

# Springfield House School

Springfield House School, Kenilworth Road, Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands B93 0AJ  
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Springfield House School is a maintained school operated by Birmingham City Council. It is a residential community special school for boys and girls aged 4 to 11 with a range of special educational needs. The majority of children have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties. Some children have learning difficulties and some are diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorders. The school currently has 96 pupils and is open on weekdays in term time only. The school is in a rural position near Knowle, Solihull, and can accommodate 17 children in The Lodge.

**Inspection dates:** 26 to 28 June 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 **requires improvement to be good**

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 23 January 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Children have good relationships with staff.
- Residential staff are knowledgeable, skilled and experienced.
- Staff provide nurture and care in a way that enables every child to thrive physically, emotionally and educationally.
- Leaders and managers have acted to address seven of the eight previously shortfalls in meeting the in national minimum standards.
- Managers ensure that children are debriefed following a physical intervention.
- The school's complaints policy is now accessible and child-focused.
- Residential care staff report an increase in staff morale and feel supported by the executive head.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Managers do not ensure that residential care staff are debriefed following a physical intervention.
- The risk assessments for the use of a bedroom door alarm is not routinely reviewed to ensure that restriction continues to be necessary and proportionate.
- Children's case files do not consistently hold the required information to ensure that staff can understanding children's individual needs.
- Residential care staff have started to receive supervision since the last inspection. However, the frequency still requires improvement.

## **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 standards for residential special schools:

- All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) within 24 hours incidents of restraint, including reasonable force, they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by. (National Minimum Standard 12.5)
- The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. (National Minimum Standard 13.8)
- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate. (National Minimum Standard 13.9)

## Inspection judgements

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

Children make progress in all areas of their development during their time at the school's residential service. Children's health, learning and emotional and social well-being all improve. These improvements are sustained over the time that children attend the residential provision.

Individual pre-admission planning ensures the success of new residential placements. Detailed planning supports young people to make progress. For example, as a direct result of attending the residential service one child has made one year's academic progress in six months, alongside his social and emotional development. This means that he is now able to interact positively with his peers. This has led to an increase in confidence and a reduction in challenging behaviour.

This residential provision has a positive impact on children and their families. Staff work closely to share behaviour management strategies with parents and children's behaviour improves as a direct consequence. One parent said, 'Staff help me understand my child's behaviour and how to deal with it. He is nowhere near as challenging as he used to be.'

Residential care staff ensure that children have access to additional services to improve their outcomes. For example, staff have secured the help of pet therapy and music therapy and have made sure that children can access speech and language services.

Children make positive relationships with staff and this has helped them to become more confident. As children's self-esteem develops, they make good friends at the residential provision.

Children take part in a wide range of stimulating activities. The residential care staff support children to take part in community activities, sporting and recreational activities, trips and social occasions. Children are encouraged and supported to try new things. Staff are sensitive in striking a balance between favourite activities and new and more challenging ones.

Children have the opportunity when necessary to keep in touch with family and friends. This ability to maintain communication with family enables children to feel secure.

The residential provision has had some modernisation since the last inspection. This includes the refurbishment of two children's bedrooms and the updating of notice boards that celebrate children's work. Children take pride in their bedrooms and enjoy their own space as they are personalised with personal possessions.

Residential care staff listen to the wishes and feelings of children. The voices of children are evident in daily logs and case files. Children consistently say that they love attending the residential provision. Since the last inspection, the complaints policy and procedure has been made accessible for children. This supports the opportunity for children to make an independent complaint without the support of an adult.

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

Safeguarding incidents since the last inspection have been managed well. Staff understand risk and carefully develop and implement strategies to minimise any potential risk. The principle care coordinator works in partnership with safeguarding agencies.

The senior leadership team has several designated safeguarding leads. They have the key responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding knowledge is kept up to date through training, which includes awareness of bullying, sexual exploitation and internet safety. Residential staff monitor children's welfare and have good knowledge about individual needs. This means that they are well positioned to identify any changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate potential concerns.

Behaviour management is good. Residential care staff only use physical intervention as a last resort to manage children's challenging behaviour. Since the last inspection, there has been a reduction in the use of physical intervention. Children now receive a debrief following a physical intervention. They report that they feel safe and that staff help them to resolve areas of difficulties between other children.

Residential care staff ensure that children have individual risk assessments that help to identify risks and offer all staff guidance for managing behaviour. There have been no incidents of children going missing from the residential provision. The school is currently using bedroom door alarms to provide additional security. However, the current risk assessment surrounding this practice does not consider the children's individual needs and progress.

Recruitment records demonstrate compliance with safe recruitment practice. This practice supports the prevention of unsafe adults working with children.

Parents and carers and professionals have no concerns about the children's safety. Children continue to be provided with the opportunity to speak with an independent person with whom they can share concerns.

The health and safety arrangements benefit from scrutiny. All health and safety policies are ratified and signed off by the senior leadership team. This ensures that leaders have good oversight of the safety arrangements for the school.

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

The overall leadership and management of residential provision is no longer inadequate. Since the last inspection, the executive headteacher has worked closely with the principle care coordinator to actively review the extensive action plan for the residential provision. Sufficient action has been taken to address seven of the eight previously raised breaches in national minimum standards.

Senior leaders have ensured that there has been sufficient improvement in the provision of food served to children within the residential provision. Numerous meetings and surveys have taken place to ensure that the pace of change has been effective. Staff and visitors describe the food as 'continually improving'.

Senior leaders have prioritised the development and supervision of residential care staff since the last inspection. However, the frequency of supervision requires improvement to ensure that there is opportunity to celebrate success and, when necessary, to address poor practice.

On the occasions when restraint is necessary to prevent serious harm, the records made by staff receive management oversight. However, the recordings do not consistently reflect staff views and feelings about the restraint. This hinders the opportunity of effective monitoring and review.

Residential care files are in place for each child accessing the residential service, which includes important information about their care. However, staff have not ensured that all files hold key information regarding a child's legal status and contact arrangements.

Residential care staff remain passionate and committed to helping children to make progress in all areas of their lives. Staff report an overall improvement in support and investment from the senior leadership team since the last inspection. The executive head is getting to know the children and the staff and routinely visits the residential service of the school. Residential care staff report an increase in morale since last inspection. Staff say that they feel listened to by the executive head, and that their views are valued. This helps the staff to remain motivated in their care of 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:** SC042411

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Miss Kay Reid

**Type of school:** residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Lisa Walsh, social care inspector (lead)  
Andrew Waugh, social care inspector



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