

Fountaindale School

Nottingham Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 5BA

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This is a residential special school for physically disabled and sensory impaired children, who may also have learning disabilities, aged from three to 19 years. The school is operated by Nottinghamshire County Council. There are 74 pupils on roll at the school. The residential accommodation is adapted to meet the physical needs of the children. It is located in the main school building but is separate from the main school. Residential care is provided during term time for pupils aged from 14 to 19 years. The primary focus of the service is to promote independence and improve social skills.

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 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: 6 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- The residential environment has improved since the last inspection. It is a fun, child-friendly space. Children are proud of the 'woodland den' theme.
- Children build trusting relationships with familiar carers and have fun with peers. The ethos of the school and residential service is inclusive. Children are supportive, encouraging and kind to each other.
- Children enjoy new experiences and develop independence skills. As a result, they grow in confidence and resilience.
- Staff are effective in communicating with children to raise their awareness about risks.
- There have been significant changes in the leadership of the residential service. All staff report improved team working and morale.
- Leaders and staff are ambitious for the service. The creative use of limited resources to improve the residential experience for children is a strength of the service.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Fire drills and personal evacuation plans for children require more detail to ensure that they provide the most useful information to keep children safe. (Linked to National minimum standard 6.3)

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

Recommendations

- Health and safety practice is generally good. However, fire drills and personal evacuation plans for children require more detail to ensure that they provide the most useful information to keep children safe. (National minimum standard 6.3)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy their residential stays. A carefully planned programme provides opportunities for children to participate in new activities. As a result, children develop social, independence and life skills.

Children build trusting relationships with familiar carers and have fun with their peers. As a result, they grow in confidence and resilience. Children also learn new skills that enable them to develop greater independence.

The residential environment has improved since the last inspection. Staff, in consultation with children, have created a child-friendly, fun space. Children are proud of the 'woodland den' and are ambitious for more improvements.

The admission and induction processes are child-centred, fair and transparent. Parents, carers and school staff are asked to identify specific targets for children. For example, some children have learned to brush their teeth. Others have learned how to cook a meal. All children develop improved confidence and better communication skills and as a result of their residential experience.

Skilled, experienced staff plan a termly programme of activities. The activity programme takes account of children's starting points, individual targets and interests. Children are continuously consulted about their activity choices. In addition, children are given a 'job' to do each day, such as helping to prepare a meal or helping to tidy up after an activity. Children relish the responsibility that this gives them and are enthusiastic about completing their 'job'.

The residential stays work well for children with a range of medical and health needs. This is due to strong partnership working between families, school and residential staff. There is a clear handover between residential and school staff before and after each stay. If the child has had any health issues during the stay, carers will also take advice from the school's health lead.

Specialist services, such as speech and language support and physiotherapy, are provided in school. The administration of medication and any other health interventions are undertaken sensitively. Staff are trained, and their competencies assessed. Staff respect each child's dignity and privacy. They identify and respect each child's preferences and choices about their care.

An example of participation and consultation is the lively, effective school council. There is always a residential student representative on the council. This ensures that the residential provision is a focus of discussion. School councillors are lively and committed. They are very proud of their school and contribute creative suggestions to improve residential care. A feedback board of 'grumpy groans' and 'joyful

comments' was introduced in the 'woodland den' as a result of an idea from one of the students. It has proved to be effective because staff and managers respond to any comments. One child, who had been anxious about staying in the residential service, said that he wished he had tried it sooner.

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

Residential staff are acutely aware of the additional vulnerabilities and potential isolation of disabled children. Staff receive good-quality training that includes information about emerging risks to children. There is an experienced and knowledgeable senior designated safeguarding lead in the school and two designated safeguarding leads in the residential service.

All staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They all have direct access to the school's 'my concern' recording process. Staff have received training in safe recruitment and managing allegations against adults who work with children. There are robust recruitment processes.

Staff are mindful that good communication and trusting relationships are the key to effective safeguarding arrangements. Staff have received additional communication skills training since the previous inspection. Staff have recently explored the use of emojis to help children to communicate their emotions and feelings. This has been successful in enhancing children's emotional awareness.

There are very few behavioural incidents and little conflict between children. The residential service helps children to celebrate each other's differences and abilities. Children are very supportive, encouraging and kind to each other. Staff sensitively support children to manage their feelings and prevent negative or harmful behaviours. Positive behaviours are consistently reinforced.

School leaders and support staff maintain a safe environment. Staff in residence report any maintenance or health and safety concerns quickly so that they can be addressed as soon as possible. Since the last inspection, a checklist has been introduced for staff to check each room to ensure that there are no hazards prior to each residential stay.

There is a detailed, up-to-date fire risk assessment. Regular fire drills are undertaken. There is a need for more detailed recording in one of the fire drills and in the children's personal evacuation plans to improve their effectiveness. This was addressed immediately by the residential manager.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

In the past year, there have been significant improvements in the leadership of the residential service. Currently, there are two effective, experienced leaders. Their skills and strengths complement each other. All staff say that there is improved team working and better morale. Leaders are ambitious for the service. Staff are creative

with the resources available to them in order to improve the residential experience for children.

Improved recording systems are in place. Improvements include the involvement of night staff in recording, which enhances their knowledge and understanding of children's needs, abilities and progress.

There is much clearer evidence of the tracking of children's progress towards their agreed residential targets. This would be improved further by also tracking the impact of residential stays on the achievement of school targets.

Experienced, skilled governors know their areas of responsibility and work well with school leaders to support continuous improvement. There has been some improvement to the monitoring of residential care by governors. A new lead governor for residential care has been appointed and will be regularly visiting and overseeing the service.

There is improved monitoring and auditing of the service by school leaders. A vice-principal has lead responsibility for the residential service. She meets regularly with the children, staff and managers. She is committed to ensuring that the service makes a positive difference to children's lives, and capturing the evidence to demonstrate this.

Staff have regular team meetings and termly performance reviews. Staff report that they receive training and opportunities for development. They say that they feel valued.

Families report that children grow in confidence. Families trust staff to safely care for their children. They appreciate the information that they receive about their child's residential experience. This information is brought to life through the use of photographs.

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: SC402858

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Stuart Cameron

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Inspector

Cathey Moriarty, social care inspector



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