

Newbury Manor School

Newbury Manor, Newbury, Near Mells, Frome, Somerset BA11 3RG

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Newbury Manor School is part of Priory Education and Children's Services. It is a co-educational, independent special school for children who have autistic spectrum disorders, often with additional complex needs. Newbury Manor School is a residential and day school situated in the Somerset countryside, close to Frome.

At the time of the inspection, there were 33 children on roll. Ten children stay in the residential provision that can accommodate up to a maximum of eight children at one time. The length of stay varies from one night to a full term.

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 February 2018

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: 24 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- A committed and nurturing staff team cares for children. The staff team provides a stimulating and enjoyable time in the residential provision where children have fun and enjoyable experiences that enrich their lives.
- Leaders and managers motivate staff and encourage creative thinking. This leads to effective problem-solving and a 'can do' attitude.
- Strong leadership provides clear direction and guidance, including the use of research to help shape day-to-day practice. Children benefit from the collaborative approach of staff across the school.
- Parents, carers and professionals express high levels of satisfaction. Strong working relationships develop, enabling staff to find and agree creative ways to support children who have autism. A professional said, 'I have seen children flounder at other provision but 'blossom' when they start at Newbury Manor. This has an impact on the families that feel that their child is safe and learning, often for the first time since they started education.'

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- To strengthen monitoring systems in order to identify shortfalls in records and ensure that any concerns are escalated promptly.
- Consider how to support all children with their personal development, in particular through puberty and with their sexual health.
- Review the going missing policy to ensure that it reflects statutory guidance.

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that residential staff coordinate with education staff on the delivery of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum to enable further promotion of children's sexual health and development during residential time.
- Review the missing child policy to incorporate the statutory guidance for children who are missing.
- Strengthen monitoring systems to ensure that shortfalls in reporting and recording are identified promptly.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive a very good quality of care when staying at the residential provision. The level of personalised care and support is a strength of this school as staff give a great deal of thought and attention to each child's individual needs. This is underpinned by the collaboration of all staff, regardless of their roles in the school. Education staff provide support to the residential provision and vice versa. Therapists work closely with residential staff, teaching staff, parents and carers.

When a child first visits the residential provision, this is carefully planned in consultation with parents, carers, teaching staff, residential staff and therapists. The introduction can take as long as it needs to, to suit the child. Similarly, extensive planning occurs to prepare children to leave and move on to another school or college. Use of pictures, social stories and calendars all contribute to helping the child to understand what is happening, when and who with.

Children who come and stay for one night a week are informed as to what member of staff will be supporting them, which helps to reduce anxieties and develop a routine. Parents and carers value the importance placed on routine for their children. One parent said, 'He knows he can stay here, be safe and then come home.' Residential staff provide some parents and carers with 'planners' in advance to enable them to prepare their child for what will be happening during their stay.

Parents and carers express very high levels of satisfaction with the residential provision. They are confident that the staff understand their child and their unique behaviours. This is particularly valued when children have previously experienced disruption and exclusion from other schools. One parent said, 'They look for alternative ways to meet an aim or an outcome when previous attempts have not been successful.'

Examples of leaders, managers and staff going above and beyond to meet the needs of the children were seen. A teacher stayed late into the evening in the residential area to support a child to settle. When a child was ill with a high temperature, a member of staff stayed overnight to support the night staff in case emergency medical attention was required. Residential and teaching staff undertake home visits during school holidays where such family support is beneficial to the child and some parents and carers are provided with an activity planner for the school holidays to assist with maintaining routines.

Children develop trusted and secure relationships with the adults who care for them. The knowledge and skills of the staff team enable them to communicate well with children who have autism. Creative approaches such as sign language, pictures, symbols and technology are used. Consequently, documents are created with good use of colour and photographs to provide child-focused records. For example, the minutes of the school council meeting are easy to understand, with photographs and

pictures being accompanied by simple text to describe the council activity and decisions made.

Parents and carers receive informative emails with photographs, sharing what learning and activities their child has enjoyed while away from home. These documents provide a good record for memory boxes and photo albums. In addition, use of a web-based journal enables parents and carers to log in and see photographs and videos created at school to share the experiences. Parents and carers can add comments and view again with their child when they are back home in their care.

Children make progress in their personal development and learning. This can range from increasing their communication skills to using a knife and fork to learning how to use the washing machine. The developments in communication lead to a reduction in unsettled behaviour as children are taught how to express themselves and the staff are skilled at interpreting behavioural traits.

Key-work time is an opportunity to work towards the targets that are identified from the education, health and care plan. One developmental area that is not always considered in the residential time is in relation to the children's sexual health and puberty. Overall, by staying at the residential provision, children have fun by doing things that they like such as swimming, outings, visiting parks and the opportunity to try new experiences such as camping and horse riding.

The arrangements to ensure that children receive the medication and medical care that they require are strong. Trained residential staff take responsibility for the safe management of medications. Leaders and managers are creative through inviting health professionals to the school. Clinics are held by a psychiatrist, a paediatrician and a dental service. This partnership working ensures that children can access these specialist health services in a setting where they feel safe and comfortable.

The dedication and commitment from leaders, managers and the staff are evident as they spoke very fondly of all the children and they became animated when talking about them. This approach is welcomed by parents and carers as one parent reported, 'I like how much passion and enthusiasm they show for the child in their care, both in how they are with them and how they talk about (my child).'

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

Leaders and managers take safeguarding matters seriously and strive for a safe environment where children are protected from harm. There has been one isolated incident of a delay in staff reporting a concern to leaders and managers. Once the headteacher was informed of this matter, she ensured that other professionals were notified promptly. A thorough investigation was undertaken and an action plan formed to include any lessons learned. This led to staff revisiting some training, being issued with further guidance and increasing their awareness and reporting of potential concerns. A social worker reported that they were very impressed with the headteacher's response to this incident.

There has been one incident of a child going missing. This was managed well to ensure their safe return. A review of the missing child policy identifies that some amendments are required to ensure that it incorporates statutory guidance. As the designated safeguarding lead person, the headteacher attends regular multi-agency training with the local authority and is a member of an independent schools safeguarding forum.

Children are supported to keep themselves safe and to take measured risks, particularly when using the internet and experiencing physical activities. Documents clearly identify known and possible risks and provide strategies on how to reduce and manage them. These assessments are reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Residential staff give consistent responses to children's behaviour, providing them with security. The collaborative approach from all staff, and frequent use of a scripted response, enables children to become settled. This is evident from the reduction in the use of physical intervention and the implementation of the school policy to positively engage with children, 'connect before correct'. For example, to prevent a child from injuring himself or others one child was held seven times in one term, four in the next term and only once in the following two terms. A parent reports that initially at this school their child did escalate their behaviour, 'we never felt it was something the staff couldn't handle'.

Comprehensive health and safety systems protect children, staff and visitors. Staff are trained in fire safety and children have experienced evacuations of the building. The noise of the fire alarm is traumatic for some children, causing considerable distress and anxiety. Planned drills are managed sensitively to reduce the impact of this important aspect of safety. Not all the fire drills are recorded in one record. This hinders the monitoring of their frequency.

Employment procedures include safer recruitment guidance with in-depth exploration of career history and references. This robust approach reduces the risk of unsuitable people being permitted to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have high standards and lead by example. They are visible and involved in the day-to-day operation of the school and residential provision. Through providing training, supervision and good support, there are expectations for the staff team to ensure that children receive the highest level of care and support. New staff said that they are supported well through their induction.

Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to the residential team, with some staff leaving. Three new staff are now in post and more staff will start soon. To address the shortfall, teaching assistants have provided care and existing staff have worked additional hours. This has ensured that only known adults care for the children in the residential provision and therefore this has had minimal impact on

them. The lack of a full permanent staff team has led to some slippage in maintaining and monitoring records. For example, the record of fire drills is not complete, an out of date review report was found on file and the lack of monitoring daily records contributed to the delay in reporting a concern to the designated safeguarding lead person.

Leaders and managers strive to be open and transparent with parents, carers and agencies, leading to strong working relationships. Clear and regular communication supports these effective partnerships. Leaders and managers take prompt action to respond to any concerns raised by children, parents and carers. This ensures that people feel listened to and consequently there have been no formal complaints.

Leaders and managers closely monitor the progress of children. Records relating to behaviour, restraint, bullying and emotional development are interrogated and thoroughly analysed. Daily briefings and weekly meetings provide forums to highlight where any changes in practice are required to aid progress and development. This can range from reminding staff to keep the noise levels low in the dining room to changing a behaviour management approach for an individual child. Creative solutions are implemented and reconsidered if unsuccessful. Parents and carers recognise this, as one parent summarised, 'Nothing is too much trouble for these guys and they have a wealth of ideas and strategies up their sleeves.'

Staff development is encouraged through training and embracing research-based initiatives. Since the previous inspection, a member of staff has achieved a degree qualification in autism and the therapy team has undertaken training on sensory integration. The residential provision liaises with other schools, disseminating aspects of their work that has been recognised as good, and outstanding, practice.

The individuality of children is celebrated. There is a culture of acceptance and tolerance for all. All staff recognise the need to advocate for the children in their care, to ensure that they are not discriminated against due to their individual needs. Staff strive to ensure that the children have opportunities like other school age children, for example camping and many off-site activities. Children are central to decision making where their views are established using a range of communication skills.

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: SC033016

Headteacher in charge: Maria Harman

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector

Clare Davies, social care inspector



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