

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education, 50 Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4NF

Inspection dates

25/05/2017 to 25/05/2017

Context of the inspection

The purpose of this visit was to monitor the action taken and the progress made by the organisation since its last Ofsted inspection. The visit had a particular focus on help and protection for children and young people and safeguarding.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding/residential provision

The organisation has recently appointed the acting principal to the substantive post of executive principal. The executive principal is currently appointing to substantive positions within the senior leadership team. During the inspection, interviews were taking place for the appointment of a vice principal. The principal and the senior leadership team have produced a detailed action plan in relation to the findings at the full inspection. They are steadily working to implement the plan.

Changes have been made to key personnel responsible for leading on safeguarding. The substantive role of head of safeguarding will be in post from July 2017. Although some further changes are required to ensure that the leadership team forms a solid and permanent infrastructure, the streamlining of the safeguarding team has resulted in a more robust approach to the welfare and safety of children and young people.

The organisation has provided training to develop staff knowledge, skills and understanding of safeguarding. Revised systems for the reporting and recording of incidents have been put into place following the last inspection. Leaders and managers are confident that the full implementation of these systems will support further improvements. Inspectors noted that improvements had been made in terms of how well the organisation

now works with external agencies when safeguarding concerns have been identified.

Inspectors are reassured that action has been taken to follow up and investigate the issues raised in the whistle-blowing concerns that were reviewed at the last inspection. One internal investigation is still ongoing. These concerns have been taken seriously. Action has been taken in respect of concerns about staff where necessary.

Inspectors were particularly reassured that the responses to safeguarding concerns are currently being managed by the suitably skilled and experienced interim safeguarding lead. There are some examples of good practice and this has become more evident since the appointment of the interim safeguarding lead. Inspectors identified two significant practice issues that had not been rigorously addressed in the period prior to this appointment.

Some gaps in practice still remain. For example, the organisation failed to escalate concerns in other agencies practice when the school was not provided with crucial safeguarding information about one young person. As a result, the organisation is unable to fully understand or effectively manage the risks arising from the safeguarding concerns. Despite leaders and managers updating the young person's risk assessment, not all staff who were caring for the young person during the inspection could explain what action they should take to minimise the risks.

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that updates to the care planning for one young person have been understood by care staff and put into practice. Staff who care for this young person during the educational day were unable to demonstrate an understanding of the potential risks. Communication remains a concern and some divisions remain between the education staff and the care staff.

Communication is a key concern within the organisation. Leaders and managers have put systems and structures in place to improve information sharing, but these systems are not always effective. For example, not all staff were aware of the rationale for moving one young person into a bedroom with an alarm. There is some confusion about the specific risks they are supposed to be monitoring. Others were unable to demonstrate a sound knowledge of historical concerns that link to present day issues.

Inspectors found information in respect of one young person that highlighted some safeguarding concerns. The member of staff who initially received the information did not report the concerns to the safeguarding team as required by the schools policy. As a result, the safeguarding team were unable to address the wider safeguarding concerns. The member of staff spoke with the young person about the concerns, but used inappropriate examples and language to reinforce the message.

There have been some concerns raised at senior level about fractures still remaining between education and care staff, particularly in relation to the management and oversight of safeguarding responsibilities. It is evident that some progress has been made in this area to start to address this issue, but more work is required to achieve a collaborative approach to caring for the children and keeping them safe.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding (residential special) schools. The national minimum standards were set at the last inspection and will be reviewed at the next full inspection.

Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding/residential provision

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

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.

13.3: The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role.

13.4: The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.

13.5: The school's leadership and management actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.

13.8: The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.

13.9: The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children.

19.1: Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up to date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school.

19.6: All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance.

22.1: Every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress which can be read by the child at any time, and add personal statements or statements correcting errors.

How well children and young people are protected in the boarding/residential

provision

6.3: The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

11.1: The school ensures that:

- arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school; and
- such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

12.1: The school has and consistently implements a written policy on managing behaviour, including promoting good behaviour. This policy includes:

- measures to combat bullying, including cyberbullying, and to promote positive behaviour;
- school rules;
- disciplinary sanctions;
- when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed; and
- arrangements for searching children and their possessions.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding/residential provision

3.1: Children's physical, emotional and social development needs are promoted.

3.6: The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of children who are unwell, and ensure that children's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing is promoted. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, administration of medicines (including controlled drugs) and dealing with medical emergencies. Policies for administration of medication should reflect guidance provided by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society.

3.12: Where necessary a child has a clear individual health and welfare plan or similar record, containing relevant health and welfare information provided by parents/carers and recording significant health and welfare needs and issues.

21.1: The school produces a 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 the 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.

Inspection team

Tracey Ledder
Paula Lahey

lead social care inspector
regulatory inspection manager

Information about this school

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education is a non-maintained, mixed, residential special school and college, which caters for pupils between 4 and 25 years of age who are hearing impaired, with some pupils having additional needs. The main form of communication used is British sign language (BSL). English and Sign Supported English communication are also used. The academy is situated within the city of Exeter and operates from one site, which is divided into two areas: college and school. Residential accommodation is provided in both settings. Pupils board for five days, seven days or part time. The last inspection was carried out in November 2016, when the school was judged as adequate overall.

School details

Social care unique reference number SC022216

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 boarding schools.

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Type of school	Residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	89
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	5 to 19
Headteacher	Arnet Donkin
Date of previous boarding inspection	07/11/2016
Telephone number	01392 267 023
Email address	info@exeterdeafacademy.ac.uk

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