

Shapwick School

Mark Road, Burtle, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA7 8NJ

Inspection dates

22/02/2017 to 24/02/2017

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good **2**

The quality of care and support

Outstanding 1

How well children and young people are protected

Good 2

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding 1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The school has a clear policy on safeguarding which is adhered to in practice. Staff have a good working knowledge of safeguarding procedures. This protects children and young people.
- Children and young people make good to excellent progress in all aspects of their lives. A number of them have moved on to further or higher education.
- Children and young people enjoy their time at the school. They develop good relationships with their peers and the staff.
- Children and young people receive excellent individualised support from a well-trained and committed staff team. This work is enhanced by additional support provided by the school's therapeutic team, which works cohesively alongside the staff team.
- Children and young people develop an understanding of other people and cultures, and are well supported to develop respect for others. This is further supported through their involvement in charity work.
- The residential accommodation provides young people with a comfortable, homely environment in which to thrive.
- Leaders, managers and staff are keen to further improve practices at the school.
- Health and safety at the school is excellent. Staff involve children and young people in this work to develop their understanding of environmental risks and how to address these.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are consistently kept of its administration. (National minimum standard 3.8)
- Consistently operate safe recruitment in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (National minimum standard 14.1)

Information about this inspection

The school was contacted on the morning of the inspection and the inspectors arrived at the school at midday. Inspectors met with children and young people and observed staff interaction. In addition, group meetings were arranged with children, young people and the residential staff. Inspectors met with the headteacher, the head of care and a range of ancillary staff. The inspectors scrutinised a variety of records, documents, policies and procedures.

Inspection team

Wendy Anderson

lead social care inspector

Polly Soper

social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Shapwick School is registered with the Department for Education and with the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic pupils (CReSTeD) under the 'special provision' category. It is inspected by both Ofsted and CReSTeD. The school specialises in supporting pupils whose education has been adversely affected by dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. Approximately half of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. There are five residential houses spread across three sites: a mixed gender house for the preparatory school and four single gender houses for the senior school and sixth form residential pupils. The school currently has 81 pupils on roll across the two sites, of which 48 are residential pupils. The remaining students are day pupils.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Children and young people receive exceptional individualised support throughout their time at the school. In addition to academic skills, they learn independence and life skills. They develop skills and coping strategies which will help them in their life after school. Feedback from both current children and young people, and those who have recently left, is very complimentary.

Children and young people are happy at the school. They speak with great warmth of the school and the staff who care for them. They like their accommodation, with some saying 'it's like a sleepover' and 'I've got extra brothers and sisters'. Children and young people learn to value other people, their cultures, ideas and views.

Children and young people's safety is central to the work undertaken by the school. Staff demonstrate a good working knowledge of the policies and procedures in this area.

A strength of the school is the relationships staff have developed with the children and young people. These are based on trust, respect and honesty, and are developed through good processes of consultation with children and young people.

Behaviour at the school is well managed. Children and young people respond well to an approach that is based around positive reinforcement. During the inspection inspectors attended an end-of-week assembly where children and young people are praised and rewarded for their efforts, achievement and progress.

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the strengths, and the areas for improvement. They have developed detailed plans to address the areas for improvement. Leaders and managers welcome inspection. They see it as a positive event, linked to their own monitoring and that of the independent visitor, to help them to drive forward practice.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Children and young people receive exceptional individualised support throughout their time at the school. The clear admission criterion reflects the expertise of the staff team in working with and caring for children and young people with dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. They do not accept young people with behavioural difficulties.

There is a strong nurturing ethos in each of the residential houses and across the school. Children and young people commented on how well they are cared for by the staff. The staff team are skilled at communicating with parents and other professionals. This enables them to develop children and young people's individualised plans. Plans are signed and dated, and reflect children and young people's known and emerging needs.

The school has a team of therapists; they are integral to the day-to-day work

undertaken at the school. The team includes speech and language and occupational health therapists. They hold individual sessions with children and young people, advise the staff team and contribute to individuals' plans. There is a cohesive and holistic approach to care and education.

Since their starting point at admission, children and young people have made progress that ranges between good and outstanding. For example, young people who would not communicate verbally now do so, and others with eating disorders are now flourishing. Young people praised the staff for the support they have received. One said, 'this place is fantastic', and another said, 'at my other school they did not understand me, they do here and it's great'.

Children and young people are helped to develop self-esteem, self-confidence and resilience, and to develop a positive view of themselves. Some have designated roles within the school. These include the school council, anti-bullying ambassadors, prefects and heads of house. Children and young people demonstrated a clear understanding of these roles and their responsibilities. They receive training and additional support from staff for this work. They are very proud of the roles they have taken on, and enjoy them.

A number of children and young people attending the school are from different countries. The staff support them with their cultural and religious beliefs. Staff liaise with their parents and guardians on a regular basis to ensure that they are kept up to date with what is happening in the child or young person's life.

The health needs of children and young people are well managed. One error was found in the record of controlled drugs. Since then, records and audits of records have improved. Staff manage personal care, where required, with great sensitivity, ensuring that children and young people are treated with dignity.

Consultation with children and young people is a strength of the school. Their views are valued and where possible acted on. The staff involve children and young people in all aspects of their care. This includes seeking views on the development of the residential accommodation, meals and activities.

Staff are very good at keeping in touch with parents and carers. One parent praised the staff for their work in this area.

There are four residential houses. These provide children and young people with a safe, homely environment in which to live and develop. The refurbishment to accommodation is ongoing. Within the main house, which is on the main school site, any work is subject to listed buildings requirements. However, staff have been creative within these restrictions. Children and young people are proud of their residential accommodation.

Children and young people take part in a large range of activities. The activity programme was devised in consultation with the children and young people. This enables them to pursue their current interests and try new ones. The school enrichment programmes include a significant amount of charity work. A number of young people attend clubs in the local community. This helps to increase their social networks beyond those at school.

The catering provision at the school is excellent. Children and young people are provided with a varied and healthy diet. The catering staff encourage children and young people to give feedback on the meals. This feedback is used to further improve what is on offer. Catering staff ensure that all dietary needs are catered for.

The school policies and procedures are updated annually to ensure that they reflect developments in practice, guidance and legislation.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

The school has comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures which are adhered to in practice. These are in line with both local and national guidance and legislation. Safeguarding is a standing item at the staff briefing each day. They receive training on safeguarding procedures, child protection, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and internet safety. The team are knowledgeable, demonstrating a good understanding of safe care during this inspection. The designated safeguarding officers have developed effective working relationships with external agencies such as the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO), police and the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). As a result, when children or young people raise a concern it is responded to effectively. All children and young people spoken with said they feel safe at the school, and they named a number of staff who they would go to if they had any concerns or worries.

Staff work with children and young people to develop their understanding of keeping themselves safe, including online safety. Throughout the boarding houses and school noticeboards there is information about the designated safeguarding officers, help lines and the independent visitor. Children and young people had a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of these individuals.

Recruitment policies and procedures are in line with 'Keeping children safe in education' and 'Working together to safeguard children'. During this inspection a selection of staff personnel files were inspected. Of these, one did not contain the information required, which reduces the effectiveness of this process.

The staff team work with children and young people to develop their understanding of healthy and safe relationships. This work is supported by school therapists. Currently the guidance on appropriate touch and boundaries is under review.

Children and young people are aware of the school and house rules. These are based on being positive members of a community. Children and young people regard the rules as reasonable and fair. Records on behavioural issues are clear and include support for children and young people to discuss and understand the effect that their behaviour has on themselves and others. The school's therapists are involved in the development of behaviour plans, where required. Risk assessments are in place for children and young people, where required. These are very detailed, identifying children and young people's vulnerabilities and known triggers, and including a range of effective responses for staff to use.

Children and young people said that bullying was not an issue. They said that if it does happen they go straight to staff who will 'sort things out'. In addition, they said that they would always tell staff if they saw any bullying or teasing taking place. Some children and young people are appointed as bullying ambassadors. They take their role very seriously and receive training and support. This includes the importance of sharing information with staff. Children and young people spoke very positively about the bullying ambassadors.

There have been no incidents of children or young people going missing from the school. There is an appropriate policy and procedure in place should this happen.

Health and safety is exceptionally well managed at the school. Risk assessment and attention to fire safety provide children and young people with a safe environment. In one house, the young people took the inspector through what they needed to do if the fire alarm sounds.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

At the previous full inspection on 28 September 2015, six recommendations were made. These have been met. There is a distinct separation between children and young people's school and home lives. This is seen as an important part of nurturing and enabling children and young people to grow as rounded individuals. All placement plans and health care plans are clearly signed and dated, and reflect children and young people's current and emerging needs. Improved information is gathered prior to a child or young person's admission to the school. All of the staff team receive regular supervision which is of a good quality and is linked to the annual appraisal systems. All staff have also received specific training on child sexual abuse and mental health awareness. Records of medications do provide an audit trail for all stock levels of prescribed medication, with one exception that has been mentioned previously in this report.

Since the last inspection the school has been through an uncertain period. This has now been resolved, with the school being under new ownership.

The school and the residential provision are very well managed and led. Staff, children and young people spoke positively about the school leaders. They are seen as accessible and approachable. Senior staff have instilled in the team an ethos and culture which embraces inspections as events which enable them to develop and improve the services they provide for the children and young people. Inspections include the reports of the independent visitor and the scrutiny of the governing body, whose reports are rigorous and are used to drive forward practice.

The staff team have high aspirations for the children and young people they care for. The school motto, 'The same road by different steps', is truly reflected in the innovative and proactive approaches the school uses to enable children and young people to achieve. An example of this is the school's therapy team, which is an integral part of the school.

The therapy team not only provides one-to-one support for children and young people, but also works closely with the residential and education staff to provide an outstanding standard of support and service. All staff work closely together across all aspects of the school, and have developed exceptional communication skills to ensure that children and young people receive the care they need. The school has had its work with children and young people recognised, and has been identified as part of a research project being undertaken in Australia regarding students with dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia.

Children and young people are cared for by a well-trained, committed and stable staff team. Staff have the children's and young people's best interests and development at the heart of all their work. The relationships between staff and those they care for are based on mutual respect and trust. Children and young people spoke very highly of the staff. One said, 'they look after me really well and are always there when I need them.' Staff have an excellent understanding of the needs of each individual they care for, and will act as strong, effective advocates for children and young people to ensure that they are protected and reach their full potential. Staffing levels are kept under review to ensure that there are appropriate numbers of staff on duty to deliver an appropriately high standard of care.

Managers also use staff supervision as a tool to drive and develop staff practice. Staff supervision links into a robust annual appraisal system, which in turn informs individual staff members' training programmes. Regular team meetings enable staff, as a group, to discuss individual children or young people, and to develop bespoke support plans to meet their needs.

Complaints are effectively dealt with in line with the school's policy and procedure. Comprehensive records are maintained. Leaders and managers use this information as part of their reflection on practice, and use it to further develop practices.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework'.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceed the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	123929
Social care unique reference number	SC031481
DfE registration number	

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.

Type of school	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	52
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	eight to 18
Headteacher	Mr Adrian Wylie
Date of previous boarding inspection	28/09/2015
Telephone number	01458 210384
Email address	adrian.wylie@shapwickschool.com

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