

Dawn House Residential School

Dawn House School, Helmsley Road, Rainworth, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire
NG21 0DQ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Dawn House School is a non-maintained co-educational residential special school, one of two run by the national charity 'I CAN'. There are 63 students on roll, whose ages range from seven to 19. All students have difficulties with speech, language and communication. Some may have Asperger's syndrome. There are six students who reside at the school during the week. The residential accommodation currently used consists of two units located on the school site. The school is situated in the village of Rainworth, Nottinghamshire. The last inspection of the residential provision was in December 2017.

Inspection dates: 9 to 11 October 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: 5 December 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- The school principal and the heads of department have provided excellent leadership throughout a period of restructuring.
- The skilled and committed residential staff team continues to provide high standards of care.
- The multi-disciplinary therapeutic and education team provides bespoke support to all children and young people.
- Residential provision enhances pupils' education and their recreational and social lives.
- Children and young people are safe. This is because safeguarding is a priority for all staff.
- 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:

- Managers have not implemented plans to ensure that the operation of the residential provision secures continual improvement.
- Health and safety arrangements for the residential provision should be known and understood by managers.
- Maintenance of the accommodation is generally good. However, investment is needed to ensure that the accommodation is of a high standard.
- Residential staff require reliable methods of communication when they are working across the school site.

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

Recommendations

- Implement development plans which support continual improvement for the experiences and care of children within residential provision. (Linked to NMS 13.2)
- Ensure leaders and managers have oversight of the health and safety arrangements for the residential provision, including maintaining clear and up-to-date maintenance records and ensuring premises are free from potential hazards. (Linked to NMS 6.2)
- Ensure staff can communicate effectively with each other when on site. This relates to consideration of intercoms and reliable mobile phones. (Linked to NMS 15.1)
- Remedial maintenance and decoration ensure the school has a satisfactory appearance. Leaders do need to consider more investment in the residential accommodation. (Linked to NMS 5)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The residential provision continues to provide a high standard of individualised care and support. This contributes to the progress and experience of residential pupils.

Pupils speak positively about the school and their residential stays. Routines ensure that pupils have healthy meals, take part in physical activities and have time to relax. Staff arrange and take part in a range of after-school activities. Day-to-day care is well managed. This ensures that pupils have happy and enjoyable residential stays.

The quality of relationships between residential staff and pupils is very good. Staff know all pupils very well. Staff nurture pupils and care for them as a good parent would. Equally, the relationships between staff, professionals, parents and carers ensures consistency of care.

Educational outcomes improve because of the impact of residential care. Pupils who have previously struggled to attend or engage in mainstream schools thrive. Pupils benefit from education, therapy and residential staff teams that understand their needs. Staff teams have daily communication. This promotes continuity of care.

Communication, speech and language skills improve because the pupils' needs are understood. Multi-disciplinary teams work with individual pupils to promote their individual needs. This means that pupils develop improved self-esteem and confidence.

Preparing pupils for independence is a priority. Residential pupils learn new skills which lead to accredited awards. They benefit from training and work placements. They develop practical skills in a range self-care tasks. This learning equips pupils with life skills which are essential to successful independent living.

Pupils' views are heard on a day-to-day basis. In addition, they have an independent visitor, quality assurance visits from an independent professional and the residential governor. Pupils contribute their ideas and views through the school student council. This consultation ensures that pupils can express their views and participate in care delivery.

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

Safeguarding is a priority in the school and residential provision. There have been no safeguarding incidents since the last inspection.

Risk management is excellent. Risk assessments are robust. Individualised assessments enable all young people to take age-appropriate risks as part of their development. This enables pupils to take part in a range of stimulating activities and to expand their horizons.

Behaviour management in the residential provision is excellent. This is reflected in staff not having to use physical interventions. Residential staff create a strong sense of well-being and security. They implement consistent boundaries when needed.

The school has several designated safeguarding leads. They are responsible for managing safeguarding concerns. They provide 24-hour safeguarding support for staff and pupils. The local authority designated officer and other important safeguarding agencies confirm that there are effective working relationships with this provision.

All staff have regular safeguarding training. This equips them with up-to-date knowledge to enable them to respond appropriately to a range of child protection and safeguarding issues. Staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. They know how to respond to any allegations or concerns.

Health and safety arrangements ensure that staff, pupils and visitors are safe within and outside of the building. However, managers need to be clear that health and safety maintenance checks are undertaken. They need to ensure that written verification of safety is in place, where applicable. In addition, routine checks throughout the premises are required to ensure that potential hazards are quickly dealt with.

Staff work across the school site. This means that sometimes they work alone. In such circumstances, staff require reliable methods of communication. This is to enable them to communicate with each other and to ensure that they and young people are safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, the school has been through a period of significant change. This has led to a reduction in managerial, teaching, residential and support staff. Throughout this time, the principal and senior leaders have continued to provide robust leadership.

The head of care has left. The residential setting is now led by an established, knowledgeable senior residential manager. Residential pupils continue to enjoy high standards of care from an effective and established team. The senior leadership team has high expectations in respect of what children and young people can achieve.

Monitoring is a strength of this school. The management team uses a range of internal and external quality assurance systems to promote improvement. However, despite a great deal of monitoring activity, there are no clear plans in place to promote continued improvement in the residential provision. Leaders and managers identify the strengths and the areas for improvement but have yet to formulate and implement a development plan based on these findings.

Governance remains strong. The residential provision has a dedicated governor and student governor. This ensures that there is meaningful scrutiny of the residential provision.

Partnerships with parents, carers and professionals are positive. The principal has a strong ethos for working in partnership with parents and professionals. There have been no complaints from parents or professionals, but there is an abundance of compliments.

The residential provision would benefit from some investment. Some areas leading to and outside of the residential accommodation are not of a high standard.

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: SC008761

Headteacher/Teacher in charge: Jenny McConnell

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Inspector:

Amanda Ellis, social care regulatory inspector (lead)



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