

Penn Hall School

Penn Hall School, Vicarage Road, Penn, Wolverhampton WV4 5HP

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Penn Hall is a Wolverhampton Local Authority Community Special School for young people aged three to 19 years, whose special educational needs fall predominantly in the category of physical disability and complex medical needs. The school is located on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. The school has 80 planned places, which will increase to 100 from September 2019 and there are currently 96 on roll. The residential provision is on the school site. Six young people stay overnight at any one time.

Inspection dates: 22 to 24 January 2019

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: 12 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- young people make exceptional progress in all areas of their lives
- safeguarding young people is paramount
- clear complaints processes are in place for young people
- leadership and management arrangements are exceptional
- managers and staff have high aspirations for young people and continually drive improvement in the quality of care provided
- partnership work with families is excellent; parents are unanimous in their praise for the school
- residential staff have extensive knowledge, skills and experience; they nurture and care for young people in a way that enables each young person to thrive educationally, socially, physically and emotionally
- planning for residential care is meticulous; plans are tailored to ensure that young people reach their full potential.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people make exceptional progress from their starting points in different aspects of their development, due to the individualised specialist care they receive.

Staff forge positive relationships with parents and carers. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the impact that the residential care has for their children and are reassured that all of their needs are fully met. They identify and value the exceptional progress that their children make.

The residential provision offers a vibrant and nurturing environment where young people can continue to work on their personal and social targets. They are included in all aspects of the day-to-day running of the provision, such as shopping for food and planning meals. A newly created communication board provides young people with visual references to express their needs and views. Creative and personalised displays add to the vibrancy of the residential setting. This includes photographs celebrating individual achievements, which increase young people's self-esteem.

Young people take part in a wide range of stimulating activities. The residential care staff support young people to take part in community projects, sporting and recreational activities, trips and social occasions. Birthdays and different festivals are celebrated within the residential provision. A qualified reflexology therapist regularly visits the young people and offers a range of treatments to support emotional and physical well-being. This approach to therapy is flexible and treatments are provided in direct response to the voice of the young person and their individual care plans. During the inspection, one young person received a leg massage to help improve their circulation. There was an immediate impact. The young person became more comfortable and relaxed.

All aspects of care now take place on the ground floor, making all bedrooms more accessible for young people to access independently. In addition, changes in budgets for catering arrangements now permit young people to express daily meal choices. This contributes to mealtimes feeling much more like a family and social event.

The staff offer a consistent, nurturing approach, which meets the complex needs of young people. Time is taken to understand every young person's individual needs, which leads to strong, trusting relationships between staff and young people.

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

Young people thrive because of the support that they receive from staff. This is underpinned by excellent care planning, risk assessments and behaviour management strategies.

Child protection and safeguarding procedures are implemented throughout the

residential provision effectively. Strong partnership working with parents and teaching staff ensures that the needs of each young person are individually identified and sensitively met. Staff attention to detail is meticulous, both in terms of written records and practice.

The management team has a designated and a deputy safeguarding lead. They have the key responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding knowledge is kept up to date through training, which includes awareness of contextual safeguarding. This enables staff to respond to the needs of young people.

Safeguarding leads have close links with designated officers. Strong governance ensures that safeguarding practice is monitored, reviewed and updated. The deputy designated safeguarding lead quality assures the impact of training through assessment and appraisal. This outstanding practice ensures that staff learning is embedded and further areas for developments are identified.

Behaviour management strategies are exceptional because staff understand young people extremely well. Staff promote young people's strengths and consistently reinforce positive qualities and behaviours. Staff are patient and measured in their approach. Each young person's individual anxieties, communication needs and challenges are fully understood and uniquely managed.

Close monitoring of young people's progress enables leaders to have an in-depth understanding of the impact of care. There has been no incident of physical restraint in residential provision since the last inspection. Newly developed systems for recording incidents ensure that young people of all abilities can give feedback on how staff manage their behaviour.

Young people's health needs are exceptionally well met. Residential staff ensure that young people are in good health. Staff are acutely aware of issues relating to mental and emotional well-being. They demonstrate an excellent sensitivity to each young person's needs, being alert to any minor changes in behaviour or presentation that could indicate that all is not well. Residential staff receive specialist training to administer specific medication to promote consistency in care for young people.

Residential staff have been innovative in making the complaints procedure accessible to young people who experience speech and language challenges. Young people feel confident that residential staff will take seriously any concern that they raise. Systems are in place to support staff in maintaining records of actions they have taken.

The staff recruitment records have been carefully audited. This has ensured that staff are safe to work with the young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Senior leaders are inspirational and lead by example. The new headteacher is innovative and highly respected. She leads an exceptional senior management team across the residential provision and school. In partnership with the head of residential care, they lead a highly motivated and committed team which is aspirational for the young people whom it cares for. Excellent team morale and a sense of shared ownership drive a culture of improvement across the provision.

A strong and active governing board underpins the team's leadership. Although there have been several consecutive outstanding judgements over many years, senior leaders have not been complacent. Through continuous self-assessment of the residential provision, leaders have a clear understanding of the provision's strengths and areas for development to drive continual improvement.

Most members of residential staff are long-serving and committed to meeting the needs of all the young people in their care. Residential staff speak highly of each other and are supportive of the leadership team. They appreciate the wide and varied training they receive and enjoy applying such learning to practice.

Parents speak very positively about how staff care for their child. Parents appreciate the regular communication they receive about the well-being of their child. The outstanding nature of partnership working with parents is evidenced by one parent's comments.

'The head of care and her team of staff have been kind, supportive and kept us informed of progress while nursing cover was being put into place. Now that the nursing cover issue is resolved, my child has been able to stay; we are very pleased and excited about this. An amazing team effort from the residential team.'

Staff speak highly of the head of care and are driven by the same enthusiasm. A positive, inspirational ethos exists within residential provision, which underpins the quality of care that young people receive. Staff have regular supervision, development plans and monthly team meetings. As a result, the staff have opportunities to discuss the care of young people as well as their own professional development.

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: SC043187

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Fiona Gillespie

Type of school: residential special school

Telephone number: 01902 558 355

Email address: admin@pennhall.co.uk

Inspectors

Lisa Walsh, social care inspector (lead)
Andrew Waugh, HMI



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