

King's Mill School

Victoria Road, Driffield, North Humberside YO25 6UG

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

King's Mill School is a residential special school that is maintained by a local authority. The school provides education for 132 children aged from two to 19 years, who have profound and multiple learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum disorders. All pupils have education, health and care (EHC) plans. The school has a separate residential facility on-site, called The Residence. Currently, 34 pupils use The Residence. Up to 14 pupils can stay each night. Most stay for one or two nights per week on a regular basis. Some pupils also stay for part of the school holidays.

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: 4 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- The pupils have positive day-to-day experiences and they make good progress in developing their skills, abilities and confidence.
- The pupils receive individualised care and support that is of a high standard.
- The staff know the pupils well and invest time and effort in promoting the pupils' well-being.
- Parents rate the school highly and are pleased with the impact it has on their children.
- There are good arrangements in place that keep the pupils safe.
- The pupils' behaviour is good, and they enjoy a settled and calm living environment.
- The new head of care is making improvements to the service that are child-centred and are raising standards of care.
- There is good leadership and management and the school's aim and objectives to promoting learning for life are met.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- All concerns, discussions and decisions made about a pupil's safety, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). ('Keeping children safe in education, statutory guidance for schools and colleges.' Department for education 2019)
- A written record is kept of major sanctions and the use of any reasonable force. Records include the information in Appendix 2 (use of reasonable force). In particular records detailing the reasonable force employed must clearly describe the actions of staff. (NMS 12.6)
- Ensure all care staff receive training about 'county lines'. Support all staff to attain a relevant minimum level 3 qualification or to have qualifications which demonstrate the same competencies. (NMS 19)
- Undertake an internal, annual assessment of compliance with the national minimum standards. (NMS 20)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The staff know the likes, views and needs of the individual pupils. This knowledge is used effectively to make the pupils' short breaks fun, happy and safe. The staff are patient and sensitive and provide the pupils with a nurturing environment. The pupils are able to be themselves and are encouraged to try out new activities and experiences.

The pupils enjoy a range of activities. They are encouraged to take part in cultural events, to make displays for the notice board and to play outside in the sandpit, on the trampoline and with the scooters. They like going swimming, going to local parks and relaxing in the hydrotherapy pool. The staff take the pupils on trips out and on short holidays. The staff give pupils lots of one-to-one attention and respect the pupils' needs for their own space. Consequently, the pupils benefit from a rich level of extra-curricular activity.

The staff are attentive to the pupils' well-being. The staff invest time and effort in the pupils, such as taking a pupil with restricted mobility to the local shops to improve his mood. Pupils benefit from massage and from support to move out of their wheelchairs to stretch out on the floor and play with toys.

The pupils are encouraged to eat healthy diets, to try new foods and to keep hydrated. The staff are gently persistent and take the time to communicate with school staff, such as when a pupil has refused to drink before school starts. The pupils exercise regularly, and the staff are always close by to support with any difficulties. For example, when a pupil has a seizure, the staff provide the appropriate support and follow any emergency plans if seizures are prolonged or frequent.

The relationships with pupils' parents and carers are good. They consistently praise the staff for the quality of care. They feel well informed about the pupils' experiences and are confident about raising any concerns if they needed to.

Short breaks provide the pupils with additional positive social experiences. The pupils progress in developing their self-care skills. They help with chores and improve their life skills and develop their communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal. They improve in their confidence and maturity.

There are good arrangements for pupils starting to use The Residence. They can visit and become familiar with the environment before staying overnight. The school supports older pupils and their families with the transition to adulthood. The pupils benefit from undertaking work experience, attending local colleges and from the support to visit potential adult services.

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

The improved care planning and risk assessment process set up by the head of care clearly identifies individual risks for each pupil. The clear risk reduction strategies are implemented in practice. These are linked to the individual needs of the pupils such as their complex health needs, communication and behaviour.

Policies relating to intimate care, surveillance and medication are being reviewed to ensure that these are in line with good practice. The administration of medication practice is safe and helps to protect the health of the pupils.

The pupils benefit from the high staffing levels and the quality of individual support. There are good relationships between the pupils and staff, which helps the pupils to feel safe and secure. This was echoed by parents who were confident that their children are safe. The pupils develop their own sense of safety and benefit from learning about stranger danger, e-safety and road safety.

The pupils are generally happy and content, and the staff respond well to any signs of distress or change in mood. The staff are sensitive and persistent in finding out what may upset the pupils and to help them to feel better.

There are no incidents of pupils going missing from the school and no known risks from smoking or alcohol misuse. There is no bullying between the pupils and if any of them have an outburst the staff react sensitively to maintain a calm environment and to keep all of the pupils safe. Record-keeping about the actions of staff is not always clear about how they have intervened when they need to physically hold or guide a pupil. This impacts on how the head of care can monitor such practice. The use of physical intervention is rare and a last resort, which reflects on how settled the living environment is for the pupils.

The school's safeguarding arrangements generally meet statutory guidance. There are safe recruitment practices, and concerns about pupils' safety and staff practice are appropriately referred to the local authority. The school has good links with the local safeguarding partnership group and benefits from training and networking opportunities. One of the safeguarding concerns that had been appropriately acted on had no record of follow up action. This was a recording issue as the head of care was able to explain what had happened in this case.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The new head of care is proactive at driving improvements and raising standards. He has identified key strengths and weaknesses and is implementing a development plan to make further improvements. He keeps the headteacher and governors informed of his plans and progress. This is part of the good management oversight that is in place.

The Residence has been refurbished. The pupils' care plans and risk assessments are

being improved and there is more consistent staffing on duty. This is raising the standards of care for the residential pupils.

The school leaders put pupils' needs first. This was reinforced by the positive feedback from parents. The school's learning for life ethos is demonstrated in the child-centred approach and encouragement for the pupils to develop their skills.

Across the whole school, there is a good understanding of the pupils' progress. This is less good in The Residence and there remains a shortfall in how well staff consistently record pupils' progress against set targets. This is offset by the whole-school approach to monitoring progress and contribution to the annual reviews of EHC plans.

The staff feel supported. They are regularly consulted and kept well informed about changes to the setting. There is good communication between the care staff and there are regular team meetings. The head of care uses these meetings to encourage staff to reflect on their practice and values and to improve the quality of life for the pupils.

The staff receive a range of training that is specific to the individual needs of the pupils. This includes needs in relation to diet, medication, physiotherapy, sleep systems and communication. The staff all complete safeguarding training that is related to children and young people with disabilities. Senior staff have had training about county lines and this is planned to be cascaded to all staff. The head of care is taking steps to ensure that all staff have the appropriate level 3 qualification or equivalent.

Good, all-round support for the pupils is promoted through the EHC plan process, with school leaders ensuring that the pupils receive care that meets their assessed needs. The pupils benefit from the input from the school nurse, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and use of evidence-based behavioural interventions.

There is regular independent monitoring of the residential care. Combined with the governors' checks on the quality of care and welfare of the pupils, there is a good level of scrutiny and oversight. This helps to ensure that the pupils' welfare is safeguarded and contributes to a system of continuous improvement.

A system to annually assess compliance with the national minimum standards is still not in place. Even with the levels of monitoring that take place and the head of care's development plan, the school is not able to demonstrate how it meets all the national minimum standards. This may limit the school's opportunities to consider other areas for development.

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: SC055984

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Gail Lawton

Type of school: Residential Special School

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Inspectors

Simon Morley, social care inspector (lead)

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