

Hope House School

Barnby Road, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 3NE

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Hope House School is an independent residential special school that has 28 pupils. Most pupils have autistic spectrum disorder and/or learning disabilities. The school also caters for children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The residential accommodation is provided in a detached property in the grounds of the school. Two students can access the residential service, but only one child is currently resident. This is the school's first inspection of its residential provision since it was registered with the Department for Education in March 2019.

Inspection dates: 28 to 30 January 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

Date of previous inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

The experience of the child who stays at the residential provision is poor because of significant safeguarding and management shortfalls.

Staff do not have access to good information about the child. For example, the education, health and care plan document is out of date and, therefore, does not provide staff with up-to-date information. Subsequently, staff do not have a good understanding of the child's needs or risks. This leaves the child vulnerable to criminalisation and exploitation. Risks, however, are lowered because staffing ratios are high for this child.

There is currently no independent visitor for children in residence. This means that children do not have anyone independent of the school, other than their parents, who they can talk to about any worries or concerns that they may have.

The child attends the on-site school. His attendance is very good. He is also helping to care for the school's animals. This activity has improved his confidence, empathy and ability to manage his emotional responses. The child also enjoys horticulture at the school, and is developing some practical skills. He particularly likes playing football and rugby. He has recently joined a rugby club.

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

Recruitment checks are incomplete for most staff:

- References are not sought until after the member of staff has commenced working with children.
- Some references have not been received at all.
- References are not always sought from the most recent employer.
- Staff begin working with children before their disclosure and barring service (DBS) certificate is received by the school.
- Gaps in employment history have not been explored.
- There are no risk assessments for staff who start work without checks or whose DBS identifies potential concerns.

Consequently, vetting procedures do not protect children from unsuitable adults.

Safeguarding concerns are not properly managed:

- Staff have not reported safeguarding concerns to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) for the school.
- The DSL has not passed on safeguarding concerns or allegations against staff to the appropriate safeguarding agency.

- The DSL does not have a good understanding of her role.

This has left children vulnerable to abuse and harm.

There are fire hazards in the residential house. Storage arrangements for electrical equipment and cleaning materials have not been carefully considered. Portable appliance testing was last done in July 2018 and so is not up to date. The fire risk assessment relates to the school and not specifically to the residential provision. Also, fire drill records do not specify which staff and children were involved in the drill. Therefore, it is not known which children and staff have practised leaving the house in the event of a fire.

Individual risk assessments are generic and do not reflect the risks pertaining to the child. Therefore, staff do not have a good understanding of the risks for the child or how to minimise them. In addition, risk assessments are not completed for staff who are unable to carry out certain tasks, such as physical intervention, because of ill health. This also puts staff and children at risk of harm.

Not all staff who have carried out restraints have received appropriate training. This is unsafe and significantly increases the risk of harm to children. Not all incidents of restraint have been recorded. Incidents are difficult to monitor because there is no log of incidents. Records do not always give a clear description of the holds used. There is not always evidence of management oversight of restraint practice. There is very little evidence of discussions with children after a physical intervention or of reflective discussions with staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

Staff have not received important training in areas such as safeguarding children, health and safety, fire safety, first aid and food hygiene. Staff have not had training that enables them to meet the specific needs of the children accommodated, such as sexually harmful behaviours or attachment theory. Therefore, staff do not have the skills or knowledge to be able to promote children's welfare and safety.

Staff who are still on their probation period, and therefore not experienced or appropriately trained, are supporting children without any supervision from more experienced staff. At times during the night, at weekends and during holidays, there are no experienced staff on-site. At these times, there is very often not a qualified first aider on duty.

The residential manager is enthusiastic but lacks experience or an appropriate qualification. She currently works longer hours than she is contracted to work, and this is not sustainable. She is not well supported.

Staff are not well supported. Some staff complain that they are not listened to or consulted. Not all staff feel that they are treated respectfully by managers.

Trustees took on their role on 25 September 2019 after an investigation by the Charities Commission had been completed. They are unaware of their responsibilities

in respect of the national minimum standards and, therefore, have not undertaken any form of monitoring of the service.

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

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standard(s) for residential special schools:

- 2.2 The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school who children may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. This person may be known as the 'independent person'. Children are informed who this person is, and how to contact them and they are easily accessible. Children are also provided with one or more appropriate helpline(s) or outside contact numbers, including the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England, to ring in case of problems or distress.
- 3.6 The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of children who are unwell, and ensures that children's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing is promoted. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, administration of medicines (including controlled drugs) and dealing with medical emergencies. Policies for administration of medication should reflect guidance provided by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (Handling of Medicines in Social Care).
- 3.12 Where necessary, a child has a clear individual health and welfare plan or similar record, containing relevant health and welfare information provided by parents/carers and recording significant health and welfare needs and issues. This record should be agreed by parents/carers and include: records of developmental checks; health monitoring required by staff; intimate care or bodily functions requiring staff help; and the involvement of a child's parents/carers or significant others in health and welfare issues.
- 6.2 The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of children are ensured.
- 6.3 The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- 7.1 The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 10.2 Children take part in age appropriate peer activities as would normally be permitted by the parent in relation to their children or as outlined in any placement plan. Suitable risk assessments are in place for any activities which may

put children at risk of harm. Decision-making should be undertaken from the perspective of a reasonable parent.

- 11.1 The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 12.3 Staff receive appropriate training and support to recognise and deal with incidences of challenging behaviour or bullying. This training should include assistance in managing staff members' responses and feelings arising from working with children who have emotional difficulties which result in challenging behaviour. Staff training is regularly refreshed.
- 12.5 All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) within 24 hours incidents of restraint, including reasonable force, they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by.
- 12.6 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). The record is made within 24 hours and is legible. Children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records. The school regularly reviews any instances of the use of reasonable force and examines trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and learn in a way that will inform future practice.
- 13.1 The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.
- 13.3 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role.
- 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.
- 13.5 The school's leadership and management actively promote the wellbeing of pupils.
- 13.6 Staff with management responsibilities have an adequate level of experience or training in the management and practice of boarding to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted.
- 13.7 The school follows and maintains the policies and documents described in Appendix 1.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.
- 13.9 The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.
- 14.1 Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- 15.2 Records of staff working in the school demonstrate sufficient competent staff are deployed and that contingency plans are in place in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels.
- 15.4 Staff members who are placed in charge of the school and other staff at particular times (e.g. as leaders of staff shifts) have substantial relevant experience of working in the school and have successfully completed their induction and probationary periods.
- 19.1 Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school.
- 19.2 All existing care staff have attained a relevant minimum level 3 qualification or have qualifications which demonstrate the same competencies. All new staff engaged from the commencement of these standards hold these qualifications or begin working towards them within 3 months of confirmation of employment.
- 19.6 All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance.
- 20.1 The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who is independent of the management of the school, to visit the school six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the head teacher (or school equivalent).
- 20.2 Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish).
- 20.3 Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the head teacher (or school equivalent) and where applicable the governing body, organisation, or partnership. Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body), within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary. Monitoring reports should be retained by the school and made available during an inspection.
- 21.1 The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan there is appropriate

consultation. Where applicable the plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Where feasible, children in the school are aware of the content of their placement plans, and confirm that the school is providing care for them that is consistent with the plans.

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: 2524285

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mrs Terri Westmoreland

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Inspector

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector (lead)

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