

Dawn House Residential School

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

Inspection dates

02/02/2016 to 04/02/2016

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding **1**

The quality of care and support

Outstanding 1

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding 1

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding 1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- The residential provision has been judged as outstanding in all areas and there are no failures of national minimum standards or recommendations for improvement.
- Students make excellent progress in all areas of their development because of the residential experience. This is especially strong in the area of social skills and independence, which supports their transition to adulthood.
- Students are fully involved in all aspects of their care and in the running of the school. They hold key positions with associated responsibilities such as student governor and e-safety representative.
- Residential planning is expertly tailored to each individual's needs. A detailed induction into the school ensures students are able to settle quickly. They also move on from the school very effectively. 100% of students successfully gain employment or move into further education. This is sustained year on year.
- Safeguarding is outstanding. Excellent relationships with parents and external safeguarding agencies ensure students are kept safe. Students understand how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Managers, leaders and staff are excellent and constantly strive to improve the way they work, providing exceptional care and opportunities for students.

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

This inspection was announced on the morning of the start of the inspection. The inspectors visited the residential accommodation, spoke to the students and staff, including key staff with responsibility for the residential provision. The inspectors also observed practice in the residential provision and scrutinised school policies and records. The inspectors gathered information from Parent View and were able to speak to parents during the inspection. Day two and three of the inspection were carried out by the lead inspector only.

Inspection team

Judith Longden	Lead social care inspector
Amanda Ellis	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 78 pupils on roll, whose ages range from 5 to 19. All pupils have difficulties with speech, language and communication. Some may have Asperger's Syndrome. 13 students 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 January 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

Students make excellent and sustained progress in all aspects of their lives but especially in education, development of social skills, and in their preparation for independence. The experience of being residential enhances this progress, providing opportunities for students that they might otherwise not have.

Aspirations for students are high and staff work tirelessly to ensure they reach their potential. Education attendance and attainment is excellent. Effective communication between care and school staff enables enhanced student learning through the provision of experiences in the residential provision.

Students are encouraged to undertake further study to improve their employment opportunities. For example, one student who wishes to join the air force is planning to study further so he can join the forces at a higher level as a technician. Work experience opportunities are sought externally and are provided in school. For example, students are involved in the maintenance of the school and grounds and in providing catering services on site. All students leaving this school move on to further education or employment. These opportunities are sustained year on year providing long-term positive outcomes for students.

A real strength of this school is preparing students for independence, ensuring they are fully equipped for when they leave. All residential students participate in a development programme leading to accredited awards. This includes learning practical skills such as laundry, cooking and budgeting. As a result, they develop confidence in their own abilities. One parent said: 'This school is focussed on my son's abilities rather than his disabilities. Here he has grown and flourished.' Parents report that the skills and knowledge gained at this school are transferred into the family home. One said: 'Thank you for taking such wonderful care of my child and teaching them to be so independent.' The accreditation programme used in care is the same as in education and complements students' learning. For example, the work they do on independent travel promotes their ability to access their further education or work experience opportunities. Students are maturing into confident and happy young adults.

Students enjoy a comprehensive range of activities that promote their physical health, build their confidence, develop social skills and prepare them for moving on. These include activities on site and in the local community such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. Students attend a local gym and swimming club. They also train with a local football club. Team games are important, providing students with an understanding of teamwork and improving their listening and communication skills.

Students lead healthy lifestyles. This is because they learn about a range of health matters through school and in the residential provision. They discuss topics such as healthy eating, sexual health, and relationships. This enables them to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. Medication practice is excellent. The process of administering medication is not just a daily routine but also an opportunity for

students to learn about their medication and develop an awareness of their medical condition. This supports them in developing the skills needed to self-medicate in future. It also builds their confidence so they can communicate their own health needs and manage situations such as attending medical appointments.

Staff and leaders have a good understanding of young people's needs. They ensure that all identified needs are met. Relationships between staff and students are excellent. There is a real sense of warmth, nurture and encouragement in the houses. Students appear very happy and relaxed and enjoy simply being able 'to chill out' after the school day. Relationships between the students are also excellent and, where there are any issues, these are dealt with swiftly and effectively. This is because staff understand the varied strategies for managing behaviours. Students are encouraged to manage their own behaviour, helping them to foster even stronger relationships.

In addition to weekly boarders, some students stay over in the residential provision for one or two nights a week, others visit for after school activities. This widens the opportunities for socialising and establishing strong friendships between students. It also enhances social interaction skills, builds confidence, and improves their self-esteem.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

This school fosters a whole team approach that is consistent across all areas of the school and includes parents and partner agencies. Consistency and good multi-agency working ensures a cohesive approach to the care, safety and development of all students.

Students receive highly personalised care from the very beginning of their placement. Transition into the school is excellent and the clear liaison between home and school continues throughout the student's placement. The induction to school and residential life is tailored to the individual, ensuring that any anxieties are effectively managed and they are able to settle into the routines of school. Care planning involves all those who have a role in the student's life, and the students themselves. Care plans are detailed and easy to follow, ensuring students' care needs are met. Each student has identified targets in areas they want to improve. These targets are broken down into smaller steps appropriate to each individual. Excellent evidence files show the progress made in reaching these targets. This helps students to take pride in their achievements. They are enthusiastic about showing visitors the quality of their work.

Students' diversity is celebrated and they are encouraged to understand their own and others identity, building a culture of respect and dignity. This enables them to develop a positive self-view and increase their confidence.

The school works exceptionally well with parents through regular contact, questionnaires and special events. The annual parents' day provides opportunities for parents to attend workshops on subjects such as internet safety and British values. This promotes consistency in the students care between school and home.

The food provided at this school is excellent. The menu is varied and exciting and provides students with nutritious meals whilst encouraging them to try new foods that

they might otherwise not explore. They are fully involved in menu planning and share their views on the quality of the catering facilities as well as the food. The domestic staff do an excellent job. They keep the school looking clean and tidy and help students to take pride in their bedrooms and houses. They understand and respect individual student preferences about how their rooms are organised and maintained.

The residential provision is homely and comfortable. It provides ample space for students to engage in group activities or spend time on their own. One wall is decorated as a 'media wall'. Articles from newspapers and magazines are displayed, providing excellent opportunities for students to explore and discuss the world around them, and helping them identify with the wider community. Extensive plans for refurbishment and redecoration demonstrate a desire and commitment to improve the fabric of the building.

Students share their views in a number of creative ways. These include regular house meetings, student council, questionnaires, and having a student on the board of governors. The involvement of students in key groups within school such as the e-safety group, and having them work alongside school staff such as the maintenance team, means they are fully involved in the day-to-day working of the school and residential provision. It also provides students with a range of useful life and employability skills. The involvement of students in decorating and painting their rooms, and in plans for future refurbishment, gives them further opportunities to develop skills and confidence. This also addresses a shortfall identified at the last inspection.

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

The safety of students is paramount and safeguarding arrangements are extremely robust. An extensive range of policies and procedures are clearly understood and implemented by staff to ensure students are kept safe. The involvement of students in understanding and managing their own safety is exceptional. They learn about safeguarding matters through regular house meetings, 'Lads group', and by being a part of focussed groups such as the e-safety group. One student's involvement in the safe use of computers group not only secures the safety of students but also promotes his confidence in his own abilities. The skills he is learning will be invaluable in the future. Staff are not afraid to discuss serious issues with students such as sexual exploitation and radicalisation. This provides students with a better understanding of how to keep themselves protected, not just in school but also in the wider community. Rigorous monitoring by a range of external and internal professionals identifies that safeguarding practice remains of the highest calibre. Robust, detailed and regularly reviewed risk assessments allow students to take age appropriate risks in a way that promotes their growth and development.

Staff are aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding students and know how to respond to any allegations or concerns. They keep themselves up to date with current practice and take part in a range of training to ensure they are able to take action as required. Staff continue to gain knowledge of safeguarding matters such as female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, and extremism. This knowledge is disseminated

throughout the team, and is shared with parents to help them keep their children safe.

Staff understand the risks of students leaving the site or going missing. They work hard on establishing excellent relationships. Students know that they can talk to staff about their anxieties rather than running away when distressed. Robust policies and procedures identify what to do in the event of any incident. There has only been one incident of a student leaving the site and staff actions ensured a very swift return. Detailed discussion with the student identified the reasons he had left and ensured strategies were in place to prevent a similar incident in the future.

Behaviour is extremely well managed, again through a consistent whole team approach. When appropriate students have a positive intervention plan detailing triggers for their behaviours, and helping staff understand underlying factors that manifest themselves in behaviours. All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention. Qualified staff from within the school setting provide the training. This means it is bespoke, reflecting the needs of the students. Any use of physical intervention is recorded in excellent detail. Students and staff benefit from in-depth debriefs after incidents that identify learning and reduce the need for future physical intervention. A child and adolescent psychotherapist provides additional support, helping staff to understand group dynamics, and complex behaviours.

The use of a 'response' rather than sanction means incidents of negative behaviour are handled in a way that supports students to understand what they have done rather than punishing them for their actions. Incidents of discriminatory behaviour and bullying are effectively challenged and students are helped to understand the impact of their actions and respect for others.

The monitoring of behaviour is exceptional. Anti-bullying, safeguarding and behaviour management are intrinsically linked. Key staff with responsibilities in these areas, meet regularly to share information and analyse incidents. This helps identify trends and patterns so that the most appropriate intervention is implemented.

No new care staff have been appointed since the last inspection. Previously, recruitment procedures have been identified as robust ensuring students are not at risk from inappropriate people working with them. The building is well maintained, safe and secure. Students take part in fire drills ensuring they know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Students are protected from harm and they say they feel safe here. This protection is not just because staff are well trained and the building is safe but because there is a culture of positive relationships and trust, where students feel able to voice their concerns and have a range of people they can talk to. Regular visitors such as governors, and independent visitors ensure students have the opportunity to talk to someone other than care staff if they are worried.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

An exceptional principal and senior management team lead the school. They drive

forward improvement because they are not complacent. They are inspirational and have high aspirations for all students. The senior team are highly skilled and competent and continue to develop their knowledge and expertise. The principal is committed to the development of future leaders of the school. She stated: 'No one person is the keeper of the knowledge, we have to make sure other people have that depth of knowledge.'

The ethos of the school is clearly understood by all and implemented effectively. The staff team is extremely experienced and stable. They maintain their enthusiasm because they continue to develop knowledge and skills through a raft of training and development opportunities. These include specialist areas such as radicalisation, and sexual exploitation. Where courses are delivered externally, the school ensures that trainers understand the specific needs of the group of students. For example, police officers delivering training on radicalisation undertook training in Asperger's Syndrome enabling them to deliver a highly relevant course for staff. Training is reviewed by staff who identify how their learning will be implemented in practice. The skills of individual staff are well utilised. For example, staff with skills in the performing arts and media support students in the production of an annual performance. This is a fully inclusive event involving every student in some way.

Staff development plans are informed by the school improvement plan, residential provision evaluation, and self-evaluation. This means that staff are stretched and motivated to develop their practice. Supervision of staff is robust ensuring they are supported in their work and are able to grow as practitioners. Senior staff such as the principal and head of care are supervised by an external professional. Support is also provided by the independent visitor. This provides a wealth of knowledge and experience.

Internal and external monitoring and scrutiny is excellent. An extensive range of monitoring tools are used to review developments in the service and the progress of students. Internal monitoring provides an in-depth analysis of care quality. Such analysis identifies areas for improvement and development that are then addressed. This ensures that the quality of the provision remains exceptional. The independent visitor, governors and senior personnel from the organisation provide external monitoring. Additional audits are commissioned and carried out by experienced professionals, providing further scrutiny.

Feedback is regularly sought from partner agencies, stakeholders, other professionals, parents and students. Students are consulted on the design and content of surveys as well as completing them. This helps to ensure that the most appropriate questions are asked and the school can develop as a result. Complaints are rare and are handled swiftly and appropriately. Complainants are kept informed throughout the process and the few issues that have been raised have been satisfactorily resolved. Leaders learn from complaints, ensuring practice continues to improve. Files, records and reports are exceptionally well-organised ensuring easy access to all relevant information and appropriate implementation of plans and policies. Well-maintained records clearly identify the outstanding progress students make.

All national minimum standards are met and there are no recommendations for improvement identified as a result of this inspection.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

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	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	13
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	5 to19
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Child
Date of previous boarding inspection	12/01/2015
Telephone number	01623 795361
Email address	a.child@dawnhouse-ican.notts.sch.uk

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