

Millgate School

Millgate School, 18 Scott Street, Leicester LE2 6DW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Millgate School is a maintained residential special school run by Leicester City Council. It caters for boys aged between seven and 16 who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The school has a residential facility which can accommodate up to eight children per night. There are also facilities within the residence for children to attend an extended day provision.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 September 2018

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 28 February 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- Children excel in their education. This is particularly impressive given the educational history of many of the children.
- Children build confidence in their own abilities and gain an understanding of self-worth. Their relationships with their peers and with staff are excellent.
- Children have fun. They enjoy a host of activities and experiences in the residential facility and during the extended day programme.
- Children previously at risk of social exclusion now enjoy activities in their home community.
- Children feel loved, cared for and safe.
- The school's ethos of respect and kindness teaches children how to behave well.
- The residence is exceedingly well led. Staff and leaders are passionate about their work and extremely dedicated.
- Excellent links with the local community, charitable organisations and business leaders ensure that additional funds are available to the benefit of children, thus increasing their opportunities.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- To record discussions with staff following all incidents.

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

Recommendations

- Learning from incidents would improve if discussions with staff following incidents were recorded.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The residential and extended day experiences clearly benefit children. Their educational outcomes are excellent, they increase their understanding of self-worth, enjoy excellent relationships with their peers and staff, and learn new skills. Importantly, they have fun. Children know that they are loved and cared for, and feel safe.

Children who use the residential facility excel in their education. Data identifies a clear difference between those accessing the residential facility and those who do not. In fact, the achievements of those accessing the residential facility exceed the national average, which includes figures for mainstream schools. Their behaviour in school also improves following a busy evening of activities, good reflective conversations, and a good night's sleep. Staff provide bespoke educational support for children. For example, one teacher stayed overnight in residence to help a child with his revision for his GCSEs. Being there for him in the morning also helped to calm his nerves. Children attend 'revision camps'. This is a huge achievement for some children who, prior to coming to this school, did not attend school at all.

Excellent relationships with staff help children to develop a sense of self-worth. They begin to feel valued, cared for and loved. Staff say that they are there 'to plug the gaps of love and support'. As children develop their own sense of worth, they are able to help other children, acting as role models and mentors.

Children benefit from a host of activities and experiences, taking advantage of opportunities to learn new skills, have fun, and make and sustain friendships. After-school activities include football, golf, swimming, and cooking. Physical activities, combined with a healthy and nutritious diet, help children to live healthier lives. The school has a dog and an animal care centre with chickens, goats, rabbits and alpacas. Taking the alpacas for a walk not only helps children learn about the animals but is also a very calming activity. One child summed up his evenings in the residential facility, saying: 'It is good to spend time with friends and make new friends. It is great to be in a safe place and enjoy the activities.'

Children access local community activities such as cubs and air cadets, and join local football teams. Staff take children to events during the holidays, and at weekends when families cannot attend. This helps children who previously felt socially isolated to feel part of their own community.

Summer activities provide an opportunity for children due to start school to make friends and meet the staff prior to the new term. This helps them to settle quickly. Holidays abroad offer new experiences for children who have not been to a foreign country before.

Staff help children to run charitable events, such as coffee mornings, mud-runs, and preparing meals for local homeless people. This helps them to develop an understanding of community issues and a sense of empathy.

Support for children is highly individualised. This starts when children are preparing to use the residence for the first time. The number of visits and meetings with parents is tailored to each child. An excellent child-friendly booklet identifies what residence is about, and parents find this helpful too. Staff prepare and implement bespoke care and education packages, meeting the very specific and complex needs of children. Each child has an identified key worker to support them through their residential journey. One child said: 'Key workers are there just for you. We can go to other staff but the key worker is for you.'

Children play an important role in the residential experience. Every day the 'tea and toast time' provides an opportunity for children to 'chill out', discuss their day and make plans for the evening and future activities. Children involved in the student council help make decisions across the whole school. Examples include developing a new school uniform, with particular regard to the sensory nature of the fabric to help those with sensory needs.

The work to prepare children for leaving is exceptional. Staff work closely with other professionals to identify possible destinations from Year 9. A range of activities in the residential facility provide vital skills and learning to help children to move on. When children leave, staff continue to track their progress. One member of staff said: 'Their attendance may have ended but the relationship hasn't.' One young person who left school this summer returned during the inspection to talk to the inspector. He was able to identify the impact the school and residence had on his life. He said: 'This place has helped me academically and with my behaviour. Resi has helped me be who I am today. It has helped me with routine, structure and support. It has helped me achieve my qualifications, helped me learn new skills in independence and in catering.' He is now working with a high-end catering company providing food for large corporate events.

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

Children feel protected and safe because safeguarding practice is excellent. One parent said: 'What I love about this place is it is like a family and he feels loved here, feels he is taken seriously and feels safe. It is the first time he has felt safe in an educational setting.'

Staff understand what to do if they have concerns about a child. Excellent work in partnership with the local authority ensures that any concerns are acted on swiftly. This helps children to keep safe in and out of school.

Children learn how to behave appropriately and how to manage their own emotions, keeping calm rather than becoming aggressive. Children also learn to reflect on their

behaviour. Behaviour support plans include a succinct summary of each child's views about how best to help them if they are displaying challenging behaviours. This helps to inform de-escalation practice. There is a clear correlation between children who have stayed in residence overnight and improved behaviour in school the following day.

Staff act as excellent role models, responding swiftly but calmly to any potential conflict or negative behaviour, reducing the need for physical intervention. There have been no incidents requiring restraint in the residential facility since the last inspection. Staff describe residence as 'a real anchor for children'. One member of staff said: 'It is a consistent in their volatile environment; this is a stillness for them. They are safe and secure and this stability instils belief in themselves, and this is the start of their progress.'

Incidents of bullying are rare, because children 'buy in' to the anti-bullying approaches used by the school. This is due in part to the involvement of the student council in the formation of the anti-bullying programme.

The emotional well-being of children is high priority, and the knowledge and skill of staff in this area is excellent. Staff are trained in responding to self-harm and are currently undertaking training in mental health first aid. Excellent links between the pastoral teaching assistants, residential staff, family support worker and families ensure that each child is supported. The school's ethos of 'be prepared to transform a life and help children take control to transform their own lives' is clearly demonstrated by the whole staff team.

There is one recommendation for improvement. A debrief with a member of staff following an incident with a mobile phone was not clearly recorded. This means that opportunities to learn from such an incident may have been lost.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Children and staff benefit from excellent leadership. A new head of care, responsible for the day-to-day running of the residential facility, is supported by the headteacher and senior staff, who have a more strategic overview. This is an excellent combination, bringing together the varied skills and experience of the individuals.

Leaders have excellent links with local organisations and businesses. This helps to generate funds to support activities, including animal care and the music suite. They also maintain links with their peer groups, sharing knowledge and experiences. The headteacher plays an active role in the local education partnership. One member of this group stated: 'He is prepared to give help, support and guidance to individual schools for individual pupils or with systemic issues.'

Very close monitoring of children's achievements means that staff are always aware of the good work children do and the progress they make. The celebration of this progress provides ongoing encouragement to children to continue to do well.

The governing body provides further monitoring, scrutinises practice, and ensures the safety, welfare and progress of children. The governor responsible for the residential facility and the chair of governors visit frequently. The independent person also undertakes monitoring visits and is well known to the children. They know how to contact her and readily share their opinions with her.

An integrated staff team works across both the school and the residential facility. This brings a wealth of experience and diversity to the team.

School leaders are not complacent and strive for continued improvement. Staff support has improved, with a focus on their emotional resilience and well-being. The supervision process has developed to include more in-depth reflection on practice.

Staff training has improved. Attendance on courses relating to mental health reflect the increasing number of children with mental health needs accessing the school.

The two recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed. Supervision now includes more questioning concerning safeguarding and staff performance. More detailed information is now recorded about why any restraint was necessary. This is based on restraint within the school, as there have been no restraints in the residential facility.

Professionals hold the school and residence in high esteem. An educational psychologist stated: 'I have the highest regard for the senior leadership. They have shown great creativity and innovation in meeting the needs of some of our most vulnerable pupils.'

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: SC006452

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mark Oldman

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 0116 2704922

Email address: moldman@klms.leicester.sch.uk

Inspector

Judith Longden, social care regulatory inspector (lead)



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018