

Frewen College

Frewen Educational Trust Ltd, Frewen College, Brickwall, Rye Road, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6NL

Inspection dates	14/03/2017 to 16/03/2017	
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

- Children really enjoy the boarding experience. There is acceptance of who they are, which enables boarders to develop a sense of belonging. They participate fully in boarding life and are encouraged to try new things.
- Trusting and warm relationships with staff and other boarders create a calm and positive atmosphere. Boarders behave very well. There is respect for each other's differences.
- Boarding has a direct part to play in helping children make significant progress, particularly in building their self-esteem and confidence.
- Staff and managers work closely to ensure that boarders receive outstanding care and support.
- Effective leadership from a relatively new management team drives improvement.
- Boarders' welfare and safety is central to all that goes on. Staff understand their role in safeguarding boarders.
- Collaborative working with other professionals, such as medical staff, helps staff find the best way of working with each boarder.
- Parents report outstanding pastoral care for their children. One said their child is 'more outgoing and more willing to try other things as a result of boarding'. Another said that their child is doing so well here compared to previous schools 'due to staff's integrated approach and understanding of children's needs'.

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?

- Evaluate the learning and development programme in greater detail.
- Ensure consistency when carrying out the required tasks during monitoring visits.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors gave four hours' notice of the inspection. The inspectors met with the principal, designated child protection officer, head of boarding, matron, residential staff, maintenance staff, gap-year volunteers, the boarding governor, business manager and boarders. The inspectors spent time in each residential unit, observed evening activities and joined boarders for lunch and an evening meal. They spoke to some parents by telephone. Inspectors also examined documents and records.

Inspection team

Jacqueline Graves	Lead social care inspector
Angus Mackay	Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Frewen College is an independent day and residential special school for boys and girls aged between seven and 19 years of age. Boarders are able to stay at the school for weekends if they choose. The school provides specialist education for children with dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, sensory integration, and speech and communication difficulties. Boys stay in the main school building and girls in a separate house within the school grounds. The school is a registered charity managed by a governing body. The last inspection of the school's residential provision took place in December 2015. At the time of this inspection there were 37 full-time and four flexi boarders.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

The committed staff and management team understand boarders well and meet all their needs. As a result, boarders are happy in boarding and find it a supportive, family-type environment. They regard it as a safe and secure place to be.

Boarders say that staff listen to them and that their suggestions make a difference. They are confident in the effectiveness of the school and boarding councils. An example of a suggestion they made, which staff acted upon, was making homework more structured, ensuring that all subjects were covered. Daily meetings provide good opportunities to discuss plans for the day and any concerns.

Boarders get on well together and are supportive of each other. Trusting relationships between boarders and with staff are a strong feature of this school. A boarding governor said, 'I like the way different ages look after each other. They do seem to work together well. A good atmosphere.'

A wide variety of interesting activities are available to boarders. This includes sporting and physical activity, such as hide and seek in the college gardens and swimming in the outdoor pool in the summer.

Helping boarders become more independent is a priority. Younger boarders say that they like helping with daily chores, such as loading the dishwasher or helping organise laundry. Boarders develop skills to assist their social interaction, such as learning how to look at people when speaking to them. Their self-care and life skills also improve, which increases their confidence.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

The quality of care exceeds the standard of good. Children really enjoy their time in boarding. They experience very warm, positive relationships with 'firm but fair' staff, naming many who they would approach with any worries or concerns. Boarders are consistent in their message that boarding strongly benefits their personal development and academic achievements, as well as being fun.

Many boarders have had very negative experiences in previous schools, including bullying. Some who have felt isolated elsewhere develop a sense of belonging. They feel safe and protected in this school, where bullying is not an issue. A parent described feeling relieved now their child was doing so well after their previous experiences and said they 'really appreciate' the school.

Behaviour is excellent. A boarder stated, 'We know why the rules are there and know the difference between liking a rule and respecting it. If someone breaks a rule we own up really quickly.' Exclusions are very rare and challenging behaviour does not feature in this school. Boarders get on very well together and support each other. They are polite, well mannered, respectful and accepting of those who are different in some way. They

say it is a safe place to express who you are. Boarders look out for each other. When they experience homesickness, boarders say they get excellent support from staff and other boarders who are particularly kind and supportive.

Through encouragement to settle and try new things, and with great support, boarders build self-esteem and confidence. Coupled with improved academic achievements, boarders' personal development is rapid. One parent described how this has resulted in their child having ambitions for the first time. They find their child is 'more outgoing and more willing to try other things as a result of boarding'. Boarders benefit from participating in a wide variety of interesting activities, both on- and off-site.

The school's arrangements promote boarders' physical, emotional and psychological health. Boarders receive every encouragement to live a healthy lifestyle. Use of illegal drugs, smoking or alcohol abuse do not occur at this school. Staff strongly advocate for the boarders in their care, including challenging local authorities and mental health agencies to provide suitable support for boarders' emotional and mental health.

Main meals are plentiful, varied and nutritious. Kitchen staff use local fresh produce for meals and use sauces and spices to enable boarders to flavour meals as they choose. The kitchen staff cater for diverse requirements, including vegan, vegetarian and various choices and allergies. Boarders can make snacks and have access to water and other drinks in their separate kitchens. A parent appreciates that staff 'talk to boarders about healthy choices'. Boarders report having plenty to eat and having an input in menu planning, although some feel the variety can be limited at times.

Boarders benefit from very good facilities and plenty of outdoor space. A parent said, 'The location is fabulous.' A boarder commented, 'There will be problems with this being an old school but it does have a strange, snuggly feel.' Accommodation is comfortable and homely if rather tired in some places. The principal has identified improvement to residential accommodation for boys as a priority in the school development plan. Upgrades to some areas have occurred already, with plans for further improvements. Some boarders have personalised their bedrooms and staff have placed photographs and positive images in many communal areas, which helps make the boarding accommodation homely.

Boarders are strongly encouraged to be as independent as possible. They learn valuable daily living skills, which some children who have dyslexia may struggle with. For example, some follow a programme of graduated steps to help them learn to keep their rooms tidy. Boarders enjoy walking to a local shop to spend their pocket money. Some learn how to present themselves well for work experience by, for example, ironing their uniform. Learning how to plan a meal, budget, buy the ingredients and cook the food is a popular activity in boarding time. Those aged over 18 visit a local pub and learn to drink responsibly in preparation for adult life.

Children may contact their parents when they choose to in boarding time. They usually use telephones to do this, although they say they can use other methods, such as Skype or Facetime. They also benefit from remaining in touch with friends who may have moved on elsewhere.

Boarders can contact the matron when unwell. The receipt, storage, issuing and disposal

of medication is efficiently organised and the matron maintains excellent records. She has good communication with external health professionals where necessary. All boarding staff have appropriate training, including first aid and dealing with anaphylactic shock.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Boarders' safety is a priority for staff. A boarder said, 'I feel safe at all times and even if walking down the street.' Boarders are encouraged to be independent and learn how to keep themselves safe. They meet regularly with their key workers, where they have the opportunity to talk about anything at all.

Staff receive training and remain up to date about current issues concerning safeguarding risks to children, such as radicalisation and e-safety. There are effective links with external safeguarding agencies.

Staff demonstrate concern for boarders' welfare. The management team meets regularly to review any safeguarding matters. A recently introduced online system is an efficient means for staff to share any concerns with the designated teacher and other appropriate staff. Staff provide direct support to children who may be experiencing difficulties with their emotional or mental health. They advocate for children by challenging other professionals, such as those in local authorities and health authorities, to secure appropriate services for boarders.

Staff recruitment checks help to ensure that only suitable people work in the school. A suitably detailed single central record details all checks required. The principal monitors all recruitment records, ensuring compliance with 'Keeping children safe in education' guidelines. Staff check and record all visitors to the site and suitably supervise them during their visit to protect boarders. All recruitment panels have staff trained in safer recruitment and this includes governors for senior appointments.

The premises and grounds are appropriately maintained and all areas are subject to risk assessment. The risk assessment is thorough and supported by highly detailed specific testing and maintenance records on relevant areas. The recording of legionella testing is a particularly good example of well-planned measures to keep boarders safe.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The relatively new management team has brought about improvement. A governor finds that the team brings drive and commitment to enhancing children's boarding experiences.

The principal has constructed a statement of the school's principles and practice, which he has presented to the board of governors for consideration, review and implementation.

Staff receive training which is relevant to their role, such as in first aid and safeguarding.

Boarding house parents have achieved appropriate qualifications for the role and two further staff have almost achieved the qualification. Further staff embarked on a course equivalent to level 3 but the training provider recently went into administration. Management are urgently seeking an alternative training provider to enable all staff to achieve qualifications.

Staff receive good support in their work with boarders. An induction prepares new staff for their work and they receive regular supervision and team meetings, plus annual appraisal. This gives them opportunities to reflect on their performance and support for individual boarders.

The independent visitor provides a good additional safeguard for boarders. She advertises her visits and all boarders know her by name and do meet and discuss issues with her. Governors receive reports of her visits. However, these reports can lack consistency in covering the required tasks during monitoring visits.

The head of boarding presents regular reports to the relevant board of governors and the principal includes a report on boarding in the school development plan. However, there is not a detailed review of all matters relating to the operation and resourcing of the welfare provision or a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the learning and development programme.

The principal and management team have met the only failed national minimum standard from the last inspection. They provided training for boarding staff in positive handling and conflict resolution, which staff have found useful in their work. This results in an improvement to boarders' safety and protection.

Management also met a recommendation to improve communication with parents. Comments on children's boarding experience are now included in termly education reports. Alongside a newsletter specifically about boarding, and direct contact when necessary, this helps to keep parents informed. A parent said, 'Communication is good with the school.'

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 SC049345

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 41

Gender of boarders Mixed

Age range of boarders 7 to 19

Headteacher Nick Goodman

Date of previous boarding inspection 09/12/2015

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