

Lindsworth School

Monyhull Hall Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, West Midlands B30 3QA

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Lindsworth School is a maintained residential special school catering for boys and girls who have social and/or emotional difficulties. It currently offers education for pupils aged nine to 16 years old. Currently, the school accommodates 119 boys and girls, 11 of whom are residential pupils. Boarding is predominantly offered four nights a week. The residential provision is situated in a large detached house, spread over two floors and located close to the main school. Residential pupils can use the school's sporting facilities during residential time. The residential provision was last inspected in January 2018.

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 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: 22 January 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Young people enjoy their residential stays.
- Young people form strong and trusting relationships with the staff who care for them.
- Staff support young people to develop safe, caring and thoughtful behaviour towards each other and the staff team.
- The staff provide frequent and regular opportunities for every young person to be praised for their achievements.
- Staff listen to young people's hopes and wishes, as well as their concerns.
- Parents are full of praise about how the residential experience has helped their child to make excellent progress in the school and at home.
- Staff work in partnership to promote young people's development and provide additional support to families when necessary.
- Strong leadership and management ensure that young people receive consistently good standards of care, which meet their individual needs.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Risk assessments are not in place for some of the activities that young people take part in.
- Residential staff have not received appropriate training to support them in their role.
- Placement plans need to be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect young people's individual needs.

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 standards for residential special schools:

- Children take part in age appropriate peer activities as would normally be permitted by the parent in relation to their children or as outlined in any placement plan. Suitable risk assessments are in place for any activities which may put children at risk of harm. Decision-making should be undertaken from the perspective of a reasonable parent. (NMS 10.2)
- Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school. (NMS 19.1)
- The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan there is appropriate consultation. Where applicable the plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Where feasible, children in the school are aware of the content of their placement plans, and confirm that the school is providing care for them that is consistent with the plans. (NMS 21.1)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people make good progress as a result of their residential stays. For example, young people make progress in their relationships with their peer group, their school attendance improves and their academic achievement increases. One parent told the inspector, 'Since he has been going there, his aggression has calmed right down. This is because the staff talk to him and listen to his views. Nowhere else has ever done that.'

Staff ensure that placement plans identify young people's needs. These include health, cultural and leisure needs. However, not all young people's placement plans are being regularly reviewed or updated to reflect the changing needs of each young person.

Young people build secure and trusting relationships with staff. The staff group is made up of a combination of staff who have worked in the residential provision for a number of years as well as staff who primarily work in the school. There is a rota in place to ensure that there is enough capacity to meet the needs of all the young people, and a balance of male and female staff with different levels of experience is on duty at any one time.

Young people are invited to attend residential forums every term and have input into discussions about the range of activities, menu planning and independence planning. They benefit from access to a wide range of social and recreational activities, both inside and outside of school. Activities include young people attending football matches, going swimming, participating in trips to the local town, playing computer games and watching films.

There is a separate building on the site that staff used to help young people to develop their social and independence skills. This opportunity enables young people to develop essential life skills that will help them prepare for adulthood.

Young people live in a comfortable, nicely decorated and furnished and well-maintained residential provision. There is enough space for both communal activity and privacy.

A programme of refurbishment of the ensuite facilities in the bedrooms is under way. Most bedrooms have been completed, and the remaining work is expected to be completed shortly. Young people receive encouragement to personalise their bedrooms and make this space their own.

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

Staff are skilled and experienced in safeguarding young people. They use their knowledge of child protection procedures to keep young people safe.

Staff use a multi-agency approach to help young people learn about risks in the school and the wider community. For example, the police have attended the school and delivered information to young people about the risks of county lines, and local members of the community have delivered awareness training to young people about knife crime.

Risk assessments outline the risks to young people's safety and guide staff in how to manage these risks. They are regularly reviewed and updated. This helps to ensure that staff know how to keep young people safe and have a good understanding of each child's individual safety needs. However, some of the risk assessments pertaining to young people's activities are out of date. This means that staff are referring to risk assessments which do not reflect the most recent behaviours displayed by young people.

Relationships in the residential setting are good. Young people develop constructive relationships with staff and they talk positively about the support they receive. One young person told the inspector, 'In residential, it's just like one big family. We all watch out for each other.' Interactions between young people are boisterous but generally respectful. There have been very few incidents of negative behaviour, and the use of sanctions is minimal.

Health and safety within the residential provision are well managed. Routine servicing and checks take place as required. Maintenance is undertaken promptly, and there is a clear programme of refurbishment and development. Fire safety precautions are checked on a regular basis, including the servicing of firefighting equipment, testing of fire alarms and carrying out evacuation drills.

When appointing staff, the school follows safer recruitment practice guidelines. This means that only those deemed suitable to work with vulnerable individuals look after young people.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The school is led and managed by the executive headteacher, who is committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for all young people, regardless of their starting points. She leads from the front and is supported by a leadership team that includes the head of care.

The residential and education teams work well together. This joined-up approach means that both parts of the school run smoothly together, and young people using the residential provision receive a consistent approach to their care. The head of care has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas of development of the residential provision. She reports to the headteacher and the governing body to provide them with regular updates on the residential service and to highlight any developmental needs. This demonstrates the school's strong commitment to the continuing improvement of the residential provision and the service it provides for young people and their families.

The residential team is experienced and has been in post for a substantial period. All the team members have the relevant qualification for their roles, receive regular supervision and attend team meetings. They are cohesive and supportive of one another. This results in good team morale and ensures that staff clearly understand their responsibilities and roles.

Not all the staff have up-to-date knowledge and skills to adequately safeguard young people and meet their assessed needs. Staff have not received up-to-date training in fire awareness, food hygiene and medication administration. This lack of appropriate training compromises the young people's safety while staying in the provision.

External monitoring by the independent person and a governor who has responsibility for the residential provision carry out regular visits to the provision. These visits provide an additional layer of scrutiny and oversight of the residential provision.

Staff are committed to improving outcomes for young people. They work well with professionals and parents and keep them up to date with their child's experiences at the provision. A parent told the inspector, 'The staff have been a godsend to me. When he comes home after staying at residential, he is much calmer and less problematic. It is a really good place that is really helpful to parents like me.'

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: SC017171

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Ms Kay Reid

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

Dave Carrigan, social care inspector (lead)
Karen Gillingwater, social care inspector



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