

The Springfields Academy

Springfields School, Curzon Street, Calne, Wiltshire SN11 0DS

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This residential special school is set in a small rural town in Wiltshire. The school offers day and residential provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorders.

The residential accommodation is provided on the school site in one building. All residential pupils return home at weekends and during school holidays.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 November 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: 14 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The residential provision provides children and young people with a 'home-from-home' experience. Children and young people are happy to be here and said that staying here is having a positive impact on their life. A child said, 'It may seem scary at first, but give the school and staff a chance. They will help you develop, and change your life for the better.'

Residential staff develop positive relationships with children and young people. Children and young people said that they can easily approach any adult if they have any worries or concerns. At the time of this inspection, the inspectors observed residential staff supporting children and young people in a nurturing, supportive and encouraging manner.

Children and young people enjoy a wide range of leisure and social activities in the school, and in the local and wider community. Activities include mountain biking, swimming and rock climbing. Children and young people recently rescued a baby hedgehog. They made contact with a local animal rescue sanctuary that took care of the hedgehog. Following this, the children and young people have raised money to support the wildlife sanctuary. They are very proud of their achievements and the money that they have raised.

Residential staff support children and young people to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. As well as staff promoting healthy eating, a member of staff holds a regular morning running group. Children and young people enjoy this activity and can identify the benefits of an active lifestyle. As a result, a child has lost weight and is highly delighted and proud of his success. This has developed his self-esteem and confidence.

Residential staff encourage and support children and young people to develop their independence skills. This includes developing their personal care skills, doing chores around the house and preparing snacks and drinks. Staff have supported an older child to use public transport and to travel to London independently. This has prepared him well for adult life.

Since the previous inspection, children and young people have begun to have their evening meals in the dining room of the residential provision. They are delighted with this positive change. The mealtime is now a 'family-type' occasion that is well organised and provides children and young people with a good range of healthy food. In addition, this has been a platform for children and young people to become more involved in the planning of menus, shopping for food and assisting with cooking meals.

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

Leaders and managers safeguard children and young people effectively from harm. They work jointly with safeguarding agencies and parents when concerns arise. The school's policies for safeguarding children and young people reflect current statutory guidance. Staff benefit from regular safeguarding training and refresher training. The areas covered by recent training have included county lines and children and young people who exhibit sexually harmful behaviour. Staff have a thorough understanding of safeguarding protocols.

Staff are alerted to a range of potential safeguarding risks on a monthly basis. This ensures that staff know the children and young people who are at risk, and their particular vulnerabilities. Children and young people did not identify bullying as a concern. Since the previous inspection, children and young people have not been missing and there are no concerns in relation to misuse of substances.

Children and young people are safe. They said that they feel safe and that there is always someone they can talk to. Staff respond effectively to children and young people's complaints in a timely manner.

Positive behaviour is promoted well in the residential provision. Children and young people are supported to manage their emotions and feelings effectively. At this inspection, the inspectors noted that the children and young people's behaviour was polite and respectful. In addition, parents spoke positively about the improvement in their children's behaviour since they have been staying in the residential provision, and the positive impact that this has at home.

Since the previous inspection, children and young people have not been restrained in the residential provision. However, during an incident in school time, a child who stays at the residential provision was held on the ground. This was used as a last resort, and to keep him and others safe.

However, there is a disparity between the residential provision and the school in regard to the use of physical intervention and ground holds. In addition, this has been identified as a matter of concern by the independent visitor. At the time of this inspection, the senior leaders took effective action to review the use of ground holds across the whole school, and they plan to eradicate the use of this form of intervention.

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The senior leadership team provides effective leadership. As a result, there is good management oversight of the residential provision. Senior leaders know the strengths of the provision and the areas identified for future development focus on improving the outcomes for the children and young people.

The residential provision is achieving its stated aims and objectives. It is seen as an important and integral part of the school. Residential staff place the needs of the children and young people at the centre of their practice. Residential staff and school staff continue to work in partnership to provide consistency and stability for children and young people.

External monitoring by the independent visitor continues to be appropriately challenging and critical. As a result of this, the independent visitor assists leaders and managers to identify areas for improvement. Furthermore, the safeguarding governor provides intelligent and supportive challenge by routinely using data to see patterns and issues that are emerging. Records of his frequent visits evidence attention to detail and his recommendations are acted on.

Children and young people's care and support plans guide the staff on how to meet their needs. The plans are presented in an accessible format and are well written. This ensures that staff are able to sensitively understand each child and young person's wishes and how to take action in their best interest. Children and young people's plans are written with them, which means that they are supported to belong to the home, feel ownership and build trusting and secure relationships with the staff.

Staff are confident in their leaders and said that the training they receive is presented in a way that enables them to retain the information, and keeps them up to date. The areas covered by the training include radicalisation, neglect, autism spectrum disorders and sensory issues. However, the evaluations of the staff's annual reviews show that they offer little overall future direction or reflection on what has been achieved. This is because the objectives are broad and do not lead to specific targets for the individual.

Parents spoke highly of the quality of care provided for their children, and the effective communication between the residential provision, school and home. A parent said, 'My son is achieving academically and socially, and we can see a future for him at last.'

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that the plan to eradicate the use of ground holds is carried out. (NMS 12.4)
- Ensure that the staff's annual reviews reflect the member of staff's achievements and identify clear and specific objectives for future development. (NMS 19.6)

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: SC039093

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mr Jon Hamp

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01249 814 125

Email address: jhamp@springfields.wilts.sch.uk

Inspectors

David Kidner, social care inspector (lead)
Joy Howick, social care inspector



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