

Lindsworth School

Monyhull Hall Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, West Midlands B30 3QA
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Lindsworth School is a maintained residential special school catering for boys and girls who have social, emotional, mental health and behavioural difficulties. It currently offers education for pupils aged nine to 16 years old. Currently, the school accommodates 115 boys and girls, of whom nine boys are residential pupils. Boarding is predominantly offered four nights a week. The residential provision is situated in a large detached house, spread over two floors and located close to the main school. Residential pupils can also use the school's sporting facilities during residential time. The residential provision was last inspected in November 2016.

Inspection dates: 22 to 24 January 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: 21 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Young people make progress across all aspects of their lives.
- Parents, carers, young people and staff are extremely proud of the improved behaviour and educational progress made by young people, as a direct result of staying in the residential provision.
- Young people show a strong sense of pride in being part of the residential setting. They experience a strong sense of belonging, and they feel safe.
- Staff provide nurture and consistent boundaries to young people and this is reflected in young people's growing self-esteem and confidence.
- Young people are unanimous in their appreciation of the range of activities provided by staff. Daily homework sessions complement the fun and sporting activities also on offer.
- Safeguarding is managed effectively and given the highest priority. Young people are safe because staff implement robust safeguarding procedures.
- Young people receive consistent care due to effective communication between residential and teaching staff.
- Leadership is strong. The head of care and the staff strive to improve the provision.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Make better use of the school nurse in liaison with outside health agencies.
- Improve accuracy and detail in the records for physical intervention and sanctions.
- Ensure that reports by the governor for the residential setting reflect her consultation with young people and the checks on records.

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

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that referrals to young people's GPs and health support agencies are followed up by the school nurse and residential staff.
- Provide more detail in the sanctions and physical intervention records. These should include more child-focused evidence about the how young people are held, debriefs with young people and the effectiveness of sanctions.
- Improve the content of Standard 20 reports to give clarity about checks on the records, as required by the national minimum standard and consultation with young people.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make good progress and have extremely positive experiences as a result of attending the residential provision at this school. Their comments about their experiences include, 'It's fun and lots to do. I think it helps with my behaviour and with school' and 'Residence teaches us self-respect, it's phenomenal.'

Parents and carers also have an extremely positive view of the residential provision and the progress made by their children. They fully appreciate the improvements in their children's behaviour and how this impacts positively on their family lives.

Parents are very proud of their children's educational stability and progress. They value the close relationships and good communication provided by the residential staff. Parents comments include, 'I give them 10 out of 10', 'I am delighted with his school results' and 'I think they do an outstanding job; they choose to do this job and they do it fantastically.'

The residential provision offers a nurturing and encouraging environment where young people experience fun and consistency while they work on their educational and social targets. Structure and routines provide stability for young people. This is particularly important for young people who may experience chaotic family lives. Young people grow in self-confidence as their personal hygiene improves, they take greater pride in their appearance and enjoy keeping their bedrooms tidy.

Relationships with staff and other young people are of great importance to young people. They feel looked after and can express their emotions and worries to the residential staff. This security and connectivity with staff improves young people's behaviour and sense of well-being. As young people grow in confidence, they demonstrate qualities such as kindness and empathy and make positive friendships.

Young people experience improved relationships with their family members as a result of staying at the residential setting. They form and enjoy trusting relationships with staff and are more able to manage behaviour and develop good social skills.

Young people's attendance at school improves as a result of staying in the residential setting. Good bedtime and morning routines mean young people get up on time and arrive at school fresh and well-prepared for learning. They make good academic progress due to the additional support that they receive in residential time. Teaching staff show high levels of commitment to the young people and offer their own free time to support revision sessions. This support is crucial to the confidence and sense of achievement experienced by Year 11 students in preparation for their GCSE exams.

Staff have good insight into the behaviours and qualities of young people, who are encouraged to live in harmony and helped to support each other. Young people are not concerned about bullying and they feel reassured by the staff's quick response to any concerns, should they arise. Staff show good skills in de-escalation and intervention. Young people are tolerant of each other and show good understanding and greater patience when in the residential setting.

Young people's participation is a strength. Daily after-school meetings bring young people together to discuss their school day, achievements, challenges and plans for the evening ahead. Young people take their mentoring role very seriously. They take pride in being part of the residential setting and their positive achievements.

Expectations and boundaries are clearly accepted by the young people and they all have a clear understanding that homework is an essential part of each residential evening. Practice in spelling, reading and maths are embraced by the young people. They take pride in helping each other, and make good progress in education as a result of their efforts.

Young people grow in self-confidence as staff encourage them to choose and help organise activities. Nightly cooking sessions have become a firm favourite with some young people. They enjoy learning new skills and spending time with staff. Young people take great pride in sharing the food they have cooked with the other young people and staff.

Young people receive good support to develop their independence skills. They are supported with their transition from school to college as designated staff liaise with college staff in terms of behaviour management and supporting young people in the early days of college attendance.

Residential staff have an in-depth understanding of the challenges that young people face as they come to the end of their education at the school. For example, staff and young people have worked together to set up an independence facility. The separate annex has been refurbished to offer suitable facilities for young people to have greater independence and to practice skills to prepare them for transition from the school and the residential setting, and in their journey towards young adulthood. Work experience opportunities have a positive impact on young people and open their eyes to potential employment opportunities

Young people enjoy a wide range of activities, including swimming, going to the gym, football, cooking, trips out and watching a favourite film. They become more confident and outgoing as they try new opportunities and learn new skills.

Regular outdoor activities, with plenty of physical exercise, benefit young people's health. Support, encouragement and coaching from staff help young people learn new sporting skills. They grow in confidence and develop an understanding of good gamesmanship as staff talk about sporting boundaries, winning, losing and fairness.

Mealtimes are social events. The cook has a clear understanding of the needs and preferences of young people. Fruit and vegetables are available in abundance and menus provide a choice of meals for young people.

Young people stay in a comfortable and well-presented environment. Communal areas are homely with good decoration and furnishings. Pictures, plants and fresh flowers bring a warm and homely ambience to the residential setting. Young people are extremely appreciative of their own individual bedrooms and en-suite toilet and shower facilities. They enjoy their own personal space and have an array of pictures, toys and certificates which personalise their rooms and give them a firm sense of belonging.

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

Young people thrive because of effective care planning, risk assessment, behaviour management and education support.

Partnership working with parents and education staff ensures that the needs of each young person are individually identified. Staff insight into the backgrounds of young people ensures sensitive support. Young people feel valued because leaders and staff celebrate the uniqueness of each young person.

Staff ensure that there are clear structures and expectations for young people's after-school routines, bedtimes, healthy eating, personal hygiene and getting up for school. Further individualised targets are set for all young people. The recently introduced target review process, in which staff record progress on each daily handover sheet, brings greater scrutiny to how young people are making progress. The traffic light system gives both staff and young people an instant visual view of how young people are doing and areas that staff need to focus on.

Healthcare is well coordinated. Health plans set out young people's medical needs and clear guidance for staff to follow. The school nurse provides health support to young people and advice to staff. Her weekly visits provide regular consultation, and young people can also drop in to talk to the nurse about their concerns. Working relationships with residential staff are described as 'fantastic' by the school nurse. However, some young people's referrals to external health services have not come to fruition and have not been chased by the school nurse or residential staff.

Young people's safety and need for protection are promoted with good partnership working with safeguarding agencies. Concerns are quickly identified and referrals to safeguarding agencies are prompt. Senior leaders work in good partnership with each other and safeguarding agencies in order to identify young people who require additional support and protection.

Young people are cared for and taught by staff who receive annual safeguarding training. Staff remain alert and updated as their knowledge and practice are regularly refreshed with fortnightly safeguarding snap-shot sessions which cover a range of topics.

There are no concerns about young people going missing from the home. Staff have a good understanding of the robust procedures to follow should a young person go missing.

There are no concerns about young people's exposure to radicalisation, and training equips staff with the knowledge required to identify and report concerns should they arise.

Young people are protected from and made aware of the risks of using the internet. There are effective security settings and young people fully understand that their phones are routinely checked and they therefore avoid any inappropriate use while staying at the residential setting.

New behaviour management strategies and staff training positively impact on the experiences of young people both in school and in the residential setting. There has

been a significant reduction in physical interventions of all pupils in the school. Most importantly, incidents of physical intervention are significantly reduced for those young people who stay in the residential setting.

Bespoke behaviour management plans, staff training and rigorous monitoring of behaviour management ensure that young people experience effective support and improve their behaviour. While records detail the use of physical intervention and consequences for poor behaviour, there is a lack of child-focus and detail about how young people are held, de-briefs with young people and the effectiveness of sanctions. The area for improvement to make behaviour management records more meaningful for young people is acknowledged by leaders.

Safety is promoted, and there are effective security measures throughout the school and the residential setting. The use of surveillance systems, such as alarms on bedroom doors, is open and transparent to young people and parents. These measures are used to promote the safety of young people with the permission of parents.

Children and young people know what to do in the event of a fire, due to regular practices. They are safe as a result of effective health and safety arrangements and checks. Young people's safety is crucial to the organisation of activities, and there is effective and well-implemented risk assessment and management by staff. Staff promote an effective balance between young people's safety and the opportunity to grow up positively and experience a range of new and exciting activities.

Children and young people's medical needs are protected, with sound administration procedures implemented by well-trained staff.

The quality of safer recruitment processes is outstanding. Checking and counterchecking makes recruitment robust and prioritises the safeguarding of young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Young people do well across all aspects of their lives because the residential provision is well managed by a suitably qualified and experienced head of care. Leadership is strong and senior leaders work as a team to highlight the strengths and further develop the residential provision at the school.

The area for improvement from the last inspection is met. All parts of the residential setting are now well heated. The residential accommodation is further improved with new shower units in some young people's bedrooms, as part of an ongoing and rolling refurbishment programme.

Young people are cared for by experienced and well-trained staff who work as a cohesive team and are very child-centred in their practice. Young people receive consistency of care due to effective information sharing between education and care staff. The recently introduced handover sheet provides good organisation for each residential stay and ensures that individual needs and appointments are communicated and carried out effectively.

Staffing levels ensure that young people enjoy quality time with staff and have a choice of activities. Young people are kept safe as staffing levels provide good levels of supervision.

Partnership working with parents and carers is a key strength and lends to effective transition planning for young people who join the residential provision. All young people and their families are given information about and a tour of the residential service when they first arrive at the school. The head of care also visits all young people in their family homes. This proactive approach helps senior leaders, young people and their families to identify and make effective referrals for the residential service. Young people settle well into the residential setting and parents are quickly reassured due to this inclusive approach.

Focused training and strong leadership ensure that young people are always placed at the centre of staff practice. Care and outcomes are good because staff practice is built on a firm foundation of well-understood policies and procedures, which are consistently reinforced with effective staff supervision, refresher training and focused team meetings.

Consultation with and participation by young people in the running of the service are integral to young people's stability and investment in the residential setting. Young people are empowered because they have good information about their rights, including how to complain, advocacy and the role of the independent visitor. Young people understand their right to complain and they feel reassured about their concerns and safety because the head of care and the staff listen and respond quickly to their concerns.

Young people fully understand and relate to the governor who is responsible for visits to the residential setting. This governor has good relationships with the young people, but her reports do not fully reflect her consultative approach and that all the required records have been checked.

Leaders have clear insight into the strengths and areas for development of the residential service and the school. Young people receive meaningful care and make good educational progress because senior leaders ensure that young people's behaviour and academic progress are closely reviewed and tracked. For example, the newly introduced electronic system for education assessment includes a traffic light system. This gives staff and pupils an instant visual understanding of achievement, areas for development and the impact of teaching practice.

The head of care carries out routine monitoring of the residential service and this is reflected in the service being compliant with the national minimum standards. She provides comprehensive and evaluative reports to governors which show clear scrutiny of records and the positive outcomes for young people. Governors, in turn, provide good oversight of the residential setting.

The head of care, other senior leaders and staff are resourceful and drive improvement. The newly developed independence project is an excellent example of obtaining additional funding to improve the service and focus on ever-improving outcomes for young people.

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: SC017171

Headteacher/Teacher in charge: Ms Kay Reid

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Inspector

Elaine Cray, social care inspector



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