

# 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, who may also have learning disabilities, aged from three to 18 years. The school is operated by Nottinghamshire County Council. There are 77 pupils on roll at the school. The residential accommodation is adapted to meet the physical needs of the children. It is 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 18 years. The primary focus of the service is to promote independence and improve social skills.

**Inspection dates:** 3 to 5 February 2020

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

**requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected

requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

requires improvement to be good

The residential special school is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of previous inspection:** 28 January 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

During this inspection, the inspectors were aware of a serious incident that has been investigated since the previous inspection. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, the actions taken by the setting in response to this incident were considered alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Leaders have failed to ensure effective safeguarding practice in the residential provision. However, the residential provision continues to provide effective care to young people.

The residential and education staff teams work in partnership. Good communication supports young people to have enjoyable stays in the residential provision. This collaborative approach is successful in improving outcomes for young people.

Residential staff have good knowledge, skills and experience. They develop strong and warm relationships with young people. This means that young people trust staff to nurture and care for them. These trusting relationships enable young people to settle.

Young people's self-care and independence skills improve. This means that young people can transfer these skills to their home environment.

Young people have access to a range of enrichment opportunities. Creative indoor and outdoor activities ensure that they develop new skills and interests. This increases their confidence and self-esteem.

The school does not provide an independent person for young people to contact, should they have any concerns. This limits their capacity to access independent support and advocacy.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

Safeguarding practice is not good enough. However, there are no serious failures which have resulted in actual harm.

Fire safety arrangements have been poor. Fire drills are undertaken each term. However, not all young people who access the residential provision take part in these fire drills. This means that staff may not know how to evacuate young people safely and that some young people are not familiar with the evacuation procedures. Fire doors to young people's bedrooms have been propped open. This practice fails to protect young people from potential fire risks.

Staff training arrangements fail to address the specific needs of disabled young people. The safeguarding training is generic. It does not focus on the vulnerabilities and indicators of abuse associated with disabled young people.

The arrangements to respond to young people being absent without permission or going missing are inadequate. Staff are not familiar with the relevant statutory protocols. Individual risk assessments for young people are not in place. These combined issues fail to provide staff with a clear plan of action in the event that a child goes missing. This could place young people at risk of harm.

Physical interventions have not been used since the last inspection. However, staff have not been given physical intervention training. This means that the staff are not equipped with the skills to ensure safe physical intervention practice.

The vetting of new staff has not been rigorous enough. The head of residential provision has not had oversight of the recruitment records of all residential staff.

Staff are sensitive to young people's intimate and personal care needs. They treat young people with dignity. Staff enable young people to become more independent.

Residential staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They understand how to report allegations and concerns.

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

Leaders, including governors, have not ensured effective safeguarding and management arrangements. A new senior leadership team have implemented a programme of development. Improvements are evident, but not yet embedded.

The interim executive headteacher has clear improvement plans, based on a realistic evaluation of the service. She is providing effective support to the acting head of school.

Internal and external monitoring of residential provision is poor. The quality assurance and monitoring visits do not take place as often as they should. The monitoring reports fail to highlight weaknesses.

Governance has been ineffective. Governors have not visited or reported on the residential provision. They have failed to be effective in their wider duties at the school. Governors acknowledge that they lack clarity on their current roles.

The interim manager for the residential provision is tenacious and dedicated. She leads a team that is passionate about providing high-quality care. However, neither the interim manager nor her team is adequately supervised. This limits the opportunities to identify performance issues and professional development needs.

Currently, there is no clear guidance to address potential issues relating to staff who manage or work alongside their family members. This does not ensure transparency about the management of safeguarding issues and supervision arrangements.

## **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 standards for residential special schools:

- 2.2 The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school who children may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. This person may be known as the 'independent person'. Children are informed who this person is, and how to contact them and they are easily accessible. Children are also provided with one or more appropriate helpline(s) or outside contact numbers, including the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England, to ring in case of problems or distress.
- 7.1 The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 12.3 Staff receive appropriate training and support to recognise and deal with incidences of challenging behaviour or bullying. This training should include assistance in managing staff members' responses and feelings arising from working with children who have emotional difficulties which result in challenging behaviour. Staff training is regularly refreshed.
- 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.
- 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.
- 20.1 The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who is independent of the management of the school, to visit the school six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the head teacher (or school equivalent).
- 20.2 Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish).

- 20.3 Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the head teacher (or school equivalent) and where applicable the governing body, organisation, or partnership. Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body), within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary. Monitoring reports should be retained by the school and made available during an inspection.
- 20.4 The headteacher (or school equivalent), governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school carries out, and records in writing, once each year: a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for boarding pupils, in relation to: its Statement of Purpose; its staffing policy; the placement plans for individual children; and an internal assessment of its compliance with these standards. Where appropriate such a report may be incorporated within a review of the whole school.

## **Recommendations**

- Ensure that all young people who stay in the residential provision take part in fire evacuation drills at frequencies which ensure safe evacuation. (Linked to National minimum standard 7.2)
- The head of residential provision should have oversight of the recruitment vetting and check records for all staff who work in the residential provision. (Linked to National minimum standard 14.1)
- Arrangements to prevent young people from being absent or missing need to be strengthened. Residential staff should refer to statutory guidance for children missing from care or home. Individual risk assessments for 'missing' incidents further reinforce safeguarding arrangements. (Linked to National minimum standard 11)
- Ensure clarity about how allegations, safeguarding issues, complaints and supervision arrangements will be managed where family members work together. (Linked to National minimum standard 15.11)

## **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:** SC402858

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Acting Head of School - Jan Collins

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Telephone number:** 0162 379 2671

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## **Inspectors**

Amanda Ellis, social care inspector (lead)

Catherine Honey, social care inspector

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