

# Dawn House Residential School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

---

**Unique reference number for social care** SC008761  
**Unique reference number for education** 122956  
**Inspection dates** 16/04/2012 to 18/04/2012  
**Inspector** Elaine Cray

---

**School address** Dawn House School, Helmsley Road, Rainworth,  
MANSFIELD, Nottinghamshire, NG21 0DQ

**Telephone number** 01623 795361  
**Email** [ajordan@dawnhouse-ican.org.uk](mailto:ajordan@dawnhouse-ican.org.uk)  
**Headteacher** Mrs Angela Child

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 looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

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 Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

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, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.<sup>1,2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Dawn House School is a non-maintained co-educational residential special school, one of two run by the national charity 'I CAN'. There are 75 pupils on roll, whose ages range from 7 to 19. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage and all have statements of special educational need for difficulties with speech, language and communication. Some may have Asperger's syndrome.

There is a high level of pupil mobility, as pupils join the school at any time up to the sixth form. 24 young people reside at the school during the week with a further 12 occasional boarders. The residential accommodation is provided in two houses, both of which are located on the school site.

The school is situated in the village of Rainworth, Nottinghamshire. The residential provision was last inspected as part of an integrated inspection in April 2011.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>good</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	good
Residential pupils' safety	good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	good

## Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- This service is judged good overall with an outstanding judgement for outcomes for young people. There are a number of strengths in the provision of care afforded to residential pupils. This results in a positive impact on the progress and outcomes for pupils.
- The positive residential experience promotes pupils' personal, social, cultural and social development. Each pupil is seen as unique and individuality is celebrated and responded to with a range of interventions and sensitive interactions.
- Residential pupils enjoy outstanding outcomes as a result of being able to extend their use of a combination of communication processes. They are able to access opportunities, extend their friendships and build confidence. This results in improved quality of residential pupils' lives and positive self-esteem.
- Communication processes encompass all aspects of the school and residential service, with proactive inclusion of parents and families. Residential pupils are empowered and more confident. They are enabled to participate, contribute and enjoy school/family life, a variety of activities and opportunities in their local communities.
- Residential pupils enjoy their stays in the residential unit because they value and benefit from positive and trusting relationships with staff in a supported and nurturing environment. Residential pupils clearly enjoy and value their friendships with each other and their behaviour is a credit to the pupils and staff of the service.
- Residential pupils feel safe and secure. There are safeguarding procedures and systems in place help to promote pupils' safety and welfare. Behaviour

management is a key strength. Staff are proactive and creative in managing behaviour and making sure all young people are safe.

- There is a clear ethos of mutual respect which permeates throughout the routines and practice delivered. Regular and ongoing communication between parents, carers, the care team and education staff ensures a consistent focus on the best interests of the pupils.
- Residential pupils enjoy stability, grow and develop due to the excellent links between care staff, academic staff and ancillary staff. Excellent communication and committed teamwork mean that residential pupils are effectively supported in achieving positive outcomes.
- The high level of support and guidance given by care staff helps residential pupils reinforce their education, language and social skills. The high emphasis placed on life skills work helps to prepare pupils for transition; including the next stage in education, moving to employment and preparation for life once they leave the school.
- While there are a few minor shortfalls against parts of the national minimum standards. The shortfalls do not weaken the overall good quality of care and provision and have minimal impact on outcomes for residential students.

## **Outcomes for residential pupils**

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. They benefit from a service provision which recognises and values them as young people with diverse individual needs. Their individuality is celebrated and explored. There are proactive and creative strategies to ensure pupils of all abilities develop and progress.

The residential experience allows pupils to benefit from meaningful, secure and stable relationships with care staff. Pupils stay in an inclusive community. They can interact and enjoy the company of others, because communication processes are inclusive and meet their varied needs. The residential pupils show concern for others and they develop meaningful friendships.

Residential pupils benefit from significantly improved behaviour. They are less anxious and able to express and understand their needs and experiences. Resourceful behaviour management strategies which reward effort and success enable young people to explore and use different ways to cope and positively participate. These improvements in behaviour are valued by pupils, staff and parents and impact on pupils preparing for their future and reaching their potential.

Pupils are more confident and independent because there are excellent opportunities for them to develop personal and social skills. Residential pupils say they enjoy a wide range of purposeful activities. They are confident and empowered because they are able to choose their favourite activities. They also help to organise trips such as

to the cinema and make their own travel arrangements. Residential pupils particularly like going to youth club, swimming, trips to the gym and bowling. Pupils extend their social skills because they have effective links with the community. They attend local clubs, use public transport, attend college and try out work placements.

Building up life skills is positively embraced in the routines and activities offered. This develops pupils' self-esteem, independence, and confidence. Group living routines, networks to support communication and a variety of education opportunities mean that pupils are enabled and supported. Residential pupils proudly talk about their achievements, including helping to shop for ingredients, doing their own washing and cooking a meal with their peers. They develop excellent social skills, become less anxious and are able to participate because their individual needs are identified and responded to.

Residential pupils enjoy improvements in their physical, emotional and psychological health. They are healthy because staff liaise with relevant health agencies, professionals and parents are fully involved in health care planning. Residential pupils are encouraged to develop understanding of their own health. For example, they are aware of the need for good personal hygiene and healthy eating. They learn about growing up and understand why they take medication. Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy healthy meals with a good choice of multi-cultural foods. They are encouraged to do regular exercise.

Residential pupils and their families value the service because they are effectively supported in the transition to the school and integration into boarding. Parents and pupils are involved, consulted and their views are valued. For example, there are home-to-school diaries, their views are canvassed with surveys and pupils have weekly house meetings.

Residential pupils are positively enabled and encouraged to attend and contribute to review meetings to discuss their progress. Pupils have a school council and have used this as a vehicle to improve the school toilets and request alternative benchmarking for measuring school attendance.

Parents and professionals are pleased with the progress the pupils make. Residential pupils have a better quality of life as a result of attending the school. They are happier because they do well in education, have increased confidence and better communication skills. Comments about outcomes for pupils include 'far more than just education, my child learns so many other things, life skills, relationships', 'the child's voice is heard' and 'amazing progress'.

## **Quality of residential provision and care**

The quality of the residential provision is good. The residential service provides a nurturing and structured environment to support pupils' academic and personal development. Effective links between residential and education staff enable pupils to

make significant progress and grow in confidence.

There are clear induction procedures for each pupil, to facilitate a needs-led transition to the residential service. The family liaison team visit pupils in their home environment. This team works in conjunction with care and educational staff. Excellent communication processes ensure that residential pupils are looked after and their families are informed and reassured.

The induction process and care framework responds to the diverse and complex needs of pupils and focuses on the integral involvement of parents. Staff have a clear understanding of the socio-economic and diverse backgrounds of the families and local communities using this service. Young people are encouraged to develop confidence in their personal identities and social relationships as they grow towards young adulthood.

Staff make clear efforts to provide a sensitive, nurturing, fun and interactive environment for residential pupils. Pupils' parents' and professional comments about the service and staff include, 'the staff are great as parents, I know they will look after my child and this is a great feeling', 'the staff have never given up on me' and 'staff really do have my child's best interests at heart'.

A key strength of the care framework is the strong emphasis on inclusive practice to improve outcomes for pupils. Communication processes, including verbal, written, symbol and signing systems provide an opportunity for residential pupils to contribute their ideas and views. Residential pupils are supported by the robust key-worker system and strong communication.

Care plans are drawn up with pupils and parents, who are fully included in the monitoring and regular review of the plans. Pupils and parents discuss and record their agreement on how best pupils can be supported. Plans focus on clear targets both in terms of safe care, encouraging independence and managing complex medical and disability needs. Residential pupils actively engage in the review process with the support of their key workers.

The school provides effective arrangements for promoting and caring for pupils' health and well-being. Residential pupils' complex medical needs are excellently and effectively met with clear procedures for medication, appropriate medical protocols and staff training. There are good health care arrangements in place. Staff demonstrate in-depth knowledge and promote safe practice in meeting residential pupils' health and medical needs. Records are generally clear and robust but are not always updated with exactly how staff implement any new medical protocols.

Pupils are provided with varied, balanced and nutritious meals and every effort is made to encourage pupils to eat healthily. The school caters appropriately for pupils' religious and cultural needs, specific health allergies and individual preferences.

The residential accommodation comprises of two buildings, which are then separated into residential units according to the age, gender and needs of the pupils. The accommodation is appropriately maintained and clean, but on the first day of inspection, it was not adequately heated, due to a breakdown of the heating system. Additional heating appliances rectified this shortfall the next day. Records showed that servicing agreements for the heating have not been honoured.

The accommodation is institutionalised in appearance. Despite the limited scope of the residential accommodation, there are attempts to improve the use of the building. Improvements include providing single bedrooms for all residential students and a variety of communal areas. Residential pupils have more choice as smaller lounges, recreational rooms, soft play and sensory rooms have been established. However, décor is the same throughout all the units and there are few pictures and items of personalisation to provide a homely environment. The residential areas represent an extension of the school experience due to the type of furnishing.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

The safety of residential pupils is good. The care team are well trained. They have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and of the role of the school's designated child protection staff. The school's designated staff members have completed recent and up-to-date training. Staff receive regular refresher courses. Additionally staff have access to on-line training, including preventing bullying behaviour, creating a culture of safety and children's rights. This means that residential pupils are kept safe and their welfare promoted.

Welfare is promoted and protected by a range of policies and procedures for child protection. Staff know what to do should a pupil go missing from the service. There is a clear written procedure and good liaison with local safeguarding agencies, including the police. Residential pupils are protected by sound procedures for safe recruitment and the monitoring of staff and volunteers.

The school has an established behaviour management training programme, including clear procedures for the use of physical intervention. Throughout the duration of the inspection, pupils' behaviour and attitudes were well-managed. There are clear elements of outstanding practice in terms of behaviour management at this service. Parents and professionals express a high level of confidence in the service's ability to promote safety, manage and significantly improve behaviour. There is a strong emphasis on understanding behaviour in terms of learning disability, communication, understanding and sensory challenges.

While residential pupils can experience difficulties in managing their feelings and emotions, staff are effective in utilising de-escalation techniques. Staff are well trained, physical intervention is a last resort and is seldom used in the residential service. Residential pupils are supported with behaviour management and positive handling plans. Outstanding practice was observed throughout this inspection.

However, some records do not have detail about the method of physical intervention to be potentially used or some current strategies that are successful in supporting some pupils. There are also some inconsistencies in how some sections of the central record for physical restraint is completed.

Interactions between pupils and staff are constructive and appropriate. Effective strategies are in place for managing any instances of bullying. While there is effective staff practice, the countering bullying policy does not include homophobic bullying.

The physical environment of the residential provision is safe and secure. Health and safety is generally well managed, but some servicing checks are not up to date. Risk assessment and management is effective. All activities, environmental features and behaviour are routinely and robustly assessed to ensure safety. Risk management strategies are proactive, well resourced and effectively monitored. Residential pupils have good opportunity to try new and challenging opportunities in a safe and structured way. They have seen, discussed and understand their risk assessment and management plans. Residential pupils talked about having rules so they are safe and understanding the importance of privacy of other pupils.

## **Leadership and management of the residential provision**

The leadership and management of the residential provision is good. Parents, residential pupils and other interested parties are informed about the aims and facilities of the school's residential service. There is a brochure, website and prospectus for parents. Parents value the induction process at the school and say the high standards of communication have continued throughout their children's placements at the service. While staff report that residential pupils are supported with their own induction handbook, this was not evident during this inspection.

The service is effectively staffed. Well-trained and experienced staff value each other and the leadership of the management team. Management is strong because all staff work as a team. There is excellent commitment and a strong child-centred focus to their practice. This results in high levels of self-esteem and a sense of achievement for both pupils and staff.

Routines and procedures are clear and operate to provide a safe, sensitive and motivating environment for the residential pupils. There is consistent focus on reward and a strong emphasis on maintaining meaningful and respectful relationships between staff, residential pupils and families.

Residential pupils benefit from the strong ethos for improvement of the service. The principal and senior management team are keen to further develop strategies to track trends of behaviour, achievement and progress. The Principal has adapted the robust and regular monitoring systems in line with the national minimum standards and inspection framework. Self-evaluation is an emerging strength of the school and clearly focuses on improvement. Reports are routinely submitted to the board of

governors. The development plan for the residential service is clear, practical and already embedded into the school's overall improvement plan.

All required policies, documents and records are in place but some have minor shortfalls. While senior care staff actively and regularly monitor the quality of care provided, they acknowledge these processes should pick up such shortfalls.

Reports written by the independent visitor reinforce the positive developments and show how the developing strategic leadership and management impacts on quality of care, staff development and exceptional outcomes for pupils.

## **National minimum standards**

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.

- A written record is kept of major sanctions and the use of any physical intervention. Records may include the information in Appendix 2 (Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards) - 'use of physical restraint'. The record is made within 24 hours of the sanction being applied and is legible. Children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records. The school regularly reviews any instances of the use of physical intervention restraint and examines trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and learn in a way that will inform future practice. (NMS 12.6)
- Accommodation for children complies with any requirements set out in regulations relating to school premises (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'), is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any children with restricted mobility. Toilet and washing facilities provide appropriate privacy for children. The accommodation contains suitable specialist facilities to support children whose disabilities require them. (NMS 5.1)

## **What should the school do to improve further?**

- Improve the availability of the residential pupils' information booklet.
- Include homophobic bullying in the counter bullying policy.
- Improve the standard of decor and furnishings so that boarders can feel comfortable and their learning and relaxation is supported.



**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16/04/2012

To all residential pupils at Dawn House School

### **Inspection of Dawn House Residential School**

The residential provision at Dawn House School has been judged to be good overall.

There are outstanding outcomes for young people, good quality care, good systems for safeguarding and good leadership and management.

I could see that you really enjoy your stay at the school. You learn well, improve behaviour and learn how to be more independent. You, your parents and people who come to visit the school told Ofsted that the school has a number of strengths and continues to improve.

Some of the key strengths I identified were the improvements you make in language and communication. You all enjoy and value your relationships with staff. You also make great friendships with the other pupils and treat each other really well. There is a good range of activities available to you. Your views are very important to the staff and they make sure you can have your say.

The school has been asked to make sure that the houses are always warm and to ask you about how they should make the houses more homely. The staff have also been asked to improve information about homophobic bullying and make sure that you all have an information booklet about the residential service. Some records need some additional information about how staff help you with behaviour and how they use physical intervention. Staff should write down more information about how they hold you. I have also asked that staff write down, in your health and care plans, some of the day-to-day things that they do to support you.

Yours sincerely,

Elaine Cray

Yours sincerely,

Elaine Cray