

Saxon Hill

Saxon Hill Special School, Kings Hill Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS14 9DE

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The school is for children who have a wide range of physical, complex medical, sensory, communication and/or learning difficulties. The school has a 14-bed unit called 'The sleepover club' that offers individually based overnight care to children who attend the school and are aged between five and 18 years.

There is a dedicated team of care staff that operates independently of, but in close liaison with, the teaching staff and other members of staff. The sleeping accommodation comprises six twin bedrooms and two single rooms. There are currently 103 children on roll at the school, of which 44 children currently access the residential provision.

Inspection dates: 24 to 26 September 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	Outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
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: 5 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The sleepover club is at the heart of this academy. It is supported and celebrated by the whole school community. The quality of care provided to children is exceptional. It provides them with the opportunities to make and maintain friendships, participate in new activities and sensory experiences, learn new skills and flourish as individuals.

Managers and staff ensure that care plans are comprehensive. This means that the individual, health and behavioural needs of children are met to the highest standard. Details such as likes and dislikes, allergies, routines, sleeping patterns, communication and sensory needs, mobility issues and risk-taking behaviours are all well documented. As a result, children benefit from well-planned care that meets their specific needs.

Staff are highly skilled. They work closely in partnership with families and other professionals to ensure that children benefit from any new initiatives. For example, a sensory pathway of learning has been introduced in school. Sensory teachers have also trained the sleepover club staff in approaches to engage sensory learners. Staff now ensure that all evening activities are run by applying this theory. This has helped children to achieve their education, health and care plan targets.

Staff continue to develop their skills to ensure that children experience a wide range of meaningful and diverse activities. For example, staff recently attended story massage training alongside parents. This is successfully encouraging communication, reducing tactile defensiveness and is also being used as a tool, by staff and parents, to reduce anxiety experienced by children staying overnight.

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

Managers and staff make sure that safety is the highest priority for children in their care. There have been no complaints, safeguarding incidents or episodes of children going missing from care since the last inspection. Staff receive up-to-date training across all areas of safeguarding to ensure that children are protected from harm and their needs promoted.

The staff team's continuing ability to safeguard children and promote their well-being is further enhanced by the senior leadership team's use of research-based practice and involvement in research projects. For example, staff are currently working with external professionals and families to ensure that children experience 24-hour postural management. They are also hoping to take part in a national pilot scheme which aims to boost the importance of 24-hour postural management.

Children benefit from trusting and exceptionally nurturing relationships with committed staff. Staff make sure that children's wishes and feelings are at the forefront of all the work that they do. Staff follow the whole school communication

approach and have recently been involved in the implementation of PODD (Pragmatic, Organisation, Dynamic, Display). This has resulted in an increase in child-initiated communication, as well as an increase in participation in activities and independence. Staff are also seeing a decrease in challenging behaviours as expectations are clearer using sleepover club-specific PODD boards.

Celebration of children's successes and achievements is a big part of the sleepover club. The staff work in collaboration with the children's university run by Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent University. They collate extra-curricular data that counts towards all children participating in an annual graduation, complete with gowns, mortarboard squares, ceremony, certificates and photos, which are proudly on display.

Medication systems and procedures are thorough. They are well monitored and reviewed and there have been no medication errors since the last inspection. This is because staff are very knowledgeable and diligent when it comes to administering medication. Staff are meticulous in their recording and work together with the nursing team to make sure that children's health needs are met.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The management team has a very effective management approach that consistently promotes high expectations from the team to help children to make the most of their stays at the sleepover club. Staff clearly demonstrate a strong commitment to delivering a high-quality service that is tailored to children's individual needs and personal goals. The effectiveness of this approach is evidenced by the excellent progress and fun that children experience.

Staff are exceptionally passionate about providing children with the best care. They focus on children's unique qualities. They provide specific support, which is informed by personalised strategies based on each child's strengths and needs. Staff work tirelessly to make sure that children are afforded all of the opportunities possible, irrespective of their disability. The staff team is very consistent, and all staff have excellent specialist knowledge and understanding of the children that they care for.

The Head of Care and staff receive regular formal supervision. This encourages staff to reflect on and develop their practice. All staff are up to date with their mandatory training. Staff also receive additional training, which ensures that they are well equipped and very knowledgeable, enabling them to provide care to children who have diverse needs. Staff appraisals target the training needs and interests of staff. This means that children receive care from highly trained and skilled staff.

The Head of Care works collaboratively with health professionals, parents, teachers and social workers to gather all vital information about children. Staff diligently make sure that communication with parents and professionals via email, telephone, communication books and face-to-face meetings is effective. Consequently, children's experiences are accurately monitored. This helps staff to track children's progress and development.

Managers are forward thinking and have high aspirations to improve the service. They are constantly seeking new and innovative ways to develop the service. This is achieved by using external and internal quality assurance and research-based practice to continue to develop the residential provision. The Head of Care and staff team complete a wide range of regular reviews of the quality of care provided to children. External audits are also conducted by the local authority and by peers from other services. The Head of Care scrutinises all reports and feedback for areas requiring action as well as areas for growth and improvement. The service receives overwhelmingly positive feedback from children, parents and professionals.

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: SC038728

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mrs Melsa Buxton

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Inspector

Dawn Bennett, social care inspector (lead)



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