

# Parkwood Hall Co-Operative Academy

Parkwood Hall School, Beechenlea Lane, Swanley, Kent BR8 8DR

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Parkwood Hall Academy is a residential special school providing day and residential placements for boys and girls between the ages of seven and 19 years and who have a wide range of special educational needs such as speech, language and communication needs, moderate to severe learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders, and/or medical needs. At the time of the inspection, there were 19 residential pupils. The pupils reside in residential units in the main house and in one house within the school grounds.

**Inspection dates:** 20 to 22 February 2018

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account**                      **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected                      outstanding

The effectiveness of leaders and managers                      good

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 17 May 2016

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Leaders, managers and all the staff share a commitment to support the residential pupils to fulfil their potential and develop the skills that they will need for their future.
- The competent staff team recognises and responds to the residential pupils' individual needs. Staff know the residential pupils extremely well and are able to provide highly personalised, nurturing care and support to advance their development.
- Safeguarding the residential pupils is embedded in practice. Effective safeguarding systems promote the welfare of residential pupils, but the staff resist an over-protective approach.
- Through establishing positive relationships, nurturing care and a structured residential education curriculum, the residential pupils respond to the support that the staff offer. The residential pupils make significant progress with their social, independence and communication skills. They develop confidence, enjoy their time within the residential provision, and improve their future life chances.
- A strong governing body provides robust scrutiny, challenge and oversight of the residential provision. It shares the senior leadership team's vision for improving and developing the residential provision.
- Excellent partnership working with parents and carers promotes the residential pupils' holistic development.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- To improve bathroom facilities for residential pupils in order to provide a greater degree of privacy and less of an institutional appearance.
- To improve the recording of complaints to ensure that the category and resolution of the complaint is clear.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Progress further with modernising the bathrooms to provide residential pupils with a greater degree of privacy.
- Ensure that records of complaints clearly identify the category of the complaint and the outcome of the complaint.

## Inspection judgements

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

Through highly individualised care and support, residential pupils flourish and make significant progress. Parents comment positively on their children's experience at the school. One parent remarked that, 'The school has provided my child with learning, friends, confidence and, above all, happiness.' The residential pupils themselves stated that they enjoy their time staying at the school 'because there are lots of things to do'. One residential pupil commented specifically on how he appreciated being given more responsibility and more options, resulting in him feeling more independent.

The residential pupils progress in many aspects of their lives, including their social skills, life skills and improving their behaviour. Working collaboratively with the staff across the school, the residential staff use their in-depth knowledge of each residential pupil to ensure that effective support advances their development.

The residential pupils receive good-quality support from the school nurse and the staff to maintain their physical health and lead healthy lifestyles. The school nurse is highly effective in monitoring pupils' specific health needs. Through liaising closely with parents and carers and compiling medical care plans, the staff have the necessary detailed knowledge of the pupils' medical conditions and medication requirements. The school nurse provides thorough and comprehensive training for the staff to administer medication safely. Medication systems are audited regularly. In preparation for life after school, residential pupils have opportunities to take more responsibility for self-administering their medication.

The pupils' emotional well-being also is a priority. The pupils benefit from the availability of art and play psychotherapists, in addition to a team of speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. Therapeutic provision is integrated into all aspects of the school, including the residential setting. The therapists focus on each pupil as an individual, with support tailored to meet their particular needs.

Developing and extending the residential pupils' life skills and independence skills is fundamental to the ethos of the residential provision. Learning for independence is integral to the residential education curriculum, where residential pupils continue to learn and practise key skills such as social, communication and independence skills after the end of the school day. Residential pupils are able to gain accreditation for the achievement of independence skills through the Open College Network programme. This highly structured curriculum promotes the residential pupils' development and future life chances.

The staff at all levels value the views and opinions of the residential pupils as part of their commitment to ensuring that the residential pupils have a positive experience residing at the school. The governors share this commitment. Student Voice Ambassadors have attended governors' meetings. A residential pupil stated, 'I love this role as I get to voice my opinion and help make changes.' The residential pupils' views have contributed to plans to modernise the bathrooms, and residential pupils

have each been given a budget to personalise their bedrooms. Personal tutor time, house meetings and informal discussions provide opportunities for the staff to engage with the residential pupils to seek out their opinions. The residential pupils stated that they are confident in speaking to any member of staff if they have worries or concerns.

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

Extremely effective safeguarding measures protect the residential pupils. Safeguarding pupils is embedded into all the aspects of school life. All staff are acutely aware of the residential pupils' vulnerabilities. The staff know the residential pupils very well. They respond to them with specific strategies to care for them, promote their development and protect them.

Care plans are individualised and risk assessments clearly demonstrate that the staff understand the specific needs of each residential pupil. Despite the focus on providing nurturing, safe care, the staff resist an over-protective approach. Supporting the residential pupils to develop independence skills and preparing them for life outside the school is a key aspect of the residential provision. An important part of this is educating the pupils to keep themselves safe. E-safety has a high priority. Leaders and managers recognise the importance of residential pupils having access to the internet. The revised policy will allow residential pupils to use their own devices, but with appropriate monitoring and support from the staff to use the internet safely.

The staff are well trained, alert and confident in their safeguarding role. They have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of current issues that can present a risk to the residential pupils. They are diligent in informing the experienced and highly competent designated safeguarding lead (DSL) of any concerns. Appropriate action is taken, including referral to and consultation with external safeguarding authorities. Highly effective liaison and partnership working between the DSL, external agencies and families promotes the welfare of the pupils.

Extremely positive relationships between the staff and the residential pupils underpin successful behaviour strategies. The residential pupils develop a sense of safety, protection and trust in the staff through their thoughtful and consistent support. Individual behaviour management plans are carefully compiled with input from classroom staff, residential staff and therapists following observations of the pupils and discussion about the most effective ways to support their development. Parents and carers have opportunities to comment on and/or agree these plans.

Behaviour is closely monitored by senior leaders. Physical intervention is used only as a last resort to safely manage pupils' behaviour. Knowing the residential pupils very well, the staff are able to successfully implement personalised strategies to help them self-regulate their emotions and manage their difficulties. The behaviour of residential pupils significantly improves through successful, individualised support strategies with the necessity for physical intervention markedly reduced.

Termly multi-disciplinary meetings with parents review the residential pupil's progress, set realistic targets and ensure that support is in line with the pupil's education, health and care plan.

The managers carefully plan the evening activities and support needs of the residential pupils. The staff are effectively deployed so that the residential pupils have the appropriate level of support to keep them safe and promote their development.

Recent improvements in monitoring systems for health and safety matters have increased the protection for pupils and staff. Recruitment processes are rigorous and safeguard residential pupils from unsuitable adults working with them.

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

Striving to achieve constant improvement is a core value of the school. Leaders and managers have high expectations of the staff to develop their knowledge and skills, with a focus on meeting the individual needs of pupils. All the staff share a commitment to supporting each of the residential pupils to develop and achieve their potential.

The experienced and highly competent managers of the residential provision guide and support the staff team to meet the diverse and complex needs of the residential pupils. Annual staff performance reviews with relevant targets linked to the school improvement plan, as well as regular supervision and comprehensive training, enable the managers to monitor the effectiveness of the staff's support to residential pupils. The managers continuously encourage the staff to improve their practice and explore avenues to promote outcomes for the residential pupils.

Initiatives to strengthen a waking day curriculum include the extension of therapy provision into the residential provision and the involvement of teaching staff in the residential environment. The residential staff work with the residential pupils during the school day, providing consistency for them and ensuring that there is a seamless link between education and residential support.

A strong governing body provides robust scrutiny, challenge and oversight of the residential provision. Regular visits by governors provide an additional layer of monitoring. The governors are ambitious and are proactive in supporting the development and growth of the residential provision. They, and the senior leadership team, are currently considering proposals to improve the standard of residential accommodation. Bathroom facilities require modernisation to provide residential pupils with more privacy and to give a less institutional appearance.

Parents report excellent communication and partnership working with the staff. One parent commented that the staff 'listen to parents and carers and do everything they can to make the experience the best for the young people'. Another parent remarked that the staff, 'Work hard at building trust with parents and we are never made to feel redundant. Our views and worries are listened to.' Consequently, complaints are infrequent. Some records of complaints are unclear in relation to whether the

complaint is a formal or informal complaint. The outcome and resolution of the complaint is also not always clearly recorded.

## **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:** 1159380

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Nick White

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

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## **Inspector**

Jan Hunnam, social care inspector



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