

Shapwick School

Shapwick School, 21 Station Road, Shapwick, Somerset, TA7 9NJ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special 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. Approximately half of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

There are four residential houses spread across two sites.

The school currently has 95 pupils on roll, of which 56 are residential pupils. The remaining students are day pupils.

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 June 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 6 June 2017

Overall judgement at previous inspection: requires improvement to be good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Leaders and managers work collaboratively with parents, carers and safeguarding agencies to ensure that prompt action is taken to protect and support children. Safeguarding arrangements are good.
- Leaders and managers ensure that all children are encouraged to identify and accomplish their aspirations. Good support and guidance is provided to children to achieve these.
- Opportunities for children who board are given a high priority. The boarding provision is integral to the operation of the school.
- Children benefit from taking part in a wide range of fun and purposeful activities. These activities build their confidence, self-worth and self-esteem.
- Children's dietary needs are well met. Menus are healthy, balanced and nutritious. Religious and cultural needs are known by staff and met.
- Parents, carers and professionals speak positively about the quality of care and professionalism of staff. One professional said: 'The information sharing is of a high quality, they [staff] are incredibly good advocates for children, they provide a high level of support and communication with parents and carers.'

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Some safer recruitment checks do not include the verification of references. One reference that provided limited information has not been challenged by leaders and managers.
- Secondary dispensing of medication for children who self-administer does not follow pharmaceutical guidelines.
- Currently, the quality of the accommodation is mixed. Some areas provide good facilities and others are tired, worn and dated. The school has an action plan to improve the accommodation.
- Records relating to sanctions are not always restorative or recorded.
- Not all records show that the views of children have been sought or acted on, children do not always receive feedback about requests or concerns they raise.
- Not all boarding staff receive regular supervision and appraisal.

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(s) for residential special schools:

- The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory requirements. (National Minimum Standard 18.1)
- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate. (National Minimum Standard 13.9)

Recommendations

- Implement the plans for the redecoration and refurbishment of the residential accommodation.
- Ensure that sanctions are restorative, proportionate, fair and recorded.
- Formally seek the views of young people and provide them with feedback about the actions that will be taken.
- Ensure that the dispensing and storage of medication for children who self-administrate follows pharmaceutical guidelines.
- Ensure that staff consistently operate safer recruitment guidelines.
- Ensure that all staff receive formal supervision and that their practice is appraised annually.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children build secure, positive relationships with staff and long-lasting friendships with their peers. Residential staff are knowledgeable, caring and nurturing in their approach.

Children are prepared well for the next stage of their lives. Staff encourage them to develop independence skills in the boarding houses and within the community. Children value these opportunities and they are aware of the progress that they have made.

Children who have left formal education frequently return to the school to share their achievements with others. During this inspection, two visiting ex-students informed the inspectors of their successes and said that their achievements were as a result of the support, encouragement and guidance they received from the school.

Children understand and embrace differences; they have a good understanding of different cultures and what this means for individuals. Children referred to their boarding experiences as akin to 'having a second family'.

Children are consulted with informally every day. The residential suggestion book is used well in two boarding houses. Formal meetings such as group house meetings and school council meetings take place frequently. However, despite this consultation, records do not consistently describe the actions taken by residential staff in response to children's requests or dissatisfactions.

The medication recording systems are under review because internal monitoring has identified errors in some controlled medication log books. A weakness identified at this inspection relates to the secondary dispensing of medication for children who self-administer. This process does not follow pharmaceutical guidance.

The current residential accommodation is comfortable and safe. However, some of the residential houses require refurbishment. Some dormitories and communal areas are not as homely or maintained as well as others.

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

The management of child protection concerns has strengthened since the previous inspection. The lead for safeguarding and his deputies have the required skills and experience to undertake their roles effectively. All staff receive annual safeguarding training. Residential staff spoken to demonstrated a good understanding of their responsibilities to keep children safe.

The designated safeguarding officers have developed and maintained good relationships with safeguarding agencies, parents and social care professionals.

Prompt action is taken to protect and support children. Safeguarding records are well maintained and provide a detailed overview of actions taken by staff.

Children's behaviour is managed well. There have not been any instances of children going missing or being physically held. Children are supported to identify and manage their anxieties, frustrations and anger. Although rare, sanctions given for minor behavioural concerns are not restorative, and they do not help children to take responsibility for or learn from their behaviour.

Children are taught by teachers and cared for by residential staff who have been subject to safer recruitment checks and vetting. The interview process has been strengthened, children are actively involved in the interviews of new candidates and their contribution is valued. Leaders and managers did not challenge the quality and content of one reference and do not ensure that all references are verified.

Significant improvements have been made to safeguard children when they are in the school grounds. These include keypad locks fitted on all residential houses and secure gates and fencing in areas that prohibit pedestrian access. Exterior lighting and closed circuit television are now positioned by the school entrance and enable leaders and managers to monitor who is entering and exiting the school site.

Health and safety systems are in place that help to protect children, staff and visitors. Staff are trained in fire safety and records now detail children and staff who are involved in fire evacuations. Environmental risk assessments are regularly reviewed and risks are managed well. Leaders and managers recognise that the current systems to report, file and store health and safety records are complex and require streamlining.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection in June 2017, senior leaders, managers, staff and governors have been working hard to improve the site security and weaknesses identified with the boarding provision. Leaders and managers have demonstrated capacity and determination to improve. The head of care has compiled an action plan that identifies actions that he proposes to take to address the weaknesses that have been identified through internal and external monitoring. The effectiveness and sustainability of the improvements made to date have yet to be tested out.

The head of care is also the school's designated safeguarding leader. His role and responsibilities are extensive. Weaknesses identified at this inspection relate to the head of care's time to undertake effective monitoring of the records maintained by house parents and boarding staff.

The quality and content of records maintained in each of the boarding houses varies significantly. Not all daily records provide a detailed overview of the child's day, their

engagement, achievements or any concerns that the house parent has identified. Records do not detail actions taken by residential staff to support children when they are upset or worried. In addition, in some of the boarding houses there is limited evidence that children's views are formally sought or considered, and insufficient progress has been made to introduce the reviewed care plans for those children who need one.

Appropriate action has been taken to address the one formal complaint received since the previous inspection. However, timescales to respond to and investigate the complaint were outside of those outlined in the school's complaints policy.

The head of care meets weekly with the boarding staff. Discussions focus on children's achievements, their progress and behaviours. In the main, staff morale is good, boarding staff are motivated and they say that they love their job. Staff spoke positively about the head of boarding, and said that he has an open-door policy and that they are given regular supervision. Despite this, supervision records reviewed by inspectors showed that not all formal supervision or performance reviews have been carried out within the required timescales and that the quality of these records vary.

Since the previous inspection, six new house parents and two assistant house parents have been recruited. They have all been provided with a comprehensive induction training programme and have attended specialist training to meet the needs of the children in their care. Those who do not hold a level 3 qualification are enrolled to do so. House parents and boarding staff spoke highly of the training opportunities that they have had and were able to give examples about how this helped to improve their practice.

The residential provision is regularly reviewed by the school governors and an independent visitor. The independent visitor confirmed that leaders and managers always act on recommendations made, that they are forward thinking and continually strive to improve the services provided to children.

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: SC031481

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Adrian Wylie

Type of school: Residential Special School

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Inspector(s)

Sharron Escott, social care inspector (lead)
Wendy Anderson, social care inspector



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