

New College Worcester

2 Whittington Road, Worcester WR5 2JX

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

New College Worcester is a non-maintained special school. It provides education and care for young people who are blind or partially sighted, who are aged between 11 and 19 years old. Young people can access the national curriculum and progress to study beyond age 16. There are currently 68 young people on roll. Sixty-one young people stay in the residential provision on a termly or weekly basis. While all young people have a visual impairment, some also have additional needs. Young people stay in three residential houses and a hostel. All residential accommodation is located on campus.

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 May 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 4 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The leadership team has worked hard, since the last inspection, to ensure that young people's overall experiences during their stays at the residential provision are now good.

Young people value and enjoy an individualised experience when they stay at the residential provision. They enjoy a wide range of new and exciting activities. For example, one young person has been supported to strengthen his swimming abilities. As a result of this encouragement, he entered a swimming gala and came second.

The admissions assessment process has been strengthened since the last inspection. This change has enabled staff to help young people to have a smooth and safe transition into the residential provision.

Young people develop positive childhood memories from their stays in the residential provision. For example, young people excitedly told the inspectors about their 'wacky breakfasts' that the staff make for them.

Although staff oversight of young people's physical and emotional health has improved, there are still some weaknesses in practice. For example, staff have not sustained their oversight of a young person's dental care. This is a missed opportunity to help the young person to build and sustain healthy routines that ensure that his dental care is not compromised.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Since the last inspection, improvement has been made to the school's overall approach to safeguarding practice. Time has been set aside and put to good use to ensure that staff are well trained and understand, and can implement, safeguarding policies and procedures effectively.

When concerns emerge, leaders now promptly secure well-informed advice from the local authority to support and improve their safeguarding practice. As a result, all safeguarding arrangements are now fit for purpose.

Staff are now more effective at accurately assessing risk, and this helps young people to gain a better understanding of risks that can affect their daily lives.

Health and safety arrangements in the residential provision are well managed. Routine servicing and checks take place as required. Maintenance is carried out promptly, and there is a clear programme in place for ongoing refurbishment and development of the residential service.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good.

The leadership team members have worked hard to bring about the necessary changes to address the shortfalls identified in the last inspection. They are clear about their strengths and where work is needed to improve practice even further.

Governors have high expectations for staff who care for the young people who stay at the residential provision. The governing board and senior leadership team hold staff to account through having clearly articulated short-term and long-term goals. Objectives are being monitored and reviewed by a range of committee members from across the school. These systems are helping to ensure that continued improvement is being made in the quality of support provided to young people who stay at the residential provision.

Investment in training is helping staff to develop their skills and knowledge. However, the processes in place for monitoring and reviewing training are still too weak. Different systems are often used to capture the details about what training staff have received, but are not comprehensively brought together. This leaves leaders and senior managers without a complete and accessible picture of the skills of staff working in the residential provision. Furthermore, due to lack of prompt management action some staff have fallen behind in becoming enrolled on a level 3 qualification as required by the national minimum standards. Staff rotas do not detail staff members' full names. These shortfalls have not been identified, despite all the investment made in the residential provision. These weaknesses compromise the ability of leaders and managers to have an informed oversight of the residential workforce in terms of staff sufficiency, training and development.

Staff are good at providing different forums for young people to express their feelings and views about their residential experiences. These can include key-work sessions, young people completing questionnaires, attending house meetings and having general discussions. However, staff still do not routinely make a record of any actions taken when concerns are raised by young people. This ongoing failure to record key information means that a complete account of young people's experience and progress is not captured in their records.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standard(s) for residential special schools:

- Ensure that 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)
- Ensure that the school's learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and is updated if necessary. (NMS 19.4)
- Ensure that the school keeps a document that shows staff induction, training and development programme. (NMS appendix 1 point 20)
- Ensure that children's physical, emotional and social development needs are promoted. (NMS 3.1) This is about helping young people with their dental care.
- Ensure that every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress which can be read by the children at any time. (NMS 22.1) This relates to ensuring that records are made of key discussions held with young people.

Recommendations

- Ensure that staffing rotas capture staff members' full names.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC043048

Headteacher/teacher in charge:

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01905 763 933

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Inspectors

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