

# Pield Heath School

Pield Heath Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3NW Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Pield Heath School is a non-maintained, co-educational, day and residential special school for children and young people between the ages of seven and 19 years. The school caters for children and young people who have complex needs, moderate to severe learning difficulties and associated communication problems. The school can provide up to 22 residential places in its residential unit. Currently, a total of 10 children and young people use the service on an overnight short-break basis up to three nights a week, Monday to Thursday. Accommodation is provided at St Joseph's, a home located on the school site.

**Inspection dates:** 12 to 14 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 **good**

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:** 11 July 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- Leaders and managers act as role models who promote an ambitious vision and have high expectations about what the children can achieve.
- Children are making outstanding progress in their emotional development, communication skills, social engagement, awareness of risks and the development of life skills.
- The positive behaviour model followed by staff is exceptionally effective at promoting and supporting children to develop safe, caring and thoughtful behaviours towards each other and the staff team.
- Children are defined by what they can do and achieve, rather than their disabilities.
- Children are very happy in the residential provision and enjoy being with their friends and the staff.
- Children are at the centre of practice. Staff focus on the individual support needs of children. Relationships formed are nurturing, professional and trusting.
- Children benefit from the residential experience, which has a highly positive impact on their social development. Feedback from parents and children was overwhelmingly positive.
- Staff and the children are part of a community where equality and diversity are a natural part of the culture. Children are able to express their identity with full acceptance by those around them.
- Safeguarding practice is exemplary and is interwoven into everything that the school does.
- Children are provided with excellent opportunities for varied, interesting and challenging activities.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Children thoroughly enjoy their residential short breaks and are extremely happy during them. Although most children only stay for one or two nights each week, they achieve a lot in that short time. Staff help children to build on the excellent progress that they make in school. One parent said, 'My daughter thinks of her overnight stay as a sleepover with her friends. We have lots of smiles and laughter as we pack her case for the stay.' Children make outstanding progress in learning and practical independence skills. Children explore how to be independent of their families in a safe and nurturing environment. This helps to prepare them well for independence.

Feedback from parents about the quality of care and the difference it makes to children was overwhelmingly positive. Children spoke of 'love' for the staff and the fun things that they are able to do. A parent said, 'The short break has enabled my daughter to learn essential independence skills, tasks she has previously refused to do at home. She now tells us she is a young adult and [name of staff member] has shown her how to attend to her personal care. It is lovely to watch her take more responsibility and use the skills that the house had helped her to learn.'

A stable and consistent staff team, led by an experienced head of care, has been central to the development and progress of children. Children and staff have trusting relationships. Staff know the children very well. They understand their complexities and individual differences. Staff members commented on their pleasure at seeing the children mature, grow and achieve beyond expectations. A positive sense of well-being, care and laughter are apparent when visiting the residential provision.

A holistic approach to learning underpins the excellent progress that children are making in their education, social and emotional development and their independent development. Children relish the opportunity to try out new things and take pride in their achievements, no matter how small. A 24-hour curriculum means that care staff work in tandem with the education provision to deliver safe, consistent care. Staff meticulously follow the school's 'positive behaviour support' model of intervention. As a result, the use of sanctions or restraint during residential times is rare.

Children learn coping strategies and build emotional resilience. Staff offer them just the right amount of support to overcome their difficulties and have time to learn from their experiences. As a result, children have an excellent 'can do' ethos and do not allow their disability to define them. For example, children who previously would not participate in activities, preferring just to observe, are now active participants, developing good drawing and writing skills. Another child is now enjoying giving and receiving emotional warmth from staff.

Staff work collaboratively across the school and residential provision to ensure that children receive care that is consistent and focused on meeting all of their needs.

Children value the kindness and tolerance of other children and they have fun together. Staff support children to apologise to each other when necessary and to take responsibility for their own, and peer group, behaviour. A parent commented, 'I feel that residential works closely with us as parents. Good communication means that we are able to follow the same targets and behavioural routines at home. Staff take time to find out what the children like to do at home and incorporate these into their plans in school. It is good to know that we are working together in the best interest of the children.'

Staff are highly skilled in adapting their communication style as they talk and interact with individual children. They seamlessly change their interactions based on the needs of each child. This means that the child's 'voice' is heard, and their wishes are acted on. Staff understand what the subtle smiles or looks from a child can mean, and respond appropriately.

Children thoroughly enjoy a wide range of activities such as cooking, board games, circle games and physical activities in the large garden, going to a youth club and on trips. These opportunities enable the children to learn social skills such as communication, turn-taking and resilience. Some activities take place in the local and wider community. This helps the children to integrate into society and socialise with their peers. All activities enable children to build on their self-esteem and confidence. A parent said, 'My son is fairly isolated at home. The number of differing activities he has access to is giving him the opportunity to socialise, learn patience and give consideration to others. He is not able to do this at home.'

Staff provide children with a range of opportunities to give their views on issues such as menu planning, activities and celebrations. Each child has a virtual 'jam jar', where they earn marbles for reaching targets and other achievements. These marbles are exchanged for small gifts. Staff praise all achievements and celebrate special occasions. Children can choose a favourite meal and decide how to celebrate. A child spoke happily to the inspector about the fun he had had at his recent birthday party.

The residential accommodation is exceptionally welcoming and comfortable. It is furnished to a high standard. Children are able to personalise their rooms. Photographs of them enjoying activities with staff are displayed in all areas. Leaders and staff are committed to providing a homely environment. The size of the unit enables the children to interact happily, but also gives space for individual time away from others. A parent said: 'He is able to take part in a stress-free environment with people he knows well, which adds to his experience and is something we find hard to replicate at home.'

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

The safety and welfare of children are high priorities in this school. Children feel safe and parents agree that their children feel safe. Staff have a good understanding of how to keep children safe. Safeguarding systems are robust. However, the school is

not risk-averse, as staff actively encourage children to try new things in a safe environment.

Through warm and trusting relationships, staff create an open and supportive environment that helps children to feel confident about bringing any fears or anxieties to them. Children confidently ask questions of staff, and remind each other to apologise when behaviour is unacceptable. Children also feel able to describe their emotions verbally and pictorially, without fear or embarrassment. This creates an open environment where children and staff interact as a community, and enables children to feel safe.

All staff receive comprehensive information and training in how to keep children safe. This is completed as part of whole-school training and residential team reflection. This ensures that everybody knows and understands the key messages emerging from best practice and any changes in legislation and guidance. The designated safeguarding leads review all safeguarding procedures and makes changes to improve systems and processes as and when necessary.

Robust safeguarding policies and procedures underpin practice. Staff are clear about these procedures and apply them imaginatively to ensure that they are not oppressive to children. Well-considered care planning and risk assessments help to promote children's safety in the building and out on activities in the community.

Children can identify adults, in both the school and the residential staff teams, who they would go to should they have any concerns. In addition, children have ready access to an independent visitor who visits the residential accommodation on a termly basis. To further enhance this process, managers have appointed a 'listening parent' on a voluntary basis. She visits the home each term to speak with children, to act as a listener and to offer advice in addition to the help already given to them. A school governor with primary responsibility for the residential provision visits on a regular basis to observe care, to listen to any concerns and to celebrate achievements. As a result, children have easy access to adults with whom they feel secure. This promotes an open atmosphere where children clearly have a voice.

The safeguarding leads work well with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable children are protected from harm. Safeguarding professionals spoke highly of the school's transparency and commitment to keep children safe, and parents share this view.

The school and the residential setting use the 'positive behaviour support' model. This model focuses on promoting and supporting children in safe and caring behaviours towards each other and the staff team. There have been no incidents requiring the use of restraint since the last inspection. Individual support plans are developed for each child. Identified triggers and types of behaviour are recorded and analysed in order to minimise any potential challenging behaviours. As a result, children are helped to develop self-control through staff guidance and positive reinforcement.

Children have an awareness of different forms of bullying, although bullying has not been a concern at the school. Children have not gone missing from the residential provision. There are in-house and local procedures and protocols in place should this occur.

Healthcare arrangements are effective and medication is managed safely.

Safer recruitment processes are robustly followed. Thorough records detail all necessary and updated information on new and existing staff. This ensures that children are cared for by adults who have been appropriately vetted.

The school site and residential accommodation provide children with a safe and secure environment. All visitors complete an electronic record when they first arrive, with bespoke photographic identification. Health and safety checks are comprehensive, with clear actions for any areas for improvement

Children know what to do if the fire alarm sounds. They practise this regularly, including 'walk-through' sessions. Personal emergency evacuation plans are completed for children who have additional disabilities such as hearing loss. These plans are well known by the staff and children.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

All of the leaders and managers are inspirational and enthusiastic. They want all children to thrive and they consider that no problem is insurmountable. The residential home is highly valued and is respected as an integral part of the school. The head of care provides excellent management, supported by the school principal and governors. Staff praise her calmness and her quiet determination to get things done to continually improve children's experiences and progress.

Leaders and managers have high expectations of their staff to improve the lives of the children in their care. They have created an inspirational and dynamic environment where children grow and gain an extensive range of new skills. As a result, children receive a high quality of care and support and enjoy a seamless journey through school and residential care. Collaborative working with families enhances this process.

Care staff work exceptionally well alongside school staff and other professionals, such as speech and occupational therapists, to ensure that children make continuous progress against their plans and targets. They share information so that each child receives excellent care, and there is consistency across the disciplines. When children are looked after by their local authority, key workers write clear, concise progress reports for statutory reviews.

The expertise and commitment of leaders and managers have created a deeply caring and nurturing environment. Leaders and managers have successfully

transferred their vision of care for children who have special educational needs into outstanding practice. They have done this while continuing to research, evaluate further improvements and raise standards in the delivery of care and education. Leaders and managers have established a progressive learning culture that seeks continuous improvement based on the latest research in supporting children who have disabilities.

The governors are a dedicated team. They visit the school and residential provision regularly and receive a wealth of information from senior managers. A governor with responsibility for the residential aspects of the school has improved scrutiny of the quality of care. Governors undertake regular visits, some of which are unannounced, and work in conjunction with the care manager to consider how children can be more involved in having a voice in the development of the residential provision.

The care manager has developed a comprehensive self-evaluation document for the residential setting. This document sets out the strengths and areas for improvement. This self-evaluation document reflects the aspirations and the aims for children, to prepare them for the next phase of their life.

Equality and diversity are interwoven seamlessly into everything that the school does. Children's cultural, ethnic and religious needs continue to be exceptionally well met and supported in the school and the residential setting.

## **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:** SC027138

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Julie Rose

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Telephone number:** 01895 258 507

**Email address:** julie.rose@pieldheathschool.org.uk

## **Inspector**

Juanita Mayers, social care inspector (lead)





The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019