

Hunters Hill (Residential) School

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

Inspection dates	05/12/2016 to 07/12/2016	
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	Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- This is a good service that consistently identifies and meets the individual needs of students and supports them to make good personal progress.
- At the last Ofsted inspection, the service was judged to be good overall. At this inspection, it continues to be judged as good overall with good judgements in overall progress and experiences of young people, quality of care and support and how well young people are protected. It has been judged as requires improvement in the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers.
- Residential students thoroughly enjoy their stays at the residential provision.
- Outcomes for students are good. They have an individualised residential experience that enables them to make positive progress in their educational, personal and social development.
- Students learn in an environment where the individual is valued, their needs are promoted and their achievements are celebrated.
- Students receive sensitive, insightful care from a professional team of dedicated staff.

- Staff work collaboratively with other professionals and families for the benefit of the students.
- Student safety is promoted at all times. Staff proactively work in partnership to support students to manage their emotions and learn new coping strategies. As a result, serious incidents are very low.
- Not all national minimum standards have been met. Records of physical interventions and complaint investigations are not robust. Governors and the senior leadership team do not have effective quality assurance systems in place to identify and address practice shortfalls and inform future development plans.
- There are some areas for improvement. The statement of principles is not up to date. Records of significant events are not detailed. The senior leadership team has not communicated effectively with the human resources team. Staffing of the residential service needs to ensure appropriate levels to cover staff sickness and managerial tasks.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:

- All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) within 24 hours of incidents of restraint, including reasonable force, they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by (national minimum standard 12.5).
- The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory requirements (national minimum standard 18.1).
- The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary (national minimum standard 13.1).
- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met (national minimum standard 13.4).
- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate (national minimum standard 13.9).
- The headteacher (or school equivalent), governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school carries out, and records in writing, once each year: a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for boarding pupils, in relation to: its statement of purpose; its staffing

policy; the placement plans for individual children; and an internal assessment of its compliance with these standards. Where appropriate such a report may be incorporated within a review of the whole school (national minimum standard 20.4).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review safeguarding case studies and live school cases to look at the quality of practice, recording and outcomes for students, and to take action on any lessons learned.
- Ensure that the statement of principles is up to date and reflects the school's new initiatives, such as the code of conduct, restorative practice, the counselling psychologist role, therapeutic techniques and the new farm.
- Ensure that all records of significant events including safeguarding, complaints, incidents, physical interventions and children missing are detailed, accessible and accurately reflect actions of staff and managers and outcomes for students.
- Ensure that the senior leadership team communicates effectively with human resources when a member of staff or volunteer starts in post, to ensure staff vetting procedures are in place.
- The senior leadership team and governors should undertake a review of staff levels to ensure that residential managers have a management overview of the quality of the service and outcomes for students, in line with national minimum standards and Ofsted's outcome judgements.
- Ensure that there is adequate cover when there are residential staff sickness or vacancies to maintain normal routines for students.
- Monitoring reports undertaken by the independent visitor need to give more focus to the quality of practice and records.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspection team

Dawn Bennett	Lead social care inspector
Louise Battersby	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 Friday. The school is maintained by Birmingham City Council 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 2016.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Outcomes for residential students are good. The students increase their social skills, forming positive circles of friends. They develop new, appropriate hobbies and interests. They engage in education, improving attendance and progress. They learn independence skills that enable them to make a successful transition into further education. Students' routines and emotional well-being are enhanced as a result of staying at this residential provision. A parent stated: 'I can see the difference at home. They've helped to establish a great bedtime routine. Night-times are now not a problem. He goes to bed without any complaint.'

Students who have historically experienced difficulties in mainstream day schools now attend school on a regular basis and successfully achieve personal education targets. The school's management team operates a wide range of strategies which include the active involvement of parents and students in increasing attendance, meeting targets and improving learning outcomes.

Students enjoy and are positive about their residential experience. Parents are similarly enthusiastic about the care their children receive. Students know that they are making good progress because they are involved in setting individual specific targets in their residential home and classroom. The progress made in meeting these targets is monitored and achievements constantly celebrated and rewarded. For example, a points system is linked to educational and residential targets. There are also points for good work and for students being respectful towards others. Gold standards are rewarded to students for challenge, engagement and progress, and there are weekly 'celebration of achievements' assemblies. Students value these systems and are proud of their achievements and the progress that they have made. They also recognise and praise others' aspirations and achievements.

Students' views are sought regarding their care, through house meetings and the school's council. Students feel involved in school life and in their planning and target setting. They are able to reflect on their development since staying residentially at the school. They develop good self-knowledge and self-confidence.

Students take part in a variety of different on-site activities at lunchtimes and in the evenings. They also participate in clubs and activities off-site. They are then encouraged to continue these activities, hobbies and interests in their own community from their home. The whole ethos of the school is to reduce the need for residential stays by equipping students with the skills to sustain education from their own homes.

Students develop the skills that they require to achieve this and to move on into adulthood throughout their schooling and residential experience. All residential students move into a new residential house when they reach their final two school years. This move allows them to experience a planned transition within the safety of the school. The staff operating the house work alongside education staff and the school's transition team. They provide a wide range of activities that promote independence, including work experience, college placements, independent travel to and from home, project

work and practical skills sessions. At the same time, the number of residential nights that a student receives reduces, ready for when they leave the school.

The quality of care and support

Good

Students experience a high standard of care which meets their needs and individual circumstances. Staff are committed and motivated. They embrace diversity and difference. Students receive a service which is tailored to meet their personal needs. For example, the number of overnight stays each week varies from student to student. Personalised and updated care plans ensure that students' social and emotional needs are considered in line with their educational aims and objectives.

The admission of new residential students is well planned. Staff work very effectively with students, families, health and other professionals prior to students joining the school. Once a student starts at school, an induction process, an initial assessment in the first half-term, home visits and regular meetings and contact ensure that information on each student is kept up to date and staff have all the information they need to continue to meet individuals' needs.

Students are cared for by staff who treat them with care and respect. Arrangements are in place to support students should they wish to talk to an adult. All students identify key personnel that they have confidence in turning to if they are worried about aspects of their lives at the school.

Staff work effectively with a wide range of internal and external organisations and professionals to ensure that the specialist needs of students are met. This includes social workers and health professionals. The school also employs a counselling psychologist. He sees students and parents on a one-to-one basis, supports and trains staff and can diagnose autistic spectrum disorder. He has recently trained staff in anger management so that they can run sessions with students. He continues to supervise them in this role.

Staff have excellent relationships with parents and carers. They establish regular contact and dialogue. Some students' targets support focus on better outcomes at home as well as at school. A family member stated:

The relationships we have all formed with the staff team are really important. We trust and respect the staff and they respect us. When there are problems we all talk openly with each other. They come to our house or we go to the school. It is like a big family.

Staff inspire and are positive influences on students. They introduce them to activities and teach them skills that students enjoy and that are valuable as they move on into adulthood. For example, a young person was helped to learn to ride a bike and complete Bikeability. He went on to fundraise successfully for charity by completing a cycling challenge. He now uses his bike to cycle to college.

A new behaviour management system has been developed and links directly to the educational aspect of the students' days. Students buy into this new system and try their hardest to earn the rewards and recognition they deserve. Students respect their peers

and enjoy spending time together. One young person described how the other children are 'like brothers to him'.

Residential accommodation is of a good standard across the school campus. All residential areas are cared for equally by the staff team and students. Accommodation is comfortable and homely, with improvements planned on a rolling programme that ensures that standards continue to be raised.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Residential student safety is promoted at all times. The number of serious incidents during residential time is very low. The leadership and staff team promote the importance of a safe, cohesive community. The residential service plays a pivotal part in creating this. All students, whether day or residential, are attached to a residential home and class group. They all start and finish their day in their residential home. This gives staff attached to each home the opportunity to ascertain if any student needs additional help or support. This might be a hot breakfast or a conversation about what has happened at home the previous evening.

Partnership work with families and other professionals is seen as vital by staff. A student or a family member can talk to staff about issues or concerns at any time. When appropriate, staff facilitate 'restorative breakfasts' where both parties can meet to resolve issues and put in place strategies to prevent difficulties in the future.

Staff have established links with the local police. Their link officer stated:

It is a very unique school. Pupils are either very vulnerable or very streetwise. It is a difficult combination but the staff manage situations very effectively. Staff know me and I know the staff. It is a very static team with lots of experience. They involve me but 'not just at the drop of a hat'. Some of the challenges they face I would find daunting as a police officer to have to manage and they manage them well.

The leadership team and staff promote the safety of all students and challenge the actions of other agencies to fulfil their statutory duties where necessary. Rare safeguarding concerns are responded to appropriately. Good arrangements are also in place to respond to students who go missing. The lead designated person and his trained team follow up all concerns. Clear lines of responsibility are in place, which include appropriate involvement from governors. Staff are trained to recognise concerns. Effective working with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the police ensures that matters are addressed in line with agreed local and national protocols.

The senior leadership team, designated persons and governors do not use internal or external case studies to quality assure safeguarding. As a result, leaders are not rigorously challenging current practice or continually improving and developing future practice.

Discriminatory practices are constructively challenged. When incidents occur, the school's senior leadership team is proactive in looking at lessons that can be learned.

Work has recently been undertaken to respond proactively to concerns raised on bullying through parent and student questionnaires. Work has been undertaken with external agencies and professionals to develop the knowledge of staff, parents and students. Training has been run for staff and workshops for students. Decreasing risks relating to bullying and homophobic behaviour forms part of the whole school curriculum. Staff are diligent in maintaining awareness of concerning behaviours in this area.

The behaviour of students is continuously monitored. The whole school, including residential students, has recently reviewed and revised the school's code of conduct. Students understand it and benefit from living in an environment where standards of behaviour are promoted at all times. The strength of relationships between staff and students enables feelings, attitudes and behaviours to be explored safely. This results in significant improvements in students' coping mechanisms.

The use of physical intervention is extremely rare. There has been only one incident during residential time since the last Ofsted inspection. The record of this incident is not robust and does not reflect the good practice described by staff and students. It does not record conversations with the young person or the staff involved to ensure that the record accurately reflects what was described as having happened. It also does not record how managers supported the young person and staff to reflect on the incident and incidents might be prevented from happening in the future.

Restorative justice is used effectively as a positive response to challenging behaviours. Behaviour seen during the inspection was excellent. Incidents that do occur are managed in a way that allows students to consider the effect that they are having on others and to address their mistakes. There are effective systems in place that monitor triggers and behaviours. Staff are quick to identify and address concerns. For example, when there have been a series of incidents, staff can refer a student for group relaxation and anger management sessions.

Staff have good knowledge of the school's policies and procedures. They attend regular training which covers a wide range of safeguarding subjects including radicalisation and identifying child sexual exploitation. They also attend additional training which ensures that their practice remains current and can meet the changing needs of students. For example, they have recently attended courses on domestic violence, honour-based killing and female genital mutilation.

There are effective health and safety procedures in place that also promote staff and student safety. These include a robust staff recruitment procedure.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement

Leadership and management require improvement. The senior leadership team has a good awareness of the progress each residential student is making. Recent initiatives and developments have been embraced by students and staff. The residential aspect of the service is effective and highly thought of by governors, manager, staff, students, parents and external professionals.

However, governors and the senior leadership team do not have effective quality assurance systems in place to ensure the quality of the residential aspect of the service. Current systems do not quickly identify or address shortfalls. They do not use markers, comparisons and indicators of good and outstanding practice to measure the service and outcomes for residential students compared to day students. Lack of managerial oversight and monitoring of the residential service does not support a consistent standard of practice or continuous improvement to the quality of care to residential students. The school's development plan does not include the development of residential services.

Significant incidents, complaints, safeguarding and use of physical restraints relating to residential services are low. However, the quality of records relating to these events is inconsistent and in some cases the records lack detail. These shortfalls have not been identified or addressed by the senior leadership team because there are no quality assurance processes in place to identify them. Records do not clearly evidence the practice of staff or the impact their actions have on young people. They do not record day-to-day manager oversight or scrutiny.

There is a statement of principles in place. However, it does not describe initiatives recently introduced into the school and residential services. It therefore does not clearly inform the reader of the capacity and purpose of the service.

Although there are strong staff vetting procedures in place, a lack of communication from the senior leadership team led to a volunteer starting without the knowledge of human resources when vetting checks had not been completed. As soon as this was identified during the inspection, the senior leadership team and human resources team investigated and addressed shortfalls. The volunteer had only visited on two occasions and had been supervised by staff at all times, therefore the risk to students was minimised.

The senior leadership team and staff are highly committed and motivated. They are experienced and well qualified. Only one residential staff member does not hold a level 3 qualification. He was enrolled within timescale and has started the appropriate course. All members of staff have their performance appraised and receive regular supervision. This process is supported by regular and varied training, which enables staff to develop skills which benefit all students. Some staff also have lead roles within the school, such as lead practitioner for autistic spectrum disorder.

There are currently some vacancies in the residential staff and management team. These have not resulted in a reduction in staffing ratios for residential students. However, it has on a small number of occasions affected students' normal evening routines, which some students have found disruptive and difficult to manage. The senior leadership team is still developing and is not yet fully recruited. The vacancy in the residential leadership team does not support management oversight of this service.

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 exceed the standard of good and result 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 that children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or that their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number SC043050

Social care unique reference number SC043050

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 117

Gender of boarders Mixed

Age range of boarders 11 to 16

Headteacher

Date of previous boarding inspection 01/02/2016

Telephone number 0121 445 1320

Email address head@hunthill.bham.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

if you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to Subscribe.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.co.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017

