children's and young people's files have not been effective. Leaders and managers fail to identify the poor quality of placement plans and records that detail the individual needs of children and young people.

The school has the necessary policies and procedures in place, but the majority are under review following the federation of schools and changes to a residential special school. The statement of purpose does not identify the aims of the school now that it is a residential special school. This would benefit from a robust review under the new management structure.

The system to record complaints is not centralised. There are no significant complaints recorded. Parents and carers feel comfortable to make complaints on behalf of children and young people. The school receives compliments from parents and carers about the quality of care provided in the houses.

Staff have responsibility to conduct fire checks and evacuations throughout the residential provision. Fire checks are not effective as the faults are not identified by leaders and managers and are not rectified in a timely manner.

Staffing arrangements meet the needs of children and young people. Currently, there is a surplus of staff as the changes take place with children and young people moving on. Leaders and managers are utilising this to increase activities in the community and also improve the environment.

Staff receive supervision regularly and the governors continue to monitor the quality of

these supervisions to improve performance. Staff have their development reviewed annually. The training package is sufficient to meet the needs of children and young people.

The executive head has a vision for the school, which has federated with the local residential special schools. An action plan identifies areas for improvement including stabilising the leadership team and improving the quality of care to children and young people. Governors visit the school regularly, including spending time in the residential provision with children and young people. Governors' monitoring includes checking the quality of staff supervision and children's and young people's care files. The chair of governors is a consistent figure in the leadership team who recognises the areas for development.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113642
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	1238045
<b>DfE registration number</b>	878/4703

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Residential special school
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	10
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	5 to 18
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cherie White
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	N/A
<b>Telephone number</b>	01626 862363
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:CWHITE@dawlish-ratcliffe.devon.sch.uk">CWHITE@dawlish-ratcliffe.devon.sch.uk</a>

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