

Maplewell Hall

Inspection report for Residential Special School

Unique reference number	SC001836
Inspection date	09/03/2011
Inspector	Carole Moore
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Maplewell Hall School, Maplewell Road, Woodhouse Eaves, LOUGHBOROUGH, Leicestershire, LE12 8QY
Telephone number	01509 890237
Email	stindal@maplewell.leics.sch.uk
Registered person	Leicestershire County Council
Head/ Principal	Susan Tindal
Nominated person	Susan Tindal
Date of last inspection	24/11/2009

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The school provides for secondary aged students with moderate learning disabilities. It is situated around two miles from a small village. The age range of the school is 11 to 16 years, apart from in the specialist autism unit where provision can extend to 19 years.

All residential accommodation is in the main building of the school and is organised on two floors with boys' accommodation on the first floor and girls' accommodation on the second floor. Each area has a TV lounge and in addition there is a pool table, a computer room and an arts and crafts area. There are currently pupils receiving a service from the residential provision. These students have contributed to this report.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This announced inspection focused on all the key national minimum standards for residential special schools. As with the previous annual inspection, the school continues to provide outstanding outcomes for students.

This resource is unique in that it provides a very flexible approach to residential provision. Parents and students make their own choices when it comes to deciding if they want to stay in residence. Decisions are also made on which students share the week together and those decisions are taken in consultation with parents and students.

At the last inspection there were two recommendations, all of which have been achieved. Progress includes the physical intervention log being revised and the electrical testing has now been carried out.

This is a school with exceptional strengths that meets all and exceeds the vast majority of the national minimum standards. Students continue to receive good quality care, guidance and excellent support to meet their individual needs from a range of staff who collaboratively work together in the best interests of each child. All employees of the school have a common aim with the Students at the core of their thinking. The residential team is experienced, well established and provides good quality care to the students. The staff group is small, so they know the needs of the students extremely well. They can also provide consistency and as a result the children make very good progress and enjoy their stay. Students are happy and they show trust with the adults around them.

One recommendation has been raised that relates to the care and control policy but has a minimal impact on the overall outcomes for children.

Improvements since the last inspection

The school has reviewed the physical intervention records to ensure the record includes full details of any restraint used. Also the three yearly electrical check has taken place.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Students' individual health and care needs are identified and assessed at the admission stage. This is recorded in clear plans for each student detailing how his or her specific and general health issues are to be addressed. Health needs which may impact on future outcomes for the pupil are addressed succinctly and staff, in partnership with parents, actively seek out the services needed to address these; for example, visual impairment specialist, diabetes specialist and speech and language therapists. This means the students receive dynamic care that actively promotes their well-being and health.

The students strongly agree that they enjoy the food during their stay. They are encouraged to be healthy in their choices and individual needs and preferences are well provided for. All food is freshly cooked on the premises by staff who understand nutritional issues well and how these impact on individuals. This includes bread, biscuits and cakes, ensuring that optimum nutrition is established and maintained. Mealtimes are a social occasion where conversation is encouraged and positive social behaviour promoted.

There are efficient arrangements to ensure that medication is safely administered. Staff are trained in the administration of medicines and specific training is provided by the school nurse to ensure that staff are fully competent in any particular medical procedures that the students require. Medical consent is actively sought from parents and a signed form is retained on file ensuring students receive preventative and emergency medical treatment without delay.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff recognise that students are not all the same. They make sure that students have privacy, choice and control over the support they need and how it is delivered. The residential provision has effective leadership that consistently promotes an environment where safety and students' welfare is paramount. A majority of the questionnaires confirmed that parents and students felt safe when they were in residence.

The complaints procedure is easily accessible to students and they are confident that any complaint would be taken seriously by staff. There are good relationships between the students and the staff, and an open culture encourages them to raise any issues they have freely. The complaints process and anti-bullying information are presented in the welcome pack. Students say they can easily talk to staff and they sort out any worries. Parents also confirmed that they strongly agree that the school is easy to contact if they wish to raise any issues about their child.

There are appropriate systems in place to promote the safety and welfare of students in order to keep them safe. All staff receive refresher safeguarding training and the designated child protection officers have advanced training.

The school also takes appropriate steps to ensure that pupils who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance. However, there continues to be no such incidents as students want to stay in residence and enjoy their stay.

The quality of relationships between staff and students is outstanding and reinforces the very caring atmosphere that can be witnessed throughout the school. This view is reinforced by a parent who states: 'the residential provision is wonderful. It helps children gain insight into independence and is well supervised'. Student's needs and behaviour are well understood by the staff and they know what the 'triggers' are for more challenging behaviour for individuals. Staff have completed training and are competent in diffusing situations to try to avoid the use of physical intervention, which is rare and a last resort. There has been only one physical intervention and very few sanctions used during residence since the last inspection. Staff are very effective and help students to control their impulsive behaviour and this is achieved by the use of a positive and achievable points system.

Students stay in a school that provides them with effective physical safety and security. The school has risk assessments that are updated regularly for all aspects of safety of the premises. These assessments include fire, pupils' behaviour, and activities. Students learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they regularly practise the emergency escape drill. This ensures that pupils can exit swiftly and calmly in the event of a fire. The school operates a robust staff vetting procedure and staff demonstrate an appropriate awareness of the need to safeguard students.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The residential experience provides the opportunity for students to develop personal and social skills. This helps them with their independence, their self-esteem and to form positive relationships with their peers and adults. A parent reported: 'the support received from the school and boarding is outstanding'. Each morning there is a meeting where teaching and care staff can share aspects of the child's previous day. There is a seamless approach across the school and the residential provision

which provides a consistency and continuity of care which is outstanding.

A further strength of the school is the enjoyment and achievement of the students. There is an extensive range of activities which are appreciated and enjoyed by all. This gives students the opportunity to experience those activities which they may otherwise not have the opportunity to carry out and they feel the sense of achievement. Students were seen engaging in learning that develops and challenges them and excites their imagination. Students were seen cooking muffins and also learning about a range of disabilities and how these can be managed. The extensive grounds surrounding the school provide ample opportunity for play and exercise and include bicycle rides, nature walks and many sporting activities.

Individual support is available from a variety of sources within the school to meet the student's special needs. Residential staff and teaching staff work together to provide the most appropriate support tailored to the individual. Staff spend time with students helping them in making progress towards their personal targets. In addition to the residential staff there is a nominated governor who visits regularly and the Head spends time each week with the students in residence.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Students are cared for well in residence by a small and established staff team who provide consistent good quality care on a day-to-day basis. This results in significant improvement to the welfare, behaviour and safety of individuals. Assessment and care planning inform staff about how to meet student's needs on a day-to-day basis. There are regular changes in the needs of individuals but the systems in place for the exchange of new information are very good. Residence profiles cover all aspects of the students care with clear targets and outcomes that are well measured.

Students are supported when they move into residence and say that staff make them feel very welcome and try to settle them in, in a pleasant and supportive way. They receive a welcome pack which sets out the rules, how to complain and what to expect. The care team leader also ensures that students are individually as prepared as they can be. Parents report a high level of satisfaction with communication from the school staff, being kept well informed, and that their child really enjoys the boarding experience.

Staff spend a lot of quality time with students and this helps to ensure that their views can be established. There are regular questionnaires sent home for students to complete with their family; these work well to establish their views about their stays in residence. There is also a school council which meets regularly and students are actively involved in a variety of school issues. This includes being part of the recruitment process for some staff posts which is good.

In accordance with their wishes students are actively enabled and encouraged to

maintain contact with their parents and families when sleeping at school. The school understands the value and importance of communication and contact with parents.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The residential unit is situated in the same building as the school. It provides a well-maintained homely environment with comfortable furnishings. The lounges provide sufficient space for the group, and additional play rooms are available for specific activities and individual time with an adult. Bedrooms are suitably furnished and students are encouraged to personalise their own space. The shower and bathroom areas are certainly due for refurbishment and plans are in hand to carry out this work before the end of the year.

There are extensive grounds surrounding the school where a good range of activities can take place when weather permits.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Students, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding. As a result, students are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently. Students are making good progress because staffing in the school is well organised and effectively managed.

The school is organised and managed in a manner that delivers and maintains an outstanding level of care. The team leader provides good leadership and has the expertise, skills and knowledge to effectively manage a residential provision. The cohesion of the senior leadership team is a strength of the school with their determination to continually raise standards in the delivery of care and education to the children. There are usually enough staff on duty at all times to provide safe care and staff have opportunities to spend quality time with the students.

Students are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare. Staff have great confidence in the people who manage them and managers value the staff. Professional supervision takes place and regular staff meetings involving all staff ensure consistency of approach and a professional working partnership. There is a clear training programme in place and all refresher mandatory training is well managed.

Students and staff enjoy the stability of an efficiently run school. Systems for monitoring the operation of the residential school are excellent, and the school has an atmosphere of creative and focused direction with student's welfare clearly at the forefront. The board of governors play an active role in the monitoring of the residential unit, and the quality assurance function captures student's overall

experiences and highlights any areas for improvement. These visits provide excellent additional safeguarding mechanisms for students by looking at staff and management practices.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding and the staff ensure that each student is seen as an individual and is treated as such. This is evidenced in the overall school's records. Each student, whatever their needs, has equal access to the services that the residential service provides.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure all staff have read, show an understanding of and have signed a copy of the school's policy on measures of control, discipline and physical intervention, and evidence of this is retained on their personnel file. (NMS10.19)