

St Bernard's School

St Bernard's House, Wood Lane, Louth, Lincolnshire LN11 8RS

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

St Bernard's School is a residential special school that has academy status. It provides education for 69 students aged two to 19 years. One young person routinely resides at the school for part of the week. Other young people access the provision for short breaks. Others access the provision for targeted intervention projects as part of their Education Health and Care plans within post 16. The school caters for students with a range of additional needs, including complex and severe learning difficulties. The last residential inspection was carried out in June 2017.

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 July 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: 20 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Leaders and managers ensure that each young person reaches their potential.
- Residential staff have extensive knowledge, skills and experience. This means that young people benefit from good standards of care.
- Young people enjoy a range of programmes that promote social, psychological and emotional well-being.
- Safeguarding is a priority. Safeguarding training ensures that staff have up-to-date knowledge and skills.
- Monitoring and governance are strong. This ensures that the residential provision is monitored, reviewed and quality assured.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- To develop opportunities for young people in residential provision to access a wider range of social and recreational activities that meet their individual needs and interests.
- To take account of the experience and competence of staff when organising rotas.

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:

- 10.1 Children develop their emotional, intellectual, social, creative and physical skills through the accessible and stimulating environment created by the school. Children are supported to take part in individualised and stimulating activities.
- 15.1 There is a sufficient number of competent staff deployed appropriately, both as a staff group and on individual shifts to meet the individual needs of all children resident in the school.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The residential provision enables young people to learn and to develop their talents. Overnight stays also help young people to develop friendships and social skills. This promotes self-esteem and confidence.

The school environment supports vocational learning. Individualised packages ensure that young people enjoy work experience that is based on their interests and aspirations. This approach is also seen in the residential provision. This prepares young people for their adult life.

Young people do not access a sufficiently wide range of activities. This inspection identified a lack of stimulating activities and community engagement. This is an area cited by parents and social workers as having declined in the past 12 months.

The pastoral support for young people is excellent. This enhances the emotional, social and psychological well-being of young people.

The school manages transitions well. Staff work in partnership with parents and providers. They consult with young people. Good communication and planning ensure smooth transitions to new placements.

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

Safeguarding practice continues to be strong. There have been no incidents of young people going missing from residential stays. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that the young people are kept safe. When on an outdoor activity, high staffing ratios and close supervision keep young people safe from potential harm.

Behaviour management is very good. Staff teach young people to self-regulate their behaviours. There have been no physical interventions since the last inspection. This shows how well staff communicate with young people.

Since the last inspection, one incident has taken place during a period when a young person did not appear to have been properly supervised. This resulted in an accident. The executive head teacher has ensured a thorough investigation into this incident. Procedures have been implemented to ensure that such an incident does not occur again.

All staff have regular safeguarding training. This means that they know how to recognise and respond to safeguarding issues. Residential staff know students very well. Consequently, they identify any changes in behaviours which indicate potential concerns.

The school has several designated safeguarding leads. These staff have the main

responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns. They provide 24-hour safeguarding support for staff and young people. The designated safeguarding leads ensure that safeguarding concerns are acted upon promptly and appropriately.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The executive head teacher wants all young people to reach their individual potential. She collaborates with her senior management team to promote improvement.

There have been changes in the management arrangements since the last inspection. However, the succession planning undertaken by the executive head teacher reduces any negative impact on young people.

The residential staff are an effective and established team. However, the residential provision needs more staff. There has been ongoing recruitment to identify suitable residential team members. In the meantime, the existing staff and agency staff ensure safe, consistent care.

Relationships with parents, carers and professionals are positive. When there are concerns, the school has an accessible complaints system. The executive head teacher robustly manages complaints in line with the school's complaints procedure. The executive head teacher has a clear commitment to partnership working with parents and professionals.

Monitoring is a strength of this school. The management team uses a range of monitoring systems to promote continual improvement.

Extensive internal monitoring and self-evaluation identify areas of strength and areas of potential improvement. Governance remains strong, ensuring close scrutiny of residential provision.

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 difference 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: SC065118

Executive head teacher/teacher in charge: Leanda Mason

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector(s)

Amanda Ellis, social care regulatory inspector (lead)



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