

Hailey Hall School

Hailey Hall Academy, Hailey Lane, Hertford SG13 7PB
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Hailey Hall School is a residential and day special school for boys aged 11 to 16 who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Hoddesdon. The school is an academy. Children who attend the school have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The residential provision can accommodate a maximum of 20 children. At the time of the inspection, 11 boys were staying between one and four nights a week, Monday to Friday during term time only. The residential provision was last inspected in September 2016.

Inspection dates: 27 to 29 June 2017

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 27 September 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- There is an abundance of sustained benefits to the children because of their residential experience, particularly in relation to academic and social progress.
- Barriers to learning are creatively addressed and successfully removed, providing the children with a wide range of opportunities and equality of access.
- Safeguarding arrangements are thoroughly effective and embedded throughout the school.
- There is an outstanding partnership with parents, who highly value the school and the staff.
- A dynamic and inspirational leadership team that continually strives for improvement leads the school.
- The residential provision is central to the whole school. The cohesive staff team provides care and education that is seamless.
- The staff are genuine and passionate about the children's care. The relationships between the children and the staff are strong and supportive.
- There are no limits. Staff regularly go above and beyond to safeguard the children and support them to achieve better outcomes.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- The decor and appearance of the communal areas of accommodation are dated and tired.
- The evening meals are not served in a way that encourages the children's independence, or that fully highlights the provision of healthy choice options.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

- Consider the evening meal routine to provide more opportunities for children to be actively involved in selecting and serving food.
- Continue to refurbish and improve the decor and furnishings in the residential provision.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children at this school have a strong allegiance with the school. They believe that they can succeed and achieve goals. Staff inspire self-belief and other children provide successful role models. One parent said, 'The school has turned his [child's] life around. No other school can meet his needs.' Although each child is different, the expectation and aspiration from the staff remains limitless. Fundamental attachments, coupled with skilled staff who share the ethos of the school, drive its successful outcomes. The children genuinely like and trust the staff, who provide extremely good role models. The staff help the children to manage their feelings and self-regulate the behaviours that created previous barriers to learning. This approach is extended to the children's home lives. Staff support the parents by providing them with advice and guidance. Staff unobtrusively support the children with family contact during the evenings. Families visiting the provision appear elated and relaxed as they enjoy tea and games in the evening. Family support workers provide additional support and the school provides parenting courses. A parent spoken to summarised, 'They could not have done anything more for [child] and the family.' The staff offer consistency of approach and holistic work with the child and the family.

The children are central to the decision-making and treated as equals. For example, after a serious incident, a meeting was held with the children to help to expand their understanding and gauge their views. Another example is the provision of Prevent Duty training for the children. The children assist with staff interviews, actively share their views and they know the school's independent visitor well. In this school, the children are given a voice and are empowered. This helps the children to learn to articulate their views and know that their feelings count.

A children's complaints procedure is in place and is given a high profile. Staff ensure that the children know how to use the procedure, and this is checked in meetings and during the children's surveys. There is a culture of honest and open dialogue between the staff and the children, and this has resulted in no complaints. All of the children spoken to are highly positive about the residential provision.

This school is run as one provision. The handover between day and care staff is seamless and held daily. The electronic recording system alerts staff to each child's events during the day and this is discussed in the afternoon handover. Staff offer a clean start in the residential provision, coupled with support and guidance when required. This gives the children a chance to reflect and consider their actions.

A new school initiative looking at the purpose of core subjects and how these are taught has resulted in better progress. Mathematics, reading and spelling have been given a kick-start to ensure stronger engagement. The children have an unlimited choice of reading books that is entirely child led and unrestrictive. This has been successful in encouraging the children to read for a purpose. Evaluation of data

shows that, in core subjects, the residential provision gives added value in terms of achievement. The average reading and spelling age of the residential pupils is 2.2 above the day pupils. Evaluation of GCSE results shows that, in A to G grades, 83% of residential pupils achieve 5 A* to G in their GCSE exams. This exceeds the day pupils' grades.

The school's curriculum has been scrutinised to ensure that the breadth of subjects suits the children and provides equality of opportunity for all. The curriculum is enriched with an outdoor adventure activity programme and life skills programme. The school exhausts all strategies to ensure that all of the children have access to the right course. For example, there is a new photography course. A parent described how the school's excellent design and technology department has allowed a child to recognise and believe in his own talent.

The children's life experiences are significantly improved at the school. Staff unreservedly promote a culture of achieving and further education opportunity. A designated member of staff supports the children's transition to college. Transitional staff work with colleges and other destinations. A recent data capture shows that, out of five leavers currently attending university, four of these were from the residential provision.

The school has introduced a new home-learning initiative. This shows that children from the residential provision are twice as likely to do homework as day pupils. This is incentivised by the points system. The children gain a significant number of points, in addition to lesson points, for home learning. This shows that children move up the league table from points gained through home learning.

The children benefit from evenings that are structured with purposeful activities. Box Clever is a government-funded community boxing programme and currently includes six of the residential children. Several of the children attend regular community clubs. This broadens their interests and provides opportunities to meet peers outside the school, which helps them to build on their social skills.

The medication systems in the school are established and work efficiently to ensure that stock is safely accounted for. The children routinely attend the first aid room to take medication. This is overseen and managed safely by two staff. The staff collect the children in the evening and encourage them to remember their medication times, which encourages the children to start to take responsibility.

The school is forward thinking and has developed its own mental health model based on government research. The staff practise the 'minded model' across the whole school. Staff are encouraged to explore this and expand this in relation to their roles. This approach is accredited by National Health Service and provides a consistent and vigilant approach to the children's psychological well-being.

Meals are cooked at the school and incorporate children's choices and preferences. Care staff take time to ensure that they discuss children's likes and dislikes and they take these to the chef. There are always options and lighter healthy choices. The presentation of meals and foods does not always make healthy options look

appealing, or fully support the family-style dining arrangements.

The school sits in extensive grounds with a centralised Japanese garden, established beds and large grassed areas. Mature trees, a shrubbery with a moated area and walkways provide an idyllic setting and a tranquil feel. The gardens and grounds are maintained to perfection. This enables the children to enjoy space away from others and experience the beauty of nature.

The residential accommodation is purpose-built, comfortable and extremely clean. The children feel relaxed and safe. Privacy and dignity is promoted using curtained bed spaces. Possessions are safely kept. The school plans have been pinned on securing the funding for a new build and this has taken the focus off refurbishing the existing provision. Decor is dated, dark and worn in places. This does not provide a homely or uplifting atmosphere.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

The children's safety is given absolute priority. Risk assessments are highly effective and responsive to incidents. These are individually recorded and clearly guide staff in how best to manage the children's presenting risks.

The children say that bullying is not a problem and that they feel safe and relaxed. All of the parents spoken to said that they are extremely confident that the children are safe at the school. Data shows that all incidents are reducing. There is a three-year downward trend in bullying incidents across the school and there have been none in the residential provision in the last year. The school safety coordinator leads on prevention work and this incorporates social media, cyber bullying, safety-themed assemblies and raising the children's awareness of modern-day technology and how best to safeguard themselves. This proactive approach has successfully prevented incidents.

The children have never left this school unauthorised until recently. There were two incidents whereby children left the school twice in a 24-hour period. The school's response was immediate and a number of meetings resulted in quick actions and an immediate decision to safeguard the children. Following this, door alarms were purchased and installed and the site security and risk assessment were updated and reviewed. The children were fully included in the meetings that were held prior to the actions being taken to openly discuss the risks involved and how to prevent a future occurrence.

The children's behaviour undoubtedly improves at the school. The children enthusiastically work towards a 12-point system throughout the day and the evening. Informed data analysis of each child suggests triggers to incidents, and this enables staff to plan interventions and tailor support. The staff are assigned with consideration and carefully matched to the child. Staff discuss individuals, identify trends in behaviour and the impact of new strategies. Communication between the school and the care staff is intrinsic. This bespoke approach shows a reducing trend

in behavioural incidents and increased feelings of positive self-belief and esteem in the children. This has had a significant positive effect on the children's ability to sustain progress, supporting them to access the further education provision and better life changes. A parent said, 'They [staff] are superb at instilling boundaries and values. There is constant review of how behaviours are approached to empower the child.'

There has been a phenomenal 91% reduction in the school's use of physical interventions. A new, recognised trainer provides a therapy-based approach to holds. This means that the staff are getting to the underlying issues and causation factors and supporting the children to manage these. This has successfully resulted in no physical interventions in the residential provision during the last year.

Recruitment checks are systematically undertaken. Children are involved during the interview processes for the new staff. Identification documents are checked for authenticity. Staff carrying out checks are trained in safer recruitment and use the support advice line from the local authority human resources department. This provides an informed approach to background checks and suitability of the adults working at the school.

The designated safeguarding lead at the school is an accredited Prevent Duty trainer. This training is provided for all of the staff, the children, the governing body and the parents. The training was cascaded to the children in response to their anxieties following media coverage. The school is sensitive and vigilant to the impact of topical news incidents.

There is a comprehensive system to record and log child protection concerns. All of the staff receive regular safeguarding training. The school takes a robust and preventative approach. Staff are highly proactive and maintain a systematic record. All concerns are monitored according to their category, and classed in designated groups and tracked. While a number of these concerns do not result in a subsequent referral being made, this helps to build a picture of the children's overall welfare and well-being.

The school has managed one allegation that was about a member of the school staff. This led to a formal complaint by the parent that was not upheld. The designated officer and the police were contacted and the school took every action to ensure that the child and the staff member were protected. The investigation was quickly carried out alongside a police investigation and has been concluded. Records show that the school worked closely with the designated officer and the police to ensure that the investigation safeguarded all involved. This is the only complaint received by the school in the last year.

The site safety is managed with established systems that ensure that annual checks and appliance servicing routinely take place. Supporting records evidence that checks are routine and meticulous. A vigilant approach to risk assessments identifies and minimises hazards. Security incidents are given high priority and responded to swiftly. Fire prevention education is approached creatively. The head of care uses different scenarios illustrated with pictures and role-play during fire drills. This makes

evacuations varied and interactive, helping the children to have a comprehensive understanding of the fire safety protocol.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The long-serving, experienced head of care has successfully maintained an outstanding provision. He is qualified to level 5 and is 100% committed to providing high-quality care. The school's tiered and established management structure provides leadership that is child centred and innovative. Support from the local authority is used and valued. The school has been asked to share its expertise and success with other schools. Equally, this school visits other outstanding provisions to research and inform its own practice.

Leadership of this school continually drives improvement. There has been an abundance of new research-based practice in the last six months. This includes new learning strategies, a mental health initiative and detailed analysis of data that defines practice in the school. A supportive and enabling environment run by leaders, who are forward thinking and embrace change, has created a school where good practice continues to thrive.

The cohesive senior leadership team has created a culture of aspiration and high expectations. The school never uses staff that are unfamiliar. A bank of experienced school staff provides residential cover support. The small staff team provides excellent continuity of care and familiarity for the children, who take time to build trust with new adults.

New staff are carefully selected to ensure that high-quality practice is maintained. Every member of staff at this school embraces the school's ethos that places the children's welfare first and foremost. Regular appraisals and termly supervisions are recorded. Targets are practice related and promote each member of staff's professional development. Targets for staff link to the whole school development plan. Improvement stems from researched-based practice. The school has established a shared ethos of learning, training and improving outcomes for all of the children.

The accommodation, school and grounds are extremely well maintained, orderly and provide a calm and safe environment for the children. Community links are well forged and help the children to understand how to contribute positively. The children take part in an annual lunch, whereby they serve lunch for elderly members of the community. There are links with the neighbouring care home and the school uses local activity clubs. This helps the children to develop a sense of community and to help those less fortunate than themselves.

The external visitor is widely experienced in residential provision and provides regular oversight of the school. The children know the visitor and are happy and at ease in his presence.

Work with outside professionals is developed and ongoing. One therapist explained,

'I asked to come and work here because of the way they put children at the centre of everything. I came here and asked for a job because I like the atmosphere. Children feel contained and safe at the school. They move forward and grow. The staff have unconditional positive regard and they absolutely care about the children.'

The school has a strong and established parent partnership. The parents spoken to are exceptionally positive about, and highly commend, the school. They say that the school has been life changing. A parent said, 'Communication is excellent.' Another parent described the school as 'absolutely fantastic'. Parents say that the children's academic and social progress has been remarkable. This has had a positive effect on rebuilding family relationships.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC056397

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mrs Heather Boardman

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Inspector

Deirdra Keating, social care inspector



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