

The Caldecott School

Station Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6PW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Caldecott Foundation School is a non-maintained special school which provides a service for day and residential pupils between the ages of seven to 18 years of age. It is a school for pupils who experience social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties and who may, in addition, have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or autistic spectrum disorder. The residential provision can accommodate up to 10 residential pupils and is situated on a different site connected by a footpath.

Inspection dates: 4 to 5 March 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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Date of previous inspection: N/A (First Inspection)

Overall judgement at last inspection: N/A

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Residential pupils feel safe and form caring, trusting relationships with the staff who care for them. They enjoy staying at this school.
- A culture of tolerance and respect enables residential pupils to relax and feel accepted and valued.
- Close working between therapists, school staff and residential staff means that care is consistent and there are swift responses when additional support is needed for any residential pupil.
- Residential pupils' views are valued and encouraged. This helps them to feel they have a meaningful say in how their boarding area is run.
- Well-established systems related to safety and safeguarding are responsive and effective.
- An enthusiastic staff team enjoys working with the residential pupils and is committed to enabling the pupils to achieve their potential.
- Communication between staff and carers, professionals and parents is very effective.

The residential special school's areas for development:

- Individual personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPS) need to be developed where applicable for residential pupils who may need extra help during an emergency evacuation.
- Assessments of how new admissions may impact on the group and how behaviours may affect others need to be more thorough.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: Good

Residential pupils enjoy their boarding experience. The structure and routines, together with committed staff who enjoy their company, provide a warm, friendly and supportive environment. Residential pupils are seen to be relaxed in the company of staff and there is an ease of communication and mutual respect.

Residential pupils have bespoke care plans which outline how they preferred to be cared for and what strategies help them to progress. The carefully thought-through plans which are followed by staff mean that residential pupils feel secure and safe.

Residential pupils know how to complain and have support from independent advocates and visitors. Weekly meetings between residential pupils and the staff team are effective in understanding relationships and how children are feeling. Individual sessions with key workers give residential pupils the opportunity to voice their views on how they feel they are being cared for. Staff value what children say and take steps to learn from this.

Independence skills are developed with residential pupils at a pace that they can cope with, and are commensurate with their abilities and vulnerabilities. Residential pupils are expected and encouraged to have an active role in the running of the provision. This includes shared household chores or planning with staff in areas such as menus, activities and discussions about group dynamics and behaviour. This encourages the development of residential pupils' social skills, confidence and investment in where they live.

The health needs of residential pupils are met to a good standard. Residential pupils are encouraged and supported to attend health appointments and to develop their self-care skills and healthy eating. Emotional health is promoted to a high standard. Residential pupils and staff have ready access to professionals such as therapists and psychologists. As a result, the children are guided and helped to develop their emotional resilience and an understanding of their backgrounds and behaviours.

The residential provision is a new service. Managers are being cautious about the frequency at which new residential pupils are admitted. This is because they want to ensure that the culture is right, children are settled, and that members of staff are fully aware of the group dynamics as well as the individual needs and personalities of children. Part of this process is to assess the impact on the group of new admissions. However, this has not consistently identified the potential impact that some new admissions may have on other peers. Due to very low numbers and good staff awareness of the individual children in their care, this has not compromised progress or quality of the residential experience. Nevertheless, this is an area of improvement.

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

Staff are aware of residential pupils' vulnerabilities and abilities. They know what strategies need to be in place to keep pupils safe.

Staff insight and knowledge of residential pupils' individual needs are very good. This means that staff know how to support pupils and how to plan for their behaviours. Consequently, residential pupils report feeling safe and secure living in the boarding provision.

All members of staff are trained in child protection and safeguarding matters and know what to do and who to inform if they have concerns about a residential pupil's well-being. Each residential pupil has an individual 'protocol' in place, which is a plan for staff to follow in the event that residential pupils are absent without permission. The plans clearly identify the potential risks and what staff need to do to ensure safe return. There have been no incidents where a residential pupil has been missing.

Staff are appropriately trained in the method of physical intervention used by the organisation. All incidents of physical restraint are monitored to ensure that the use is appropriate and safe. Records are of a good quality and include the individual child's views about the incident. This, in turn, informs decisions on behaviour strategies and supports plans to avoid or reduce future incidents.

Residential pupils' anxieties are shared between the residential staff and teaching staff at the school. This enables close multi-disciplinary working so that consistency can be achieved both at school and in the boarding provision. Additionally, therapists and psychologists are available on-site to provide oversight and knowledge about children's behaviour. This helps staff to understand behaviour and how to help the residential pupils manage their own behaviour better.

Recruitment of staff ensures that all necessary checks are carried out prior to them starting work. This ensures that only those with appropriate working histories and clear background checks are employed to work with the residential pupils.

Regular fire drills have taken place since this provision opened. One residential pupil has not taken part in a drill due to concerns about their ability to cope with the alarms. Members of staff know the child very well and know how to support them. However, there is no formal written PEEP outlining the specific strategies that are needed to help the child to leave the building safely during an emergency evacuation. At the point of the inspection, this had not negatively affected the child's safety due to low occupancy and good availability of staff. However, in the event of increased numbers of residential pupils to the provision, the plans would need to be clearer.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: Good

This is a boarding provision which is relatively new. There is a careful and well-planned approach to admitting new residential pupils. This is with a view to establishing a settled positive culture. At the time of the inspection, there were only

two young people who were boarding.

This inspection also considered a 'materiel change' request made by the organisation to the Department of Education to allow the boarding provision to accommodate children from seven years of age.

The staff team and the manager demonstrate a genuine care for the children. They make strenuous efforts to help residential pupils to make progress and to feel safe.

The small staff team is ably led by an experienced manager who provides clear leadership and sound role modelling for less experienced staff. This is helping the staff to gain confidence and to develop their skills. Staff attend a range of training courses and sessions; this has developed their insight and knowledge. Training is underpinned by supervision that is regular and helps staff to reflect on their practice.

Senior managers and the boarding manager are aware of the need to gradually increase staff confidence and carefully assess any new admissions so that the provision has the best start. This is being achieved. Leaders are very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and plan accordingly.

Professionals, parents and carers speak highly of the levels of commitment and communication between them and the staff. This enables a sense of working together and transparency of practice. It also strengthens levels of trust and a belief that the staff team is working in the best interests of the residential pupils.

Importantly, staff advocate strongly on behalf of the residential pupils so that plans are clear and in their interests. It is very evident that the residential pupils trust the staff because of the support and care that they receive.

Internal monitoring systems are good. All key records are subject to scrutiny by the manager and senior managers of the organisation. Visits required under Standard 20 are carried out by an independent visitor who provides clear reports on his findings promptly. Consequently, any identified shortfalls can be promptly addressed by the manager.

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: 1276600

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Acting Head – Stacey McShane

Type of school: Residential Special School

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Inspector

Paul Taylor, social care inspector



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