

Marland School

Devon County Council, Marland School, Peters Marland, Torrington, Devon EX38 8QQ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This school is a local authority-maintained school. It is a member of a foundation trust with other special schools within the local authority. The school provides weekly residential care, over four nights, for up to 40 boys between the ages of 10 and 16 years. The school provides education and care for boys who have social, emotional and/or mental health needs. At the time of this inspection, there were 31 children on roll.

Inspection dates: 10 to 12 February 2020

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: 3 December 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The students make very good progress from their starting points. The academic achievement and social and emotional progress of the students are enhanced because of the residential provision at the school.

The good quality of the individualised care helps the students to develop a sense of security and belonging. The staff know the students very well and succeed in building positive and trusting relationships. The staff offer nurturing care to the students. They understand the importance of offering bedtime stories and enabling the students to freely discuss any concerns or worries with them.

The students enjoy taking part in a wide range of activities. These include trips out of the school to attend football matches, swimming, youth clubs and the cinema. The new accommodation block has large communal areas and lounges where the students can enjoy games of table tennis, pool, learn to play musical instruments, watch films, or play games. Through participation in these activities, the students make friends, learn new skills and build their resilience, self-esteem and confidence.

The views and wishes of the students are taken seriously and are acted on if appropriate. Complaints from the students are minimal. Any complaints are taken seriously and promptly responded to. The students report that they are listened to and that their views are respected by the staff.

The complex health needs of the students are met well at the school. The staff are trained to use a therapeutic model of care that supports the students to make progress with their emotional and mental health. It is also effective in supporting students to develop resilience and coping strategies so that they learn to manage their own behaviour. Health professionals such as counsellors and psychology services are obtained for the students if necessary. Medication is well managed and is safely administered.

The staff use a sensitive approach when students move in and out of the school. They understand how difficult change is for some students and so prepare the students well for any moves. The students benefit from staying in the school's independence flat, where they learn a range of independence skills such as how to budget, shop, cook and clean for themselves.

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

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and robust. External safeguarding professionals and services are appropriately and promptly consulted if necessary. Safeguarding referrals are made in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures. Any safety or welfare concerns are noted by the staff on a new safeguarding system that is overseen by the school safeguarding leads. The concerns are reviewed and immediate plans for action are agreed and allocated. Students

report that they feel safe at the school and could name a member of staff that they would speak with if they were worried or concerned.

Incidents of students going missing are minimal. If a student does go missing, the staff follow robust missing procedures and the students are promptly returned to the school. The staff achieve a good balance of allowing the students to take age-appropriate risks and keeping them safe. For example, staff use 'trust time,' where the students are allowed to have free time away from the school that is earned through positive behaviour.

Routines at the school run smoothly. The students report that the rules are fair and respected by them. The students benefit from clear and consistent boundaries that are understood and respected. These boundaries help the students to feel safe and secure. The staff effectively de-escalate any incidents. The students are kept very busy to help them to channel their energy positively. The students are supported to learn from their mistakes and are rewarded for positive behaviour.

Leaders and managers have reduced institutional practice in the school. Internal doors are no longer all locked and the use of CCTV in the residential blocks is appropriate. Staff continue to use radios to communicate with each other. However, the use of radios is currently being reviewed by managers. Searches of students are minimal and are now recorded. However, records do not contain all information that is required to establish if the search was necessary.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers work tirelessly to improve the quality of care at the school. There is an ambitious vision and high aspirations for the students. The staff team is consistent and stable. Staff report that they are very well led and managed. Leaders and managers are very visible in the school and their accessible approach is appreciated by the staff, who describe working at the school as like being part of a family.

Leaders and managers ensure that the staff continue their professional development and remain up to date with the latest research and innovative practice. Strengths and areas for development in the school are well understood by leaders and managers. Since the last inspection, many improvements have been implemented. The new accommodation blocks are now fully operational and offer the students a very high standard of accommodation. All of the students now have their own bedroom that they appreciate and enjoy personalising.

The staff benefit from a comprehensive training programme that equips them with the skills and knowledge that they need to care for the students. The staff also benefit from regular supervision from their line manager. The staff report that they are very well led and managed. They have high aspirations for the students and enjoy working at the school.

The views of the students, parents and the staff are regularly obtained and acted on. An example of this action is one child commenting that their mattress was too hard,

so the staff responded and bought him a mattress topper to ensure that he was comfortable. In response to negative comments about the quality of meals, a review of catering was undertaken, changes have been made and the quality of meals is now improved. This action demonstrates that leaders and managers listen to the views of the students, parents and the staff.

The quality of relationships between the staff at the school with parents and professionals is very positive. Parents comment positively that the school is helping their child to make progress in every aspect of their life, and they appreciate how the staff never give up on their child and offer support to all the family.

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

Recommendations

- Any search of boarders' personal belongings should be carried out in accordance with section 550ZA of the Education Act 1996 and with regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (Residential Special School National Minimum Standards 9.4)

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: SC022231

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Keith Bennett

Type of school: Residential Special School

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Inspectors

Tina Maddison, social care inspector (lead)

Heather Chaplin, social care inspector

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