

# Hampden House

Cats Lane, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2SF

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Hampden House is a residential pupil referral unit maintained by the local authority. The school can accommodate 30 boys, aged between 8 and 14, 12 residential pupils and 18 day pupils. Residential pupils reside at the school for up to four nights a week. The residential accommodation is part of the school. Situated in a residential area of Sudbury, the pupil referral unit caters for young people who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The last residential inspection took place in October 2016.

**Inspection dates:** 26 to 28 February 2018

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<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:** 12 October 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- The young people make progress in their attendance, attainment and behaviour because of the support that they receive.
- The quality of the service has steadily improved under the leadership of the headteacher. The shortfalls identified at the last inspection have been addressed.
- A dedicated, caring staff team works hard to support the young people. The staff provide good-quality direct care in a calm and consistent manner.
- An experienced safeguarding lead ensures that safeguarding concerns are referred to appropriate agencies. The safeguarding team challenges agencies when it is in the young people's best interest to do so.
- Parents and professionals provide good feedback about the quality of the residential provision.
- The young people have access to a wide range of leisure opportunities that they enjoy.
- There is strong internal monitoring and reporting on the quality of the care.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- One young person's individual risk assessment does not consider known and pertinent risks. Other risk assessments are not sufficiently clear.
- The staff have limited knowledge about 'county lines'. This is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or deal lines.
- Recruitment records are not sufficiently clear about reference verification.

## **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 standard for residential special schools:

- 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.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that the staff have a good understanding of issues pertaining to county lines.
- Ensure that employment records provide sufficient detail about the verification of references.

## Inspection judgements

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

This residential provision offers good-quality care to the young people. Steady progress facilitated by a committed headteacher and staff team has seen improvements take place. Although there are some areas for improvement, these have not resulted in students experiencing harm.

The young people have good relationships with the staff who support them. The young people reported feeling well looked after. They said that the staff care about them and treat them fairly. Young people and their families reported that staff know them well. The young people make progress as a result of the support that they receive. Case studies show the difference that the residential provision makes in meeting the young people's needs. There are examples of positive, life-changing support, with young people being able to return to and maintain their placements in mainstream education.

The young people make social, emotional and behavioural progress. One family carer of a young person who is new to the residential provision said, 'We can see some changes in him already. He reflects more on his behaviour. He used to be more argumentative. He will come and apologise whereas before he would not.' A social worker said, 'He [the young person] is now able to identify what needs to improve. Before, he did not want to accept this. Before, he blamed everyone else. Now he can reflect and accept [what needs to improve]. They [the staff] have helped him to understand his own behaviour, reflect on it and learn from it. There have been lots of positive steps.'

Management data shows improved attendance for residential pupils in comparison to when they were in their previous placement and in comparison to non-residential pupils. A parent said, 'It has been the longest time that he [my child] has spent in school. His attendance is the best it has ever been since he has gone to school.'

The staff treat the young people with calmness and respect, and they are positive about the young people. The staff celebrate the young people's achievements. Progress and success are reinforced formally and on an ad hoc informal basis. Assemblies celebrate achievement, and positive moments during the day are acknowledged with young people as they happen.

The young people reported that staff support them well to manage their behaviour. Clear boundaries are put in place. This can lead to conflict as young people struggle to accept the boundaries. Management monitoring records show that this struggle reduces over time for most young people.

The young people have access to a wide range of leisure opportunities. These include activities at the school and in the local community, which the young people enjoy.

The young people have access to information about complaints. They said that they can talk to staff if they have any concerns. Parents confirmed this. Interactions observed during the inspection saw staff listening to young people who were angry or upset and calmly explaining why certain decisions had been made or actions taken. As a result, situations defused, and young people regained control of their behaviour.

A clear process is in place for transitions into the residential provision, and the staff are proactive about transitions out of the service. A social worker said, 'They [the staff] are very good and on the ball. They are very child focused. They want the child to get the best care and education that they can. In terms of moving on from them [the school], they [the staff] are very timely in getting the best provision.' These approaches increase the potential for successful future placements.

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

The young people said that they feel safe, and families said that their children feel safe. The young people said that they can talk to and trust the staff and that the staff listen to them.

The experienced designated safeguarding lead has a thorough knowledge of the young people and is well respected by the professionals with whom she liaises. She ensures that relevant information is shared with safeguarding professionals. Safeguarding professionals are positive about the working relationship with the school.

There are very few incidents of young people going missing from the residential provision. When incidents have occurred, young people have walked off site for a short period and then returned. The staff understand what is expected of them in response to such incidents. The staff follow the associated policy and report the young people as missing to police.

The young people's needs and experiences mean that on occasion it is necessary for the staff to physically intervene to keep them safe. Interventions are monitored by the headteacher and reported on to the governors.

Observations of staff and young people during the inspection saw staff managing difficult situations well. Staff are calm and clear with young people who are distressed or angry. Young people reported that the staff manage their behaviour well.

Bullying is an issue at the school. The staff are aware of this and intervene when necessary. The staff have a range of options available to them in dealing with bullying, and the headteacher monitors these interventions. Work to address bullying

is both proactive and reactive. Assemblies cover subjects such as homophobia. One-to-one support is given to young people whose behaviour is considered as bullying. Families of the young people who have experienced bullying talked positively about the approach that the school has taken. A parent said, 'They [the staff] take this seriously. I am happy with the way in which they deal with it.'

The staff are aware of the process to share concerns and they follow the process when concerns arise. They are alert to the signs of radicalisation and refer to the appropriate authorities accordingly. However, discussions with staff identified that training has not provided them with an understanding of some high-profile safeguarding concerns, specifically 'county lines'. Although the staff have awareness of some of the issues linked to the term, the lack of a comprehensive understanding limits the potential for them to act to support young people who are vulnerable to this issue.

A clear system is in place to manage medication and young people's health needs. The medication policy now reflects relevant guidance. The staff have their competency to administer medication assessed at least every three years. The designated safeguarding lead liaises with mental health support services when needed. The young people have access to a counsellor who attends the school twice a week.

Each young person has an individual risk assessment. These assessments were identified as basic but sufficient at the last inspection. At this inspection, it has been identified that one risk assessment does not contain or consider important information. As a result, known risks have not been adequately assessed. Furthermore, some risk assessments are not sufficiently clear. While neither issue has resulted in harm, an inaccurate or ineffective risk assessment has the potential to increase the likelihood of an ineffective response to risk.

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

The headteacher leads this provision from the front. He is known and highly respected by staff, young people's families and professionals. A social worker said, 'I really like how the headteacher is actively involved with the students. This is a big plus, not just for staff but for the students. They know him. I like that he is fully involved.' The headteacher has a thorough understanding of the service and the needs, experiences and progress of the young people. His leadership has enabled steady, sustained progress to take place. All five of the minimum standards that were found to be unmet at the last inspection are now met.

Brief placement plans are in place. The headteacher has a good understanding of the plans and he is actively involved in their creation, implementation and monitoring.

The school has strong relationships with the other adults who are involved in the

young people's lives. Families and professionals reported good working relationships with the school. There are good relationships with neighbours, who are understanding and empathetic.

The staff offer challenge to the local authority when they feel that actions taken are not in young people's best interests.

The headteacher ensures that there is strong internal monitoring and reporting on the quality of the care. He undertakes a thorough report on the residential provision, including detailed information about exclusions and physical interventions. This information is shared with the management committee. An independent person undertakes half-termly monitoring visits. Governors undertake visits to the school. Combined, these approaches enable the management team to have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the residential provision.

The staff receive regular, recorded supervision and an annual appraisal. The staff have access to a range of training opportunities. They are either qualified or working towards an appropriate qualification. The management team monitors to ensure that the staff have undertaken the training that they need.

The young people are able to influence day-to-day decisions about the residential provision. They are also able to contribute towards more complex decisions such as the appointment of staff. The young people contribute to interviews and their views are taken into account. The student council meets regularly. These opportunities to contribute to decisions increase the young people's sense of ownership and responsibility.

Safe recruitment processes are followed, and full employment histories are consistently gathered. Although references are verified, the only indication that this has taken place is a signature. As a result, it is unclear what information has been verified. This risks inconsistency in approach and a lack of clarity, should this information be needed in the future.

## **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:** SC024594

**Headteacher:** Graham Alcock

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Ashley Hinson, social care inspector (lead)



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