

Horton Lodge Special School

Staffordshire County Council, Rudyard, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 8RB

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Horton Lodge is a local authority-maintained residential special school for 52 boys and girls aged two to 11 years who have physical disabilities and associated learning difficulties. Some of the children have additional visual, hearing and/or speech and language difficulties. The residential provision operates from Monday to Wednesday each week, with six to 10 children residing at the school on any one night. Children access the residential provision on a rolling six-monthly programme and usually for a maximum of two nights per week.

The residential provision is called Kiplings, and is located in a separate wing of the school.

The residential provision was last inspected in March 2017.

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 October 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: 28 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Children enjoy the residential experience. They thrive and develop their independence, communication, mobility and social skills.
- Children experience positive relationships with staff.
- Children trust staff, who listen to any worries or concerns.
- Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding children, and they are aware of children's vulnerabilities.
- Care staff work closely with education staff. This makes sure that children receive consistency of care across the school and residential setting.
- The quality of partnership working between staff and parents is very good.
- Children receive excellent healthcare and support from the nursing and care staff.
- Children's diverse needs are met.
- Children's stays are carefully planned around their individual needs.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- To ensure that staff receive annual appraisal.
- To ensure that regular fire drills are undertaken.

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:

- All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have formal annual appraisal of their performance. (National minimum standard 19.6)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have the opportunity to stay at the residential provision usually for one or two nights a week. They make excellent progress across a range of areas, including developing independence and communication skills. Parents and carers gave examples of how the residential provision has had a positive effect on their development. For example, one parent said:

Residential is a lovely, welcoming place where my child continues her learning. Targets are set and discussed to improve her independent skills. All the staff have a positive approach to learning, giving each child the chance to become independent.

Care staff know children's educational targets and work with teaching staff to make sure that progress continues beyond the school day. This encourages further progress.

Staff know the needs and vulnerabilities of the children. Care plans are up to date and they are regularly reviewed. Staff have regular meetings to exchange key information regarding the children. This enables the timely sharing of information and contributes to a consistent approach by the staff team.

Children benefit from a very inclusive approach to their complex healthcare. Staff communicate with parents and a range of health professionals effectively to make sure that there is consistency of care. Medication is stored safely, and arrangements for the administration and recording of prescribed and non-prescribed medicines are effective. Staff receive training to make sure that they can respond appropriately to any child's health needs.

Staff receive training to support children's communication needs and to capture their views. Staff use alternative forms of communication with non-verbal children to aid their understanding and make sure that they have opportunities to have their voice heard in the decision-making process.

The catering manager maintains a record of each child's special dietary needs and has effective procedures in place to make sure that these are met.

Children participate in a range of evening activities with the aim of providing opportunities for them to relax and enjoy their leisure time while at the same time promoting their independence and education. For example, children undertook an arts and craft activity during the inspection that included a celebration of the autumn season. This involved them looking at and touching leaves and pinecones to support visual and sensory sensations.

The residential provision is well maintained and has a full range of equipment and

adaptations to meet the needs of all the children. Staff make sure that children's complex needs do not limit their opportunities. Children's bedrooms are bright and colourful. Children confirm that they like their bedrooms.

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

The staff team knows the children very well. Staff are able to identify each child's vulnerabilities, so they are able to plan their activities accordingly, making sure that they consider all possible risks. One parent said, 'the staff keep her physically and medically safe, and they do this very well.'

The designated safeguarding lead makes sure that procedures are followed rigorously. The system of monitoring safeguarding concerns makes sure that records detail the immediate action taken to protect children's welfare. These enable the swift assessment of whether further action is necessary.

Because of their complex needs and associated vulnerabilities, staff closely supervise children. No children have gone missing from the residential provision since the last inspection. Staff have strong relationships with the children, and they are proactive in nurturing and redirecting any challenging behaviour. The residential provision works alongside the school policy. As a result, physical restraint and sanctions are not used. There have been no complaints made by parents, children or professionals, further indicating that children feel safe.

The environment is physically safe. Regular health and safety checks, routine servicing of equipment and robust risk assessments make sure that the residential provision is safe for children, staff and visitors. However, fire drills have not been regularly undertaken.

Recruitment records demonstrate compliance with safe recruitment practice. This practice prevents unsafe adults from working within the provision and thereby makes sure that children are kept safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The head of care is committed to providing high standards of individualised care for children. Senior leaders are passionate about the residential provision and the role that it plays in enhancing and improving the lives of children.

Staff have opportunities to make sure that they keep up to date with best practice developments and they undertake training to extend their competence to meet the complex needs of the children.

All staff are qualified or working to gain the relevant qualification for their roles. They receive supervision, which they describe as supportive. However, annual appraisals have not taken place.

Monitoring of the provision is good. The head of care is able to show the benefit that the provision has for children. Quarterly reports to senior managers provide a detailed overview of how well the residential provision is meeting the needs of the children. The current development plan, which is subject to regular review, demonstrates the commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

Staff and leaders work effectively in partnership with an extensive range of other professionals in areas such as health and safeguarding. Excellent links with other schools, sharing ideas and best practice, enable learning and development. There is good collaboration between managers, staff and parents, who speak highly about the quality of care provided and the difference that this makes to them and their children's lives. One parent said: 'Since he has been attending residential, he has become much more independent with dressing himself and his self-care skills have improved. It's a great place the staff are all friendly, it's like a family.'

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 difference 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: SC038727

Headteacher/teacher in charge:

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01538 306214

Email address: headteacher@hortonlodge.staffs.sch.uk

Inspector

Dave Carrigan, social care inspector (lead)



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