

Shapwick School

21 Station Road, Shapwick, Somerset, Bridgwater, Somerset TA7 9NJ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Shapwick School is registered with the Department for Education and with the Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic pupils (CReSTeD) under the 'special provision' category. Approximately half of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

There are three residential houses spread across two sites.

The school currently has 93 pupils on roll, of which 41 are residential pupils. The remaining students are day pupils.

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 October 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	requires improvement to be good
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The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 13 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The quality of care and support that children receive is good. Children are looked after by house parents and assistant house parents who know them well. Children spoke fondly of the adults who look after them. They report that they feel safe and enjoy boarding. Children have good opportunities to develop personally as well as academically. They make good progress in these areas.

Children's views and experiences are sought in a variety of ways. These include informal discussions, house meetings and student council. The students' council considers itself to be an influential body that is integral to the improvements that have taken place within the school. For example, new lockers and toilet facilities. House meetings take place regularly. Despite this, records of these meetings do not evidence the children's contribution or if actions agreed at the previous meeting have been met.

Since the previous inspection, there has been significant investment and improvement to the boarding living environments. Improvements include redecoration, new furniture and showers. Constraints on the development of some of the boarding houses have been problematic. This is due to the listed status of some of the buildings.

Children have access to a range of activities on-site and within the local community. Some children attend air cadets and trampolining club. Children report that they enjoy and look forward to day trips out during the weekends. Despite this, some boarders say they are bored, particularly during the evenings. Leaders and managers have not explored more effective and creative ways to engage the children in meaningful activities during the evenings that stimulate students' interests and broadens their talents.

Sixth-form students are provided with a wide range of enrichment and learning opportunities outside of their school day. These are facilitated within workshops, school assemblies or by keynote speakers. Topics include mental health awareness, online safety, interview skills, and love, relationships and consent. These learning and development opportunities are being cascaded at an age-appropriate level to other students.

Since the previous inspection, a full-time nurse has been appointed. She has recognised that the systems in place are unwieldy and have potential risk for error. As a result, she has reviewed the recording and administration procedures for all medication. In addition, senior leaders are considering introducing an electronic recording system dedicated to the management and administration of medication. Despite commencing employment in April 2019, the nurse has not been receiving clinical supervision. Action has been taken to remedy this.

Independent care plans are in place for those children who need them. These detail the students' strengths, areas for them to work on and how staff will support them. However, there is a lack of information recorded detailing students' progress towards or achieving these targets.

The school's admissions and discharge procedures have strengthened. Senior leaders and managers ensure that all information is provided, reviewed and assessed by all departmental heads before offering a student a placement. All children are provided with a student handbook on arrival at the school. This provides them with information on what they can do if they have a complaint or dissatisfaction.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that young people are safe and protected. The school's safeguarding procedures are good. Leaders and managers have maintained effective links with all safeguarding agencies. They seek advice and guidance as and when required. All potential safeguarding concerns are dealt with promptly and responded to effectively. Children report that they feel safe and bullying is not a major concern.

Currently, there are three behaviour management systems in place. These include in-house sanctions, children being placed on report cards and major sanctions, all of which are used in conjunction with each other. This means, on occasions, that sanctions are excessive and inconsistent. Not all consequences are restorative or provide children with the opportunity to reflect and learn from their behaviour.

There have been no reported incidents that have resulted in the use of physical intervention or children reported missing from the boarding provision.

The management of risks is variable. Risk assessments are in place and detailed. They provide staff with clear guidance and instruction on how to manage and mitigate risks. However, these are not always available in the homes or reviewed within the appropriate timescales.

Two of the three boarding houses have ensured that fire evacuation drills have taken place at appropriate intervals. One boarding house has only had one evacuation drill in boarding time since the previous inspection. Records do not always detail who has been involved in the evacuation. All staff are provided with annual fire safety training. An annual fire risk assessment has been completed by an external contractor. The recommendations made are being addressed.

Safer recruitment procedures are followed. Leaders and managers ensure that employment histories and references are explored for all applicants. Such good practice assists with the assessment of the suitability of adults to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Since the previous inspection, a new senior leadership team has been appointed. The head of education and head of care now share the role of joint principals for the school. They are ambitious and focused to improve and develop the care and education services provided for the children. Together, the principals have completed a comprehensive development plan.

Senior leaders have taken action to strengthen the management of boarding and the provision of pastoral care. A deputy head of care and assistant house parents have been appointed to these key roles. They are suitably experienced and qualified to meet their roles and responsibilities. All boarding staff are provided with refresher training and specialist training. This provides them with information on how to meet the children's current and emerging needs.

There are new and improved communication systems between all departments. These include education, health and care. Parents are kept up to date with events and celebrations by newsletters as well as emails and telephone calls. Parents' feedback has been unanimously positive.

Leaders and managers ensure that all staff receive regular supervision. The quality of supervision records is variable. Some lack detail about the discussion held. Team meetings take place regularly. They provide an opportunity for all boarding staff to share and develop practice and concerns.

Leaders and managers ensure that all external complaints are responded to. The school's three-stage complaints policy is used well. Records relating to the action taken and resolution of complaints are not well maintained. They do not provide a clear audit trail of action taken and the outcome.

Students are provided with information on how they can raise a complaint. However, information on how to contact the independent visitor or how they can make a complaint anonymously is not included. Some students report that they do not know how to raise an informal complaint and that they do not always feel confident that their complaint would be accepted and investigated without fear or favour.

The monitoring of records by leaders and managers and the independent visitor lacks robust scrutiny and challenge. As a result, weaknesses in records have not been identified or rectified.

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:

- 7.1 The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 7.2 In addition, fire drills are regularly (at least once per term) carried out in 'residential time'.
- 13.1 The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school and takes appropriate action where necessary.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.
- 13.9 The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.
- 20.2 Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish).

Recommendations

- Not all sanctions imposed for not adhering to house rules are recorded, restorative, proportionate and fair. (National minimum standards 12.1)
- Formally seek the views of young people and provide them feedback on what actions will be taken. (National minimum standards 17.1)

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: SC031481

Principals : Mr G Wright Mrs H Lush

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

Sharron Escott, social care inspector (lead)

Wendy Anderson, social care inspector



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