

Laleham Gap School

Laleham Gap School, Ozengell Place, Ramsgate, Kent CT12 6FH

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Laleham Gap school is a residential special school, maintained by the local authority. The school provides care and education for boys and girls who may have autism spectrum disorder and/or speech and language difficulties and who are aged between 10 and 16 years. The residential provision is located within the main school site. During 2019, the school made a decision to close the boarding provision in July 2020. There are currently three children in residence.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 5 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people:
outstanding

Children have continued to make exceptional progress across all areas. The settled and stable living environment enables children to make the best possible academic progress. Detailed and meaningful plans support their significant progress in their self-care, social development and independence. Some children make remarkable strides in developing their vocational interests and building aspirations for the future.

Staff work very closely with teachers and parents. High levels of communication and cooperation help the children to transfer their progress and development across home, school and the residential setting. This joined-up working also contributes to the careful and considered plans for the transitions that all the children will soon be making. Children's records are clear and detailed and speak loudly of the children's progress and achievements as well as the positive memories that they build.

The residence remains a well-organised and homely environment in which the staff and children maintain positive and mutually respectful relationships. Staff maintain a careful balance between boundaries, structure and routine, and the children's need for healthy self-expression and making their own choices.

Leaders and managers have taken a proactive, planned and sensitive approach to the decision to close the residential provision. This has ensured that the children have continued to feel secure and experience a sense of belonging in the residence. Their parents said that the high standard of care that their children have previously enjoyed has not diminished in any respect since the decision to close, and, in their view, standards have become even higher.

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

During this inspection period, the residence has been very settled, and incidents of any kind are rare. Staff ensure that they manage children's strong emotions and impulsive actions in a calm and considered manner. This is also attributable to the creation of a positive environment, which staff work hard to maintain. As a result of this approach, there is no use of physical intervention. Staff support the children to reflect on and learn from their actions and, where relevant, to follow a restorative approach to fully resolve conflicts and restore relationships.

Staff are highly effective in supporting the children to take developmentally appropriate risks and to develop their awareness and self-protective abilities. They do this sensitively and in close partnership with parents. This positive practice has enabled one child to independently access a work experience placement, adding greatly to his overall benefit from the experience.

Staff encourage and support the children to administer their own medication and to keep the necessary records. Again, staff do this in close cooperation with parents and maintain careful oversight. This helps the children to take responsibility for their health and well-being and promotes independence and self-confidence.

The residence is maintained to a high standard, and health and safety practice, including fire safety, is effective. Staff are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding children and are very well supported by senior managers in following procedures and maintaining a strong safeguarding culture.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

There have been no changes in staffing during this inspection period. The stable staff team demonstrates a remarkable commitment to the care of the children and in supporting their best possible progress.

Leadership structures are strong and clear. Despite the planned closure, there has been no compromise to the high standards of staff support through supervision, team meetings and ongoing training. The standard of staff supervision remains particularly high and helps to maintain a strong focus on the children and maximising their care experiences.

Managers ensure that care plans are detailed, individualised to the children and regularly reviewed. Clear objectives are in place for each child, and this supports children to make positive transitions to adulthood. Parents spoke highly of the service and recognise the consistent efforts of staff and managers to support positive transitions for their children.

Information about this inspection

The inspector has 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: SC023691

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mr Les Milton

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector:

John Pledger, social care inspector

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