

Hunters Hill (Residential) School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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Inspector Dawn Bennett

School address Hunters Hill School, Spirehouse Lane, Blackwell,
BROMSGROVE, Worcestershire, B60 1QD
Telephone number 0121 445 1320
Email
Headteacher Mr K Lewis

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{1,2}

Information about the school

Hunters Hill Technology College is a residential special school providing residential boarding for up to four nights a week Monday to Friday. The school is maintained by Birmingham Local Education Authority and is situated on the south side of the city. The school is split across two sites and has five residential homes. The school caters for 110 pupils with a capacity for 75 residential placements. It accommodates both boys and girls aged 11 to 16 years old. Pupils attending Hunters Hill Technology College have been identified as having social, emotional, behavioural and specific learning difficulties. A number of pupils attending the school also have associated medical conditions. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2011.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for residential pupils	outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	outstanding
Residential pupils' safety	outstanding
Leadership and management of the residential provision	good

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- This is an outstanding school that proactively meets the individual needs of pupils and effectively supports them to make outstanding personal progress to achieve their full potential.
- The school meets all the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. At the last Ofsted inspection the service was judged to be good overall with outstanding features. At this inspection they are judged as outstanding overall.
- There is a true commitment to promoting equality and diversity, which permeates throughout the school. This results in an environment where the individual is valued and their needs and that of the wider community are promoted and celebrated.
- There are excellent arrangements to ensure that pupils learn the skills they need for adult life and achieve their full potential moving onto further education and employment.
- There is a committed, stable and professional staff team who work effectively with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure each individual pupils needs are identified and met.
- The safety and well being of pupils is promoted at all times. High risk and inappropriate behaviours are sensitively challenged and addressed.
- This is a well managed school that continues to develop its services and practices to best meet the needs of the pupils attending.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Pupils are developing excellent personal, emotional and social skills, which promote further education, independence, self-esteem and positive relationships.

Pupils who have historically experienced difficulties in mainstream day schools are now attending school on a regular basis and making outstanding personal educational progress. The school provides a proactive admissions procedure that actively involves parents and pupils. Transport is well organised and aids school attendance. Levels of attendance are monitored and any concerns are quickly addressed with parents and pupils. At the end of each term and year, 100% attendance is rewarded. Where a pupil makes significant educational and social progress the school supports planned return to mainstream education. Throughout this transition process the school continues to support the pupil to ensure success. After the final year at school pupils are successfully progressing on to further education. All last years leavers left the school to attend a further educational or work based placement and continue to be supported in those placements by the school.

Pupils experience and celebrate success. All pupils, whether day or residential, are attached to a residential home and class group. These stable, safe environments enable pupils to experience a consistency of staff who have high expectations of each pupil. In these environments each individual's needs are focused on and developed. Pupils know they are making personal progress because on a weekly basis they are involved in setting individual specific targets in the residential home and classroom. The progress made in achieving these targets is mapped by the school's profiling system. This enables staff to monitor and evaluate pupil's progress. A weekly celebration of achievements assembly enables pupils to assess and celebrate their own performance.

Young people become valued, active members of the school community and develop excellent skills in interacting with others and expressing views and opinions. They are encouraged to contribute to the running of the school and feel their views and opinions are acted upon. Pupils are voted for to become elected members of the school council. They have influenced changes to the operation of the school and therefore improved outcomes for themselves and others.

Pupils make excellent progress in looking after their health and leading healthy lives. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle is successfully integrated into the ethos of the school. For example, pupils are educated on how to live a healthy lifestyle through discussion groups in class and the residential homes. This covers healthy eating, exercise, environmental issues and drug awareness. This is reinforced by an extensive programme of physical activities, outside visits and external speakers.

Pupils social development is promoted at all times and is outstanding. The enjoyment

and achievement of the pupils continues to be a key strength of the school. It continues to be developed with different activities being brought in at the suggestion of pupils, most recently, zumba and street dance. The lunchtime, afternoon and evening programmes and skills development sessions provide ample opportunity for activities and exercise that includes cadets, food technology, craft skills, motor vehicles skills, model making, computers and many sporting activities including swimming and football. The school successfully use the development of social skills and interest in activities to reduce pupils residential stays. One pupil discussed his new found interest in the cadets and how the school were supporting him to access a squadron near his home.

Pupils successfully develop the skills they require for adulthood. Staff are able to tailor support depending upon the individual's needs and ability. It is the ethos of the school to involve and nurture pupils to develop life skills throughout their schooling and is a central theme to the residential experience. For example, one of the five residential homes specialises in promoting an environment that encourages independence for the more mature pupils. It also provides an opportunity for pupils to experience a positive house move and planned transition within the safety of the school. This residential provision works alongside education to promote a wide range of activities including work experience, college placements, independent travel to and from home, project work and practical skills sessions. As a result pupils develop positive self-esteem, have clear aims and objectives for the future and are confident members of the wider community.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of residential care is outstanding. The school promotes a positive ethos that fully embraces diversity and difference. Pupils receive an individual service, which is designed to meet their personal needs. For example, in the case of a looked after child the school recognise that home circumstances may be very complex and when arranging contact and home visits every effort is made to establish a relationship with the person with parental responsibility.

Due to an established admission and induction process, an initial assessment during each pupil's first half-term, home visits and regular meetings and contact, subsequently all staff have excellent knowledge of each pupil. They work in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals to ensure an excellent quality service where the ethos is centred around meeting the individual needs and aspirations of pupils.

Pupils, parents and partnership agencies feel strongly that a key strength of this service are the staff teams. Staff have constructive relationships with pupils and are supportive in assisting them to communicate their views and opinions and learn new skills. This positive engagement creates respectful relationships, which enable staff to have sensitive conversations with pupils. These day-to-day discussions support pupils to address difficulties and learn new skills to progress socially, emotionally and

physically.

Staff are proactive in promoting awareness of others, citizenship, community involvement as well as global issues. Regular activity days based in the residential houses explore topics such as Black history month. Notice boards around the school promote anti-bullying, trips away and the school council. Staff give time to ensure all members of the school community experience travel. Last year the school sent year seven and eight to camp on the Gower in Wales. The whole of year nine went to the Ann Frank Museum in Amsterdam. Year nine went on a day trip to Boulogne. Whilst other pupils travelled to Cape Town South Africa where they played football matches with a number of local schools.

The provision of meals at the school continues to be excellent, with the kitchen maintaining a five star rating from environmental health. Menus include foods from different cultures, catering for pupil's dietary restrictions and requirements and encouraging them to try new and healthy dishes. The kitchen staff are actively involved in the life of the school and ensure that when there are activity days, such as 'the royal wedding', the food served is in keeping with the theme.

The residential accommodation is of a good standard across the school campus. All residential areas are cared for equally by the staff team and pupils. There has been maintenance work to maintain the standard of accommodation and this is continuing.

Residential pupils' safety

Pupil's safety continues to be outstanding. Pupils say that they feel safe at the school. They are systematically protected from harm by robust safeguarding arrangements. For example, there are effective comprehensive policies on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils, which are known to pupils, parents, partner agencies and staff. These underpin an established programme of induction and training for all staff that includes listening to complaints, safeguarding, promoting positive behaviour, e-safety and anti-bullying. This ensures all policies are implemented successfully in practice.

Staff sensitively respect pupils need for privacy and confidentiality. They promote an open approach to complaints and successfully support pupils to make their views known. They do not tolerate bullying or any inappropriate behaviour and where issues arise they are well managed. Those incidents that do occur are managed in a way that allows pupils to consider the effect they are having on others and to address their mistakes. The school has excellent partnership arrangement with the local community police who speak positively of the proactive approaches used by the school when working with pupils and parents. The school involve the police in a range of social and educational events and the police use the school to host wider community events. This close involvement changes pupil perception of the police and their role. This outstanding work continues to be very successful.

Safeguarding pupils continues to be given a high priority within the school. All staff have completed training in safeguarding, and appropriate staff guidance and safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and regularly reviewed. This ensures staff understand and are clear about what they should do if there is a safeguarding issue. They are therefore familiar with the referral process to the local authority children's services department. Pupils express confidence in the safety and security of the school. They learn how to protect themselves because they regularly practice the emergency escape drill and staff receive fire training. Procedures are in place to protect pupils through tests on fire systems and other electrical equipment at appropriate intervals. Environmental risk assessments are in place to ensure the school is fully informed about potential hazards so they actively put measures in place to reduce any identified risks.

Pupils continue to be protected by the school's robust recruitment systems. These ensure all staff employed complete the necessary recruitment checks and are deemed suitable to work before commencement of employment. Proactive monitoring of visitors to the school takes place to prevent pupils being exposed to unsuitable adults. These excellent practices further safeguard their welfare.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

Leadership and management are good. Pupils continue to benefit from a well-managed school that is having a positive impact on their developmental outcomes. At the last inspection the school was good with outstanding features. There were four recommendations made and all have been met.

The school's Statement of Purpose sets out all required areas of information about the school and residential facilities. Pupils are admitted to the school in accordance with the Statement of Purpose. Parents are provided with information that details the provisions for residential accommodation at the school.

The staff team are positive in their approach to working with pupils. They are keen to achieve the best for the pupils in their care. Staff have access to a wide variety of training opportunities which ensures they are skilled, especially with regard to supporting pupils with challenging or high-risk behaviours. There are sufficient numbers of staff to meet the complex needs of the pupils and to support them in their activities. Any absences are covered from within the school staff team to ensure consistency of care.

The cohesion of the senior leadership team is a strength of the school. They have clear determination to continually raise standards in the delivery of care and education to pupils. As a result the school has substantial strengths and a sustained record of delivering good performance and managing improvement. Where areas for improvement emerge the school recognises and manages them well. For example, over the last year the school has appointed two parent governors, has expanded lunchtime clubs, improved sports day and parents evening leading to better parent

attendance, and introduced a leavers assembly to celebrate achievements. Regular meetings ensure that all aspects of life in the school are discussed and monitored by the senior leadership team. There are good systems in place to monitor all aspects of boarding and these continue to be developed. The school development plan identifies areas for the future development of the school and residential provision.

National minimum standards

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What should the school do to improve further?

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



09/02/2012

Inspection of Hunters Hill (Residential) School

The residential provision at Hunters Hill Technology College has been judged to be outstanding overall.

There are outstanding outcomes for young people, outstanding quality care, outstanding systems for safeguarding and good leadership and management.

You told Ofsted the school has a number of strengths and continues to improve.

Some of the key strengths you identified were the wide range of activities and hobbies available to you. The staff teams, who you felt were 'fun' and 'supportive'. The systems in place to keep you safe. The food served in the school kitchen and in the residential houses and the school trips.

Yours sincerely,

Dawn Bennett