

# Notton House Academy

Notton House Academy, 28 Notton, Lacock, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 2NF  
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Notton House Academy is a residential special school. It is located in a rural area of Wiltshire. The academy provides a 38-week-per-year educational provision for boys aged eight to 19 years, who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties and/or speech, language and communication difficulties. An increasing number of pupils have additional complex needs. Each young person referred to the academy has an education, health and care plan. At the time of the inspection, there were 36 residential pupils. The residential accommodation is provided for pupils in eight distinct areas located on the academy site.

**Inspection dates:** 25 to 27 February 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

**Date of previous inspection:** 16 January 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Leaders, managers and staff know the young people very well and the residential provision fully complements the education component of the school.
- Leaders and managers provide strong leadership; they are supported by the school's senior staff team. Staff have high aspirations for the young people and have created a structured and supportive environment, all of which impacts

positively on the young people's outcomes.

- A well-structured leadership team drives change and advocates for developments extremely well. Examples of this include the refurbished bedrooms and communal areas and the significant reduction in restrictive practices.
- Young people are looked after by a stable, well-trained staff team. As a result, they make steady progress in all areas and form trusting and loving relationships.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Ensure that risk assessments capture the individual needs of young people in respect of their access to and use of the internet and mobile phones.
- Further reduce the number of locked doors across the residential provision. Ensure that there is not a generic approach to young people's access.
- Ensure that all young people have the opportunity to help prepare and cook their evening meals within their houses.

## **Inspection judgements**

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

Young people make good progress from their starting points. They benefit from a safe and comfortable environment that has undergone extensive refurbishment and redecoration. Young people's individual likes and interests are valued and captured in the decoration of their rooms.

The quality of pastoral support is a strength of the home. Family support, cultural champions and a Thrive practitioner who leads on emotional well-being provide young people and families with support that has a measurable impact on relationships and behaviours.

Young people are encouraged to be healthy and active. A wide variety of planned activities and learning support complements the young people's academic studies. Examples of learning include safe use of the internet, healthy eating, risk around substance misuse and issues in relation to bullying, gender and diversity.

All staff place a strong emphasis on providing the young people with a healthy, balanced diet. Mealtimes are occasions when young people engage in healthy banter and plan activities. Some of the older young people can also prepare suppers in their houses. This facility enables them to learn how to prepare and cook meals and take responsibility for cleaning. Further work is needed to ensure that all young people are able to take part regularly in the preparation of evening meals.

Inclusion and consultation with young people are recorded in a number of different ways. House meetings, school council meetings and discussion groups provide young people with opportunities to contribute to the ongoing development of the residential provision.

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

Young people are kept safe and this is due to many factors, for example knowing there are staff they can talk to and knowing that the building is safe. Parents and social workers also told inspectors that they feel confident that young people are safe.

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and know how to safely support each young person. Risk assessments for activities and behaviours are regularly reviewed and are up to date. However, there is a generic approach to some risk assessments, for example those regarding use of and access to the internet and mobile phones, and those in respect of access to some parts of the school. This fails to individualise the risks to each young person.

Staff have a good understanding of the young people's behavioural and therapeutic

needs. Collaborative working with social workers and the input from a qualified Thrive practitioner, a cultural champion and a family support worker result in behaviour and care plans that are informative. Structured and personalised responses mean that challenging behaviours and the use of physical interventions are reducing significantly. Young people are learning how to manage their anxieties and worries.

Complaints and serious incidents involving young people and staff are responded to quickly, and comprehensive, detailed records are kept. Young people rarely go missing, but when they do they are quickly and safely returned.

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

The appointment of a new head and continued support provided by an experienced executive principal mean that the senior leadership team continues to make significant strides on its improvement journey. The senior leadership team demonstrates a good understanding of the provision's commitment to providing caring and nurturing residential education.

The residential provision continues to be ably led by a head of care. She is supported by a senior leadership team whose members are experienced and suitably qualified. Staff are benefiting from the enthusiasm for and commitment to improving the outcomes of young people, which has emerged since the change in leadership. There is a direct correlation between these changes and the improved working environment for staff and deputy leaders. The visibility of the head of care and the head of school exemplifies this approach.

Leaders and managers are eager and keen to listen and make improvement. They show interest in developing practice and improving the environment. They accept challenge and use it constructively. This was demonstrated during the inspection, through the consideration given to increasing the role of the cultural champion and the review of generic risk assessments regarding doors that have historically remained locked.

In line with the residential school's stated aims and objectives, leaders, managers and staff have succeeded in creating a caring atmosphere in the houses, both by modelling calm, considered, positive and pragmatic approaches to behaviour management and through making improvements to the furnishings.

Parents, carers and professionals spoke positively of the care, support, safety and improved outcomes of the young people.

The residential school's staff team has remained stable, except for a few changes more recently, and safer recruitment procedures are followed.

## **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:** SC039112

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Michelle Reysenn

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Linda Bond, social care inspector (lead)

Anna Gravelle, social care inspector



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