

Fosse Way School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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Inspector Anna Williams

School address Fosse Way School, Longfellow Road, RADSTOCK, BA3 3AL
Telephone number 01761 412 198
Email
Headteacher Mr D Gregory

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

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 residential special schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{1,2}

Information about the school

The school is a maintained specialist school, located in the town of Radstock. It provides education for 175 pupils aged three to 19 years who have a statement of special educational need. In addition, it offers weekly residential provision for up to 14 pupils of either gender who have autistic spectrum disorders. Whilst the majority of these pupils will be between 11 and 18 years of age, where appropriate, accommodation may be made available to those aged 19 or 20. The residential provision forms part of the main school building. The residential provision was last inspected in February 2011.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	good
Outcomes for residential pupils	outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	good
Residential pupils' safety	satisfactory
Leadership and management of the residential provision	good

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is good.
- The school provides a good boarding experience for residential pupils who thrive on the care and support they receive.
- Residential pupils benefit from good relationships with members of staff who provide clear boundaries and a safe and stimulating environment.
- The school meets its duty to safeguard residential pupils. However, the fire risk assessment and supporting residential pupils to understand fire evacuation procedures are not in line with national minimum standards.
- Residential pupils make extensive progress in relation to their starting points when joining the residential provision.
- Diversity and individual needs are recognised in planning and caring for residential pupils, and they are accorded equality of opportunity.
- The residential provision does not meet five national minimum standards.
- The fire risk assessment does not contain suitable and sufficient assessment of the specific needs of the pupils boarding in the residential provision, and action points from the current fire risk assessment are outstanding.
- Residential pupils do not take part in regular fire drills in 'residential time'.
- Some surveillance techniques in use intrude unreasonably on pupil's privacy.
- Residential pupils do not have a permanent record of their history and progress when staying at the provision.

- Individual pupil records are not kept by the school for a period of 25 years after the date of birth of the pupil.
- There were no shortfalls in national minimum standards at the last inspection.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Residential pupils within the house enjoy positive relationships with each other. Residential pupils benefit from constructive and warm relationships with experienced and committed staff members. Staff work with pupils from their individual starting points, build upon their existing strengths and support them to develop new ones. Residential pupils make extensive progress during their time as a weekly boarder. Comments from parents include 'the house has made a huge positive difference on my child's and my family's life together', and 'the impact of the house on my child has been around their health and behaviour which has changed dramatically, for their good.'

Residential pupils' feedback is sought each term about the quality of care. Through these feedback forms, pupils have seen changes happen in menu planning, and further activities on offer for residential pupils. This means pupils can see that their feedback has a direct positive impact on their time in the house.

Observations of pupils staying at the house demonstrate that pupils are relaxed in the house accommodation and respond well to clear routines in place. Feedback from parents confirms that pupils are keen and eager to return each week for their stays. Comments from parents include 'my child comes home smiling on a Friday and returns back to the house smiling on a Monday. It's great to see my child so content there'.

Residential pupils learn independent living skills through undertaking regular tasks around the house. Staff assist pupils with guidance and learning around money management. Pupils go shopping for ingredients, and prepare meals on a regular basis with appropriate staff supervision. This means pupils are supported to develop skills and build confidence around daily living tasks and helps prepare pupils for adulthood. Comments from parents include 'looking to the future, following my child's time at the house, I can see my child being more able to cope with a supported living setting as an adult', and 'my child's independence skills have improved greatly in their time at the house, and they also help at home now too, which is great!'.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the school's provision for residential pupils is good. Staff work in partnership with parents and professionals to comprehensively assess residential pupils' individual needs prior to accessing the house. Together they draw up detailed placement plans and follow a tailor-made transition into the house. Each residential pupil has an allocated key worker, who works with the pupil on a regular basis.

The accommodation is of a good standard and provides a comfortable and secure environment for pupils. All residential pupils have their own bedroom, furnished and decorated in accordance with their needs and wishes. However, there is not clear individual risk assessment and review in place for pupils who have a means of surveillance on their bedroom doors. This means that these individual pupils are not being reassessed appropriately to consider whether this surveillance is still required, thus possibly intruding unreasonably on pupil's privacy.

Maintenance issues are addressed promptly so that the accommodation presents as well maintained. The spacious communal accommodation provides ample opportunities for personal development, as pupils can be alone or part of a group with ease, and move between both.

Residential pupils receive good support to lead a healthy, active lifestyle. Parents and residential staff work effectively in partnership to promote the health of the pupils. Residential pupils remain registered with their own doctors and dentists, and parents retain primary responsibility for meeting their child's routine health needs. The staff are trained in first aid and they also receive further training in epilepsy awareness and food hygiene. This means residential pupils receive support from suitably knowledgeable staff. The quality of the school's catering arrangements are good. Residential pupils prepare their own meals in the house for 2 nights of the week, and eat in the school's central dining area for the other 2 nights. Menus demonstrate a healthy, balanced and suitably varied diet for pupils, and allow for specific dietary needs of pupils.

Residential pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to socialise and learn, through a good range of after-school leisure activities. Activities and resources include sports clubs including football, trampoline, and rock climbing; youth club; shopping trips and local walks. This means that pupils have opportunities to try new experiences, meet new friends and learn new skills.

Residential pupils benefit from staff who work across the academic and residential care settings. This means that staff work consistently with pupils to reach their targets in all areas of their life within the school.

Residential pupils maintain contact with their families and people who are significant to them. Residential pupils' records detail individual contact arrangements and staff demonstrate good knowledge of individual circumstances. Parents confirm that contact arrangements are effective and they are kept well informed of their child's time at the house.

Residential pupils' safety

The school makes satisfactory provision to safeguard residential pupils' welfare. However, the fire risk assessment and supporting residential pupils to understand fire evacuation procedures are not in line with national minimum standards.

There is robust implementation of policies and procedures that relate to recruitment so that only those deemed suitable are appointed so as to safeguard the welfare of the residential pupils. Child protection procedures in place are clear and effective, and staff demonstrate sound knowledge of these procedures in order to safeguard pupils. Comments from parents include 'I feel the staff keep my child safe during their stays', and 'the staff keep my child safe and well at the house'.

The use of physical intervention and sanctions is infrequent and when used is in accordance with the approved behaviour management method which the staff are trained in.

Staff demonstrate a sound awareness of behaviour that could be interpreted as bullying and vigilance by staff reduces opportunities for such instances to occur and also effectively minimises opportunities for children to go missing.

Residential pupils are protected by regular health and safety checks of the building. However, the fire risk assessment does not reflect the specific needs of the residential pupils who currently stay in the house, and therefore does not highlight potential hazards around pupils' possible reactions to the fire alarm. Further to this, residential pupils do not undertake fire drills in residential time; therefore pupils are not supported to understand what the emergency procedures are when staying in the house.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

The leadership and management of the residential provision is good. Residential pupils are provided with written and pictorial information about the house which summarizes the Statement of Principles and Practice. Policies and procedures in place within the house are understood and followed by residential staff. This leads to an environment for residential pupils which is ordered and safe.

Residential pupils enjoy the stability of an efficiently run house with a stable staff team. Staff are sufficient in numbers, and hold or are working towards gaining appropriate childcare qualifications. Pupils benefit from a well-trained staff team and training for staff is suitably planned to meet the needs of the individual pupils staying. Staff receive regular supervision and feel well-supported by the senior management team.

The residential provision maintains a pupil and external complaint's log, although positively there have been no entries since the last inspection.

There are regular monitoring visits and these include opportunities for pupils and staff to speak in private with the visitor. These reports highlight areas of improvement for the residential managers to consider, in order to improve the quality of care.

Individual residential pupil records are limited in content, and do not provide an accurate record of the pupil's history and progress at the house. Records which are kept by the house contain inconsistent information about pupils achievements and do not capture what life is like for a residential pupil in the house. There is a lack of management monitoring to ensure the consistency of pupil records. Individual pupil records which were written since the last inspection have not been retained by the house in line with minimum standards.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.

- Any use of surveillance equipment (e.g. CCTV cameras) or patrolling of school buildings or grounds for security purposes does not intrude unreasonably on children's privacy. (NMS 5.6)
- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards') and any requirements set out in regulations relating to school premises. (NMS 7.1)
- In addition, fire drills are regularly (at least once per term) carried out in 'residential time'. (NMS 7.2)

- Every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress which can be read by the child at anytime (except where the data controller is not obliged to supply the information to the child), and add personal statements or statements correcting errors. (NMS 22.1)
- Any individual pupil records are kept by the school for a period of 25 years after the date of birth of the child or are passed to the next school and a receipt obtained. This retention period is the minimum period that any pupil file should be kept. (NMS 22.3)

What should the school do to improve further?

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28/09/2011

Dear pupils,

Inspection of Fosse Way School

I recently came to the house to do an inspection of the care you receive when staying. Thank you for letting me take part in some of your activities and to eat dinner with you. I think that the house gives you good care and support.

You have lots of puzzles and games to play at the house, as well as all the school facilities you can use in the evenings. You can go out on the bus and visit new places with staff, or go to youth club or sports clubs. Your bedroom is personal to you, and you can decorate it with posters and photos of your family. There is plenty of food to eat, and you can help prepare meals with staff support. You help with tasks around the house, and this will help you when you leave the house in the future. It's good to learn new skills. Staff help you to progress well.

There are some things the house could do better. Pupils who have chimes on their bedroom doors should have this assessed to see if they are still needed. This means that if they are not needed, they can come off the door. Staff should help you understand what to do in case of a fire in the house, it is important that you know what to do in an emergency in the house. Staff write records about your stays but they are not being kept for you to look back on. Other records written by staff do not capture your stays at the house fully.

Thanks again for letting me spend some time with you. Overall, your house is caring and supportive of you, and helps you make lots of progress.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Williams