

Holly House School

Holly House School, Church Street North Old Whittington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 9QR

Inspection dates	21/03/2017 to 23/03/2017	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Outstanding	1
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

- Despite some excellent progress made by young people there are shortfalls that undermine this progress. This is particularly evident in the governance, monitoring, and recording of particular interventions.
- Young people enjoy a wide range of activities that build their confidence and help them socialise with others.
- The quality of care provided by staff is excellent. All staff understand the needs of young people and this is reinforced through exceptional care plans.
- Positive behaviour is actively encouraged and young people enjoy using the pirate-themed reward programme.
- The views of others indicate that the care provided is very good, and parents comment that staff 'are amazing' and say they recommend the school to others.
- The head of care is very experienced and leads a committed and motivated staff team.
- The inspection identifies one failure to meet national minimum standards in relation to governance. Five areas are identified for further improvement, including training, risk assessments, monitoring and recording of complaint outcomes.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

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

- 13.1 The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management, and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The school should appoint a governor responsible for the residential provision who is not directly involved in the provision. This will improve external scrutiny.
- The headteacher should formalise the observations and visits he undertakes of the residential provision in order to complete his annual review.
- Records of complaints should include the young person's view of the outcome.
- Further training or resources should be available to increase staff awareness of recent developments within sexual exploitation and self-harm.
- Risk assessments should clarify interventions for incidents of self-harm and should recognise individual risks presented by young people on activities.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was announced on the morning of the start of the inspection. The inspector visited the residential accommodation, spoke to the 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. No information was available on Parent View to inform the inspection. However, the inspector spoke to parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Judith Longden

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Holly House School is a maintained residential community special school for children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school provides education for 42 pupils aged seven to 14 years who have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans. The school is located in Chesterfield, Derbyshire. The residential unit is located in an annex to the main school and is on two floors. The unit provides accommodation for up to eight pupils each night from Monday to Thursday during term-time. Pupils access the service on a voluntary basis. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2016.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Young people make tremendous progress in many areas of their lives, but this progress is undermined by several shortfalls, making their overall experiences good rather than outstanding.

This school provides education for young people who have difficulty accessing mainstream education. Staying in the residential provision provides them with the opportunities to take part in activities, socialise, build confidence, and forge positive relationships to help them return to mainstream school.

The range of activities available to young people is excellent, and they make full use of an exciting programme of events while staying over in residential or on an extended day. Activities include football, exploration of the woods, roller-skating, car maintenance and swimming. This builds confidence and provides opportunities for them to build relationships in their group and with staff. They also take part in a number of community projects, including a fitness programme run by police officers. This provides them with occasions to socialise outside of their peer group. Participation in charitable events, such as Comic Relief, visiting adults with learning disabilities and helping the homeless, engages them in worthy causes and helps them to feel part of the wider community.

The confidence and social skills gained through participation, and positive relationships with peers and staff forged through spending time together, help young people in their education. Monitoring identifies that those pupils who stay in residential have some of the highest school attendance and a significant reduction in the number of incidents. For some, this improvement also transfers to the home setting; one family member commented, 'He loves staying on residence and I can see a big change in his behaviour at home.' Staff continue to work with parents to replicate and sustain achievements in the home environment for all young people.

Healthy activities, personal hygiene routines and access to a range of health professionals ensure that young people have good health. Home-cooked meals are eaten as a group with staff, providing further opportunities for socialising, as well as young people enjoying healthy and nutritional meals.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Young people benefit from care provided by an excellent team of staff, not just care staff but site and domestic staff. Their commitment to working to improve the experiences of young people is outstanding. The residential provision's ethos of increasing young people's social skills and confidence, along with having a great deal of fun, is clearly demonstrated by all staff. They fully understand the needs of each individual young person and their targets, ensuring that activities and daily routines enable young people to reach and exceed these. This understanding is underpinned by exceptional care plans, compiled with young people, and presented in a child-friendly format. These are intrinsically linked with education plans, ensuring a whole-school approach to the care and progress of each young person. Excellent use of key work enables them to make progress and to address any concerns. Young people evaluate their key-work sessions, ensuring that they are relevant and meeting their needs. Staff have responded well to different emerging needs of young people, including those who have autistic spectrum disorder, undertaking training in order to help understand how best to meet their needs.

Staff clearly understand individual health needs, and medication practice is robust. Effective work

in partnership with a pharmacist means that staff keep fully up to date with any new medication or identified side effects. Regular medication audits ensure that practice remains robust.

Participation is a real strength of the home. Young people routinely express their wishes and feelings about their care and the residential provision. They engage in residents' meetings and any issues, concerns or ideas are fed into the school student council, ensuring a wider audience for their views. A suggestions and comments box is available for young people to raise any issues privately. In addition, two 'ambassadors' have been identified from the residential pupils to represent those who may not wish to directly approach staff with a particular matter. Young people also know how to complain. This means that they feel fully involved and know that their views are taken seriously.

The quality of the residential accommodation is excellent. Bedrooms are themed, including a football room, safari experience, underwater world and racing cars. They provide a wonderful environment for young people to relax and sleep. The main lounge area provides ample space for them to socialise and they have access to games areas, so they can enjoy a game of pool or table football. The dining room has been decorated to reflect the current reward programme theme of pirates. It is an exceptionally well-decorated area and provides young people with a constant reminder that good behaviour and achieving targets are rewarded. Maintenance issues are highlighted by staff and young people, forwarded for action, and dealt with swiftly, ensuring that the environment remains safe.

Managing moves to the residential provision is a real strength of this school. Young people have the opportunity to stay for an extended day before staying overnight. Discussions with parents, home visits and liaison with education ensure that all relevant information is gained. A slow increase in the number of nights helps them settle into the residential routine. Similarly, preparation for leaving and moving to mainstream school or another placement is excellent. Staff continue to support young people in their new school for a number of weeks, helping them to establish themselves in their new setting. One parent, whose son recently left the school and residential provision, commented: 'He misses it. It played a huge part in his life. We owe a lot to the staff, in fact he owes his future to this place.'

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Staff understand their role in protecting young people, and all staff undertake training in child protection procedures to ensure that their knowledge in this area remains up to date. Representatives from the local authority safeguarding team have been assisting the school, reviewing policies and helping them to improve practice. This includes introducing a new computerised recording system for all child protection concerns. When embedded in practice, this will allow for accurate, swift recording and monitoring of patterns of concerns.

The building is well maintained, and regular health and safety checks ensure that the facilities and equipment remain safe. Regular fire drills with young people mean that they know how to evacuate safely in the event of an emergency. Appropriate recruitment checks ensure that young people are protected.

Positive behaviour is encouraged, in order to remove the barrier of poor conduct in accessing education. Positive handling plans, developed with young people, identify triggers, behaviours, and appropriate interventions. Good use of the reward scheme and the use of consequences rather than punitive sanctions help young people recognise the impact of their actions. The school rarely uses fixed-term exclusions and the last permanent exclusion was over 10 years ago. Restraint is also rarely used, and when it is it is as a last resort to protect young people.

Monitoring of behaviour is effective, with staff identifying any trends and emerging patterns, and amending positive handling plans and risk assessments if appropriate.

There are no concerns regarding young people going missing from this environment. Staff are aware of what to do in the event of any such incident and a range of policies and procedures provide the relevant information for staff.

Young people's risk assessments provide a good level of detail regarding the risks they are at, and how staff can prevent such risks occurring. Where young people are at risk of self-harm, the assessments provide detailed preventative strategies for staff, but do not indicate with any clarity how staff may intervene if they do self-harm. Risk assessments for the extensive range of activities are generic and do not recognise individual risks presented by young people that may affect the activity.

Staff undertake a range of training in safeguarding and health matters, including extremism, physical intervention, e-safety and female genital mutilation. They also provide short workshops for the taxi drivers who visit the school, helping them to understand safeguarding concerns and promoting joint working to keep young people safe. Training on sexual exploitation and self-harm were undertaken some time ago, and may not reflect current issues and concerns.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The residential provision is led by a very experienced and committed head of care, supported by an excellent staff team. The headteacher, while new in post since the last inspection, has previously been deputy headteacher at this school and brings a wealth of experience. The headteacher is actively involved with other schools, sharing good practice and identifying areas to develop.

Good quality and regular supervision, alongside annual performance reviews, helps staff develop in their role and discuss any areas of concern. A range of training in activities, such as climbing and woodcraft, helps staff develop skills to provide more activities for young people. Staff also work alongside other agencies and professionals, such as child and adolescent mental health teams, to improve their understanding of the needs of young people. Staff evaluate the effectiveness of their training, ensuring that it is relevant. All residential staff have the required qualification. This means that young people benefit from skilled and experienced staff.

Staff are first-rate; they enjoy good relationships with young people and work exceptionally well together as a team. Communication across the whole site is good, ensuring consistency in approach and a shared ethos and understanding of the aims of the school.

Leaders acknowledge the challenge of engaging parents effectively, and continue to explore ways to improve this partnership work. Increased home visits and reviews undertaken at home have already proven successful.

Complaints from others and from young people are rare. The headteacher thoroughly investigates complaints and records the outcomes. The response of the complainant to the outcome is not recorded, so it is difficult to see if the complaint was resolved effectively.

Effective monitoring of school leavers identifies the destinations of young people, their longer-term achievements and the impact of the residential experience. The headteacher writes an annual review of the residential provision, but this is not compiled through any formal monitoring visits or observation reports.

Monitoring by governors is poor. Governors do not routinely visit or formally monitor the provision and this includes the governor with safeguarding responsibilities. The governor responsible for the residential provision is the head of care, which does not provide robust scrutiny. The board of governors lacks numbers and there are few non-staff members. Governance is weak. More robust external monitoring is provided by the independent visitor who attends six times a year and produces a detailed report on the care, welfare, and progress of young people.

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	131322
Social care unique reference number	SC056234
DfE registration number	830 7000

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	42
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to 14
Headteacher	Iain Williams
Date of previous boarding inspection	08/03/2016
Telephone number	01246 450 530
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