

# The Grange Therapeutic School

15–17 Somerby Road, Knossington, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 8LY

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

The Grange School is an independent residential special school for 73 boys aged eight to 17 years, 14 of whom reside at the school during the week. The residential accommodation is provided in two houses, one of which is located on the school site. The second is situated in the village of Knossington, a short walk from the main school building. The school is situated in a rural location close to the town of Oakham in Leicestershire. The school caters for students who have social, emotional and mental health needs, autistic spectrum disorders, attention deficit disorders and mild learning difficulties. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2017.

**Inspection dates:** 30 January to 1 February 2018

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

How well students 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:** 13 March 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Students make very good progress in this school. The residential provision has a positive impact on the progress and experience of students.
- Care, education and therapy staff, along with external professionals, work closely with students. Consequently, students benefit from a cohesive education, health and care service.
- Experienced and knowledgeable residential staff implement high standards of personalised care.
- Partnership work with parents and carers and professionals is a strength of this residential school.
- Safeguarding practice is effective and ensures that students are safe from harm.
- The new headteacher has a clear vision for the whole school. He is respected and provides strong leadership for the staff team.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- To ensure that the contents of the statement of purpose are in accordance with the national minimum standards.
- To strengthen the school governing body, with the inclusion of an independent representative for the residential provision, parent governors and student representation.
- To provide further safeguarding training, resources and refreshers on specific subjects and ensure that training is evaluated.
- Residential staff to take a robust approach to following up safeguarding concerns with the local safeguarding teams.

## **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:

- 1.1 A suitable statement of the school's principles and practice to be known as the statement of purpose is available to parents and staff, is made known to children through an appropriate method of communication and is seen to work in practice. The statement describes the overall purpose of the school and describes any theoretical or therapeutic model underpinning the practice of the school. It also explains the ethos and philosophy of the school, and provides an outline of provision for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

### **Recommendations**

- Consideration to be given to ensure that an independent person represents residential provision on the governing body and that there is a parental representative. (Linked to NMS 13)
- Consider the involvement of a student from the school/residential provision in the governing body. (Linked to NMS 17.1 and 17.2)
- Ensure that there is specific safeguarding training and/or resources for the staff team, particularly in relation to sexual exploitation, self-harm, neglect and disability. Following any training or learning activity, managers should evaluate training for effectiveness. (Linked to NMS 19.1 and 19.4)
- Ensure that any safeguarding concerns identified within the school are followed up with the relevant local authority/safeguarding team. (Linked to NMS 11.1)

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Students admitted to the residential provision benefit from a detailed pre-admission assessment and planned transitions. The multidisciplinary team considers all placements carefully. This ensures that the residential provision will meet individual needs. It also ensures compatibility between students. A further assessment process means that students are placed with the most suitable peer group. As a result of good placement matching, group dynamics are good and students enjoy positive relationships.

Staff have warm and nurturing relationships with students. During the inspection, students spoke positively about the school and the staff team. Staff provide consistent routines; they instil good manners, social skills and respect for each other. Residential accommodation is warm, comfortable and inviting. When students return from school, they are welcomed into their individual homes. Staff talk to students about their day, as any interested parent would. Day-to-day care for students is well managed and supports their overall development.

Since the last inspection, the school commissioned an independent nutritional assessment of menus. Changes to menus have ensured that students enjoy well-balanced, nutritious meals. Meals in the houses are freshly cooked, nutritious and healthy. Students and staff enjoy relaxed and sociable mealtimes together. Students have choice in their menus and can express their preferences.

Residential stays have a positive impact on the progress of students. This is reflected in the views of parents and professionals. One parent said: 'He has come on leaps and bounds.' A social worker stated: 'This has been a very positive placement. He has made really good progress in all areas. The team offers consistency, which is really important.'

Monitoring of educational attainment highlights the positive impact of the residential provision. Education attendance and attainment is excellent.

Students are encouraged to continue their studies to improve their employment opportunities. Vocational training and work experience opportunities are sought and students are supported to attend. All students leaving this school move on to further education or employment. These opportunities are sustained year on year, providing long-term positive outcomes for students.

Integrated healthcare supports a broad spectrum of complex care needs. A range of professionals support staff in the school and residential provision. These include a qualified psychotherapist, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and counsellors. The therapy team develops a sound understanding of the underlying needs of the students. They work with the residential staff to ensure that these needs are met and that care is consistent. Students make very good

progression because of the therapeutic interventions.

Students have fun during their residential stays. The homes are set in extensive grounds, with woodland and plenty of opportunity for outdoor pursuits. Staff take part in activities with students. Trips to local towns and villages mean that students can go to sports centres, enjoy meals out and go to the cinema. The school has its own fishing academy. Each of the homes has plenty of play equipment, toys, books and resources for indoor play. These activities help students develop self-confidence and social skills and support healthy living.

Medication is managed by trained staff who manage this confidently. Medication procedures have improved since the last inspection. Managers have introduced more robust procedures for record-keeping. This means that auditing and stock control of medication is accurate.

Work with parents is very effective. A parent said: 'The staff are always on the ball.' Regular communication about care and education provides a consistent approach. It supports students in their residential placements and in their family homes. A parent said: 'As a result of my son being there, he has improved weekends and holidays at home.'

The residential provision enables students to share concerns with other adults. Students have access to a telephone, which they can use to make calls in private. They have a range of adults they can talk with, including the independent visitor, quality assurance visitor and school counsellors. Students know how to make a complaint, but confirmed during the inspection that they have not made complaints.

### **How well students are helped and protected: good**

Students are safe in this school and learn how to keep themselves safe. A social worker said: 'The young person is really safe here and he has come on in leaps and bounds.' Safeguarding incidents are very low.

The school has a range of trained safeguarding officers. When child protection concerns arise, the safeguarding leads take appropriate safeguarding action. Residential staff do not always have a robust approach to following up safeguarding concerns. This means that they cannot be sure if safeguarding teams are taking relevant action. The local authority designated officer confirmed that there is effective partnership work and safeguarding practice.

Staff understand the individual vulnerabilities of all students. Individual risk assessments provide clear guidance to staff. Individual behaviours and risks are well managed. There are no concerns about students going missing from this environment. The school's policy broadly reflects current protocols and procedures. The headteacher is revising the document to ensure that staff have accurate and

up-to-date guidance.

Senior leaders and governors undertake a range of safeguarding training. This includes subjects such as safeguarding, sexual exploitation and extremism. This ensures that leaders are aware of the risks posed in society, which may impact on students. Residential care staff receive safeguarding training. Additional training would be of benefit, in particular on child sexual exploitation, neglect, self-harm and safeguarding children with disabilities. This would enhance the ability of staff to identify potential indicators of harm, and ensure a more robust approach to escalating concerns.

Behaviour is very well managed. Positive behaviour is encouraged and rewarded. When students show negative behaviours, staff put clear consequences in place. Staff work with students to help to identify the reasons for unwanted behaviour. This means that staff support students to self-regulate their behaviour. Electronic monitoring of behaviour enables leaders to analyse patterns and trends. As a result, intervention plans can be put in place if required.

All staff have up-to-date physical intervention training. Staff have the skills to intervene and prevent students from harming themselves or others. The approach used by the school is to de-escalate behaviours. Staff practice is very effective, with only one physical intervention used since the last inspection.

Improvements to the home environment mean that the premises are well maintained. Legionella checks are more robust, with weekly checks recorded in each of the homes. Regular health-and-safety and fire checks ensure that students remain safe.

Recruitment checks are very robust and include thorough checks on care staff. This ensures that students are protected from potentially harmful individuals.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership and management. The longstanding headteacher and the head of care both retired in the summer of 2017. The new headteacher commenced in post in September 2017. He is also the head of care. He is a strong role model for the staff team and has a clear vision for the operation of the school and residential provision.

The headteacher delegates the operational management of the homes. An experienced principal team leader and team leader take responsibility for each home. They report directly to the headteacher regarding all aspects of the residential provision. This is a new strategy in the management of the homes. At present, management systems do not provide a consistent oversight of residential provision. This currently has no impact on students. The headteacher has plans in place to make improvements in management oversight.

The headteacher and management team have a clear vision. They have a shared commitment to continual improvement. The headteacher takes responsibility for self-evaluation of both the school and the residential provision. These reports identify current areas of strength and areas for improvement.

External quality assurance visits are undertaken at least every half term. The visitor meets with the headteacher/head of care, team leaders and staff. The visitor produces a report which highlights how the quality of care and practice could be improved. These visits provide a systematic review of care. From these findings, the headteacher implements action plans to promote improvement.

The governing body ensures that there is independent scrutiny of the residential provision. The chair of the governors is also the safeguarding governor. This provides consistency in liaising with designated officers and the chief executive officer. The governing body could be further strengthened, particularly with the inclusion of an independent person to represent the residential provision. This would ensure that the residential provision is meaningfully represented. Also, parent and student governors would increase participation and transparency, and ensure well-balanced governance of the school.

Managers advocate on behalf of students. A parent said: 'I feel that I have someone else on my side to fight his corner for him.' This was reiterated by a social worker who said: 'The manager has advocated for the young person.' They represent the needs of students professionally and are unafraid to challenge decisions. They do this when they feel the best interests of students are not being promoted.

The residential provision has a well-established and dedicated staff team. The most recent staff members transferred from the school's education team. Staff feel motivated and supported by the head of care and team leaders. Regular staff supervision and appraisal ensure that performance is monitored. They identify any areas for development and enable staff to raise any concerns.

The statement of purpose is broad in its definition. It does not include important information defined in the national minimum standards. But scrutiny of revised policies and procedures prove compliance with current legislation and guidance.

## **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 students and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to students 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 students 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:** SC001831

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Ollie Sharp

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Telephone number:** 01664 454264

**Email address:** [office@knossington.rutland.sch.uk](mailto:office@knossington.rutland.sch.uk)

## **Inspector**

Amanda Ellis, social care inspector (lead)



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