

The Marchant-Holliday School

North Cheriton, Templecombe, Somerset BA8 0AH

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The school is an independent residential special school located in rural Somerset. The school is a registered charity that provides education and residential provision for boys aged between five and 13 years who have behavioural and/or emotional and/or social needs. The school provides a residential service for up to 20 boys during term time.

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 January 2020

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

Date of previous inspection: 29 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children consistently receive good-quality, individualised care from staff. Staff know children's needs well and are skilled in building strong, positive and trusting relationships with them. Staff are good role models for children and provide them with a nurturing environment that promotes positive social behaviour and helps them to progress.

Children's day-to-day experiences in the residential provision are good. Children benefit from their residential stay and access a wide range of activities, making the most of the school's facilities and grounds. Some children attend a local scout group in the community, and the school runs a cub pack. These activities provide opportunities for children to develop their social skills, make friends and build their self-confidence.

Staff support children to create memory books that they take with them when they leave the school. These books are full of pictures, records of achievements, photographs and mementos, providing a lovely reminder of the children's time at school.

Staff are skilled communicators and work well with parents, families and other professionals. Important information about children's needs and how to support them is shared. This provides children with consistency and aids their progress. Families are very positive about the care that their children receive.

Children's healthcare needs are met well. The management of medication is robust, and therapeutic support is provided when required. These actions, along with work on healthy eating and exercise, lead to an improvement in children's general health and well-being.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Staff demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and follow the correct reporting processes. They work well with other professionals to safeguard children. The new safeguarding lead is appropriately qualified and has improved the safeguarding record system so that it now provides a clear record of the actions taken to safeguard children.

Behaviour is well managed. Good-quality risk assessments and behaviour support plans provide staff with clear guidance on how to both support positive behaviours and mitigate risk. Staff help children to understand their behaviours and support them to develop self-management strategies. This approach has been effective, as the number of incidents and restraints is reducing. Sanctions are used, and these are

moving away from being punitive towards a more restorative approach which provides more learning opportunities for children.

Children love the token and reward system, and it has been very effective in developing positive behaviours. They spend their tokens in the token shop, which is stocked with items that they have suggested and want to work towards obtaining.

Restraint is rarely used, and then only as a last resort to protect children or staff from harm. Since the previous inspection, there has been a reduction in the use of restraint. Leaders and managers have identified that further improvement is needed to the recording of restraints. This work is ongoing, and it includes improving the clarity of the language that the staff use when describing an event in records to avoid vague or emotive language.

Effective fire safety systems are in place to help to protect children. These include regular checks on firefighting equipment, as well as regular fire drills. One fire drill was observed during the inspection. This was carried out in a calm way and demonstrated that the children know what to do when the alarm sounds.

Safer recruitment systems and processes are good and protect children from those who may wish to harm them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of both the strengths and the areas for development of the residential provision. They have high expectations and are ambitious for children and staff. There is a strong sense of community at the school. Leaders and managers are involved in the day-to-day life of the residential provision, and they support children and staff and help both to reach their full potential.

Leaders and managers support the staff well. Staff benefit from receiving regular supervision and good-quality training. Supervision is reflective and helps staff to develop their skills and knowledge. Leaders and managers have identified this as an area that they would like to improve further.

The school nurse has regular supervision from her line manager yet is not currently receiving clinical supervision from an appropriately qualified person, and also attends the local nurses forum, where practice developments are shared.

Residential staffing levels are high, enabling children to benefit from one-to-one staff attention. The staff members work well as a team and demonstrate passion for their work. They are effective advocates for the children and also work very effectively with parents and other professionals.

Consultation with children is a strength of the school. This is achieved in a variety of ways, which include the school council, one-to-one time with staff and conversations over mealtimes. Children feel listened to, and their opinions are valued by staff.

The effectiveness of current monitoring is variable, as it does not constantly provide a clear critical analysis of the work undertaken or the records maintained.

The governing body has been through a recent period of instability. This has included recent changes to the chair of governors. Nevertheless, governors have worked hard to improve how they support and challenge leaders. For example, they now visit the school more regularly to see for themselves the impact of leaders' work. Leaders recognise that there is a need to embed these recent improvements.

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

Recommendations

- Improve the critical analysis of records specified in Appendix 2 and use this information to further improve outcomes for children.
- Ensure that the school nurse, in addition to supervision from their line manager at school, receives clinical supervision from a suitability qualified person.
- Leaders and managers need to ensure that the new governors are embedded in their roles.

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: SC033089

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Danny Kitts

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector

Wendy Anderson, social care inspector

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