

# 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 an inclusive special school meeting a wide range of needs including physical disabilities, a range of learning and communication needs, complex medical needs and autistic spectrum conditions. The school is located on the outskirts of Wolverhampton. There are currently 103 children and young people on roll.

The residential provision is on the school site. Six young people stay overnight at any one time.

**Inspection dates:** 5 to 7 November 2019

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| <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:** 22 January 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## **Inspection judgements**

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

Children and young people are supported by dedicated staff who know them well. Staff continually strive to provide all children and young people with an opportunity to enhance their life skills by accessing the service. As a result, children and young people benefit from well-planned transitions into residency that enable them to enjoy and benefit from overnight stays.

The residential setting provides children and young people with opportunities to have fun experiences and spend time with their friendship groups. Staff provide children and young people with a range of exciting activities in and outside the home. As a result, children and young people have experiences that they may not have if they did not attend residence. Children and young people say they enjoy their stays in residence, where they can be with their friends.

On the occasions when children and young people find their stay difficult, skilled and sensitive staff manage situations in a way that places the child at the centre of their practice. This helps children and young people to settle quickly and means that they, and others, can continue to enjoy their stay without too much disruption.

Staff celebrate children and young people's achievements. This helps children and young people to feel proud of themselves and increases their confidence and self-esteem. In addition, children and young people are motivated to succeed and meet their set targets.

Relationships between children and young people and staff are warm, trusting and nurturing. Staff know children and young people and their families well and communicate effectively with them. This enables staff to keep parents informed about their child's experiences and progress.

Children and young people make informed choices that develop and shape the experiences that they have when in residence. For example, they plan meals and activities for their overnight stays. This inclusive approach ensures that children and young people are listened to and get the best out of their stay.

Large black refuse bags used to collect laundry hang from bedposts in children and young people's bedrooms. In addition, hospital screens are used when children and young people are undertaking personal care. These practices do not lend themselves to the child-centred, home-from-home feel set out in the statement of purpose and have the potential to affect children and young people's experiences.

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

The staff team has created a calm and positive environment for children and young people. Staff implement personalised care that promotes each child and young person's welfare. This assists children and young people who have high levels of anxiety and complex needs.

Staff maintain firm boundaries while at the same time showing sensitivity, care and

patience. This helps children and young people to feel safe and to know what is expected of them.

Staff work in partnership with medical and health professionals. This joined-up approach between health and residential staff helps children and young people to access residence with the assurance that their complex health needs will be met. Children and young people with complex medical needs are kept safe during their overnight stay because they receive additional support during the night from qualified nursing staff.

The manager safely recruits staff. This helps to protect children and young people from unsuitable adults working with them.

Children and young people enjoy accessing the internet while having their overnight stay. However, during the inspection parental controls and filters in place to protect children and young people from accessing inappropriate content were found to be ineffective. Immediate action was taken by staff to reduce the risk and there was no direct impact on children and young people's safety. Managers also agreed to ensure that, moving forward, routine checks will take place as required to assure themselves that internet safety controls are in working order.

Most aspects of safeguarding training are good, which means that staff broadly understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe and well. However, staff do not receive training in respect of anti-bullying. This is a missed opportunity for staff to take a detailed look at the different forms of bullying and consider how they identify, manage, record and report incidents of bullying. Inspectors found that recording and reporting of some bullying incidents were not consistently good. This hinders the ability of leaders and managers to monitor and respond to bullying incidents effectively.

There have been no safeguarding referrals arising since the last inspection. However, staff know how to report safeguarding concerns if they need to. Regular weekly pastoral meetings help with information sharing across the whole school, including residency. This helps to promote children and young people's safety and welfare.

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

The school senior leadership team, staff and governors are passionate about the residential provision and the role that it plays in enhancing and improving the lives of children and young people. Residency is viewed as an integral part of the whole school, which ensures that in the main children and young people receive seamless care.

The leaders and managers recognise that funding has impacted on the residential service. However, considerable effort is being applied by leaders and managers to secure funding to improve the residency. This action demonstrates how driven, passionate and motivated everyone is in their commitment to improving the service.

Partnership working between staff and professionals from the school and residency is commendable. Professionals speak highly of the positive relationships that help to

ensure that children and young people continue to receive a holistic approach to school, health and education. This improves the life chances of children and young people.

Children and young people in residency benefit from a consistent staff team that knows their needs and has good relationships with their families. Staff know the aims of the service and support children and young people to develop their skills and abilities during their stays.

Staff attend a variety of training courses. Training undertaken is recorded on an individual training record for each member of staff. However, leaders and managers were unable to provide inspectors with evidence that they have a learning and development programme which is kept under review. This is a missed opportunity to look holistically at the training needs and development of residential staff and have a clear plan to meet these needs.

Staff have weekly team meetings and an annual appraisal and so have some opportunities to reflect on their practice. However, staff do not receive individual supervision. Individual supervision has been replaced by group supervision. This means that staff do not have opportunities to talk individually with their line manager about their practice, strengths and areas for development.

Some aspects of the physical condition of the residential environment are tired. In addition, damage to door frames and carpets needs to be repaired. Managers do not always act quickly enough when potential hazards are brought to their attention. A lack of funding for the residential service has had a direct impact on the quality of the physical environment. Leaders and managers are working to address this.

The development plan identifies some of the works needed to improve the fabric of the building. The business manager and the headteacher said that some of the works have been undertaken. However, despite the standard 20 report of May 2019 highlighting the shortfalls with physical conditions six months ago, little action has been taken to remedy all the shortfalls.

## **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:

- 6.2 The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of children are ensured.
- 12.3 Staff receive appropriate training and support to recognise and deal with incidences of challenging behaviour or bullying. This training should include assistance in managing staff members' responses and feelings arising from working with children who have emotional difficulties which result in challenging behaviour. Staff training is regularly refreshed.
- 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.
- 19.1 Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up to date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school.
- 19.4 The learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and is updated if necessary.
- 19.6 All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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:** Mrs Fiona Gillespie

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Telephone number:** 01902 558 355

**Email address:** admin@pennhall.co.uk

## **Inspectors**

Michelle Spruce, social care inspector (lead)

Alison Cooper, social care inspector



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