

Larwood School

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What we know about ourselves-Residential Provision.

Context:

During 2015-16, we continued to provide up to 12 places for pupils, with access to 24-hour curriculum support from Monday to Friday, during term time only.

Our previous inspection report (Oct 2014-Good in all areas) had highlighted the following areas for development:

- Embed best practice into the staff recruitment process by undertaking telephone verification for all references
- Continue with plans to employ a psychiatric nurse
- Ensure the website is kept up to date with significant changes in the school

During the year 14 different pupils accessed the provision with between 2-4 nights at school.

This was combined with our internal development plan which highlighted the following areas in need of improvement:

1. Working in greater collaboration with parents, particularly in the area of equipping them to provide continuity of care when pupils leave boarding or at weekends
2. Reviewing the activities provided with particular view of getting pupils involved in our local community when possible

How do we review our own progress and standards in residential provision?

We have an established method for this which has developed over a four-year period. This includes the following:

- Extensive use of pupil voice. This is completed using surveys by the Head of Care and (new this year) pupil interview using ipads conducted by the Headteacher



- Parent Voice. Communication between parent's and Care staff is exemplary and includes face to face hand over information, e-mails to communicate how a weekend has gone and telephone calls during the week.
- Headteacher review which includes a full cycle of activities and written/verbal feedback using national standards.
- Internal review conducted by the Head of Care and staff
- Hertfordshire review conducted by our School Improvement Partner
- External review completed by Ofsted on an annual basis.

Overview of standards:

This best summed up by our Inspection report conducted in November 2015. It confirmed our own internal judgments that we were now providing an outstanding level of care for pupils within this group. It stated the following:

Overall experiences - **Outstanding**

Quality of care and support - **Outstanding**

How well children are protected - **Outstanding**

Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers - **Outstanding**

We were left with no targets.

This was followed up with a Hertfordshire review conducted in July 2016, which again confirmed our continued progress in this area and included the following:

Information about the review

Time spent in the school included in-depth discussions with the headteacher and with Ian Reid, head of care, scrutiny of a range of documentation, a tour of the residential provision. Pupils' responses to the residential provision were evidenced by meeting some pupils when they moved into boarding after school and looking at video interviews where pupils expressed their views. The residential monitoring form, devised by John Short, was shared with the school as part of the review.

Key findings

The school provides 12 boarding places, organised across two boarding houses that are adjoined to the school premises. Pupils board for between two and four nights from Monday to Thursday.

The school's residential provision was inspected by Ofsted in November 2015 when the overall experiences and progress of pupils were found to be outstanding. The quality of care and support, how well children and young people are protected, and the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers were all individually graded as outstanding. All the National Minimum Standards were fully met and there were no issues for improvement.



The school uses the National Minimum Standards as a means of evaluating its practice and conducts various checks on a termly and annual basis to ensure that each standard is met. It then uses its detailed monitoring to arrive at a one-page self-evaluation summary using the Ofsted four-point scale. The school had evaluated its residential provision as outstanding prior to the most recent residential inspection.

The school has a current annual development plan which identifies a small number of priorities, most of which have been completed during the course of the year. The head of care notes that the improvement plan was a more substantial document in previous years at a time when the school was working to bring about more improvements in its residential provision.

Sharing of targets between the residential setting and the school is securely in place. The pupils have behaviour and life skills targets on an individual basis in the boarding provision. Pupils are involved in self-assessing their progress against the targets. Individual learning targets are also shared between the school and residential staff. The residential staff work towards pupils reaching their academic targets. On top of homework, there is also a focus on practising reading, times tables, etc. There is clearly joined up working between the school and the residential provision.

A termly residential review includes input by care staff, the teacher, parents, the pupil and any other professionals. This is a meaningful and robust process that informs the identification of further targets and helps staff to refine provision.

Thorough systems are in place for safeguarding pupils and for checking different aspects of provision. There is a clear risk assessment checklist.

Two members of staff administer medication, signing and countersigning the relevant records. A weekly check on medication is also conducted.

The school has a weekly residential register of who has attended the residential setting on a particular week.

Key strengths in the quality of residential provision clearly include the way the school listens to pupils' views and works closely with parents. There is a clear parents' boarding handbook and a children's boarding handbook.

The school listens very carefully to pupils from the outset before they start boarding and during their time in residence.

The independent person is a retired member of the care staff. A prominent noticeboard includes key safeguarding information for pupils, including the telephone number of Childline.

As well as conducting traditional paper-based surveys of pupils' and parents' views, the headteacher has used video interviews to record pupils' views about the residential experience. This has provided a very good opportunity for pupils to reflect and talk openly about their views and has proved a much more 'real' method of gathering their opinions. One pupil described during the interview how his independence skills have developed through time in residential.

Pupils are very positive about the residential experience. They enjoy supportive and trusting relationships with the staff and talk with enthusiasm about the activities provided.



The school has a very well-structured rewards system which includes a range of different awards, and this system is clearly motivating to the pupils. During the visit, pupils received their awards for the week. They were proud of their achievements and it was evident that they have excellent relationships with the staff.

Pupils work towards bronze, silver and gold life skills awards and receive certificates once they have developed various skills. These include changing a bed; cooking; being able to put dirty washing in the correct baskets; hand washing personal items; looking after their bed space; washing up after a snack, hoovering and dusting their bedroom; telling the time; developing confidence in using money; road safety.

The school works exceptionally well with parents. There is a weekly email conversation with all parents of boarders and where parents are having difficulties, they are invited in. There have been behaviour workshops for parents this year. The Larwood School engagement support workers' plan is a thorough record which incorporates parents' ongoing views and feedback. By talking through the parental survey, the school gets a very high proportion of responses from parents. **The design of the parental survey form follows the Ofsted format of 'agree', 'strongly agree', etc., and is worthy of sharing with other settings. There is also a pupil-friendly version of the survey which is worthy of sharing.**

At the time of the inspection, the school had a transition worker who focused on the early identification of pupils in need of the provision and who supported the process of transition out of the setting. There was also an engagement support worker whose role started before a pupil joined the residential provision and who undertook family support. Whereas these were two separate roles, they are now fulfilled by one person. In addition, the school employs a children's psychiatric nurse to support pupils in residence.

Conclusions

It is clear that the residential provision is managed exceptionally well to provide pupils with a very positive experience. Strong partnership with parents, excellent relationships between pupils and staff, and seamless working between the residential setting and the school are key strengths.

No points for development were identified as part of this review. The visit identified aspects of practice that could usefully be shared with other residential settings, as indicated by the green highlighting above.

Overall

We continue to judge that our provision for pupils in this area is outstanding. Key areas for development for next year include the following:

1. Embedding the work supporting parent skills for managing their own children when they are returned to their care
2. Maintaining and critically reviewing the progress of pupils that enter residential care. This includes progress and well-being points of view.
3. Ensuring that pupil and parent voice drives and informs our practice and change agenda for residential pupils

