

# Windlestone School

Chilton, Ferryhill, County Durham DL17 0HP

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

This is a maintained residential special school. The school can cater for around 100 students who are of secondary school age, and who have severe difficulties in managing their emotions and behaviour. The residential provision belonging to the school can accommodate 20 residential students over two units. The boarding places are flexible, ranging from two to four nights a week, depending on individual need. Residential places seek to develop a student's personal, social and independence skills in order to support wider learning and personal development. The head of care is currently absent and two team leaders are overseeing the running of the boarding provision.

**Inspection dates:** 13 to 15 May 2019

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>inadequate</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded, and the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

**Date of previous inspection:** 9 October 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## **Inspection judgements**

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

The students are at risk of harm because there are significant shortfalls in medication procedures, in the monitoring of students' safety and with the management oversight of the residential provision. The inspectors ensured that immediate action was taken by the headteacher to safeguard the students during this inspection.

The students enjoy positive relationships with the staff. The students benefit from staff supporting them, both educationally and socially, which helps to strengthen bonds between the students and the staff.

The students enjoy their residential experience. The students participate in a range of activities which help them to spend their free time positively. The students' favourite activities include going to the cinema, playing snooker and helping on the farm.

The voice of the students is captured through residential meetings and the student council. The students' ideas are listened to and result in positive changes, such as improvements to their games room.

The students' physical health and emotional health are well supported. The students' engagement with specialist services is improving because they have access in school to a range of support services on the school site. The services include support from mental health professionals, occupational therapists and speech and language therapists.

The school's nurture dog, Mabel is providing additional emotional support for the students. Some of the students reported that the dog makes them feel calmer. Some of the students are building strong bonds with the dog, and are starting to talk about their feelings for the first time when they spend time with Mabel

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

The students are at risk of harm because procedures and practice are unsafe in relation to the transporting of medication into school, and the storing and administration of medication. One student brings loose medication from home into school, including controlled drugs that are out of their original packaging. The drugs are not labelled or accompanied by any associated drug guidance and contraindications.

The records of controlled drugs are inaccurate. Some records have been written ahead of time by a different member of staff not administering the drugs. As a result,

if any medication errors were to occur or there was any mishandling of drugs, this could not be identified, leaving students at risk of harm.

The management and monitoring of safeguarding concerns are inadequate. Current practice places students at risk. There has been recent delay in safeguarding action being taken to protect a student, leaving them at risk of harm. The designated safeguarding lead does not have a clear understanding of the role. The arrangements for another member of staff to deputise in the designated safeguarding lead's absence are not defined clearly. The designated safeguarding lead is not being supervised. The lack of management supervision increases the risk that safeguarding issues may be missed or crucial safeguarding information could be lost and not reported.

The staff use the positive relationships they have with the students to manage any incidents of challenging behaviour. As a result, there has been no use of physical intervention.

The students do not go missing from the residential provision. The staff demonstrate understanding of what to do should anyone go missing from the residential provision.

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

The arrangements for other staff members to deputise in the absence of the head of care are ineffective. Management duties are not all being adequately fulfilled and the shortfalls noted at this inspection had not been identified by managers'. A recommendation in this regard set at the last inspection has not been addressed.

The senior managers' and governors' oversight of the residential provision is poor. They have not identified the risks to students and the shortfalls in practice.

The links between the school provision and the residential provision are ineffective. The senior leaders of the school have limited knowledge about some practices in the residential provision; this includes medication procedures, supervision of staff and oversight and provision of staff training. Some staff reported that the senior managers do not listen to their views, and that they are feeling overloaded and tired as they are constantly being asked to cover in both school and the residential provision.

Managers do not have a shared understanding of whether staff's training is up-to-date. Monitoring of staff training, including the administration of medication is not sufficiently robust. Training records showed that some of the staff continue to administer medication when refresher training is overdue. The staff complete other mandatory training such as safeguarding.

The staff are not receiving regular supervision. This is a missed opportunity to monitor and improve the care provided for the students.

A new electronic recording system has been partially introduced. However, not all of the students' records on this system are complete, including records regarding risk assessments'. As a result, the staff have not got clear procedures to follow to manage all students' risks.

One national minimum standard around the statement of purpose has been met. The additional national minimum standard around staff receiving induction is ongoing, as there have been no new staff since the last inspection.

## 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:

- 3.8 All medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the children to whom they are prescribed. Children allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so.
- 11.1 The school ensures that:
  - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school; and
  - such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

This is specifically in relation to the designated safeguarding leads' role being undertaken and defined in line with guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018', taking into account page 18, paragraph 59 and Annex B.

This is also in relation to formalising procedures for making sure safeguarding information is shared effectively designated safeguarding officers.

- 13.2 There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of residential and care provision in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff.

This is specifically in relation to ensuring senior leaders and governors are fully aware of the care practices in the residential provision.

- 13.3 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role.
- 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.
- 19.4 The learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and is updated if necessary.

This specifically relates to ensuring that all staff have the qualification to undertake their roles, such as administering medication.

- 19.6 All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance.

This specifically relates to all roles that are taken on by individual staff

members' such as the designated safeguarding lead.

- 15.3 There are clear arrangements for suitably experienced staff to deputise in the absence of the head of care (or school equivalent).
- 22.1 Every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress which can be read by the child at any time (except where the data controller is not obliged to supply the information to the child), and the child can add personal statements or statements correcting errors.
- 19.3 A school ensures that new staff undertake an induction programme designed and delivered to enable them to meet the range of needs of children at the school and fully equip them to identify and safely manage safeguarding issues. The programme should begin within 7 working days of starting their employment and be completed within 6 months.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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:** SC007615

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Mr Timothy Bennett

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Jamie Richardson, social care inspector (lead)  
Colin Imrie, social care inspector



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