

Sky College

Sky College, Pickeridge Close, Taunton, Somerset TA2 7HW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The school is a local authority provision for boys. Boarding is flexible to meet students' individual needs. An extended day can be offered for a small number of students. Students can board for up to four weekday nights during term time.

The school has 68 students on role and five are currently using the boarding facility. In addition, one student has extended days when he takes part in activities and has access to additional staff support.

This inspection was aligned with an inspection of the school provision.

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 February 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: 29 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Staff develop positive relationships with the students and they know them very well. They provide students with very individualised care and support. Students say that they feel listened to and parents speak highly of the care that their children receive.
- Students thoroughly enjoy a wide variety of activities and leisure opportunities in the residential provision and in the wider community.
- Residential students are regularly attending school. For some residential students this is a significant improvement.
- The arrangements to safeguard students are good. The designated safeguarding lead and senior managers ensure that safeguarding remains a high priority across the school.
- The residential provision is an integral part of the school. It is managed effectively and efficiently. Staff place the students at the centre of their practice.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Governors' reports do not always clearly comment upon the effectiveness of safeguarding in the residential provision.
- Staff involved in a physical intervention do not receive a debrief discussion following the use of an intervention.
- Students have mixed views on the quality and quantity of the food that they receive from the main kitchen. In addition, the current arrangements for the evening meal do not enhance a homely mealtime.

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that the governors clearly comment in their monitoring reports their view of the safeguarding arrangements in the residential provision.
- Ensure that conversations held with staff following the use of a physical intervention are recorded.
- Ensure that a comprehensive review is undertaken in relation to the quality and quantity of the meals provided. In addition, review the current dining arrangements to ensure that students' dining experiences are enhanced.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Students receive individualised care and support from staff who know them well and who put their needs first. Staff build positive relationships with students. As a result, students are happy and relaxed in the staff members' company. The students speak highly of the care and support that they receive. A student said, 'It's a good atmosphere here and staff are kind to us'. Students say that they feel listened to.

Students say that they love the activities that they take part in, both in the residential provision and in the wider community. Scrapbooks record these activities well and include photographs and comments of their experiences and enjoyment. In addition, several photographs are displayed around the home of the students' recent activities and outings. This enhances the homely feeling of the environment.

Staff encourage and support children effectively to develop their independence skills. This prepares them well for adult life.

Residential students attend school regularly. For some students, there has been a significant improvement in their attendance at school because of staying at the residential provision. A student said, 'I am proud that I am going to school. I now go every day'.

Students have mixed views about the quality and quantity of the food. In addition, a governor has raised this as a concern following a recent visit. Leaders and managers are aware of these views and have identified this as an area for review. At the time of this inspection, the evening meal arrived from the main kitchen on a catering trolley and the meal was served by a member of staff. This arrangement does not promote a homely, family-type mealtime.

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

The arrangements to safeguard students are good. The safeguarding lead ensures that any concerns relating to the safety and well-being of students are reported to the designated officer and other safeguarding agencies in a timely manner. Leaders and managers place the safety and well-being of the students at the centre of their practice. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Students say that they feel safe in the residential provision and that they are listened to by staff. They can name staff who they would speak to if they needed to if they have any worries or concerns.

Positive behaviour is promoted well, and students say that the rules are fair. Staff are provided with detailed behaviour support plans and comprehensive risk assessments that clearly guide them in how to support students to manage their

emotions and feelings. A parent spoke positively about the approach used at the school and said, 'My son is much calmer. He can now think things through rather than flaring up.'

Physical intervention is rarely used. If physical intervention is used, this is as a last resort to keep students and others safe. Leaders and managers ensure that discussions with students following the use of an intervention are clearly recorded. However, debrief discussions with staff are not recorded. This does not demonstrate that staff have reflected on their practice and if any lessons have been learned.

Since the last inspection, students have not been missing and there are no concerns in relation to bullying and the misuse of substances.

Students stay in an environment that is safe and well maintained.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The residential provision is managed efficiently and effectively. Leaders and managers have high expectations of themselves, staff and students. The residential provision is an integral part of the school. The staff are committed to ensuring that students receive high-quality care and support.

Since the last inspection, staffing vacancies have occurred in the residential provision and recruitment is ongoing. However, leaders and managers have ensured that students continue to receive good continuity and consistent care from a staff team that knows them well. Leaders and managers continue to monitor this closely.

Leaders and managers have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the residential provision. The school's improvement plan includes realistic targets to improve the residential provision.

Governors continue to closely monitor the residential provision and the head of care responds effectively to recommendations made. However, not all reports by the independent visitor clearly comment upon the effectiveness of safeguarding in the residential provision.

Detailed care and support plans and associated risk assessments provide staff with guidance on how to meet students' individual needs. These plans are regularly reviewed and updated.

Parents speak highly of the communication that they have with the residential staff. Parents say that they are regularly updated about their child's care and support and that the staff are approachable.

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: SC038758

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Richard Berry

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector

David Kidner, social care inspector



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