

Hunters Hill (Residential) School

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

Inspection dates	02/02/2015 to 04/02/2015	
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 pupils make outstanding progress in all aspects of their lives. They enjoy exceptionally positive relationships with staff and this supports the development of their emotional and social skills. Residential pupils grow in confidence, self-esteem, and independence. The residential provision provides a nurturing and homely environment.
- Residential pupils are safe and feel safe. The staff team have an excellent knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues. This is underpinned by proactive multi-agency working to identify and address potential issues at an early stage. Health and safety and fire safety audits are regularly completed to ensure the continued safety of residential pupils.
- The management arrangements for the residential provision are exceptional. Regular monitoring audits ensure that the service continues to evolve. The head of care is highly successful at managing a service that meets the residential pupils' varied and complex needs. Excellent links between the school and the residential provision ensures that residential pupils receive integrated, consistent and comprehensive care.
- Parents, carers, social workers and residential pupils all hold the school in extremely high regard. They say the value and positive impact of the boarding experience on residential pupils is excellent.

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

The inspection of the residential provision located across two sites took place following a notice period of three hours. The inspection activities included; observation of practice, discussion with pupils in the residential accommodation and meetings with residential staff, senior managers, the business manager, transition team, nurse, safeguarding officers and site managers. A range of records were examined relating to the care provided and a breakfast, lunch and evening meal were observed. Time was spent within four of the five residential houses over a three day period. Feedback gathered from parents and social workers also informed the inspection judgements.

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 Friday. 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 July 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the school's website is updated and includes up to date policies and procedures
- Ensure that individual risk assessments are regularly reviewed to reflect any changes to pupils circumstances

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. They make exceptional progress in developing their social skills. Residential pupils learn to develop suitable and sustainable relationships with their peers and staff based on mutual respect, tolerance and trust. Staff provide residential pupils with the nurture and care they need to grow in self-esteem and confidence. This supports them to move towards independence. Comments from parents include, 'My child has gained so much from being here; the transformation is amazing.'

Residential pupils are extremely happy. They speak with passion and enthusiasm about the activities they participate in. One pupil said, 'I love the Monday group activity because we all work together to solve a problem and it's really fun.' Residential pupils have the opportunity to experience new leisure activities that are not usually available to them when they are not in residence, such as outdoor sporting activities. This further supports residential pupils to develop their social interactions skills and the emotional resilience they need for a successful transition to adulthood. Parents praise the value the residential experience has for their children. One parent commented, 'He gets the attention and boundaries that he needs and has grown into a lovely young man.'

Residential pupils are fully involved in the day-to day running of the provision and regularly participate in sessions with staff to discuss how residence can be improved. They say they are asked for their views regarding menu and activity choices, decoration in the homes and their individual support needs. Regular school council meetings involving residential pupils ensure that their views, wishes and feelings are explored, recognised and recorded. This creates an environment where all residential pupils say they feel 'listened to and respected'.

Staff ensure that residential pupils access a varied range of health support services tailored to meet their individual needs. A consultant psychiatrist has been appointed to support pupil's emotional and psychological needs. Residential pupils praise the positive impact this service has on their well-being. One pupil said, 'I really like the relaxation sessions because they help me to concentrate on the good things in my life.' Residential pupils benefit from regular and varied physical activities when in residence. This helps them to understand the positive impact maintaining a healthy life-style has on their development.

Residential pupils' wishes and opinions are central to their transition planning. Parents praise the commitment of the dedicated transitions team. One parent said, 'Two years ago he just wouldn't even go to school now he's talking about what college to go to.' Pupils views concur with those of parents. One pupil said, 'I've got a real future, I can't believe I'm going to go to college and get a real job.' Residential pupils are supported to attend college interviews and experience work placements. This allows pupils to make informed choices about their career options before leaving the school.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of care residential pupils receive is outstanding from their introduction to the setting through to their transition to further education and adulthood. The admission of new pupils to the residential homes is exceptionally well managed. Residential pupils and their families are introduced to the provision prior to admission and receive relevant and appropriate information. Pupils experience a smooth introduction to residency and this reduces their feelings of anxiety and apprehension. Excellent links between school and residential staff means that residential pupils experience an integrated approach to meeting all of their needs.

All residential pupils benefit from individual residential care plans that specify their support and welfare needs. When applicable, these reflect the statutory care plans in place for looked after children. The consistent application of clear boundaries for pupils means that they learn to be responsible for their own actions and behaviour. Parents and external agencies are extremely positive about the value of the residential provision. Feedback includes, 'The staff care about the children so much and they get all the support they need' and 'Staff know and understanding the children and they listen to them.'

Residential pupils benefit from excellent in-house and community activities that enhance their social and emotional development. In residence, they are able to spend time with staff and their peers, play computer games, play board games, participate in outdoor activities and access arts and crafts. They enjoy excursions in the local community and develop the positive interaction skills necessary for independence. Residential pupils commend the support they receive for staff. One pupil said, 'Staff help me to deal with things better and I get to do loads of things I don't do at home.'

Staff work in effective partnership with health professionals and specialist health services to promote residential pupils health and well-being. Pupils are able to access 'in-house' counselling services when required and have detailed health plans in place. Staff work with parents and careers to ensure that specialist health appointments are attended when required. Residential pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health needs. This further supports their development and personal growth.

There are five residential homes that provide pupils with the resources and space they need to develop their skills and enjoy a range of purposeful activities. The homes are well decorated and maintained. Residential pupils are encouraged to personalise their own space and make decisions about the fixtures and fittings in communal areas. The grounds are spacious and well-equipped. Pupils say they enjoy spending time outside.

Mealtimes in the residential provision are extremely sociable occasions. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their day and decide on evening activities. Residential pupils enjoy freshly cooked meals based on their preferences and choices. Food provided is varied, nutritious and healthy. Where pupils have specific allergies or food intolerances, appropriate provision is made. One pupil said, 'The food here is great and I really like all the different meals.'

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The safety of residential pupils is outstanding. Safer recruitment procedures in place are extremely robust, effective and ensure that all necessary vetting checks are completed. The head teacher, head of care and key support staff are trained in safer recruitment. Adults who live on site are subject to checks and have agreements in place, setting out the school's expectations of them. All visitors to the school are required to sign in and their identification is checked. These systems continually promote the safety of residential pupils and protect them from harm.

All residential staff are clear in their responsibilities with regard to ensuring that residential pupils are safe. The head of care ensures that safeguarding training is regularly refreshed and staff understanding of this is monitored during formal supervision sessions. The detailed safeguarding policy is embedded into staff practice. Robust recording and reporting systems are in place to manage any child protection concerns. Designated officers make referrals with urgency when they identify concerns. These are regularly followed up to ensure that other agencies respond to these concerns as required. Residential pupils do not identify bullying to be an issue in the provision. One pupil said, 'Bullying never happens in the homes because staff don't let it happen. They are on top of anything like that.' Detailed policies and monitoring systems are in place to address any bullying, should this occur. Staff remain alert to signs of bullying or intimidation.

There have been no incidents of bullying in the residential provision since the last inspection.

Residential pupils have access to an independent visitor should they wish to raise any concerns. They are also encouraged to go to any staff they chose should they wish to make a complaint. There have been no complaints regarding the residential provision since the last inspection. The school's complaints policy is openly promoted in the residential homes. Pupils confirm they understand how to make a complaint. This supports residential pupils feeling of safety and security. Furthermore, parents say they feel that their children are 'safe and protected' when residing in the school.

Staff receive regular training in restraint and de-escalation techniques. There have been very few incidents of physical restraint in the residential provision since the last inspection. When these measures have been necessary to prevent pupils causing harm to themselves or others, these incidents are recorded in detail and monitored by the head of care for effectiveness. All residential pupils have behaviour plans and risk assessments in place that identify their specific vulnerabilities and challenging behaviours. This ensure that staff deliver consistent care and support; setting clear boundaries and expectations. The ethos of the residential provision is that pupils want to stay and this is confirmed by the pupils. One pupil said, 'I love being here. I'd stay all the time if I could.' Furthermore, there have been no incidents of pupils going missing from the residential provision since the last inspection; although there are robust and effective multi-agency procedures in place should this occur.

The residential area is safely maintained and appropriately monitored. A dedicated maintenance team complete regular checks of the environment to ensure that any defects or potential hazards are quickly identified and addressed. The school works in partnership with the fire authority to ensure that fire regulations are adhered to. Regular fire drills and practice evacuations ensure that all residential pupils and staff know how to safely evacuate in the event of fire. This means pupils are protected from the risk of fire.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential provision is outstanding. There are clear aims and objectives for the residential provision. The head teacher states the value of this service is, 'supporting children in all aspects of their lives through a holistic approach to developing their social and emotional skills and academic progress.' This vision is constantly translated into practice throughout the residential provision. A dedicated, enthusiastic and passionate head of care ensures that the residential service provides an excellent resource for pupils and their families. Regular and effective checks are made against the minimum standards for residential special schools. The head of care is able to review where the service meets and exceeds minimum standards. This identifies the strengths of the provision and any areas for development.

A stable, experienced, skilled and committed team of care staff provide residential pupils with consistent and personalised support. Staff receive regular and effective formal supervision and an annual professional performance review. This supports them to work effectually with the residential pupils. Their development is further supported by a detailed training programme which reflects the individual needs of pupils. The staffing numbers are adequate to ensure the needs of the pupils in residence are met. There are clear routines in place and excellent links between the school and residential provision. Staff maintain detailed records relating to the progress residential pupils make and these are shared with parents, carers and teachers. As a result, the progress that pupils make is recognised and celebrated.

The residential provision has a comprehensive range of policies in place that are embedded into practice. The school's website details the aims and objectives of the residential provision. However, parts of this website are not fully updated following the review of internal policies. This

has not impacted on the outcomes for residential pupils.

Communication with parents, the local authority and other external agencies is a key strength of the residential provision. Parents say they receive regular updates on the school and the progress their children make. They continually praise the commitment of staff and the value of the residential provision. One parent said, 'I really don't know where we would be without this place. It hasn't just changed my child's life it's changed all our lives for the better.'

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	103609
Social care unique reference number	SC043050
DfE registration number	330/7026

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	Maintained Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	75
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 16
Headteacher	Mr A Dawson
Date of previous boarding inspection	03/07/2013
Telephone number	0121 445 1320
Email address	head@hunthill.bham.sch.uk

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