

Fountaindale School

Nottingham Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 5BA

Inspection dates

13/03/2017–15/03/2017

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

Good 2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- The school is a stimulating learning environment that supports young people to engage and achieve. Consequently, young people make excellent progress from their starting points. They learn and practice life skills that they then also use at home. They gain in confidence and self-esteem.
- Young people thoroughly enjoy their residential experience. They really like the staff and get on well with each other too. They are helpful, kind and respectful towards each other, staff and visitors. They love the activities, such as cooking, archery and ice skating. They also enjoy socialising with their friends.
- Robust safeguarding systems and practice ensures the safety of young people. Creative and innovative safeguarding practice enables young people to enjoy new experiences in a safe environment.
- Young people's views, wishes and feelings are highly valued. Staff are expert in communicating with young people who have difficulties in communicating. Young people's views inform school development and practice.
- Staff work in partnership with parents, teaching staff and external professionals to ensure that young people receive a holistic service that enables them to learn and succeed.
- The residential provision is an integral part of the school. The senior leadership team provides strong, effective and supportive management. It inspires staff to provide a highly stimulating and engaging learning environment within a nurturing and warm setting. Staff respond to young people with energy and enthusiasm, demonstrating a genuine affection for them.
- Some areas with regards to records could be strengthened to ensure clarity and understanding.

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 governors and independent visitor reports detail discussions with staff and evaluate the effectiveness of care provided and whether children are safeguarded.
- Consider reviewing the risk assessment process for off-site activities to allow for more flexibility, enabling staff to positively respond to unpredictable elements such as the weather and encouraging choice.
- Ensure that planning documentation for children and young people identifies all known behaviours and records are detailed.
- Review the information given to parents about their child's stay in accordance with the child's age and understanding, to ensure that their privacy and dignity are upheld.

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 also able to gather information from Parent View.

Inspection team

Joanne Vyas

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

This is a residential special school for physically disabled and sensory impaired children and young people who may also have a learning disability aged from three to 19 years. The school is operated by Nottinghamshire County Council. The school is situated in wooded parkland on the outskirts of Mansfield and has moved into newly built premises on the same site as the old school. The boarding accommodation is specially adapted to meet the physical needs of the children and young people and is located in the main school building but is separate from the main school. Residential care is provided two nights a week during term time for pupils aged from 14 to 19 years. Residential pupils stay for one night a week for a period of 10 weeks to promote independence skills, communication and social skills. There are 69 pupils on roll at the school with up to four residents each night.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

A young person said when asked to make a judgement about the residential provision, 'I would have to give them outstanding just because of the amazing work everyone does.'

The school provides for a stimulating learning environment that supports young people to engage and achieve. Consequently, young people make excellent progress from their starting points especially with regards to their independence, social skills, communication, confidence and self-esteem. Staff have high expectations of young people which challenges them to succeed. They thoroughly enjoy their residential experience especially the activities and meeting up with friends. One young person said what he enjoyed the most was making his bed! Other young people said, 'It's really cool. I like it because I get to know people I didn't know before' and, 'We have fun.'

Young people are provided with excellent opportunities to learn social and life skills as well as encounter new experiences. For example, young people participate in cooking activities, choosing and ordering a take away meal, budgeting, looking after their personal hygiene and making their own bed. Parents report that young people are also using the skills that they learn at home. Residential staff work closely with teaching staff so that they can provide opportunities for young people to practice their independence skills during their residential stay. Currently, teaching and residential staff are working closely on work for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award but they also review life skills targets together. This work furnishes young people with a strong base to successfully transition into adulthood. It also gives them a sense of achievement, self-worth and self-esteem. They feel valued and respected.

Young people are safe at this school because the school has rigorous safeguarding processes that all staff have a comprehensive understanding of.

The leadership team provides a strong, effective and supportive management of the service. It has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses, with plans to address any shortfalls. It continually strives to develop the provision and its staff.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Parents appreciate what the residential provision has to offer their children and say that their children enjoy the experience. Staff work in partnership with parents and teaching staff to provide a consistent, supportive approach.

Young people are given opportunities that they may not otherwise experience. For example, young people who are physically disabled went ice skating at Christmas. Staff say that they will always find a way to ensure that young people, no matter what their disability, can participate in all activities, giving archery as another example. Staff have a good understanding of the barriers that young people face, overcoming these creatively to support learning.

The voice of the child is of paramount importance in this school. Young people are highly encouraged to communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings. Staff listen and are expert in communicating with each child despite the child's complexities and communication difficulties. Staff have an in-depth understanding of the equipment that young people use to communicate as well as what their facial expressions and sounds mean. This is a highly inclusive school and young people feel empowered as a result.

Young people say that they feel comfortable with staff and can talk to them if they are unhappy. They know how to make complaints and do so in a mature and confident manner. Staff take their views seriously and act on them promptly. Furthermore, staff respond positively to young people, explaining clearly when their requests cannot be actioned. A young person said, 'Staff are helpful, supportive and will listen to you. They will try and solve your problems. I feel comfortable saying that something isn't right and they will try to fix the problem.'

Young people's privacy and dignity are respected. For example, young people can choose the member of staff who supports them with their intimate care. Staff ensure that young people are comfortable and always tell them what they are doing before they do it to ensure that the young person is happy for them to continue. A young person said, 'I like how the bedrooms are very private. I can chill in my bedroom and no one will walk in your room randomly.'

Young people's achievements are celebrated no matter how small or big. Young people clearly react positively to staff, with happy smiley faces. Staff respond with energy and enthusiasm, demonstrating a genuine affection for the young people.

The health of young people is promoted. Staff receive specialist healthcare training to enable them to ensure that young people with complex health conditions can be properly cared for. Medication is safely stored and administered. Staff work closely with healthcare professionals such as a range of therapy staff and nurses. Young people are encouraged to eat healthy meals although they enjoyed a rare takeaway night during the inspection to help them with their life skills.

Young people enjoy a range of activities during their residential stay. These include ice skating (in wheelchairs), shopping, bowling, archery and visits to the neighbouring college. Young people benefit greatly from their visits to the college as they integrate with college students and get a taste of college life. One young person particularly enjoyed meeting a college student with the same condition as himself and feeling able to talk to her about what it was like to have the condition. Young people have also enjoyed activities at the school such as visits from a person with a guide dog and the dentist, playing games and cooking.

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

The safety of children and young people is a very high priority at this school. There are rigorous safeguarding processes that all staff thoroughly understand. The school has a number of senior staff who are trained as a designated safeguarding lead, which means that there is always someone trained at a high level when young people are present. Creative and innovative practice ensures the safety of young people while enabling them

to enjoy new experiences. For example, young people who are unsteady on their feet used an appropriate wheelchair when they went ice skating. Young people say that they feel safe. Staff are vigilant and competent in reporting concerns. A new electronic system means that records are comprehensive and designated safeguarding leads are informed immediately about any concerns reported. This ensures that swift action is taken to ensure the safety of young people.

Young people are very well behaved, polite and respectful of each other and staff. High staffing levels, staff skills and experience and strong, nurturing relationships mean that young people feel safe and secure. They do not go missing from the school. Staff have a good understanding of online safety and how vulnerable the young people are to other issues such as radicalisation. Young people also have a strong sense of safety as staff regularly talk through risk assessments with them and how to keep themselves safe especially when online.

Highly effective planning minimises risks to young people on-site and off-site. For example, young people went ice skating at Christmas. Young people were assessed to ensure that they could use their powered wheelchairs safely on the ice or, for young people who are unsteady on their feet, they were assessed to use a wheelchair that was appropriate for them. This meant that all young people could participate safely in the activity, which was very much enjoyed by all.

Health and safety systems ensure that young people are protected from hazards. Vetting procedures ensure that young people are not looked after by unsuitable adults.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The residential provision is an integral part of the school. The senior leadership team provides strong, effective and supportive management. It inspires staff to provide a highly stimulating and engaging learning environment within a nurturing and warm setting. Staff are encouraged to share good practice across similar services and to reflect on and share experiences of other settings to enhance the work of the school.

The principal residential childcare officer is qualified and experienced. She works closely with the senior leadership team that has been highly responsive to the points for improvement made at the previous inspection. For example, work is due to start on an extension to the residential provision to ensure improved communal space for young people.

There is an established team of staff providing continuity and consistency for young people, something that they appreciate. Staff are qualified, very experienced and passionate about providing each young person with an individually tailored package of care and support. They have access to excellent training opportunities that ensure they have the skills and knowledge to care for young people with complex health and communication needs.

Records and planning documentation for young people is mostly comprehensive. However, some records can be improved. For example, on one occasion, a body map was not detailed and therefore it is difficult to ascertain what the concern was and the

action taken. Staff understood that the marks were probably caused by known behaviour but this behaviour is not recorded on planning documentation. Furthermore, information recorded for parents does not currently consider the young person's view about whether the information should be shared with parents given their age and understanding. For example, if the young person has had a bowel movement, this is not an issue for them. They are 17 years old and able to tell parents themselves if they wish them to know.

Activities are very well planned with robust risk assessment. Consent from parents is sought for each trip out. However, the risk assessment process and repeated required consent may prevent flexibility with trips off-site. For example, staff and young people may wish to change plans due to the weather.

Currently, the chair of governors and the extended services coordinator visit the residential provision. This means that the residential provision is visited regularly by independent people who produce reports based on observation, discussion with young people and parents and review of documentation. Reports are reviewed by the governing body and principal as part of quality assurance and improvement planning. Monitoring reports provide a good insight into what the school does but could be strengthened by detailing discussions with staff and evaluating the effectiveness of the care provided and whether young people are safeguarded.

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

Social care unique reference number SC402858

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 69

Gender of boarders Mixed

Age range of boarders 3 to 19

Headteacher Mark Dengel

Date of previous boarding inspection 19/10/2015

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