

Appleford School

Appleford School, Elston Lane, Shrewton, Salisbury SP3 4HL

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Appleford School is an independent special school with boarding provision for children aged from 7 to 19 years of age, who have dyslexia and/or associated learning difficulties.

At the time of this inspection, there were 133 children attending this school. Of these children, 54 were using the boarding provision. Most boarders stay full time at school, including weekends, and some have flexible arrangements.

The boarding accommodation is provided in three areas on the school site, with one house for younger children located in the nearby village. Additional services include three host families.

Inspection dates: 8 to 10 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 **good**

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

Date of previous inspection: 12 March 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This school provides boarders with a 'home-from-home' experience. The boarding provision is seen as an important and integral part of the school. Staff, regardless of their role, place the well-being of boarders at the centre of their practice. Effective partnership working between school staff and boarding staff ensures that boarders receive good-quality, consistent and individualised care and support.

Boarders are happy to be here and embrace the extensive opportunities that are available to them. They participate in a wide range of leisure and social activities in the school, and the local and wider community. For example, since the previous inspection, some boarders have climbed the highest 14 peaks in Wales and achieved The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Parents receive regular newsletters in relation to the plans for forthcoming activities and events. The newsletters report on previous activities and include many photographs. This keeps parents informed.

Staff develop positive relationships with boarders. Boarders say that they can easily approach adults across the school, not just adults within their boarding house. Boarders have a good understanding of internal and external support networks and agencies if they have any worries or concerns.

Boarders have access to a wide range of therapeutic support. This is a strength of the school. As a result of this, boarders develop good coping skills and strategies towards their personal and social development. This enhances their confidence and self-esteem and contributes to them achieving well in their learning, and preparation for later life.

Staff encourage and support boarders to develop their independence skills. This includes personal care skills, chores around the house and the preparation of snacks and drinks. Senior boarders are assisted in learning to use trains, buses and travel independently. This prepares them well for later life.

Mealtimes are well organised and provide boarders with a good range of healthy food. Generally, boarders speak well of the quality of food and meals provided. They say that the food at breakfast and at lunchtime has improved. However, boarders say that the evening meals are not as enjoyable.

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

Leaders and managers safeguard boarders effectively from harm. They work jointly with safeguarding agencies and parents when concerns arise. The school's policies to safeguard boarders reflect current statutory guidance.

Positive behaviour is promoted well. Since the previous inspection, the number of incidents of negative behaviour has decreased. Consequently, fewer sanctions have been used. In addition, behaviour management policies have been reviewed and changes in practice have been re-enforced through whole-school training.

Boarders do not identify bullying as a concern. Since the previous inspection, the school has hosted and engaged in the Diana Award anti-bullying event. This demonstrates the emphasis that the school places on raising the awareness of bullying.

Staff know the boarders well. They understand individual risks and manage these to help boarders stay safe. Boarders' individual risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. Boarders say that they feel safe, as do their parents and carers.

Boarders stay in a safe and well-maintained environment. Health and safety matters at this school are taken seriously.

Leaders and managers ensure that there is an effective selection and recruitment process that safeguards boarders.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The proprietor, headteacher, leaders and managers provide determined, motivated and focused leadership. They have high expectations of themselves, staff and boarders. Leaders and managers know their provision well. The school is outward-looking and forward-thinking.

Since the previous inspection, there has been a focus on strengthening the senior leadership team and the improvement of the management information system. For example, additional posts have been created and there has been a review of the management structure and there is closer scrutiny of behaviour incidents. As a result of these measures, leaders and managers use monitoring activities effectively to understand accurately how the school is performing and where improvements can be made.

Staff receive effective training and access to qualifications that enhance their professional development. For example, staff have received specific training to meet boarders' individual healthcare needs, autism and attachments disorders. Additional training includes safeguarding training and behaviour management training.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff receive effective support and regular performance development meetings. These meetings reflect on the school values and a review of staff members' individual practice. Safeguarding matters are frequently discussed at these meetings, but safeguarding is not a specific agenda item.

Parents speak positively of the boarding provision. A parent said, 'The staff are very friendly and approachable.' This was echoed by another parent who said, 'The

boarding house staff and boarding environment is very supportive for children with dyslexia and associated difficulties.'

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

Recommendations

- Continue to consult with boarders in relation to the quality and standard of the evening meal.
- Consider including safeguarding as a standing agenda item in staff professional development meetings.

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: SC039141

Headteacher: David King

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01980 621020

Email address: headspa@appleford.wilts.sch.uk

Inspectors

David Kidner, social care inspector (lead)

Janice Hawtin, social care inspector

Clare Davies, social care inspector



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019