

Holly House School

Church Street North, Old Whittington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S41 9QR

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Holly House School is a maintained residential community special school for children who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The school provides education for 43 pupils aged seven to 14 who have education, health and care plans. The school is in Chesterfield, Derbyshire. The residential unit is located in an annex to the main school and is on two floors. The unit provides accommodation for up to eight pupils each night from Monday to Thursday during term time. Pupils access the service on a voluntary basis. The residential provision was last inspected in January 2018.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 February 2019

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: 9 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- The senior leadership team is passionate and dedicated. The members have a shared vision to ensure that all pupils achieve their individual potential.
- The head of care has high expectations for what all children can achieve and ensures consistently high standards of care.
- The residential care team and head of care provide a vast array of stimulating and challenging activities. This promotes continuous learning and self-development.
- The skilled and committed residential staff bring enthusiasm, energy and creativity to their work. Their participation is the key to making sure that children have fun and learn.
- Residential pupils make excellent progress. This is because the whole-school approach makes a significant impact on their development.
- Partnership work with families is excellent. Parents are unanimous in their praise for the school. Parents confirm that children's progress is consistent and sustained.
- Safeguarding practice is excellent. There have been no safeguarding incidents. This is because safeguarding children is embedded in the work of the staff team.
- The residential staff team prioritises safety while enabling children to take safe and calculated risks. This prepares children for adult life.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children have exceptional experiences in the residential provision. Enrichment opportunities promote positive outcomes. Children benefit from improved educational attendance and academic outcomes. Children make significant progress, both behaviourally and emotionally.

Residential staff have energy and drive. They participate and lead a wide range of activities. They are a loyal, cohesive and dedicated team. They are well liked and respected by the children. One child said: 'Staff are fair; strict but lots of fun.'

Each residential visit is meticulously planned. Children take part in a vast array of stimulating activities. The team uses each activity as a learning opportunity – to impart discipline, manners, social skills, teamwork and patience, and to develop confidence and self-awareness.

Parents say that children love residential stays. One parent said: 'It's like a second home.' Children told the inspector that they love the activities and would like to have more overnight stays. Children benefit from improved confidence and self-esteem because of regular engagement in structured activities.

The overall progress of children leads to them move to mainstream schools. Transitions to new schools are exceptionally well planned, with both education and residential staff supporting the child and their family. One parent said: 'My son has made tremendous progress in this school. He is having a gradual transition to his mainstream school. Since his residential stays, he has better behaviours, maturity and ambition.'

Independence skills develop because of the residential stays. Children learn age-appropriate skills through taking part in the routines of the home. One parent said: 'Since having residential stays he has "grown up". He respects the staff and now sees the possibilities in life.'

Parents and carers retain full responsibility for ensuring that their children's healthcare needs are met and, when on a residential stay, staff and parents have clear communication about the health and medication needs of the children. Medication practice in this school is safe and well understood. Staff are trained appropriately, and training is regularly refreshed. All staff have first-aid training. Healthcare provision is robust.

Children enjoy the residential environment. The accommodation is of a very high standard and is creative. Children return from activities to a warm and comfortable home. They enjoy a wide range of healthy, home-cooked meals. Clear routines ensure that children feel safe and settled.

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

Sound safeguarding practice has ensured that there have been no safeguarding incidents since the last inspection. Safeguarding officers confirm that there is robust safeguarding practice.

Designated staff ensure that there is a 24-hour response to any safeguarding incident. These managers have an excellent understanding of multi-agency safeguarding practice. The residential staff team participates in a range of regularly refreshed safeguarding training. Training is effective in ensuring that staff understand the vulnerabilities of the children to different forms of abuse.

Risks to children are understood and regularly reviewed. Staff are not risk averse – they implement sound risk assessments and ensure that there is a dynamic approach to managing risk. This enables children to safely experience new challenges and develop new skills. This builds resilience and confidence.

Children do not go missing from this home. Trips, activities and holidays are thoroughly risk assessed. Staffing levels mean that children are well monitored. The residential environment is safe and secure. This means that children do not go missing and are not in contact with unsafe individuals.

Behaviour management is a strength of this provision. Children accessing residential provision have significantly lower levels of serious incidents and physical interventions. Children are fully involved in being supported to make the right choices regarding their behaviour and to find positive ways of managing their feelings. One parent said: 'The difference is amazing. We have phenomenal reductions in violent episodes. We are getting the nice stuff now.'

Children confirm that they feel safe and that there is no bullying and, if there was bullying, they know that staff would deal with it.

Health and safety arrangements ensure that the physical environment for children is safe and protects them from harm, or the risk of harm. Risk assessments for the physical environment are regularly reviewed and updated, and comply with statutory requirements.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The leadership team is aspirational for the children who attend this provision. They are passionate in providing the best possible life chances and outcomes. The headteacher and head of care are inspirational and lead by example. The dedicated residential team made the following comments about the head of care: 'He gets stuck in! He would not expect us to do anything he wouldn't.' Positive team morale and a sense of shared ownership drive improvement across the provision.

Leaders and managers have addressed all the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. This has meant that the governance and operation of the home are robust.

Extensive internal monitoring and self-evaluation have identified the areas of strength and those of improvement. Managers have challenged the robustness of the external quality assurance. This is because they strive for continued excellence.

Governance and monitoring remain strong, ensuring scrutiny within the residential provision. The governing body is actively recruiting new members. Each year a child from the residential provision is democratically elected to act as the residential ambassador. The ambassador consults with the residential pupils and reports to the governing body. This ensures the participation of children in shaping their residential provision.

The operation of the residential provision is consistent with the aims of the Statement of Purpose. Additionally, revised policies and procedures are in line with current legislation and guidance.

All national minimum standards are met, and no recommendations for improvement are identified because of this inspection.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC056234

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Iain Williams

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector(s)

Amanda Ellis, social care inspector (lead)



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