

Shenstone Lodge School

Shenstone Lodge School, Birmingham Road, Shenstone Wood End, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS14 0LB

Inspection dates

28/02/2017 to 02/03/2017

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

Good 2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Children enjoy their residential experience and make good progress from their starting points.
- Children enthusiastically participate in a wide range of activities, both on-site and in the local and wider community, which increase their social interaction and self-esteem.
- Staff provide good-quality care that drives personalised outcomes for all children.
- Staff are good role models and form positive relationships with children and their families and carers.
- Staff work proactively with other professionals to ensure that children's individual needs are consistently met and the quality of care is constantly improving.
- Staff have high expectations of children. They reward and celebrate progress. Staff are proud of children's achievements.
- Staff ensure the safety and well-being of all children.
- Governors, leaders and staff are working together to drive up standards and outcomes for children using the residential service.
- There are four areas for improvement. Staff do not routinely receive the opportunity to discuss and reflect after every incident involving the use of physical intervention. Not all staff vetting records detail why there are gaps in staff employment history. The school's missing policy does not explicitly refer to the residential provision. Not all staff have level 3 training or equivalent.

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 the school's staff recruitment and vetting procedure is followed. Where there is a discussion regarding gaps in a prospective employee's job history, ensure that a record is made of the discussion.
- Ensure that the school's missing policy explicitly links to the residential provision.
- Ensure that staff routinely receive the opportunity to discuss and reflect after every incident involving the use of physical intervention.
- Ensure that residential staff have access to level 3 or equivalent professional development.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of residential and welfare arrangements took place following the appropriate notice period for this type of visit. Three inspectors carried out the visit and reviewed the policies, documentation, residential provision and organisation over a period of three days. The inspectors spoke to governors, senior leaders, managers, key support staff, residential staff and children. One evening was spent in the residential accommodation and out on activities observing staff and children's interactions and activities. Inspectors also joined children for a lunchtime and an evening meal. In addition, the inspectors sought feedback from parents and professionals.

Inspection team

Dawn Bennett
Louise Whittle
Dave Carrigan

Lead social care inspector
Social care inspector
Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Shenstone Lodge School is a split site maintained residential special school catering for boys and girls who experience severe emotional and/or mental health difficulties. Across the sites there are 72 pupils on roll.

The residential provision is situated on the Shenstone Lodge site which offers education for pupils aged 5 to 12 years. Currently, there are 39 pupils on the site, of whom 15 are residential pupils. Children can board on a 4 day or 2 day basis.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Children make good educational, social and emotional progress as a result of their residential experience. Their school attendance increases and academic outcomes improve. They form appropriate relationships with peers. They experience new activities and become members of clubs. They learn new skills that help them to understand and appropriately communicate concerns and worries.

Children contribute to and recognise the progress they make. They discuss their views, wishes and concerns on a regular basis with their designated member of staff as well as the rest of the residential staff team. They are successfully supported and enabled to meet targets informed by their 'my star' care plans, their parents and carers and their own personal aspirations.

Children have fun during their residential stays, stating: 'the staff are funny', 'the activities are great' and 'I think judo is the best'. They learn through play and participate in a variety of evening activities. Many become members of onsite clubs, such as judo. As they become more socially able and confident, they are supported to become members of a judo club in the local community, or a member of another community club, such as Cubs. Some children have recently gone on to experience going away on overnight camp with Cubs.

Children learn new skills, which have a positive impact on other areas of their lives, at home or school. They experience age-appropriate routines, such as reading with staff, good sleep patterns and getting up and ready in time for school. They lead healthy lifestyles through eating regular meals, trying new food and being physically active. They increase their self-help skills, learning to wash, clean their teeth and shower without verbal prompts. They have fun learning new life-skills, cooking breakfasts alongside staff and developing their ability to constructively occupy their own time.

Staff provide sensitive support to children and their families and carers who are transitioning in and out of the residential service. When a child first accesses the service, their move is tailored to their individual needs. It can take place quickly or over a number of weeks. When children are ready to move on to their next educational provision, residential stays are gradually reduced. Regular meetings also take place to ensure that children remain well informed. Since the last inspection, the executive headteacher has worked across the two school sites to ensure consistency of ethos to help children make a smooth transition.

The quality of care and support

Good

Staff have positive relationships with children. They provide a warm, welcoming and nurturing environment, with consistent stability for all children. There are simple, well-

known mottos which apply to both staff and children: 'safe happy learning' and 'be the best you can be'. These help to create a mutually respectful community. Children's understanding of and respect for diversity is enhanced by their residential experience, for example by an enriching visit to a local gurdwara. Learning is promoted at all times through play and constant communication.

Staff are also excellent role models and their relationships positively influence change in children. During a game of Monopoly, one young person stated: 'I know why he [a member of staff] always gets me to read every dice throw and everyone's cards. Also, why he makes me count the money? It's because he is making sure I learn. I don't mind doing it because I always beat him anyway!'

The senior management team and staff work creatively and openly with partner agencies. They are also proactive in seeking out new ventures, involvement in research and external professionals' learning to further improve the quality of care and outcomes for children. For example, the service has been the first to achieve Sandwell's new 'well-being charter mark', which is a whole-school approach to integrating and supporting emotional well-being.

Staff ensure that children access any additional services they might require to improve their outcomes. For example, they refer to the child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and Brook clinic for healthy relationship and well-being support. All children are assessed by a speech and language therapist. Staff work in close partnership with these professionals and ensure that any recommendations are incorporated in their work practice with individual children.

Staff promote the active involvement of children in decision-making processes affecting the operation and development of the residential service. Their views are proactively sought as individuals and as a residential collective. Children know how to raise concerns and how to make a formal complaint. Children have access to the independent listener and have regular visits from an independent visitor. These facilities mean children have a trusted adult with whom they can raise a concern.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Children's safety and well-being is promoted at all times. There are internal and external audits of safeguarding. These audits feed into the school's safeguarding action plan. This plan is monitored by designated safeguarding officers and the chair of governors.

The school's policies and procedures underpin regular whole-staff training. This covers a wide range of subjects that include the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, female genital mutilation, the safe use of information and communication technology and awareness-raising in relation to child sexual exploitation.

Staff practice is well informed by the policies and training. Staff have a good understanding of the individual complex needs of children, and staffing levels are high. As a result, there are no incidents of children leaving the site without permission or being unaccounted for. However, the school's missing policy does not explicitly refer to

the residential provision. There are no concerns in regard to child sexual exploitation, although the staff have a well-informed understanding of the signs to be aware of. Bullying is also not identified as a concern, but staff constantly monitor this.

Staff are skilled at managing incidents that are of high risk or that affect a child's safety. They take preventative actions by adjusting activities, staffing levels and managing the environment. They promote the importance of communicating feelings and emotions. They organise activities and play that promote turn-taking, listening and interacting with others to develop these skills.

Staff have a clear picture of patterns and trends of inappropriate behaviour. Physical interventions are used as a last resort. When they do take place, they are monitored and evaluated. Behaviour recovery models used by staff include the opportunity for the child to reflect on any lessons learned with the well-being team. Staff involved in these incidents discuss and reflect on any lessons learned on occasions but not routinely. This does not support staff to consider how they might react differently next time and thus continue to reduce the need to physically intervene.

Children's safety is further supported by effective fire and health and safety procedures. There are established recruitment procedures to ensure that children are not at risk from inappropriate people working with them. In some cases, the school's procedure for exploring gaps in an employee's employment history have not been followed and there are no records of the outcomes of conversations.

The residential accommodation is maintained to a good standard. There are a wide range of well-furnished communal areas. Since the last inspection, some dormitories have been made into single bedrooms. The quality of two of these rooms has been compromised as one does not have a window and the other has half a window that cannot be opened. The senior management team has decided to no longer use these rooms as bedrooms.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers Good

The residential service is well managed. It is a valued part of the school. The head of care has excellent oversight of the residential staff team and the outcomes for children. She is part of the school's senior management team and works effectively with the governing body to improve outcomes for children and develop quality of care.

Leaders, staff and governors have a clear vision for an even better school. They give a strong focus to continuous improvement and are successfully taking staff on the journey with them. They continually look for new ideas, research, training opportunities and greater partnership working. These highly motivated leaders develop competent staff who create an environment where children are happy, are excited about learning and strive to reach their potential.

Residential staff are enthusiastic and child-centred. They ensure that a good quality of service is delivered to children and their families and carers. They continue with their professional development to ensure that they meet the evolving needs of children, but not

all staff have a level 3 or equivalent qualification. Staff value regular meetings, supervisions and appraisals, where they reflect on practice and identify areas for development. There has been a full staff team for the last six months, and this promotes continuity of care.

Staff work effectively in partnership with a range of professionals, such as educational psychologists, speech and language therapists and CAMHS. Where necessary, they advocate on behalf of children to ensure that they achieve the best outcomes.

The senior leadership team is proactive in its use of quality assurance processes. For example, external and internal audits scrutinise practice and gather the views of children, families and professionals. The independent visitor produces informative reports that ensure that all governors are well informed and give areas for improvement to the senior leadership team. Improvement planning and development plans are used effectively to ensure ongoing progress. Capacity for continued improvement is clearly demonstrated and work is currently under way to measure the impact of residential stays.

All national minimum standards are met and there are four areas for improvement identified as a result of this inspection.

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 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	104024
Social care unique reference number	SC038726
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	15
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	4 to 16
Headteacher	Neil Toplass
Date of previous boarding inspection	08/12/2015
Telephone number	01543 480 369
Email address	headteacher@shenstonelodge.sandwell.sch.uk

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