

Newbury Manor School

Newbury Manor, Newbury, Near Mells, Frome, Somerset BA11 3RG

Inspection dates	24/01/2017–26/01/2017	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Outstanding	1
The quality of care and support	Outstanding	1
How well children and young people are protected	Outstanding	1
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Children and young people receive bespoke support from enthusiastic teams of residential staff, teaching staff and therapists. The collective approach is extremely child-focused and consequently children and young people make excellent progress. Children and young people flourish due to the warmth and security of their residential experience.
- Excellent partnership working with parents, carers and professionals delivers a consistent approach to supporting children and young people with autism. The skills and specialisms held by the staff are used to great effect and transferred into the family home. Parents and carers report extremely positively about this school. A parent said, 'I can't praise them enough.' A social worker reported, 'I feel confident that he is safe and well cared for. There is excellent communication from all staff.'
- Safeguarding is effective and robust as a result of training and the use of current research and guidance. The commitment from leaders and managers in keeping children and young people safe permeates the school and the residential provision. Children, young people and their families receive effective guidance on the safe use of the internet and social media.
- Leaders and managers are ambitious for children, young people and staff. They lead by example, setting high standards and creating a positive environment. Leaders and managers embrace inspection and monitoring activities for learning and improvement opportunities. Specialist skills in autism, supported through research, are disseminated to other schools and universities.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the full names of children and young people are listed at each fire evacuation.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted conducted this inspection after giving notice on the morning of the first day. On arrival, an initial meeting was held with the principal, headteacher, head of care and acting head of care. Inspection activities included observation of residential practice over two evenings and informal discussions with children and young people. The inspector held interviews with senior leaders, the regional operations manager, residential care staff, the designated safeguarding officer, the health and safety officer, the speech and language therapist and the human resources manager. Contact was made with the local authority safeguarding team and feedback received from parents, social workers and health professionals. A wide range of documents and records were examined during the inspection.

Inspection team

Clare Davies

Lead social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

Newbury Manor School is part of Priory Education and Children's Services. Newbury Manor School is a co-educational, residential and day school situated in the Somerset countryside, 12 miles from Bath. It provides education and specialist care for residential pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders, often with additional complex needs. The school accommodates residential pupils between the ages of seven and 19 years. At the time of the inspection, there were eight pupils staying in the residential provision. Their stays vary from one night to a full term. The school was last inspected on 24 November 2015, as an integrated inspection of the residential and educational provision.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

Children and young people enjoy their residential stay and make significant progress in their learning, social skills and personal development. Success with improved sleep patterns, personal hygiene and food choices are welcomed by parents and carers as they are able to transfer the successful strategies into the family home. To assist with this progress, residential staff spend time on home visits, introducing helpful tools such as schedules, timetables and communication systems.

Children and young people are meaningfully involved in their residential experience. 'You said, we did' posters on the wall show what action has been taken as a result of listening to their views. For example, there have been changes to the food, activities and new notice boards. In preparation for the police community support officer visiting, his photo was distributed and staff asked children and young people to prepare some questions for him. A picture symbol was provided for some children and young people to ensure that they were prepared for the police officer's presence.

Many children and young people have had traumatic experiences at previous schools, often leading to their exclusion and being without any education for several months. The dedication and patience of staff is exemplary as they work alongside the child, at their pace, to enable them to develop trust and confidence. Excellent ways of engaging children and young people include linking their learning to their interests. Support from the same staff members provides consistency.

The residential provision offers flexible packages of care that support children, young people and their families. This joint working contributes to the stability of families and removes the stress of alternative care being sought. Residential staff work closely with families and provide strategies to address some behaviours.

The temporary absence of the head of care was carefully planned through mentoring the deputy to cover in her absence. The deputy head of care and residential staff recognise the seamless transfer of management arrangements as a result of the input from the head of care prior to her period of leave.

The deputy head of care and senior residential staff create a strong leadership team for the residential provision. An increase in management tasks has been welcomed by the leadership team, and incorporated well into their professional development. The residential staff team is extremely positive about the work. Team members are keen and committed to assisting children and young people to develop their personal skills. The enthusiasm from leaders and managers promotes a 'can do' attitude among the residential staff team. Residential staff report that they receive good training and excellent support on a day-to-day basis and more formally through supervision and team meetings.

Staff are sensitive and appreciate the impact that past experiences and early childhood trauma can have on children's and young people's behaviour. The acting head of care reports that children and young people do not present staff with challenges, and said,

'The challenges are with the child and it is our job to support them in managing and overcoming them.'

To promote a consistent response among the residential staff, care plans include 'scripts'. In consultation with the therapists, scripts are devised to ensure that staff give the same response to a child regarding a particular behaviour. For example, if a child pours their drink over the table, staff know the script to follow to encourage the child to stop pouring and to drink up or put the cup away. Committed staff deliver the scripts in a calm, relaxed manner, avoiding negative reactions to the behaviours and offering an alternative. This consistency for children and young people is highly effective in changing behaviour and scripts are transferred into the family home.

Health and social care professionals value this school. Comments include:

- 'All of the staff have a warm and friendly approach. They operate on sound principles and values. They demonstrate excellent partnership working with all agencies. They focus on the needs of the child, resulting in the acquisition of skills to enable growth.'
- 'They encourage involvement of appropriate professionals. They celebrate the child's success and hold open days where families are able to share in these celebrations.'
- 'The staff are good at listening to and responding to concerns. The school day is adaptable to the needs of the child.'
- 'The staff have been able to manage, very effectively, the most challenging behaviours, where other schools have not been successful. I am very happy with the performance of this school.'

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Children and young people receive exceptional care and support during their residential stay. An introduction to the residential provision occurs at a pace to suit individuals. As established day pupils, the children and young people are familiar with school routines, staff members and the environment before using the residential area. Introductory visits, and staying for tea, are gradually increased to a comfortable level when children and young people feel confident to sleep overnight.

A significant contributor to the success of the residential provision is the close working together with parents and carers. Staff make home visits to talk with parents, observe mealtimes in the family home and often join in with trips to a local park. These interactions ensure that key aspects of children's and young people's routines and responses to their behaviours are noted to be included in the school's care plan. Comments received include, 'The headteacher and the care staff visited our house to see (child) in his home environment, so they could replicate some of the things we do at home at school. He likes to know who he has each day as this helps with the transition. We tell him at home who is meeting him, so he is prepared. The headteacher will text or email us if there is sickness or a change in staff at school so we always know who is meeting him.'

Residential staff work collaboratively with colleagues who are delivering education and therapy. A whole school approach focuses on the child as an individual. Staff are creative

and resourceful, searching for innovative ways to engage children and young people in their personal development. For example, a younger child who fixated on his own negative behaviours and those of other children, was unable to move on emotionally and unable to engage in positive activities. The use of a 'box' to put away the incidents has been very successful to the extent that the child has significantly improved his behaviour and is able to engage and flourish with activities such as swimming and playing drums. Children and young people recognise the progress that they are making. A child said proudly, 'I don't bite and pinch anymore. We put it in the box. It's all done and dusted.'

Leaders and managers invite health professionals to hold their clinics at the school. As a result, consultant paediatricians, psychiatrists and nurses from the child and adolescent mental health service have seen and assessed children and young people in a comfortable environment with familiar adults. This arrangement is highly valued by parents and health professionals. This has enabled some children and young people to be assessed in person for the first time as they are too anxious to attend community-based clinics. Consequently, after review, some medication has been reduced and some children and young people no longer require medication. Such practice contributes to outstanding outcomes in the children's and young people's health and well-being.

The residential accommodation is on the first floor of the main school building. The furnishings and decor throughout are of a very high standard, providing a clean, safe and comfortable living space. Single en-suite rooms promote privacy. Children and young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms. Insufficient storage space for bed linen and towels was reported at the last inspection. A suitable solution ensures that these items are now stored for easy access. A small area of damp on the lounge ceiling has appeared due to a leak from the roof. A maintenance programme is scheduled for the school holidays in April 2017 to replace the roof and internal decoration will follow.

Bespoke care plans identify children's and young people's needs and how staff will support them in meeting their personal goals. Therapists contribute to the care plans with personalised programmes of speech and language, physiotherapy, sensory needs and communication. Through working closely with therapists, staff are trained on specific techniques and able to refer to documents, photographs and further reading to increase their understanding.

Parents, carers and professionals are extremely complimentary about this residential special school and the impact that it has on children's and young people's academic and personal progress. A social worker reports, 'They have had to work slowly to encourage him to "engage" in play and then found inventive ways of creating learning opportunities. They have offered a routine which he has adapted to and encouraged communication which has developed significantly.' A parent expresses her praise of the school, 'My son has flourished and every day I see he is moving forward to become a young man with many strategies to be able to live a good life. If I had to rate this school out of 10, it would be a 15.'

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

Effective safeguarding arrangements are integrated across the school. Good-quality

training leads to competent, well-informed staff who understand the school's child protection procedures. The designated person is experienced and trained to lead in safeguarding. She is tenacious in her approach to securing safe and suitable outcomes for children and young people. The school has established links with the local authority and is a member of an independent schools' forum for keeping up to date with safeguarding matters.

Safeguarding concerns are diligently reported and meticulous records are maintained. The designated person regularly evaluates the records held and considers improvements to the way in which they are collated. The local authority designated officer confirms that allegations are appropriately reported and no concerns have been highlighted in terms of the school's reporting and investigative process.

A strength of this school is its proactive approach to joint working with other agencies. Such examples have led to a fire safety adviser supporting a family by fitting smoke detectors in the home along with other safety systems. A referral to the local authority has secured a youth worker to support a young person outside school hours and school staff have visited homes to install parental controls and restrictions to the internet. This has provided a level of education to parents and allowed children and young people to use the internet safely. Collaboration with a social worker, therapist, teachers, residential staff and parents provides one example where research has informed a specific plan for a young person.

A rigorous approach to health and safety matters ensures that this school provides a safe environment for children and young people. Regular monitoring of systems, equipment and records identifies any shortfalls that then receive prompt attention for repair or replacement. A low-level fence has been replaced with a higher wooden one to provide some security to the site. The primary focus is to keep children and young people safe. However, design and appearance of the materials were given great consideration to avoid an institutional appearance. The health and safety officer is very experienced and suitably trained. He provides an additional benefit to the school by being a local fire fighter. The skills and knowledge that he provides ensure that the school is compliant with fire safety regulations. To improve the records of an evacuation, the names of the children and young people should be recorded in full on the report.

Visiting contractors to repair the school roof are expected in the spring term. Comprehensive planning includes the parking arrangements, guidance to contractors on how to conduct themselves on the school site and the appropriate level of engagement with children and young people. The therapy team will provide communication aids and schedules to explain to children and young people what is happening with the roof repairs to reassure them. Similarly, consultation has occurred with children and young people to select new play equipment. Old equipment has recently been removed as it was not considered safe.

Children and young people are supported with their personal development and safety through creative behaviour management plans. Risk assessments refer to protective factors to enable young people to take measured risks to contribute to their learning. For example, a child who enjoys climbing is not restricted but offered opportunities to climb play equipment with staff supervision to avoid climbing on to buildings. Activities on-site

and off-site are all subject to risk assessment. Children and young people enjoyed a summer camp in the grounds when they enjoyed the experience of sleeping in tents. Staff are committed to ensuring that children and young people do not miss out on age-appropriate fun and activities.

Staff are trained in de-escalation techniques when children and young people become distressed. The residential staff are highly skilled in communicating with children and young people and through knowing each other very well they are able to distract most behaviours and avoid the need for physical intervention. Comprehensive records demonstrate this success as the number of incidents has decreased from 13 in the summer term of 2016 down to four during the autumn term. At the time of this inspection, there were no reports of physical intervention being used this term. Leaders and managers review the data collected about the use of physical intervention to assess the safety and welfare of children, young people and staff. The review refers to research to consider any changes to practice.

A social worker reports, 'I have always been impressed by the approach of the staff to what sometimes looks like quite challenging behaviours from some of the other pupils – always dealt with calmly, choices offered, "talked through" the immediate difficulties and solutions found so that the young person or child calms and progresses to the next task.'

Staff recruitment is robust to ensure that only suitable adults are employed to work with children and young people at this school. Stringent procedures seek references that can confirm the suitability and integrity of the applicant. For example, five references were obtained for a member of support staff due to several references lacking depth of information. This rigorous approach confirms the leaders' and managers' commitment to the safety and welfare of children and young people.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

The leaders and managers of this school focus on continual improvement. The safety, well-being and success of children and young people are at the heart of daily practice. The senior leadership team members lead by example as they are visible throughout the school. They readily engage with staff, children and young people, providing highly motivated role models. An internal staff survey confirmed that they are very satisfied and enjoy their work. They recognise how they are trained and supported.

Leaders and managers have a strong grasp of how their school is functioning, the strengths and areas for development. They understand the needs of the children and young people and strive to provide the best opportunities and outcomes for them.

There are no formal complaints about this school. Informal concerns are recorded and addressed as lessons learned and how to improve practice. All have reached a satisfactory conclusion. The strong relationships developed between staff and parents enable issues to be raised openly for discussion.

The number of children and young people who access the residential provision is low in comparison to the number of day pupils. However, leaders and managers place great value on the residential aspect of the school and ensure that it is considered as an

integral part of the school. The investment in the accommodation to create single en-suite bedrooms is an example of the commitment to residential care at this school.

Monitoring and evaluation are extensive and insightful. An independent visitor comes each term and is rigorous in their approach, challenging residential staff to raise standards and extend their practice to aspire for outstanding judgements. 'Every day is an Ofsted day', the head of care reminds staff. With this attitude, inspections and audits are welcomed as leaders and managers embrace improvement. Regular checks are performed and internal audits have been more recently undertaken by the head of care as she has a phased return to work. The head of care reports the value of her auditing as she is able to have a more objective view having been on leave for several months. A senior manager within the national organisation visits at least every half term to monitor progress and compliance. Reporting mechanisms to the organisation identify any shortfalls or areas of concern.

Tracking progress for children and young people is informed through the embedded use of an assessment tool that has been designed following research with adults with autism. This assessment tool is integrated in residential care and the classrooms, creating bespoke targets for measurable progress each term. Such an integrated system enables children and young people to receive consistent support with their identified targets. The success of this system has led to the school being a group leader, supporting seven other schools with its implementation.

Leaders and managers ensure that they, and their staff, maintain professional development with internal and external training. Members of the senior leadership team are studying qualifications in the field of autism and associated behavioural disorders such as pathological demand avoidance and sensory integration. With these specialist skills, staff are disseminating good practice through providing training sessions to their colleagues and to other organisations such as schools and universities.

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

Unique reference number	131016
Social care unique reference number	SC033016
DfE registration number	933/6195

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	Residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	8
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to 19
Headteacher	Andy Holder
Date of previous boarding inspection	26/11/2015
Telephone number	01373 814980
Email address	newburymanor@priorygroup.com

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