

# Royal School for the Deaf Derby

Royal School for the Deaf, 180 Ashbourne Road, Derby DE22 3BH

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

The Royal School for the Deaf Derby is a non-maintained residential special school. There are 110 pupils on roll, whose ages range from three to 19. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with some pupils from ethnic minority groups. All pupils have a statement of special educational need or an education, health and care plan for hearing impairment and some have complex special needs. The residential service operates weekdays only, as all children and young people go home at weekends. There are 18 pupils who stay at the school, either on a full-time or part-time basis during the week. The residential accommodation is provided across three residential facilities that are purpose-built blocks. The school is a signing and speaking community where the languages and cultures of both deaf and hearing people are valued. The school is situated in the city of Derby.

**Inspection dates:** 29 November to 1 December 2017

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 1 March 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- The leadership team is fully committed to young people's progress. Leaders are dedicated to the school, and are keen to improve it further.
- Leaders have high expectations and the school is developing all of the time.
- The headteacher has developed very good links with the local community. This means that young people feel like they belong in their local area, despite living away from home.
- Young people can take part in lots of extra activities, which are over and above their education. They have been involved with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, have had opportunities to travel to other countries and have been involved in holidays and trips.
- Staff are caring, kind and patient.
- Young people have good relationships with staff. There is always a 'go-to' adult for young people, should they have any issues or problems.
- Young people are safe and feel safe.
- The police are very clear in their view that staff are vigilant about safety.
- E-safety is very high on the school's agenda. Young people and staff have access to a wide range of training materials. Everyone understands how to be safe online.
- Parents are very complimentary about the quality of the residence provision.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Supervision does not provide staff with the opportunity to reflect on their practice and action should be taken to improve this.
- Managers and staff should ensure that young people are kept informed of action being taken about their complaints, concerns and suggestions. They should be consistent in their communication with young people about such issues.
- Young people's choices need to be reflected in the residence menu. Young people are feeling frustrated that this issue has been going on for a long time, and that not enough action has been taken.
- Cohesive working practices within the staff team, and between the staff team and managers, need to be improved. This should provide better consistency for young people and clearer lines of accountability for staff.
- Medication procedures should be improved to make sure that good hygiene standards are followed at all times.

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

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools**

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

- 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. This is in relation to training for designated safeguarding lead staff.
- 8.1 All children, including those with special dietary, medical or religious needs, are provided with meals which are adequate in nutrition, quantity, quality, choice and variety. This is in relation to young people's choice of food.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that action is taken to address issues identified through supervision, and that supervision provides staff with the opportunity to reflect on their practice. (Linked to NMS 19)
- Improve communication with young people. Ensure that they are kept informed of action being taken about their complaints, concerns and suggestions. (Linked to NMS 18)
- Improve cohesive working within the staff team, and between the staff team and managers. (Linked to NMS 15)
- Improve hygiene practices. When counting out tablets, a tablet counter needs to be used, rather than hands. Also, when a tablet falls on to the floor, ensure that it is destroyed in line with appropriate guidance. (Linked to NMS 3)

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Young people have a very positive experience of staying in residence. Parents' comments were complimentary and included: 'She is thriving there; this is down to residential staff'; and, 'They are fantastic, I can't fault it.'

The school's curriculum is enhanced by other educational activities. These experiences enrich young people's education. The school participates in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and some young people have achieved very well. Recently, two students who had left the school continued their work and received the 'gold' award, which is a fantastic achievement for them. Students were invited to Buckingham Palace to celebrate, along with staff from the school because of the school's involvement. The work of the school influences young people's life chances for the future.

At the end of the summer term, students requested a trip to Paris, instead of an end-of-term prom. They thoroughly enjoyed this trip. Students have access to activities and experiences that they would not normally have access to. The school helps to provide them with additional opportunities. Activities are linked to young people's personal development. For example, some students developed their planning skills this term, by planning a school disco. They learned about taking responsibility, and the importance of organisation, as well as having a great time.

The school uses a very helpful and comprehensive educational tracking programme. This ensures that young people continue to make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. Staff in residence use each young person's individually designed targets to continue their learning in residence. Residence enhances the young people's education. This is because they have more opportunities to learn new skills. Extended day activities also provide them with interesting and useful pursuits such as art, crafts and personal well-being.

There are very good links with the local community. Deaf young people can share their experiences with others, both at the school and in the community. There is an international trip planned to a school for the deaf in Germany. Young people will be able to talk to others and share experiences of life in another country.

Most young people at the school have other complex needs, as well as being deaf. Some young people face many challenges in learning to manage their behaviour, emotional well-being and mental health. Staff are extremely good at working with parents and other professionals. Young people receive the help that they need. Their progress is extremely well monitored by the school. When young people are residing at their own homes, staff continue to gather data and monitor their progress. Relationships with parents and carers are excellent.

Young people who have complex healthcare needs are supported very well by staff.

Staff know how to meet young people's physical and emotional health needs. This is as a result of the high-quality care planning and risk assessment in this area. Leaders 'speak out' for young people. They know that young people in their care deserve the best and they strive to make sure that they get this.

The storage and administration of medicines is generally very well organised. The nurse is fastidious in carrying out her procedure for making sure that students get the correct medication on time. There are additional control measures for controlled drugs, so that each medicine can be properly tracked. It is easy to check if students have received their medicines, through the comprehensive document trail. There has been one occasion where hygiene was an issue. Tablets were counted into the palm of a staff member's hand, rather than into a tablet counter. One tablet, which had been dropped onto the floor, was put back into the bottle for use. This is not hygienic and does not protect young people's good health.

Menus are well organised and the central kitchen makes sure that meal planning is well balanced. However, in practice, most young people say that they don't like the food. They say that they have complained about it before, but that they don't feel like things have changed. Leaders have met with the residence staff to discuss this. There is a clear plan in place for improvement. However, some staff and young people do not appear to be aware of the plan. There has been a delay in responding to young people and the strength of feeling is high, leaving some young people feeling frustrated.

Young people enjoy some very positive relationships with staff. Staff are kind, caring and patient. They know the young people very well. One young person commented very positively about their relationship with the deputy headteacher, saying that they can always talk to him. He was reported by one of the young people to be 'a good man'. Another young person made very complimentary comments about staff saying: 'Staff love children here.'

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

Young people are safe in residence. They feel safe by day and by night, and raise no concerns about any aspect of safety. All staff, parents and professionals agree that young people are safe. One parent reported: 'I trust them. She is safe and very happy.' Professionals, including the police, are also very positive about the safeguarding arrangements. The police reported: 'The home is so open to sharing the slightest concern, that they contact us and seek advice, guidance and support. Staff are vigilant, not over-cautious, but they are mindful of past mistakes.'

Young people who have very complex issues are well protected. When two young people were involved in some sexualised behaviour, this was very closely monitored by staff. As a result, neither of the young people was harmed. Staff are very clear about how they should look after the young people, and how they should monitor them. Robust risk assessments are key to keeping young people safe. They are

comprehensive and cover all aspects of safety.

E-safety has a very high profile in the school. The school's webpage is extremely thorough in the information it provides for students and parents. All staff understand that deaf young people are more vulnerable due to a reliance on talking to each other via texting or online. Young people report being involved in sessions about what grooming is, how they could be exploited and what to do if they have a problem. They know about how to keep themselves safe because of the work that is done at school to educate them.

Behaviour is good in residence. Staff understand that behaviour is part of a young person's communication. They support young people to improve their behaviour. The key thing is that staff try their best to understand the reasons for the behaviour in the first place. There have been no restraints in residence. This is very positive and shows that staff use other, more helpful, methods to teach young people about expected behaviour. Leaders work closely with their education colleagues and with consultant paediatricians. Together, they try to stabilise young people's behaviour. Staff work towards young people feeling more settled and happy.

Recruitment practices are safe and effective. All new staff are subject to scrutiny to make sure that they are safe to work with young people. This reduces the risk of unsuitable adults working in residence. Health and safety procedures in residence are generally organised well, and ensure that all who use the building are safe. The checks on fire equipment were very difficult to evidence, although it was established that these are up to date.

There is a good safeguarding culture in the school. Staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They feel very confident about passing their concerns on to a manager. Designated safeguarding leads are prominent. They make sure that all safeguarding matters are dealt with properly. However, three of the five designated safeguarding leads have not received updated training, in line with the current guidance that it is required every two years.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The residence is run very well by a team of highly dedicated leaders. The headteacher is thorough in her management of the school. She strives to improve the lives of the young people. She invests a lot of time in working with the local community, significantly raising the profile of the school. She makes sure that young people feel like they belong in the local area, despite living away from their own communities.

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are completely dedicated to the young people and the residence team. They have led the staff on a significant journey of improvement over the last two years. When there have been issues at this school previously, they have ensured continued improvement. This school is now going from

strength to strength.

Previous safeguarding issues in the school have had an impact on some staff. While they are now starting to gel again as a team, there is still some work to be done. Staff do not yet work entirely cohesively as a team. As a consequence, young people are not always clear about what is happening with the concerns they have raised, and their suggestions. Staff do not always give young people a clear and consistent response. The leadership team is taking its time to rebuild staff confidence. Leaders acknowledge that this is something that may take a long time, but they continue in their efforts to support staff.

It is very positive that the staff enjoy their work. They clearly want to make a difference to young people's lives. One member of staff talked about how they still enjoyed their job, after many years of working at the school. They said: 'I love my job.' There is a real sense of pride and passion for the work. There is an exceptionally low turnover of staff, further highlighting the staff team's enthusiasm and motivation. Staff morale is said by staff to be 'improving'.

The leadership team consists of several managers who staff can talk to if they have a problem. Some staff lack clarity about which of these managers they should go to if they have a problem. All staff say that they receive good support and that they could, at any time, go to a manager for help or support. However, it appears that the designated care leader is sometimes bypassed. Clearer lines of accountability and delineation of roles would improve the clarity of leadership of residence.

New staff receive an induction. High-quality training continues for all staff, however long they have worked at the school. They receive training in a number of different ways. For example, there is some e-learning, there are some training sessions provided away from the school and there are inset days where staff can learn together. This well-rounded approach ensures that staff continue to develop their skills in helping this complex and vulnerable group of young people.

Staff do receive some one-to-one time with their manager. They have opportunities to discuss the young people, and to have their performance appraised. However, these opportunities are not utilised well. These sessions are very basic, and do not provide sufficient challenge or help staff to develop. Despite this, it is clear that the management team has a good understanding of each member of staff's individual performance.

Young people have raised issues about the wi-fi, the food and other matters in residence. Some issues that arise regularly remain unresolved to date, despite leaders' efforts to resolve them. Young people say that they do not understand what is being done about their concerns, particularly about the food. They do not always receive a consistent message from staff about what is happening.

There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection. The leadership

team has devised a clear development plan. Leaders have met the two of the recommendations and five of the seven advisory recommendations which were set at the last inspection. There have been significant improvements made to risk assessments, which are now robust. Risk assessments are regularly updated to capture young people's changing and complex needs. Staffing levels at night have improved and the number of staff awake each night has been increased from one to two. The tracking of safeguarding information has improved with the introduction of a new monitoring system for leaders and the designated safeguarding team. Training for staff has improved. Staff are now knowledgeable about how to protect young people from behaviour that could be sexually harmful. The building has been made more homely. The building is institutionalised in its design, but efforts have been made to address this, with additional pictures and soft furnishings in residential accommodation.

There are two advisory recommendations not met from the last inspection. One relates to staff supervision. The second is about making sure that young people receive regular feedback, so that they know what is happening about their complaints, concerns and suggestions.

## **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 differences 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 whom 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:** SC002015

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Ms Helen Shepherd

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

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