

# 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. Up to 10 boys can stay overnight for up to four nights each week in the residential provision. The number of nights that the children stay is dependent on their individual needs.

At the time of the inspection there were 72 children on roll at the school, of which nine use the residential facility, including five children who have extended days but do not stay overnight.

**Inspection dates:** 11 to 12 July 2019

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **Good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **Outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **Good**

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 12 February 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## **Inspection judgements**

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

Children benefit from their residential experience and make good progress. Their experience within the residential provision contributes to the progress that they make in their education. It also enhances their confidence, social skills and independence. Effective partnership working with other professionals and with families supports children's development and well-being, both within school and at home.

Children choose to use the residential provision. They enjoy their stays and appreciate the contribution the residential provision makes in helping them to make progress and achieve. This approach is fundamental to the success of the residential provision. Children are motivated to be part of it and value it.

Children are introduced to the residential provision in a careful and considered way. Often, they start by doing extended days and gradually build up to overnight stays. This approach enables children to feel more confident about being away from home.

Children receive individualised care and support. The head of care and the residential team know the children well and tailor care to meet their needs. The school and the residential provision work effectively together to provide a holistic approach, which contributes to children making good progress.

Staff work hard to build trusted and secure relationships with the children in their care. They provide excellent role models and demonstrate good parenting through their positive responses, and consistent and nurturing care. Parents are very complimentary about the 'excellent relationships' that children have with the residential staff and particularly the head of care, who has worked at the school for many years.

Children benefit from the 24-hour curriculum that the residential experience provides. They have access to opportunities and experiences they might not otherwise have, which contributes to their learning and personal development. During this inspection, the inspector recommended that the head of care review the children's access to the school gym and to suitable clubs within the community.

Children have access to a wide range of activities. During the summer months, every opportunity is taken to enable children to enjoy the outdoors and to develop fit and healthy lifestyles. Following the previous inspection, the quality and quantity of food has been reviewed and there are further plans to provide more opportunities for children to enjoy home-cooked family-style meals.

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

The arrangements to safeguard children are outstanding. Leaders and managers place the safety and well-being of children at the centre of their decision-making, which is embedded thoroughly in their day-to-day practice. Leaders and managers work effectively with professionals and families. Focus is not only on protecting

children from risk of harm, but also on exploring opportunities to help children to be able to enjoy a fulfilled family life and to aspire to a safe and successful future.

Children say that they feel safe in the residential provision. They feel listened to and can identify adults to whom they can speak if they have any worries or concerns.

The safeguarding team is effectively managed by the designated safeguarding lead and all members of the team receive clinical supervision. The team is kept under constant review and a new addition will join the team in September, who will be specialising in e-safety. The team works together closely, openly and proactively seeking how it can help and protect children both at school and within their family life.

The team establishes excellent links with families. This starts as soon as children join the school with a comprehensive early help assessment. This approach identifies how parents can be helped to improve their parenting skills. For example, parents learn how to manage behaviour more effectively and to have a better understanding of what they need to do to keep their child safe at home and in their local community. The team works in a spirit of partnership with parents. In addition to its direct work, the team has also been instrumental in helping parents to access resources and other services that have made a significant difference to their family life.

The safeguarding team also works effectively with its local authority. The team has participated in joint projects, for example a recent project that has placed the child's voice at the centre of what feeling safe looks like from their perspective. Detailed work is done in helping children to explore their feelings and worries and how, through practical strategies, children's emotional and social development can be supported. Excellent attention is given to looking beyond keeping the children's safety in the here and now, but also to them as young adults, modelling how this should look like in terms of their expectations of themselves, their values and the contribution that they can make to their communities.

All concerns relating to the safety and well-being of children are responded to effectively. The safeguarding team maintains detailed records, which include an evaluation of how effective practices have been in protecting children and how further improvements could be made.

Positive behaviour is promoted well, and children are exceptionally well behaved. Children are clear about how they are expected to behave as the residential staff team is consistent in its care and support. Incentives and rewards are used effectively. Physical restraint is very rarely used and only ever as a last resort to keep children safe. Following the previous inspection, records have been reviewed to ensure that these include debrief discussion with staff. These records demonstrate that staff have had the opportunity to reflect on their practice and consider how practices can be further improved to benefit children.

Since the last inspection, there have been no incidents of children going missing and there are no concerns about bullying or the misuse of substances.

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

The residential provision is managed effectively by the head of care. Along with his team, he provides highly individualised care. The provision is valued as an integral part of the school and for the positive impact it has on the children who use it. The school and residential staff teams work together effectively to ensure that children are safe and receive good-quality care and support.

There is a small, dedicated residential staff team. A vacancy exists, and the school has experienced difficulties in appointing a suitable person whom they feel would complement their team and provide the high standards that they are proud to achieve. Cover is being provided by two staff from within the school, both of whom know the children. While this arrangement is working well, leaders and managers are aware of the importance of establishing a permanent team.

Staff feel supported through regular training opportunities, team discussions and supervision. New members of staff are given the opportunity to undertake professional qualifications. There are plans to provide additional training in the safe management and administration of medication, so as to ensure that all residential staff are suitably trained.

Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated and are of a good standard. A recommendation was made that the management of behaviour policy explicitly states under what exceptional circumstances might it be necessary to consider calling the police.

Following a recommendation at the previous inspection, the governor's reports have been reviewed and improved to include a more detailed oversight of the effectiveness of safeguarding.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that the residential provision is fully staffed with a permanent staff team.
- Ensure that all staff have suitable training in the safe management and administration of medication.
- Ensure that the management of behaviour policy explicitly states under what exceptional circumstances might it be necessary to consider calling the police.
- Ensure that residential students have good access to the school's gym and suitable clubs within the community.

### **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:** SC038758

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:**

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

**Telephone number:** 01823 275569

**Email address:**

## **Inspector**

Norma Welsby, social care inspector (lead)



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