

# Dawn House Residential School

Dawn House School, Helmsley Road, Rainworth, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire  
NG21 0DQ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Dawn House School is a non-maintained residential specialist school. It is one of two schools run by the national charity 'I CAN'. There are currently 69 students on roll, who range in age from seven to 19. All students have difficulties with speech, language and communication. Some may have Asperger's syndrome. The school can accommodate up to nine children and young people who reside at school during the week in term time. The residential accommodation consists of two houses located on the school site.

**Inspection dates:** 1 to 3 October 2019

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected                      good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers                      outstanding

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

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

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## **Inspection judgements**

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

Children who reside at the school make very good progress. They receive good support and care from experienced, knowledgeable and committed staff. Staff support children to become more confident in their use of communication systems such as Makaton and to develop improved verbal communication. Consequently, children grow in confidence and their self-esteem improves.

At the time of inspection, only one of the residential houses was in use. This house has been completely renovated and now provides a comfortable, modern and homely residential provision. Children were central in the redevelopment, helping to design the layout and choosing furnishings for the house and their rooms. This contributes to the fact that children have a genuine feeling of being at home while staying at school.

New children coming to the school and residence are supported by detailed and carefully considered induction plans. Induction takes place at a pace that is tailored to the needs of each child. It begins only after gathering information from parents and other agencies through a comprehensive assessment process. This means that school leaders and staff are confident in their abilities to meet each child's identified needs before they start school.

Children's confidence increases because they are provided with a range of interesting and stimulating experiences. For example, one child developed an interest in horticulture, so staff have provided the child with a garden area and support to develop this interest further. Children have developed independence skills. For example, they have practiced using public transport and going into local shops to ask for what they want. Children are encouraged to take part in a range of school activities, such as a drama group.

School leaders and staff understand the importance of good parental involvement in children's school life. The school communicates with parents regularly to update on children's progress and achievements. School staff contact parents immediately if they have any concerns. One parent stated, 'It is just fantastic, amazing. Staff are very experienced. It is a happy and relaxed school.'

Children make strong educational progress. Teaching and residential staff work closely together to maximise children's potential. Children are encouraged and supported to achieve a range of qualifications as well as to develop new skills and interests. This provides them with the best chance of success in the future.

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

Arrangements for safeguarding children are effective. Leaders, governors and staff have established a strong safeguarding culture. Staff understand their roles and they

know what constitutes a safeguarding concern. This helps them to keep children safe. Leaders and staff work effectively with partner agencies and always refer any concerns appropriately.

Engagement with the police is an example of good multi-agency working. A police officer who specialises in early intervention work provides support, training and information to staff and children. This is particularly effective in protecting children from risks associated with social media use such as radicalisation and criminal exploitation. Because children are now much better informed, they are safer.

The designated safeguarding leads are experienced and have undertaken training appropriate to their roles. They have established easy to follow protocols for staff to report concerns. Safeguarding leads also provide child protection training and development for all staff. This ensures that the good safeguarding systems are central to school life.

New staff recruited to the residential provision are thoroughly vetted to ensure that they do not present a risk to children. New staff have a comprehensive induction to the school and residential life. Safeguarding awareness is at the heart of the staff induction.

The behaviour of children is good. Negative behaviours and incidents of concern have decreased over recent months. Staff take proactive action to prevent situations deteriorating or becoming unmanageable. Leaders have recently reviewed the behaviour policy. This now has greater emphasis on staff providing positive role models so that children develop greater empathy for others and learn to admit their mistakes. Staff help children to express themselves. They ensure that they spend quality time with children and involve them in decision-making. This helps children to feel secure and supports improved behaviour over time.

Children feel safe in the residential provision. They are confident that they have adults they can turn to if they have any worries or concerns. Children's relationships are generally positive. Because staff support children to engage well with each other, there is no bullying.

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

The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. She is aspirational and has a strong vision for the residential provision. She is highly valued and respected by staff. A culture of high expectations permeates throughout the school. The residential manager demonstrates passion, commitment and a determination to provide children with the best possible experience of residential life at the school.

At the last inspection of the residential provision, several recommendations were made. Leaders took these very seriously and completed detailed action plans. These plans have been fully implemented. For example, the residential provision has received a complete overhaul and now provides a better environment for children to

stay.

Children receive excellent care from a very committed staff team. Staff enjoy their jobs. They enjoy spending time with children and seeing the children develop and become more independent. The staff team is very stable because there have been no changes to the team for a considerable period. This means the children benefit from very consistent care.

Staff receive good-quality support through professional supervision. Supervision sessions are well structured and provide staff with the opportunity to raise any concern or worry they may have. These sessions are also reflective, providing staff with the opportunity to suggest ways to improve their own practice.

Leaders of the school have systems in place to monitor and continually evaluate care standards. Managers seek the views of children and their families. Oversight is also provided through an independent visitor, who provides managers with a report on the functioning of the residential provision, together with constructive advice to drive forward improvement. Leaders of the school and residential provision are relentless in wanting to improve the provision and to provide children with excellent care and education.

Governors provide another layer of support and challenge to leaders. Designated governors take responsibility for safeguarding and the residential provision. This ensures that these areas are prioritised in the wider organisation. Governors undertake training to help them fulfil their roles effectively. For example, they have undertaken safeguarding training. The safeguarding governor reviews incidents and ensures that the correct actions have been taken. These additional layers of scrutiny and accountability keep children safe.

## **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:** SC008761

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Jenny McConnell

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

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## **Inspector**

Phillip Morris, social care inspector



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