

Marland School

Devon County Council, Peters Marland, Torrington, Devon EX38 8QQ

Inspection dates

22 to 24 March 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

- Students and staff have very positive relationships based on mutual respect and trust.
- Students are provided with a wide range of leisure and social activities that they thoroughly enjoy.
- Positive behaviour is promoted and generally students behave well. Restraint is used as a last resort. Leaders and managers closely scrutinise all incidents when restraint has been used to ensure that it is used appropriately.
- The residential provision is an important aspect of the school. There is robust internal and external monitoring of the residential provision, and leaders and managers are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Students achieve well in their education, and the school has developed new systems to identify their aspirations and support them well to meet their goals.
- To improve the school further recommendations include reviewing the school's 'missing' protocol, better management of medicines coming into the school from parents, and staff training and clear audit trails in respect of the maintenance of the fire safety system.

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 there is a clear audit trail of all maintenance issues in respect of fire safety, in particular, maintenance of the fire safety systems.
- Review the 'missing from school' protocol to ensure that it provides staff with clear guidance of the action to take if students are absent or missing. In addition, clearly evidence that students receive 'return home' interviews by staff and an independent person, and that staff record clearly the action that they take when students are absent or go missing.
- Ensure that all staff supervision records are detailed, to evidence reflective practice and expectations of their performance.
- Ensure that staff who have supervisory responsibilities undertake training to support this role.
- Ensure that there is a robust audit trail of all medicines that are brought into the school by parents, and that these medicines arrive at the school in their original packaging. In addition, implement risk assessments for those students who are deemed competent to administer their own medicines.

Information about this inspection

The school was contacted on the morning of the inspection, and the inspectors arrived at 11:45a.m. The inspectors visited the residential provision, observed staff interaction, and arranged group meetings with students and with the residential staff. In addition, the inspectors scrutinised a variety of records, documents, and policies and procedures.

Inspection team

David Kidner	lead social care inspector
Michelle Oxley	regulation inspection manager

Full report

Information about this school

Marland School is a local authority maintained residential special school. It provides care and education during term time for up to 40 boys aged 10 to 16 years. The residential accommodation is provided in the main school building. The school is situated in a rural location six miles from the nearest town. It caters for boys aged 10-16 with social, emotional and mental health needs. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2015.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

There are good relationships between residential students. They show concern and consideration for one another. They develop good friendships, and encourage each other to participate in social and leisure opportunities.

Students learn to adapt their behaviour, and work towards achieving rewards for their good behaviour. One student said, 'I have learnt to manage my behaviour, I am not so angry now.' Students enjoy staying at the school and they speak well of their personal achievements. One student said, 'I have done so much better in school than I thought I would do.'

Students make good academic progress and learn new life skills. They are well prepared for adult life. One student said, 'I am learning how to write a CV and learn interview skills.'

Students' views and opinions are sought, they feel supported and listened to by staff, and are confident that their complaints are taken seriously.

Leaders and managers take robust action to investigate allegations or suspicions of harm, and ensure that it is handled fairly and quickly.

There is effective leadership and management of the school. Leaders and managers are visible in the residential provision, and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses.

The quality of care and support

Good

Students receive good pastoral care and individualised support. They are very well supported by a highly committed team of staff.

Since the previous inspection, the format in which placement plans are presented has been reviewed. As a result, the plans now provide staff with clear guidance on how to meet students' individual targets and how their achievements are measured. The placement plans are supported by good quality risk assessments that identify the known risk and are regularly reviewed to reflect the students' current needs. Their personal files contain the required information, and there is good evidence of productive key-working sessions to help students' development.

The school provides a personalised curriculum for each student. A new system has been developed this academic year which makes a clear link between aspiration and

educational attainment. Residential staff work well with young people to establish their future career goals. These goals are set out against the required qualifications and those already achieved. While the system is still being embedded, it serves to join up the approaches further between education and care, linking them with purpose to the individual outcomes for each student.

Students receive an excellent choice of social and leisure opportunities. They choose from a wide range of activities that are on offer every evening and at weekends. Activities that students enjoy include cycling, swimming, football, games of pool, and trips to the coast, skateboarding, ice-skating and using computers. They speak highly of the choices that are on offer to them and are enthusiastic about experiencing new activities. This area is a strength of the school.

There are very positive and nurturing relationships between staff and students. Interactions are caring and supportive, and staff treat students with respect. One student said, 'You know that staff care about us and don't see this just as a job.'

Students' independence is promoted well. The residential accommodation has an independence flat that is used to enable older students to prepare breakfast and evening meals.

Students benefit from good healthcare support. They are well looked after if they are poorly. They know how to contact the waking night staff and the sleeping-in staff during the night if they need to.

Staff do not ensure that there is a robust audit trail of medicines that are brought into the residential accommodation by parents. In addition, these medicines do not always arrive at school in their original packaging. One student administers their own prescribed ointment, but a self-administration risk assessment has not been conducted in respect of this. These weaknesses have the potential to place students at risk of harm.

Students continue to have mixed views about the quality of meals. Some students consider that meals are good and that there is plenty of choice, while other students consider that there could be further improvement. Students confirmed that matters relating to meals are raised at the school council, and that their views and opinions are sought and acted upon. In discussion, staff consider that the meals have improved since the previous inspection. During the most recent visit by the independent visitor, she sat with students at teatime and noted that students did not grumble about the food.

Leaders and managers advise that, since the previous inspection, the school has received extremely positive news in respect of its residential provision. There is to be a phased approach to provide a new purpose-built residential accommodation and full refurbishment of the current accommodation. Students and staff are enthusiastic about

these plans. One student said, 'we will have our own bedroom and bathroom.' Another said, 'we will have better privacy' and yet another said, 'I can't wait, it's going to be pretty cool.' Students and staff confirm that they have been involved in the preliminary discussions on the proposed new provision.

The principal said that it is hoped that building works will commence in summer 2016. The current accommodation does not provide students with a homely environment. The fabric and layout of the current building are dated and have an institutional feel. However, leaders and managers ensure that the accommodation is maintained and presented in a satisfactory manner.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

When concerns about students' welfare occur, the staff responsible for safeguarding matters provides detailed information to external safeguarding agencies. Leaders and managers work in partnership with the local area designated officer and the multi-agency safeguarding hub to ensure that young people are protected. All residential staff receive safeguarding training, and as a result, demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding procedures and protocols.

Students say that they feel safe and are very clear on whom to speak to if they have any worries or concerns. They are provided with good access to telephone numbers for ChildLine and other external agencies, including contact details to a support service if they feel that are being exposed to child sexual exploitation.

Positive behaviour is promoted, and generally students behave well. Students understand the school's rewards system and work hard towards gaining rewards.

The monitoring of restraint is robust. Leaders and managers critically analyse all incidents of restraint and countersign all records pertaining to them. They have developed comprehensive monitoring systems of restraint across the whole of the school. Records demonstrate that there has been a decrease in both the use of restraint and the duration of its use since the previous inspection. One staff member said, 'the whole ethos has been a massive and welcome change, we base everything on relationships now.' All residential staff receive effective training in the school's preferred method of de-escalation and restraint.

Sanctions are not excessive. Staff use a small range of strategies to help students to develop positive behaviour and to learn from their actions. All recorded strategies are low level and effective.

Bullying is taken seriously, and if it occurs is immediately dealt with by leaders and managers. Students do not report that bullying is a concern in the school.

There has been an increase students going missing since the previous inspection. Predominantly this increase related to one student who is no longer at the school. The incidents of 'students missing' were significantly reduced when he left. The 'missing' protocol does not give staff clear guidance on the action for staff to take if a young person goes absent or is missing. In addition, students do not always receive a 'return home' interview by staff or an independent person. The records of when students go missing do not always include a comprehensive description of the action staff take to find them.

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have reviewed staff recruitment. As a result, these files are now maintained in a more accessible and well-structured way. Currently new staff do not have to provide leaders and managers with the dates when they were in full time education. As a result, leaders and managers complete additional work to establish new staffs' full employment history. However, full recruitment and vetting checks are in place.

Leaders and managers ensure that regular checks are undertaken of the school's gas and electrical services. Detailed environmental risk assessments are conducted and regularly reviewed. An improvement since the previous inspection is that leaders and managers now include the residential accommodation in the school's environmental risk assessments.

Regular checks are undertaken on the school's fire systems. This includes the annual service of the fire system and firefighting equipment. However, there is no clear audit trail to demonstrate that the work that has been completed on the school's fire system if faults are identified. Leaders and managers will confirm the action that has been taken following this inspection.

Students are knowledgeable about what to do in the event of a fire. They are able to explain and demonstrate the action that they would take. All staff have received fire safety training. This was a recommendation at the previous inspection.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The residential provision is an extremely important part of the school, and there is strong leadership and management of this provision. It is effectively and well managed. Leaders and managers have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work collaboratively to drive improvement and ensure that students have a positive experience. Leaders and managers have met the four recommendations that were made at the previous inspection.

There is good external monitoring of the residential provision. The independent monitoring visitor reports on the outcomes for students and gives clear recommendations on how to

further improve the provision. Following the most recent visit in March 2016, the independent visitor's recommendations included the following: develop data collection for accidents and incidents; make progress with the Year 11 independence programme; and implement students' suggestions. Leaders and managers are taking action to deal with these recommendations.

Complaints are taken seriously by leaders and managers, and there are clear audit trails to demonstrate how students' complaints are responded to. Students sign their satisfaction with the outcome of their complaint.

There are adequate numbers of staff on duty to meet the individual and collective needs of the students. Residential staff speak highly of the support that they receive from leaders and managers. In particular, they are positive about the head of care. One member of staff said, 'since he's been in charge our standards of care have improved, he pushes us to improve.' Another member of staff said, 'he's an excellent leader, he is supportive and organised and he will identify how we can improve our practice.'

Staff receive formal supervision regularly. However, records of these meetings do not demonstrate that supervision meetings are purposeful or focus on their performance, and they lack detail and direction. Annual appraisals are conducted for each member of care staff. These records demonstrate that the appraisal process gives due consideration to the contribution that each staff member makes to the service.

Staff receive good training opportunities, which equips them well for their role. Recent training includes that on child sexual exploitation, 'Prevent' awareness and medicines. However, it is noted that staff who have supervisory responsibilities have not recently received supervision training. The vast majority of staff are trained to the required level 3 qualification. Three staff are enrolled to undertake this training and three staff are undertaking a level 5 qualification.

A very small number of Parent View questionnaires were completed. Those who responded did not raise any concerns about the school.

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	131552
Social care unique reference number	SC022231
DfE registration number	

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	39
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	10 to 16
Headteacher	Mr Keith Bennett
Date of previous boarding inspection	03 March 2015
Telephone number	01805 601 324
Email address	k.bennett@marland.devon.sch.uk

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