

Fountaindale School

Nottingham Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 5BA

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This is a residential special school for physically disabled and sensory impaired children and young people, who may also have learning disabilities, aged from three to 19 years. The school is operated by Nottinghamshire County Council. There are 74 pupils on roll at the school. The residential accommodation is adapted to meet the physical needs of the children and young people. It is located in the main school building, but is separate from the main school. Residential care is provided, during term time, for pupils aged from 14 to 19 years. Up to four students are resident, two nights a week, for a period of 10 weeks, to promote independence skills, communication and social skills.

Inspection dates: 6 to 8 November 2017

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 **good**

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

Date of previous inspection: 13 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Children have social opportunities that enrich their lives. Staff support children to make friendships and develop positive relationships. As a result, children are developing confidence and social skills.
- Staff know children's needs well; they support them to develop independence and life skills. Staff are aspirational for children and support them to reach their potential.
- Staff prepare carefully for children's stays and activities. Children with complex needs are supported to communicate, to have their health and mobility needs met, and to participate in a range of activities.
- Children are provided with opportunities and support to share their views, wishes and feelings. Staff and leaders listen and respond to their views.
- Children are kept safe because of rigorous safeguarding practice.
- Children benefit from excellent partnership working between school and care staff, leaders, professionals and families.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Health and safety practices are generally good. However staff should consistently check children's bedrooms, prior to each stay, to ensure that there are no potential hazards.
- Independence plans would be strengthened by linking them to individual education plans (IEPs), and education, health and care (EHC) plans.

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

Recommendations

- Staff should ensure that children's rooms are checked prior to each stay to ensure there are no potential hazards to children. (National Minimum Standard 6.2)
- Independence plan targets should be linked to Individual Education Plan targets and information in Education, Health and Care Plans. (National Minimum Standard 2.8)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff and managers place the well-being of children at the centre of this service. Care is provided by experienced, trained staff. Children have positive relationships with staff and with their peers. Parents have confidence in the care that their children receive. Staff know the children's individual needs and personalities well.

The residential accommodation is based within the school, but is separate and private. Rooms are adapted to meet individual needs. Children can bring personal bedding and other items to personalise the rooms.

The residential experience is linked to the school's independence club. Children aged 14 and over can attend the independence club, which is an organised programme of activities and an evening meal. Children have the option of accessing the residential service for one night a week during term time. School and care staff provide good-quality information to parents and carers about the residential service.

School staff and residential care staff share information effectively so that each child has a smooth transition from school to residential. Staff prepare well for each child's stay and for each child's attendance at independence club. There are sufficient staff on duty to supervise and provide appropriate individual care. As a result, children benefit from new experiences and social activities in a safe way.

There are good morning and evening routines. Staff ensure that personal care routines are tailored to each child. Staff sensitively support children who require assistance to eat.

The inspector observed an evening activity of archery at a local college. Children with a range of needs and abilities enjoyed the activity and the social interaction. College staff supporting the activity were skilled and child focused. They developed bespoke ways of ensuring that each child was able to participate. Children learned new skills and enjoyed the activity. Parents report that children are benefiting from participating in new activities.

Overall, children's records are very good. Staff ensure that they have enough information to meet children's identity and cultural needs well. Children's communication needs are well understood, and their preferred methods of communication are used. Children are supported by communication aids where possible.

Healthcare needs are addressed well. Staff make referrals to, or make parents aware of, specialist services where appropriate. Staff also liaise with dietitians, physiotherapists and mental health services. Community paediatricians and specialist nurses liaise closely with school staff and visit the school to review health plans. Specialist teaching assistants administer medication and undertake health procedures

in accordance with each child's healthcare plan. There are excellent healthcare plans and personal care plans. Each plan refers to the importance of staff respecting children's privacy and dignity.

Specialist teaching assistants and the health coordinator have recently developed and implemented an 'epilepsy passport'. This is a recording tool that can be used to carefully monitor information about seizures, which will inform treatment decisions.

All children have behaviour support plans and care plans that include information about family and carers. Plans are child centred; they include information about children's views, likes, dislikes and preferences.

Children and families receive information about a range of opportunities to share views and make a complaint. There has been one complaint by a child since the last inspection. The principal met with the child to ensure that a resolution had been agreed. The school's reward system is being changed as a result of the complaint. This demonstrates that children's views are listened to and respected.

Children also have independence skills records. These records include feedback after each activity. Parents receive feedback after each residential stay. When children return to school following a stay, there is a handover of information with the class key worker.

Care plans and independence skills plans include targets for children, which are agreed with parents and children. Some targets would be strengthened by ensuring that they are linked to, and informed by, IEPs and EHC plans.

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

The school has comprehensive safeguarding policies. School and care staff are aware of the additional vulnerabilities of disabled children. There is shared information, skill and knowledge across the school and residential settings. This joined-up approach helps to safeguard children and ensure their well-being.

Where there are concerns, for example self-injurious behaviour or challenging behaviour, there are child-centred behaviour support plans in place. Behaviour is carefully assessed and monitored. Effective steps are taken to reduce and manage any risks or concerns.

There is detailed information on the school website and within school, informed by Nottinghamshire County Council policies and Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures, that sets out how staff should reduce risks and respond to concerns. Staff have received training and understand procedures regarding allegations against staff who work with children. Staff and leaders are aware of their individual safeguarding responsibilities and are signposted to the local authority's whistle-blowing policy.

There is excellent recruitment practice that ensures staff are rigorously vetted before they begin work at the school. Staff induction systems ensure that new starters are provided with clear information about safeguarding policies and practice.

There are no reports or concerns of bullying or discriminatory behaviour.

There have been a very small number of low-level physical interventions. All staff are trained in an accredited method of safely intervening to prevent harm. Staff adhere fully to the training. Behaviour plans advise staff on what works best for each child, including how to de-escalate behaviours and intervene safely to prevent harm. Detailed records are kept. Staff and children, as far as possible, are involved in a review of any intervention. Information is shared with parents and partner agencies fully.

There are robust health and safety policies and practices in place. The responsible senior manager and the site manager have well-organised monitoring systems in place. Detailed risk assessments and checks are regularly completed. Children and staff know how to report any hazards.

Two minor potential health and safety issues were identified during the inspection. They were addressed immediately, risk assessments were revisited and there was no impact on the children. There is a recommendation for residential care staff to consistently check children's rooms prior to stays.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, a new school principal and a new principal childcare officer, the lead for residential care, have been appointed. Both are experienced and qualified. The principal is committed to providing an inclusive, child-centred service in which children are supported to reach their potential.

The senior management team works effectively with parents, families and partner agencies to ensure that children do well. There is good ongoing assessment of children's needs and progress. Leaders and staff ensure that children's achievements are celebrated.

School leaders work well with the governors. There are systems in place to ensure that governors monitor the performance of school leaders, the progress of children and the achievements of the school. Governors receive training, including safeguarding training, to support them to fulfil their responsibilities.

The chair of governors is the lead link with residential care and undertakes monitoring visits. The views of children, staff and parents are sought during monitoring visits, as recommended at the last inspection. Children and families are provided with information about how to contact the chair of governors.

Quality assurance visits are also undertaken by an independent visitor and an

extended services coordinator. These visits are very positive, particularly the feedback from children and parents.

The principal also works closely with leaders of the county council. There have been some changes to resources based within the school. A review of some aspects of local authority's children's provision is underway. The principal has ensured that there is effective communication with governors and families during this period of review. However, the review has made limited progress on plans to expand and enhance the residential provision.

One change since the last inspection has been to health provision within the school. School leaders have worked closely with specialist health staff and specialist teaching assistants to enable improvements. There are excellent systems in place that mean children's health and medication needs are known and responded to. School staff regularly liaise with community paediatricians and nursing staff carry out liaison visits to the school.

Leaders are meeting with the health and safety representatives of the local authority to discuss risk assessments for off-site activities. The objective is to enable more flexibility in planning. This was a recommendation from the previous inspection.

A further example of excellent partnership working is a productive relationship with a nearby college. Children benefit from participating in activities at the college. College staff welcome partnership working with the school.

Parents' feedback is overwhelmingly positive. One parent said that his child's experience has exceeded his expectations. The child has learned new skills, developed new interests and grown in confidence. Another parent said that that she has been 'blown away' by the care provided by the nurturing staff and the progress her son has made.

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: SC402858

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Stuart Cameron

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Inspector

Cathey Moriarty, social care inspector



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