

The Springfields Academy

Springfields School, Curzon Street, Calne, Wiltshire SN11 0DS

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This residential special school is set in a small rural town in Wiltshire. The school offers day and residential provision for pupils who have social and/or emotional difficulties and/or high-functioning autism spectrum disorders, who have the potential to access the primary or secondary school curriculum. The residential accommodation is provided on the school site in one building. All residential pupils return home at weekends and during school holidays.

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 January 2019

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: 7 June 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Children and young people receive good-quality care. Relationships between children, young people and staff are positive. Children and young people feel supported and make good progress.
- A good variety of activities are available to children and young people. These opportunities enhance their residential experience.
- Children and young people's behaviour is good. They feel safe and confident to talk to a member of staff if they have a problem. Staff take appropriate action in response.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders' and managers' oversight and monitoring of the school have improved significantly. This improvement has had a positive impact on children and young people's experiences.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Two national minimum standards for health and well-being are not met.
- Current dining arrangements do not provide children and young people with a family-style dining experience.
- Progress with outcomes from internal investigations relating to staff practice do not link well to staff supervisions.
- Not all staff receive an annual appraisal of their performance, as required.
- Written information in care plans does not consistently support the good-quality care that staff provide to children and young people.

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:

- All medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the children to whom they are prescribed. Children allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so. (National Minimum Standards 3.8)
- Where necessary, a child has a clear individual health and welfare plan or similar record, containing relevant health and welfare information provided by parents/carers and recording significant health and welfare needs and issues. This record should be agreed by parents/carers and include: records of developmental checks; health monitoring required by staff; intimate care or bodily functions requiring staff help; and the involvement of a child's parents/carers or significant others in health and welfare issues. (National Minimum Standards 3.12)

Recommendations

- Further improve children and young people's dining experience by reviewing the current dining arrangements.
- Improve supervision records to ensure that they consistently include information about any actions from internal investigations relating to staff.
- Ensure that all staff receive an appraisal of their performance at least annually.
- Further improve written information in care plans to ensure that these documents support the good-quality care provide by staff.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people receive good individualised care and support. The residential experience supports children and young people to make good progress with the targets identified on their education and healthcare plans. Children and young people improve their attendance at school and increase their independence and social skills.

Leaders and managers are improving children and young people's care plans. Currently, the written information in these documents does not comprehensively support the good-quality care provided by staff. As the staff team is permanent and provides good stability to the children and young people, this recording shortfall does not negatively affect the direct care that children and young people receive.

Children and young people benefit from a consistent staff team, which provides them with positive relationships. Children and young people feel confident to express their views and opinions about their residential experience to the staff. Leaders and managers use these views and opinions to develop the residential provision.

Many interesting and fun activities are available to children and young people. The opportunities are vast and include:

- Board games, gaming, and baking in the residential provision
- Outdoor activities including football, biking, and riding scooters
- Attending clubs in the community, for example cadets
- Going on day trips to London, flying to Edinburgh and taking holidays abroad

Children and young people benefit from these good-quality activities.

Since the previous inspection, the quality of the residential provision has improved significantly. Children and young people's bedrooms are more personalised and homely. However, there is insufficient space in the accommodation for children and young people to eat meals together. Typically, children and young people eat their meals in the main-school dining room. Leaders and managers recognise that this arrangement does not always promote a family-style dining experience for the children.

Children and young people have good access to healthcare professionals and the school therapy team. However, a stock balance of 'over the counter' pain relief medication is not always maintained. Some children and young people with a diagnosed health need do not always have an individual healthcare plan as required. This is a recording shortfall as children's health needs are met well in practice.

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

Leaders and managers safeguard children and young people effectively from harm. Staff have a good understanding about their responsibility to protect children and young people. Extensive joint working with other safeguarding agencies is a strength and better protects children and young people.

Risk is recognised, understood and managed well by leaders and managers. Staff support children and young people sensitively to reduce identified risks. However, it is not always clear how and when risk assessments are reviewed when children or young people make progress.

Children and young people feel safe and have someone to talk to if they have any concerns. Risks gradually reduce as children and young people make progress. For example, children and young people no longer go missing from the residential provision.

Staff keep up to date with safeguarding training and understand the potential risks to children and young people in relation to abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, self-harm and going missing. The leadership team invests in the safeguarding team's training, which enables the members to frequently update their knowledge and skills. Information is then successfully cascaded to the staff team.

Leaders and managers have been effective in changing the culture and ethos about how they support children and young people to behave positively. Staff no longer need to restrain children and young people. This success means that no children or young people have been restrained in the residential provision for over 12 months. Sanctions have also diminished. This improves children and young people's residential experience.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers embed their vision effectively to provide children and young people with good-quality care and experiences. Monitoring and oversight of the care provided to children and young people is now more robust and critical. Leaders and managers have a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. This depth of understanding enables them to identify areas for improvement and act on them effectively.

External monitoring by a new independent visitor has become more challenging and critical. The independent visitor now spends more time consulting with children, young people and families about their experiences. This assists leaders and managers to improve.

The senior leadership team advocates strongly and confidently on behalf of children and young people when there are weaknesses in services provided by other agencies. For example, concerns are escalated persistently when leaders are concerned about a child or young person's welfare.

The staff team feels supported and listened to by leaders and managers. Regular team meetings focus on children and young people's needs, and how staff can help them to progress. This contributes to the good consistency of care that children and young people receive.

Staff receive regular supervision. Currently, the supervision records for one member of staff do not include information about the progress from the outcomes of internal investigations into their practice. This is an area for further development.

Leaders and managers recognise that not all staff have had their performance appraised annually. While there is good reason for this, this shortfall has some impact on staff development as the head of care is not setting targets in line with the formal staff development process.

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: SC039093

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mr Jon Hamp

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

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