

**Inspection dates**

15/09/2015 to 17/09/2015

**The overall experiences and progress of children and young people**

**Requires improvement 3**

The quality of care and support

Requires improvement 3

How well children and young people are protected

Requires improvement 3

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement 3

**Summary of key findings**

**The residential provision requires improvement because**

- There are five unmet national minimum standards, which have the potential to impact on young people's welfare, health and safety.
- Risk assessments for risks known to young people who have a history of harmful behaviours are not always completed. Assessment of risk remains poor.
- Recruitment procedures and checks on adults living on the school site have some gaps and contradict the recruitment policy drawn up by the school to safeguard pupils.
- Health plans for young people with long term health conditions are not devised with health professionals. In addition, staff have not accessed specific training to equip them to carry out required health procedures.
- The school keeps young people reasonably safe. Supervision of young people is adequate. The reporting of safeguarding concerns and allegations has improved.
- The accommodation has improved, although parts of the accommodation are poor. Planned refurbishment continues.
- Menus do not provide an adequate choice of healthy options at all meals.
- The impact of the residential experience adds to the personal and social development and achievement of young people. They benefit from being at the school and make good academic progress.
- The staff team are professional and dedicated to making the residential

experience fun and beneficial.

- Young people's behaviour is extremely good. There are very few incidents of bullying and the general atmosphere is calm and harmonious.
- Monitoring of the school has improved and identifies future improvement plans.

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools**

The school does not meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools

- 5.1 Suitable sleeping accommodation is provided for children. It is well organised and managed with risk assessments undertaken and the findings acted upon to reduce risk for all children. Where children are aged 8 years or over, sleeping accommodation for boys is separate from sleeping accommodation for girls.
- 3.10 Where school staff carry out medical or nursing procedures for a disabled child (e.g. catheter care, administration of oxygen, administration of rectal diazepam, management of prostheses), these are only carried out on the written authorisation of the prescribing doctor or the responsible qualified nurse in relation to the individual child concerned. Staff carrying out these procedures should be authorised and trained to do so, and their training should be kept up to date. Records are kept of all such tasks carried out.
- 3.12 Where necessary, a child has a clear individual health and welfare plan or similar record, containing relevant health and welfare information provided by parents/carers and recording significant health and welfare needs and issues. This record should be agreed by parents/carers and include: records of developmental checks; health monitoring required by staff; intimate care or bodily functions requiring staff help; and the involvement of a child's parents/carers or significant others in health and welfare issues.
- 6.3 The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- 14.2 For all persons over 16 (not on roll of the school) who after April 2002 began to live on the same premises as children but are not employed by the school, an enhanced certificate with a barred list information must be obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Incorporate healthy option choices for all meals.
- Continue with the refurbishment plan to provide accommodation of good quality throughout all areas of the residential provision.
- Carry out recruitment checks for new staff in line with the school's policy.

## Information about this inspection

The welfare inspection of the three boarding houses making up the residential provision was undertaken by two inspectors following a notice period of three hours. The inspection activities included; meetings with matron, catering staff, senior managers, the director, staff, young people, parents and social workers; scrutiny of policies and the electronic record base; observation of practice and evening routines. Parents gave feedback directly to inspectors through telephone discussions.

## Inspection team

Deirdra Keating	Lead social care inspector
Natalie Burton	Social care inspector

## **Full Report**

### **Information about this school**

New Eccles Hall School is an independent residential special school for pupils aged 4-20 years. Residential accommodation is offered to pupils aged eight years and above. There are 124 young people on roll, 41 of whom reside at the school on a weekly or fulltime basis.

The residential accommodation is provided in three houses within the grounds. The school is situated in rural Norfolk, between Norwich and Thetford. It caters for young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The residential provision was last inspected in June 2014.

## Inspection Judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

### Requires improvement

The overall judgment reflects a number of shortfalls in safeguarding and healthcare. While safeguarding arrangements have improved, risks are not thoroughly assessed in all cases. There is a lack of clear planning for young people with health conditions. The leadership and management of the school has improved. The shortfalls identified were not all highlighted by monitoring and this limits the school's ability to improve. The impact of some good management is clear but not evident across all areas of young people's care, resulting in a number of critical aspects that require improvement.

Young people make consistently good academic progress, particularly young people who have experienced previous barriers to education. They have good attendance and progress well in terms of their starting points and abilities. Residential routines underpin this progress and support young people to overcome learning difficulties, giving them better life chances.

Young people build emotional resilience by being away from home. They learn to make new relationships and develop close and caring friendships by living with others communally. This prevails across school years. For example, meal time seating arrangements show mixed ages and gender. Young people collect their meals and approach tables knowing others will welcome them.

There are opportunities for young people to contribute to the provision. They are involved in improvements, including choosing paint colours and designing graphics in the common room. Areas of accommodation require refurbishment; therefore the standard of accommodation is not good for all young people.

Young people spoken to were positive about their care and experience. There is reasonable balance between activities, prep and free time. Young people spoke positively about activities, such as clay pigeon shooting, rugby, football, cricket, swimming, and dodge ball. They felt there was a lot of choice.

Young people are encouraged to maintain good conduct and personal safety. They let staff know their whereabouts by signing in and out of the school and are expected to take responsibility for this. House meetings enable them to put forward their ideas and propose changes to the residential provision. This helps them to contribute to their community.

Young people build areas of independence, such as tidying bedrooms and dormitories, changing bed sheets, packing belongings and ensuring they have student equipment. This helps prepare them for further education and independent living.

### The quality of care and support

### Requires improvement

Staff are knowledgeable about young people's diverse backgrounds and understand the impact of young people's previous experiences. Staff are unobtrusive in their observations of young people and monitor those new to the residential provision. This

helps young people to settle in, providing an individualised approach. There has been substantial redecoration in some of the residential areas, including the senior girls' and senior boys' areas and the sixth form. Décor is better with a more modern and homely style. Despite this, the standard of accommodation remains poor in places. Some bedroom has old furniture. Décor is dated and linoleum is worn. Refurbishment of these areas is underway and detailed in the school development plan.

Staff monitor young people's wellbeing and discuss health needs with parents. Health management plans for specific needs, such as epilepsy and diabetes are not complied prior to admission. Therefore staff record and manage specific health issues without clear guidance. Staff do not seek guidance from health professionals prior to young people's admission. Consequently, there is a lack of robust recording and oversight of medical conditions, which does not promote effective, individual health care.

Young people enjoy sociable meal times but have some grumbles about food options. They love the lunch time salad bar but state that healthy choices are not always offered at other meals. Catering staff liaise with young people and request their feedback in questionnaires. Menus reflect some young people's choices. Meal time etiquette is excellent. Young people are calm, ordered and friendly. They welcome one another, by inviting friends and younger children to join them at meal tables.

Staff provide a varied range of extra-curricular activities, outings, clubs and trips. They encourage physical activity and development of skills, helping young people to be active and to cultivate their interests. Young people are offered travel opportunities and benefit from new experiences they may not otherwise access. This promotes equality of opportunity in line with their peers.

The small staff team provides consistency and stability for young people. Staff are good role models and are respectful and considered in their communications. This results in an inclusive atmosphere, in which all young people are comfortable. Young people feel a genuine commitment from staff. All young people spoken to say that they are able to speak with the staff and that they felt listened to and respected. Young people are warmly welcomed to the school. Those arriving from overseas are collected from airports by a designated driver. This helps minimise anxieties for those new to the school.

Staff provide routine opportunities to discuss concerns and gain young people's ideas. Meetings run smoothly and participation is actively encouraged. This helps ensure activities are in line with young people's preferences. Staff monitor young people's welfare, confirm plans and advertise evening activities and forthcoming events. This enables young people to plan and prepare while staff check in with all young people between the evening meal and bedtime.

The staff support young people to maintain contact with their homes and families using media, technology and telephone. Recognition of poor internet access has led to substantial investment in a new high speed internet provision. This was not fully operational during the inspection due to technical difficulties but the faults were in the process of being addressed. Parents visit the school and telephone the school regularly.

## **How well children and young people are protected**

## **Requires improvement**

Safety of young people is adequate, although some circumstances lack clear assessment

of risk. Staff do not always consider sleeping accommodation to ensure young people are best placed. For example, when an incident took place, staff failed to assess the likelihood of future risks or implement mitigating actions. Lack of clear risk assessment does not support staff to fully safeguard young people.

All adults working directly with young people hold a disclosure and barring check. However, one adult living on site had no check on file. While this does not place young people in direct danger, it contravenes the school's policy and the national minimum standards in terms of adults living on school premises. Additionally, reference checks are not always taken up. Two references are requested on each application but in three files sampled only one had been pursued for each person. This does not demonstrate a robust system for processing the suitability of new staff and contradicts the school's recruitment policy

Young people say that they feel safe at the school. There is a welcoming, family type atmosphere, in which young people feel supported. Younger children and those new to the school are given time and consideration by others. The blend of age, gender and race promotes an inclusive environment where all are young people feel equally valued.

A new reception area on the perimeter of the grounds has improved the school's security arrangements. This makes the monitoring of visitors easier, promoting better safety for young people. Fire drills and equipment all meet with requirements and ensure young people understand safe evacuation.

The number of incidents where young people have left the school site has reduced. Responses are coordinated and protect young people from further risks if they do leave site. Reporting is clear and return interviews are conducted by the community police officer.

Clearly defined safeguarding arrangements work well. Senior staff are trained for their designated roles and all staff have a termly update on safeguarding children. Staff manage investigations into allegations and child protection concerns well. There is clear improvement in the reporting of these incidents. Child protection files show a clear chronology of actions taken and partnership working with relevant agencies. Feedback from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) highlights better reporting and transparency. This protects young people's welfare.

The staff approach behaviour management strategies with consistency. Strategies are based on positive reinforcement of clear boundaries and delivered in a respectful way. Staff are unified and seamless in their approach. The atmosphere in the residential provision is harmonious. This has enabled young people with behavioural difficulties to make radical changes in improving their conduct. A parent said: 'He manages his behaviour better now and they are good at keeping him safe.'

## **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

**Requires improvement**

The residential provision has a designated staff team. A staffing restructure means that staff have new roles and responsibilities. Internal appointments have caused minimal disruption to young people, who are familiar with staff. There is a plan to improve the existing systems and residential experience. However, this is in its infancy and the

impact is therefore yet to be realised.

Effective staff deployment ensures that young people are safely supervised and evening activities are varied and fun. Staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisal of their performance. Training has improved and staff have gained a level three equivalent qualification or are working towards it. However, there are gaps in training to address young people's specific health needs.

The atmosphere is calm and orderly. Young people are established in their routines and contribute their views about the provision through their daily house meetings. Records are mainly electronic and accessed by parents, teachers and residential staff. This provides a central point where all achievements and concerns are shared. The system ensures responses to concerns are timely and young people's changing needs are considered.

The staff team work collectively to provide consistency and stability for young people living away from home. They hold clear responsibilities for task management, making them accountable. The team share a vision for the provision that supports continuous improvement. Expectations and aspirations for young people are high. This helps young people work towards their potential and achieve their personal goals.

Monitoring is regularly undertaken and identifies areas for improvements. Monitoring visits are carried out regularly and internal review has begun. There is commitment to improve the provision. This is evident in the financial investment made in upgrading the décor, furniture and provision of better internet access. This is a work in progress, which continues in accordance with the development plan.

Parents, staff and young people all recognise the aims of the provision; to celebrate individuals and provide an inclusive environment in which all young people can achieve and grow. Parental feedback is positive. Parents speak about individual progress. One said: 'He has come on leaps and bounds. The boarding care has helped him to interact.' Another parent said that the school turned a 'frightened little girl into a happy young woman'.

There have been no external complaints and one internal complaint from a young person. Staff recorded and responded to the complaint appropriately.

The use of a central electronic data base system for all recording and events in relation to each pupil provides parents and carers with an overview. Parents use this system and access daily records from home. They cite key staff as helpful and communication with the school as good.

## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121229
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC027660
<b>DfE registration number</b>	

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Residential Special School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	41
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	8 to 20
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr R Thornton
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	17/06/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01953 887217
<b>Email address</b>	headmaster@neweccleshall.com

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