

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Children receive good quality care and support from a highly committed staff team who have a thorough understanding of their needs. Relationships between staff and children are positive.
- Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the residential provision. They say that it is fun, that they feel listened to by staff and that they make friends.
- Children's independence is helped to develop. Parents consider that their child's confidence and independence has improved, and that they are safe when staying in the residential provision.
- Children speak with enthusiasm about the activities. They particularly enjoy the after-school activities that include the judo club and swimming club. Children make scrapbooks that include drawings and photographs of the activities that they enjoy.
- The residential provision is well led and managed. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision because they monitor the quality of care effectively.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Leaders and managers to consider developing a system for school staff to formally handover information to residential staff.
- Ensure that there is a clear audit trail in relation to how complaints are managed and details of the outcomes of complaints.
- Ensure that if there are any changes to the planned menu, children and staff are informed immediately.
- Review all areas of the residential provision to ensure that a homely environment is promoted. This includes reviewing the purpose and necessity of checklists and information posted in the children's accommodation. In addition, ensure that children's personal information is not displayed in communal areas.
- Ensure that children and staff, who are involved in restraints, have their experiences of the incident recorded consistently.

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 for residential special schools:

- 12.5 All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) within 24 hours of incidents of restraint, including reasonable force, they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by.

Recommendations

- Consider developing a system for school staff to formally handover information to residential staff.
- Ensure that there is a clear audit trail to demonstrate how complaints are managed, and the outcomes of complaints are detailed in records.
- Ensure that menus consistently reflect the meals that are provided, and if there are any changes to the menu that this is communicated effectively to children and staff.
- Ensure that all areas of the residential accommodation provide children with a homely environment. In particular, review the purpose and necessity of institutional-type checklists and information posted in the children's accommodation. In addition, ensure that children's personal information is not displayed in communal areas.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive good-quality and individualised care and support. Children said that they thoroughly enjoy staying in the residential provision. They said it is fun. They feel well cared for, listened to, and well looked after by staff. Relationships between staff and children are good.

Children enjoy a wide range of activities and hobbies. They enjoy the trampoline club, swimming club, playing football and drama. An important aspect for children attending the school is that they develop confidence and make friends. A child said, 'I can socialise here, I have made new friends and my independence has improved.' A parent commented that their daughter has grown in confidence, developed social skills and gained more independence. Another parent has commented that her son has 'come on leaps and bounds'.

Children enjoy making scrapbooks that comprise pictures they have drawn and numerous photographs of the activities they are involved in. These books provide a positive record for children to keep and share, reminding them of memories at this school.

Children consider others and are supportive of each other. At the time of the inspection, a child was a little nervous about staying the night. Staff gave him comfort and reassurance. However, other children also reassured him with good effect, and another child said, 'We make him feel comfortable, he soon relaxes.' This is a good example of the care children give to one another.

Children are supported with their homework and staff sit with them after school and support them in their reading, and help with spelling. As a result, the school has identified the progress that residential children are making with English and spelling.

Communication from the residential staff to the school staff is good. Residential staff formally advise teaching staff of any matters or concerns from the previous evening/night. However, residential staff consider that an opportunity to receive information formally from teaching staff would further enhance communication between the teams, as at present this can be 'as and when'.

Children enjoy mealtimes that are well managed and are 'family style' occasions. Children said that they like the food. The evening meal is prepared in the school's main kitchen and delivered to the residential accommodation. However, children and staff said that, on occasions, the meal that appears on the menu is not what they always receive. Children and staff said that they are not always informed of these changes and this can cause some children confusion.

The management of medicines is safe and effective. Some children have specific healthcare needs. These needs are clearly documented in their healthcare plans, and

staff receive specific training in these areas. One child commented that he feels that staff support him very well in relation to his healthcare needs.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that there are effective safeguarding procedures, and that there is a good culture of safeguarding children across the school. There have not been any referrals to the designated officer in relation to any allegations and suspicions of harm, and leaders and managers respond effectively to any concerning issues raised by staff or children.

All staff, including school governors, have received safeguarding training at the required level. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of safeguarding principles and protocols. Children have not been missing, and there are no concerns in relation to the inappropriate use of the internet. Children said that they feel safe. When asked what makes them feel safe, they said, 'The adults.' Parents also consider that their children are safe at school.

Children said that they can speak to staff if they have any worries or concerns. In addition, they know how to contact the independent listener, and they said that she visits them regularly.

Positive behaviour is promoted well and children show respect towards each other. If needed, leaders and managers provide staff with individualised behaviour support plans that guide them about how to support children in managing their feelings and emotions. These plans are completed with the children's parents, and are regularly reviewed.

Since the last inspection, there have not been any recorded incidents of restraint used in the residential provision. However, there has been a number of restraints used during school time. One restraint involved a child from the residential provision. The headteacher and deputy headteacher closely monitor and scrutinise the incidents that lead to restraint being used in order to look for triggers and trends. However, not all records in relation to the use of restraint clearly record the children's views of the intervention used, or those of staff. Sanctions are fair and proportionate, and are closely monitored for their effectiveness. Staff receive training in the school's preferred method of de-escalation and restraint.

Bullying is not tolerated. Children feel confident to report bullying and staff respond appropriately, proportionately and effectively to any incidences between children. In addition, staff respond effectively to inappropriate comments children may make about others. These include comments in relation to sexuality and disability.

Staff recruitment and selection processes are effective and help to safeguard children. Children stay in an environment that is safe and well maintained. Environmental risk assessments are regularly reviewed to ensure that all known risks are managed well. There are regular checks on the utility services and electrical

equipment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Suitable and experienced leaders and managers lead the residential provision effectively and efficiently. Staff place the needs of the children at the centre of their practice. The residential provision is viewed as an integral part of the school.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and systems are used effectively to monitor the quality of care. The headteacher completes a comprehensive annual audit of the residential provision and identifies where improvements can be made. The governors rigorously monitor the residential provision and detailed reports are completed following their visits.

Leaders and managers respond effectively and in a timely manner to complaints. However, the quality of record keeping relating to complaints varies. Records do not always clearly evidence a robust audit trail of the actions taken, and the outcome of the complaint.

Care plans demonstrate a person-centred approach that empowers children. Children are involved as much as possible in the planning of their care and the setting of personal targets. These targets and plans are regularly reviewed. Children are consulted about their experiences at the school prior to their annual review.

Staff receive effective and timely supervision covering all relevant issues. They reflect on the care given to children. Leaders and managers ensure that as well as mandatory training, staff receive specialist training to meet the needs of the children. Staff spoke highly of the support that they receive.

Children enjoy their time in the residential provision. They said that they like their bedrooms and they can bring personal items from home with them. Staff make every effort to ensure that a homely environment is maintained. However, not all areas of the home are homely. This is because there are a number of checklists and information posted in the children's areas that pertain to staff information/guidance. In addition, some children's personal information is displayed on their wardrobe doors.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what

difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC039099

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