

Hunters Hill (Residential) School

Hunters Hill School, Spirehouse Lane, Blackwell, BROMSGROVE, Worcestershire, B60 1QD

Inspection dates	01/02/2016 to 03/02/2016	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Good	2
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Young people enjoy living in the residential provision. They are safe and feel safe. They enjoy positive relationships with residential care staff.
- Residential care staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of young people's individual needs and vulnerabilities.
- Young people make notable and sustainable progress from their starting point. The quality of care provided is good. Young people benefit emotionally, socially and educationally from their residential experiences.
- The residential provision is an inclusive environment. Young people are fully involved in daily routines irrespective of their emotional, behavioural or social difficulties.
- Young people participate in a varied and motivational range of educational and social activities when in residency.
- Partnership working between residential care staff and school staff ensures that young people benefit from integrated and comprehensive programmes of care and support.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that young people's feedback, views and opinions relating to the residential provision and their day-to-day care is consistently recorded.
- Ensure that risk assessment documents and risk management strategies include sufficiently detail.
- Ensure that management monitoring systems highlight areas for further development and continuous improvement.

Information about this inspection

The inspection of residential and welfare arrangements took place following the appropriate notice period for this type of visit. One inspector carried out the visit and reviewed the policies, documentation, residential provision and organisation over a period of three days. The inspector spoke to senior leaders, managers, key support staff, care staff and young people. Two evenings were spent in the residential accommodation observing staff and young people's interactions and activities. The inspector also joined young people for breakfasts and evening meals. In addition, the inspector sought feedback from parents and allocated professionals.

Inspection team

Jo Stephenson

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Hunters Hill Technology College is a residential special school providing residential boarding for up to four nights a week Monday to Thursday. The school is maintained by Birmingham Local 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 120 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. The residential provision was last inspected in February 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Young people's personal development is embedded in the ethos of the residential provision. They make good social and emotional progress that supports their continual learning and educational achievements. Progress is monitored through the regular evaluation of individual targets linked to all aspects of young people's development. Young people are proud of their achievements and relate this to their time spent in residency. One young person said, 'If I didn't stay over I don't think I'd enjoy school as much as I do. It really helps me.'

Young people participate in a varied range of activities that reflect their abilities and interests; and provide opportunities to learn new skills. This helps them to recognise their capabilities and promotes their self-esteem and confidence. Relationships between young people and residential staff are extremely positive. These are based on mutual respect and trust. Young people say they feel valued and appreciated and this promotes their safety. Safeguarding arrangements protect young people from harm and supports the development of their self-management skills. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. They highlight young peoples' growing sense of maturity and responsibility. Increased detail relating to risk management strategies would further improve these documents.

Residential staff, teaching staff, other professionals and families work together in partnership. This ensures young people experience a smooth transition into residency and are fully prepared to leave the service when appropriate. These arrangements mean that residential staff are equipped with a comprehensive understanding of young people's needs. This enables them to deliver personalised care and support programmes. Parents and carer are positive about young people's experience of residency. One parent said, 'It really does make a difference to how he views school and I'm sure he's doing better because of it.'

Health care arrangements effectively promote young people's physical and psychological health. School nurse services work with residential care staff to ensure that medication administration systems are safe and appropriately monitored. Young people benefit from easy access to the appointed counselling psychologist. Referrals to this service are flexible and this means young people do not experience any delays. Furthermore, partnership working between these specialist health services and residential care staff means that young people receive consistent care across the whole school environment.

Consultation with young people is embedded in the daily practice and routines in residency. Their views are central to the arrangement of activities, and the continual review and evaluation of the impact of residency on their progress. Young people say they are involved and included in regular discussions relating to the aims and objectives of residency. They are confident that any concerns or issues they raise will be immediately addressed. This supports their feelings of inclusion and promotes their safety. One young person said, 'It feels like we're family so I like staying here.' Further improvements can be made to formal consultation systems by ensuring that feedback is sufficiently recorded in internal monitoring reports.

Leadership and management arrangements are robust and residential services are appropriately monitored. Further improvements can be made to monitoring reports by ensuring that developmental actions are specific and time-scaled. A newly appointed head of care ensures that experienced, skilled and qualified staff are available to support young people. There are sufficient numbers of staff to meet their needs and staff are well supported and supervised in their roles.

The quality of care and support

Good

Young people thrive in the residential provision because partnership working between care staff, teaching staff and other agencies is effective. This collaborative approach to assessing young people's needs and accessing all necessary information means that their care is well planned.

Tailored residency packages ensure that young people's social and emotional needs are considered in line with their educational progress and personal circumstances. Internal support plans are up to date. Young people are well matched in residency across a four-night period. Their transition into residency commences before they start the school. Residential managers work with families and other agencies to ensure that care plans are personalised. When young people are preparing to leave the school, their nights in residency gradually reduce to promote their independence and self-help skills.

Relationships young people have with each other and with residential care staff are immensely positive. These focus on promoting dignity and respect. Young people's views, wishes and opinions are central to daily routines. This means that young people engage well in residency. They develop social and emotional skills that enhance their feeling of confidence and self-esteem.

Residential staff recognise that for some young people, being away from their families can result in increased anxiety. Young people are able to contact their families and are encouraged to do so. They say this makes them feel 'comfortable' about being away from home.

Young people participate in a wide and varied range of stimulating activities. They embrace these opportunities and complement their educational curriculum by learning new practical and academic skills. Activities are age appropriate and inclusive; all young people, regardless of their skills and abilities are encouraged to take part. In addition, the group nature of activities means that young people are able to develop their social interaction skills. They form appropriate emotional connections to others. This supports their personal growth and development.

Young people are supported to pursue a healthy lifestyle when in residency. Physical and sporting activities are available every day, and a popular choice amongst the young people. The nursing service helps to ensure that medication administration systems are safe and effective. Young people's emotional health and well-being is enhanced because when appropriate, they participate in sessions with the consulting counselling psychologist. These sessions address anxiety and anger management, and support young people's development.

Mealtimes are very relaxed and sociable occasions. Residential care staff and additional support staff act as good role models. They encourage young people to display socially acceptable behaviours and help them with practical mealtime skills and tasks. Young people are involved in menu planning and say they 'really love the food'. Appropriate consideration is given to the nutritional value of meals along with individual dietary needs.

Residential accommodation is suitable. It is clean and tidy and maintained to an acceptable standard. Young people are encouraged to personalise living and sleeping areas. This helps to create a 'family atmosphere' in each individual home. Some parts of the accommodation have recently been upgraded to improve the heating systems. The accommodation is managed and maintained well despite the age and design of the buildings.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Young people are safe and feel safe in residency. One young person said, 'I feel as safe here as I do at home. There's no difference.' Young people confirm that they understand how to make a complaint. Although there have been very few since the last inspection, records demonstrate that these were quickly and acceptably resolved.

Residential care staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of young people's unique vulnerabilities and the impact these have on their behaviours. Risk assessments are fluid and demonstrate young people's progress and development, although these would benefit from greater detail for some young people.

Safeguarding training is regularly refreshed. Safe residential practice is supported by detailed and effective policies and procedures. Any concerns about young people's welfare or safety are reported to external agencies as required. There has been very few referrals since the last inspection and these are been appropriately recorded, managed and addressed. This is done in partnership with other specialist agencies and this integrated practice promoted young people's safety and security.

Young people do not go missing from the residential provision because they choose to be in residency and enjoy this experience. Procedures are in place should an event occur and staff understand what to do in these circumstances. Leaders and managers continually review and monitor behaviour in the residential provision, and are mindful of any emerging patterns or trends. This ensures that young people are effectively supported. The use of physical restraint is rare, although staff continue to receive regular physical restraint training. Staff use verbal de-escalation techniques to encourage young people to manage their own behaviours and take responsibility for their actions.

Positive relationships between young people and their peers mean that incidents of bullying are infrequent. Young people say they 'don't believe' that bullying occurs in residency. One young person said, 'Bullying just wouldn't really happen because the staff wouldn't let it.' Young people understand the behaviour that are expected of them, and recognise how socially acceptable behaviours enhances their experience of residency.

Young people's health and safety is promoted. A range of risk assessments are in place relating to school buildings, residential accommodation across two sites and extensive

grounds. These include a risk assessment for the public footpath that passes through the school grounds. Activity specific risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. These reflect young people's needs and promote their safety. The environment is suitable maintained. Fire safety standards and other health and safety requirements are effectively monitored to ensure compliance. This further promotes young people's safety.

Recruitment procedures are robust and include a range of pre-employment checks. Employment references are obtained and verified prior to staff commencing employment. All staff are subject to disclosure and barring service checks, qualification checks and right to work checks where relevant. Where non-employees of the school reside in the grounds with employees, these individuals are appropriately vetted to protect young people.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

A highly competent and efficient head of care manages the residential provision. Although she is new in post, she has many years' experience in this setting and is suitably qualified. She is supported by a knowledgeable and skilled deputy head of care; and leads a diverse and long standing staff team. This stability enhances young people's experience in residency and promotes the 'family' atmosphere within the setting.

The statement of purpose for the residential provision clearly defines the aims and objectives of residency. These are linked to young people's educational, emotional and social targets. Parents, external professionals and young people understand the scope and remit of the residential provision. Residential care staff work effectively as a team and in partnership with others, including education staff and health professionals. This ensures that young people receive well planned and comprehensive care when accessing the residential provision. This supports their continual progress.

Residency has a positive impact on young people's development and is regularly monitored and reviewed by the head of care and governing body. This ensures that the service continues meet their needs. Managers, including team leaders continue to improve and develop the service in line with the wider school development plan. Detailed recordings of actions to be taken to drive forward improvements would further enhance the systems in place.

The head of care is part of the school's senior leadership team and is supervised and supported by the head of school. Managers and residential staff at all levels have high aspirations for young people. They receive regular and reflective supervision and say they feel able to approach managers with any concerns or issues they have. Regular team meetings and daily staff briefings means that communication is fluid and effective. This ensures that staff practice remains consistent. Residential staff access a varied range of training and development opportunities that are also linked to the school's overall development and improvement agenda. Training and development needs are identified through an agreed programme of continuous professional development.

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	103609
Social care unique reference number	SC043050
DfE registration number	330/2076

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	75
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 16
Headteacher	Andrew Dawson
Date of previous boarding inspection	02/02/2015
Telephone number	0121 445 1320
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