

# Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education, 50 Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4NF

## Inspection dates

27/06/2018 to 28/06/2018

## Context of the inspection

The purpose of this visit was to review the significant and widespread safeguarding shortfalls identified at the last inspection in December 2017, and to consider other areas of national minimum standards for residential special schools that were identified as not being met at that time.

## Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

The appointment of the new head of care has complemented the dual principal arrangements that were put in place following the last full inspection. Leaders' collective passion and vision is tangible. These factors are driving this service forward and have brought about notable improvements. Leaders and managers have not shirked from making difficult decisions in order to quickly improve the quality of care and education for children. Partner agencies and placing authorities described a much better service and improved outcomes for children.

A shared sense of responsibility and a strong focus on meeting children's needs are evident across all of the staff team. The staff team is cohesive and staff morale is good. The best interests of the children are at the forefront of practice. This has resulted in significant improvements in the number of national minimum standards now being met.

Serious and widespread safeguarding concerns that were identified at the previous inspection are now being addressed. The introduction of a dedicated safeguarding team has laid the foundations to ensure that children's needs are responded to effectively and that children are safer. Leaders are realistic about the need to continue to embed the changes and ensure that progress is maintained. Some examples of poor and concerning safeguarding practice have reduced more recently as the systems and structures that have been introduced begin to make a positive impact on practice. Risks to children are much better understood and responses to these risks are more effective.

Staff have been provided with training and support to develop confidence in identifying and managing safeguarding concerns. Staff spoke positively about the arrangements that have been put in place to manage concerns about children's welfare. The staff are

clear about who they can contact if they have concerns. Staff cite openness and much improved communication as crucial factors in improving and developing their practice. All staff spoken with during this inspection were positive about working at the school.

Care planning documents are much improved. These now provide staff with clear information about risks, take appropriate account of children's behaviours and concerns and direct the team in how to manage these. It is positive to note that the team's approach to providing care mirrored the directions set out in the care plans. The staff now provide outreach work to support parents to develop an approach consistent to the one used at school, in order to help minimise emotional distress for the child.

The use of physical intervention has reduced significantly. There is a commitment from the leadership team to reduce this practice further. The oversight of these incidents is not always effective, but it has led to an improving picture. However, there are some inconsistencies in how effective the use of de-escalation strategies are for children. In addition, although debriefs for children following the use of physical intervention occur; further work is required to ensure that this process is meaningful and informs future practice.

The arrangements in place for the safekeeping and administration of medication are now good. Training provided for staff is described as being good because of the positive difference it has had on staff practice. Staff appreciated this training as they feel more skilled as a result.

The management of concerns and allegations that are made in respect of adults who work with children has improved greatly. There is evidence of the involvement of the designated officer and a willingness to seek advice and support from them. The quality of internal investigations has also improved.

The arrangements in place in respect of safer recruitment are good. Files were found to be clear and organised. In an example of innovative practice now taking place, the service sends a photograph of the applicant to the referees to confirm their identification.

Leaders and managers do not have clear records in place to confirm that they have ensured themselves that all adults who work at an independent hair academy within the school grounds have been checked to ensure their suitability to work with children and young people. Currently the processes in place do not provide evidence of good safer recruitment processes because there is no clear record of how many adults are working at the academy.

Arrangements for the supervision of senior leaders are weak. Senior leaders do not independently meet with someone for support, challenge and practice discussion. The current arrangements do not ensure the well-being of the senior leaders.



## National minimum standards

### The school is making good progress but must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:

- 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.
- 11.1 The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 13.1 The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.
- 13.9 The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.
- 19.1 Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up to date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school.
- 19.6 All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance.
- 22.1 Every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress which can be read by the child at any time (except where the data controller is not obliged to supply the information to the child), and add personal statements or statements correcting errors.
- 6.2 The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of children are ensured.
- 12.6 A written record is kept of major sanctions and the use of any reasonable force. Records include the information in Appendix 2 (use of reasonable force). The record is made within 24 hours and is legible. Children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records. The school regularly reviews any instances of the use of reasonable force and examines trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and learn in a way that will inform future practice.

## Inspection team

Tracey Ledder	Lead social care inspector
Paula Lahey	Social care inspector

## Information about this school

Exeter Royal Academy for Deaf Education is a non-maintained, mixed, residential special school and college, which caters for pupils between four and 25 years of age who are hearing impaired, with some pupils having additional needs. The main form of communication used is British sign language. English and Sign Supported English communication is also used. The academy is situated within the city of Exeter and operates from one site, which is divided into two areas: college and school. Residential accommodation is provided in both settings. Pupils board for five days, seven days or part-time.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113654
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC022216
<b>DfE registration number</b>	113654

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 boarding schools.

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

<b>Type of school</b>	Residential Special School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	27
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	13 to 22
<b>Principle's</b>	Ms Trudy Chappell and Mr Sylvan Dewing
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	11/12/2017
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 267 023
<b>Email address</b>	@exeterdeafacademy.ac.uk

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