

Dawn House Residential School

Dawn House School, Helmsley Road, Rainworth, MANSFIELD, Nottinghamshire, NG21 0DQ

Inspection dates	12/01/2015 to 14/01/2015	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Residential students thoroughly enjoy boarding at the school. They state that they have fun with their friends, always feel safe and receive excellent support from the staff team which results in them learning lots of new skills and making excellent progress.
- Students' continual development and progressive transition towards adulthood is central to the ethos of residence. As a result all students successfully achieve targets and objectives that are supported by staff and parents. The extent of residential students' improvements in their education, communication skills, social skills, self-esteem and independent living skills are commendable.
- Residential planning is expertly tailored to each individual's needs. Thorough partnership work with parents and professionals ensures there is a detailed picture of each student's expected levels of care. Developmental targets and accredited learning are established and monitored through regular reviews and consultation. This ensures there is a consistent approach to effectively meeting students' needs and a high expectation on students to develop at all times across the whole school site.
- The holistic health needs of students are fully supported and academic achievement and school attendance is outstanding. Students benefit from a service where education, health and care are delivered as a seamless service.
- Safeguarding is outstanding. Students say they feel very safe and are safe. There is a comprehensive and thorough approach to ensuring a high profile to safeguarding. Partnership work is outstanding. There is an inclusive approach across the school site, excellent working relationships with parents and proactive links with external professionals and agencies.
- The cohesion and drive of the senior management team is a strength of the school. They ensure the residential experience is an integral aspect of school life and is well embedded across the school community. They have clear determination to continue to raise

standards in the delivery of care and education to students.

- All Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards are met.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Dawn Bennett

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Dawn House School is a non-maintained co-educational residential special school, one of two run by the national charity 'I CAN'. There are 75 pupils on roll, whose ages range from 7 to 19. All pupils have statements of special educational need for difficulties with speech, language and communication. Some may have Asperger's syndrome.

There is a high level of pupil mobility, as pupils join the school at any time up to the sixth form. There are 12 young people who reside at the school during the week. The residential accommodation is provided in three units located on the school site.

The school is situated in the village of Rainworth, Nottinghamshire. The residential provision was last inspected in June 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the on-going personalisation of the school's residential accommodation.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for students are outstanding. They value and enjoy their residential experience. They have 'immense fun' and 'have made life-long friends'.

The school provides a specialist service that promotes each individual's strengths and abilities. Student outcomes are outstanding because they are succeeding in their academic and personal life. The school values students as individuals and their diverse identities; this uniqueness is celebrated in a way that promotes awareness and understanding and creates an environment where students can flourish.

Students quickly settle into the life of their residential unit and the school. Induction is thorough and focuses on individual's needs and building friendships with peers. Students receive a warm welcome and are sensitively supported to overcome any practical and emotional difficulties. As a result they quickly learn new skills by setting targets in areas they want to improve. Targets are often linked to a main aim. For example, learning to use public transport in preparation for independently travelling to an activity, work or college placement.

Students achieve positive personal and educational outcomes. They have the facilities and support to study effectively. All students have work experience placements and some become volunteers for local community projects. The senior management team monitor the educational targets and outcomes of residential students. This evidences that the residential experience increases students' educational attendance and academic outcomes and effectively equips all leavers to progress into further education or employment.

Students make exceptional progress in developing their social skills, confidence and personal identity. The school is a very social environment and participation and engagement are promoted at all times. Students make friends and build strong long-term relationships. A parent stated: 'he now has his own social circle outside of his family network'. Students support and reassure each other. As they progress through school they successfully take on additional responsibilities and learn to listen to and represent the views of others. Within the school community they become representatives on the school council, student governors or take on a peer mentoring role. They also represent the school and share their own personal experiences at other forums. For example, some students have spoken to an All Party Parliamentary Group on the impact of a disability on young people, other students addressed a group at the House of Lords. Students become responsible role models for younger peers as well as excellent representatives of the school.

The enjoyment and achievement of students continues to be a key strength of the residential service. Students' social development is outstanding. They substantially increase their social skills and social opportunities because they experience a highly inclusive residential community. They also experience a comprehensive range of activities which promote new interests, social groups and community involvement. These include regular activities run on site or in the local community such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, theatre, gardening, swimming, being a member of a local gym and training with and playing for a local football club.

Students lead safe and healthy lifestyles. They have an extensive understanding of health and safety issues because the school successfully integrates health and well-being promotion into their educational and residential learning. For example, students are educated on how to live a healthy lifestyle through discussions that cover healthy eating, exercise, environmental issues and drug awareness. Students are also well informed on a wide range of social issues. This enables them to make well-informed decisions that ensure their safe welfare and long-term good health.

Students' independence and pathway to employment is maximised. 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 students to develop life skills throughout their schooling and this is a central theme to the residential experience. There are excellent arrangements to ensure that students learn the skills they need for adult life and achieve their full potential. For example, all residential students work towards accredited awards. These cover a wide range of areas that are specific to the needs of each individual and focus on building skills for employment and further learning qualifications.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

Staff place the well-being of students at the centre of their practice. Students receive highly personalised support and care that fully meet all their needs. All students experience a thorough, multi-disciplinary assessment prior to being accepted by the school. This is a child-centred process that ensures equality of opportunity and recognises strengths as well as identifying challenges. Comprehensive written care plans demonstrate that the service has taken the greatest possible care to address any identified need in full detail. Other documents are also available in students' files. These also contribute to the excellent care planning and demonstrate effective communication with parents and a wide range of professionals and ensures consistency of planning and practice.

Staff work in highly effective partnerships with parents and other professionals from health, social care and education. Students receive seamlessly integrated care and consistent support of exceptional quality. For example, health promotion and the management of medication is exemplary. Robust health planning and medication administration ensures the excellent health of students. Staff are well trained and extremely knowledgeable in the medical needs of individual students and how to respond. Effective links to health professionals both within the school and those external, promote and develop students' well-being. This is additionally supported by a considered menu and foods served that are responsive to differing needs and diets.

Staff have constructive relationships with students 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 young people. These day-to-day discussions support students to address challenges and learn new skills to progress academically, socially and emotionally. It also means they influence the service they receive and the development of the residential provision.

Staff have consistently high but realistic aspirations for all students. They have a profound understanding of the needs and abilities of the students in their care. They creatively use different media and activities to engage them. Recreational and extra-curricular activities are well organised. Students enjoy immensely such opportunities. They say that activities are 'interesting, fun and diverse'. As a result, students develop well rounded confidence and avail themselves of the many positive opportunities to build self-resilience.

Staff give students the confidence that they need in order to develop and progress. Staff provide a safe environment to experiment and sometimes make mistakes. They equip students with the skills they require to become responsible members of their immediate and extended community. Staff advocate on behalf of students and empower them to exercise their rights. They continue to develop imaginative, fun strategies to enable students' progress. Any progress is consistently monitored, celebrated and recorded to ensure they achieve targets and goals.

The three residential units are well-equipped and maintained to a good standard. Students also have access to the school's resources such as the swimming pool and sports hall. The residential

environment is comfortable and facilities support students' learning and personal development. Each unit has a lounge, dining area, kitchen and a selection of toilet and bathing facilities. The residential accommodation features on the school's rolling development and redecoration plan and this ensures standards are maintained and improved. Some students have enjoyed personalising their own single bedrooms. Others have been encouraged but have not taken up this opportunity. This results in some bedrooms looking bare. Some communal areas and hallways are also not as personalised or homely as others. The staff and students are currently developing some areas and are busy discussing and choosing colours and wallpapers. The senior management team and the staff team recognise this is an area for further discussion and development to strengthen and improve upon.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The safety and well-being of residential students is paramount at this school. The senior management team and staff recognise the importance of educating students on how to safeguard themselves as well as supporting parents to help in this process. All academic and care staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues and take positive action to provide a safe environment. There are effective comprehensive policies on ensuring the safety and well-being of young people, which are known to young people, parents and staff. These underpin an established programme of induction and training for all staff that includes listening to complaints, safeguarding young people, promoting positive behaviour, e-safety and anti-bullying. Training and guidance is also provided to parents. This ensures all policies are implemented successfully in practice and students are safe.

Staff sensitively respect young people's need for privacy and confidentiality. They promote an open approach to complaints, and successfully support young people to make their views known. They do not tolerate bullying behaviour and where issues arise they are addressed. All staff are very aware of the vulnerability issues for students with complex communication needs. There is continual debate and discussion with regard to the important balance between promoting independence and keeping students safe. Major behavioural issues are minimal and those incidents that do occur are managed in a way that allows students to learn by their mistakes.

Safeguarding of students continues to be a high priority within the school. The senior management team, governors and all staff receive regular training that enables them to keep up to date with good safeguarding practice, research and developments in the field of safe care for students with complex communication needs. Robust 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 and are familiar with the referral process to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The school has designated safeguarding officers whose well-defined lead roles contribute to the clarity of procedures for identifying and following up on any concerns. The senior management team provides additional oversight and scrutiny of the effectiveness of safeguarding. The chair of governors has a lead safeguarding responsibility and visits the school on a regular basis to provide an additional and more independent safeguarding audit. As a result systems continue to be discussed, reviewed and developed to ensure the safety and well being of staff and students remains a high priority.

Young people express confidence in the safety and security of the school. They learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they regularly practise the emergency escape drill and staff receive fire training. Safe procedures are in place to protect young people through tests on fire systems and other electrical equipment at appropriate intervals.

Detailed risk assessments are in place to ensure the school is fully informed about potential hazards to reduce risks. These are frequently reviewed and updated to cover every eventuality and to respond effectively to students' changing needs. High staffing levels and excellent

safeguarding practice enable students to feel safe. They are empowered to take assessed risks inherent with trying new things, in a safe, well-controlled and supervised environment. There have been no major incidents or incidents of students going missing. The school's safeguarding practice is proactive and effective at finding and implementing protective strategies before incidents happen.

Students continue to be protected by the school's robust recruitment systems that 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 students being exposed to unsuitable adults. This excellent practice further safeguards their welfare.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. The senior management team are unyielding in their commitment to providing outstanding outcomes and promoting safety at a high level for students and staff.

Stability and commitment to improvement, rigorous internal and external quality assurance processes and comprehensive development programmes, mean the senior management team and staff have acquired immense levels of expertise and specialist knowledge relating to various aspects of the service provision. They are highly effective at ensuring that the residential service continues to realise their vision of enabling and empowering students to become active partners in their life choices and opportunities.

Staff are highly complimentary about the management, support and training they receive. Staff benefit from a programme of excellent quality staff training as well as professional development. As a result, this helps staff to maintain their knowledge and competencies. They 'are fulfilled by their work' and 'feel proud to be working for the organisation'. High motivation to achieve excellence and working together as a team to ensure the safe welfare and enjoyment of students are strong features of the residential service.

The management and deployment of care staff meets the changing needs of students and ensures a sustained high quality of care. The stability and experience of the staff team contributes significantly to the exceptional effectiveness of the service. Other factors that underpin the excellent quality of the service are the genuinely caring attitudes, skills and competence of the care (staff) team and the outstanding leadership and management of the service. In addition to frequent staff meetings, staff receive regular individual supervision and review of their performance, including observations of work practice and records. This supports them to consistently achieve high professional standards in their work.

Managers and staff successfully eliminate discrimination through the implementation of their very effective policies and procedures, which make sure that all students have an equal opportunity to enjoy all the experiences on offer. 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 are promoted and celebrated.

The management of record keeping continues to be reviewed and strengthened. A new care plan format has been implemented to better evidence the school's systematic approach to supporting, achieving and monitoring individual student's goals and positive outcomes. All students' records are well maintained and show their personal development and the outstanding progress that they are making.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	122956
Social care unique reference number	SC008761
DfE registration number	891/7022

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.

Type of school	
Number of boarders on roll	12
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to 19
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Child
Date of previous boarding inspection	04/06/2013
Telephone number	01623 795361
Email address	a.child@dawnhouse-ican.notts.sch.uk

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