

The New Eccles Hall School

Eccles Hall School, Eccles, NORWICH, NR16 2NZ

Inspection dates	11/03/2014 to 13/03/2014	
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	4
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Adequate	3
Residential pupils' safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is inadequate because

- Safeguarding arrangements in the school are not sufficiently robust. The designated safeguarding officers have failed to recognise and refer some safeguarding concerns. There are shortfalls in the action taken and in the recording of concerns.
- Residential pupils make good progress in all aspects of their development because of their residential experience. They develop friendships and good attachments with the staff who care for them.
- Residential pupils access a wide range of opportunities and experiences they would not otherwise benefit from. They enjoy equality of opportunity to activities, education and social interaction.
- Residential pupils benefit from consistency in the staffing and management of the residential provision. However, the school does not assess the quality of the residential provision or provide for independent monitoring and reporting. Consequently, shortfalls are not identified.
- Residential pupils generally report they are happy and enjoy the residential experience. However, the majority say that their personal belongings are not safe.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

The welfare only inspection of the three boarding houses making up the residential provision took place following a notice period of three hours. The inspection activities included; meetings with senior managers, the school matron, residential staff, the director of the school, safeguarding officers, and meetings and meal times with residential pupils. Feedback from pupil and staff surveys, discussions with parents and social workers along with inspection of documentary records informed the judgements.

Inspection team

Louisa Bayley

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

New Eccles Hall School is an independent residential special school situated in the Norfolk countryside between Norwich and Thetford. The school accepts children of mixed ability, some with specific learning difficulties for whom special education facilities are available.

The school accepts day pupils from the age of four to seventeen years. Residential accommodation is offered to pupils aged eight years and above. The school has three separate boarding houses within the grounds. Junior boys are accommodated in the main hall, senior boys in the main school area and girls are accommodated in the converted stable block behind the main hall. There is also a sixth form boarding house behind the hall. There are currently 39 boarders who are accommodated on a weekly or full boarding basis.

The residential provision was last inspected in 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure there is a separate central record of complaints, pupils who go missing and restraint.
- Develop a system to track incidents of bullying, to identify themes and patterns.
- Consider making improvements to the residential accommodation, with particular regard to the shower and toilet areas in the senior boys boarding house.
- Reflect on incidents of concern and risk assess the likelihood of future incidents, with clear actions to mitigate risks.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
 - Reasonable protection is provided for children's personal possessions and for any children's money or valuables looked after by the school. (NMS 9.3)
 - The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 11)
 - There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of residential and care provision in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff. The school's governing body or proprietor has a system to monitor care and welfare provision in the school. (NMS 13.1)
 - All existing care staff have attained a relevant minimum level 3 qualification or have qualifications which demonstrate the same competencies. All new staff engaged from the commencement of these Standards hold these qualifications or begin working towards them within 3 months of confirmation of employment. (NMS 19.2)
 - All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance. (NMS 19.6)
 - The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who does not work at, or directly manage, the school, to visit the school once every half term and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are

not also the Headteacher (or school equivalent). (NMS 20.1)

- Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of physical interventions, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish). (NMS 20.2)
- Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the Headteacher (or school equivalent) and where applicable the governing body, organisation, or partnership. Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body), within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary. (NMS 20.3)
- 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. (NMS 20.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Good

The outcomes for residential pupils are good. They develop positive relationships with their peers, demonstrating acceptance of others with diverse challenges and from a range of cultural backgrounds. A group of residential pupils said they particularly enjoyed having Russian exchange students staying in the school, as they can learn from each other. Residential pupils say they enjoy the relationships they have with staff. One residential pupil said: 'I think of them as my family'.

Residential pupils behave well; they respond positively to the routines and expectations. Parents say their children make good progress in managing their behaviour. Pupils are polite, courteous and welcoming, and happy to engage with new people. They are tolerant and supportive of each other; this was highly evident throughout the inspection.

Residential pupils contribute their own views and respect the views of others, through school council meetings and daily house meetings. They contribute to the residential experience through taking on positions of responsibility, acting as mentors for new and younger pupils.

Parents say their children benefit from the residential experience. Comments include: 'He is becoming more independent and his confidence has grown. He has developed some relationships and can cope on his own and operate within the group living environment' and 'It has helped him a great deal, he is a different boy. He has changed his behaviour and made good progress with his education'. Social workers have very positive views of the outcomes for young people they have placed at the school. They say: 'My young person has come on leaps and bounds, he has really developed his confidence' and 'She enjoys being at the school and wants to stay there'.

All residential pupils make choices about the activities they participate in, enabling them to establish and develop their talents, interests and skills. They access a wide range of physical activities, creative experiences and competitive sports. They engage in activities and sport based in the school, in the community and with other schools. This range of opportunities promotes their social interaction with peers within and outside of their immediate community.

Residential pupils access the physical, emotional and psychological support they need. They engage with a range of health services, as determined in their individual health plans and care plans. This promotes their wellbeing and enables them to develop their confidence, self-esteem and to understand how to manage their physical and mental health.

As pupils progress through the residential provision, they develop skills for adult life. They complete tasks such as making their beds, making snacks and drinks and taking responsibility for their laundry. As they move into the sixth form, they participate in self-sufficiency programmes; planning, shopping for and preparing meals. They plan their future education and visit identified placements, preparing them well for their onward transitions.

Quality of residential provision and care

Adequate

The quality of the residential provision and care is adequate. There are appropriate levels of support for pupils to make the transition in to the residential environment. The arrangements in place to review how pupils are settling in ensure a sound level of monitoring of their happiness.

There is consistency in the staffing of each boarding house. The residential staff also work in the school, supporting their understanding of all aspects of individual pupil's needs. Each pupil chooses a member of staff they can talk to and feel comfortable with, in the form of a personal

tutor. This enhances residential pupils' feelings of safety and security. Staff use a comprehensive and effective management information system, promoting information sharing between staff. Consequently, staff are well informed, enabling them to give acknowledgment and praise and to pre-empt situations when they know individuals have had difficulties.

Staff follow individual care plans for residential pupils. They work well with external professionals to implement strategies and interventions in order to meet individual needs. A social worker said: 'The school are working as part of a team around the child and keeping the young person as safe as they possibly can. They certainly have stepped up to the challenge of meeting all of the young person's needs.'

Residential pupils give mixed opinions of the activities available. It is evident, however, that they do have access to a wide range of clubs and activities and experience opportunities they may not otherwise have, such as skiing trips. Activities include; swimming, bush craft, cricket, high jump, cinema trips, canoeing, forest trips, roller skating, clay pigeon shooting, high ropes, climbing, quad bikes, cross country and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

There are safe and effective systems in place to record, store and administer medication. Managers have acted upon previous recommendations to implement a policy about first aid and medication, including the protocols for non-prescribed medication. The electronic records provide a comprehensive reflection of the medical interventions, health needs, diagnoses and services each pupil receives. Parents say the school understands their children's health needs; surveys reflect that the majority of boarders feel they are looked after well if they are ill.

The food is plentiful and gives a choice at each meal. The catering arrangements provide for individual dietary needs, whether medical or cultural. Events such as Shrove Tuesday are celebrated and there are international food events, promoting understanding of cultural food diversity. Some residential pupils say they would like improvements in the food, as they feel the three week rota is too short and food becomes repetitive.

The boarding houses provide the basics that residential pupils need, however, some areas would benefit from redecorating and refurbishment. The toilet and shower area in one of the boarding houses is in particular need of improvement. The boarding houses are secured overnight, promoting pupils' safety. Residential pupils can personalise their rooms as they wish, to reflect their personal taste. They are able to contact their families and friends, by telephone and by email and other electronic means. Residential pupils say they are generally happy with the boarding accommodation.

Pupil surveys and discussion with residential pupils during the inspection identified a breach of National Minimum Standard 9.3. The majority of residential pupils say they do not feel their belongings are safe. Some have lockable draws they can use but others do not. They report ongoing issues with money and personal items going missing. Senior managers recognise this as a concern they need to address.

Residential pupils' safety

Inadequate

Residential pupils' safety is inadequate. Designated safeguarding officers receive specific training and all staff receive regular safeguarding training. However, the designated safeguarding officers have failed to identify and refer some incidents that constitute safeguarding concerns. One incident of concern was not recorded at all, as the designated officers did not consider it to be of a safeguarding nature. This is a breach of National Minimum Standard 11. There is scant recording of a number of safeguarding incidents, with little or no supporting documentation. Senior managers have failed to investigate or reflect on the circumstances in which safeguarding incidents occurred. They have not assessed risks following incidents to mitigate the likelihood of

future occurrences. Discussion with parents and social workers indicates that they believe the school does safeguard pupils. However, the failings identified during the inspection, demonstrate that the systems in place are not sufficiently robust and have the potential to compromise pupils' safety.

There are appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. Senior managers receive training in the recruitment process and pre-employment checks are in place. Staff check visitor's identification and ask them to sign in on arrival at the school. These measures prevent unsuitable people having access to residential pupils.

Residential pupils and their parents do not cite bullying as an issue. Staff record and manage incidents of bullying. However, there is no tracking to monitor whether individuals are persistently bullied. This means staff miss an opportunity to enhance and closely monitor the safety of residential pupils.

There have been no incidents of restraint or of residential pupils going missing. Staff use de-escalation skills to manage incidents of negative behaviour, without the need to resort to restraint. Staff have a clear understanding of the policy for pupils going missing, demonstrating ability to take the appropriate action should the situation arise. Although there are no concerns about restraint or pupils going missing, there are no systems in place to provide a central record of such incidents should they occur. This is also the case with complaints. Lack of such systems makes it difficult for any monitoring to take place.

The school has health and safety checks in place, to ensure the physical environment is safe. Staff complete regular fire evacuation drills; during the inspection residential pupils demonstrated good knowledge of fire procedures in the event of a drill or actual fire.

The school operates positive rewards and sanctions to manage behaviour. Staff record all sanctions and rewards on individual file, on the electronic database. One pupil said he thought it was a good system as his parents can log into it and see how well he has done on any given day. Residential pupils say they feel sanctions are generally fair.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Inadequate

Leadership and management of the residential provision are inadequate. This is the first inspection of the school under the residential special school inspection framework; the school was previously inspected under the boarding schools inspection framework.

The aims for the residential provision are translated into daily practice. Managers and staff view the residential provision as an integral part of the school. There is consistency of staffing; pupils understand routines and respect them. There are generally sufficient staff on duty. However, incidents of concern have not led to increased staffing nor initiated risk assessments to identify whether additional staffing, vigilance or supervision is necessary. Staff receive training and annual appraisal, however, there is no supervision system in place to monitor performance and provide regular support. This is a breach of National Minimum Standard 19.6. Additionally, the majority of residential staff do not have a qualification relating to providing care for residential pupils. This is a breach of National Minimum Standard 19.2.

Required policies are in place. However, there is no record of professional discussion or reflection with staff who have acted outside of, or in direct contravention of policies. There is no system in place to monitor and assess the quality of the residential provision or its impact on the pupils, or to provide an annual report, which is a breach of National Minimum Standards 13.1 and 20.4. Additionally, there are no arrangements in place for independent monitoring of the residential provision. This is in breach of National Minimum Standards 20.1, 20.2 and 20.3. The impact of

this is a failure to identify shortfalls that impact on pupil's safety, highlighted during the inspection.

There have been no complaints about the residential provision. Parents and pupils say they know how to complain if they wish to do so. Managers take account of pupil's views through the school council and annual consultation.

Equality of opportunity and access to services and opportunities is a fundamental part of the school. Managers identify individual needs prior to residential pupils' admission to the school and plan their care accordingly.

Parents say there is generally good communication from the school. Social workers say that communication is positive and the school are proactive in their approach to multi-agency working.

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	121229
Social care unique reference number	SC027660
DfE registration number	926/6041

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	Independent Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	39
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	8 to 17
Headteacher	Mr R Allard
Date of previous boarding inspection	19/01/2011
Telephone number	01953 887217
Email address	headmaster@neweccleshall.com

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