

Pield Heath School

Pield Heath House RC School, Pield Heath Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3NW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Pield Heath School is a non-maintained, co-educational, day and residential special school for children and young people between the ages of seven and 19 years. The school caters for children and young people who have complex needs, moderate to severe learning difficulties and associated communication problems. The school can provide up to 22 residential places in its residential unit. Currently, a total of 11 children and young people use the service on an overnight short-break basis up to three nights a week, Monday to Wednesday. Accommodation is provided at St Joseph's, a home located on the school site.

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 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: 12 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

All young people thoroughly enjoy the residential experience. Most only stay for two nights each week and they achieve much in that short time. Young people are evidently happy with each other and with the staff. This can be seen through their smiles, interaction with each other and, for verbal young people, the use of each other's names.

Central to young people's very positive experiences are the close and friendly relationships they form with staff. Staff know the young people's needs very well. A permanent staff team, led by a respected head of care, has been pivotal in developing this service and in providing young people with consistency. There is a lot of good humour and laughter, for example when staff and young people sit together to share the evening meal.

Young people make outstanding progress in learning social and practical independence skills. They explore how to be independent of their families in a safe and nurturing environment. This prepares them well for their future adult lives. A young person said, 'I love having my sleepover. I see my friends and do lots of fun things.' Often, young people who have disabilities can feel isolated at home because their peers can reside across different local authorities. This school enables them to meet up and have 'sleepovers' with their friends, just as their peers in a mainstream provision might do.

Empowering young people and their parents and carers and acting on their views are central to this service. Direct feedback from parents about the quality of care and the difference care makes to young people is overwhelmingly positive. A parent commented, 'This school community embraces not just the pupils but us as parents. I am a better parent because of the love and support shown to my family.'

Young people are provided with enriching, planned activities that help them to make sense of and understand their world. These activities cater to individual interests, such as music and drumming, table tennis, eating out, arts and crafts, and cooking. There is a twice-weekly youth club. An example of a well-planned activity was when a young person was supported to prepare a meal and share this with her parents in the residential setting.

Young people behave exceptionally well. They are kind, polite and courteous to each other and the staff team. Young people show real empathy towards each other and are very encouraging and nurturing, particularly towards those who are less able than themselves. For example, young people help each other at mealtimes by setting the table, serving food and clearing the table. Using the positive behaviour support model of intervention, staff promote a calm and nurturing environment where restraints and sanctions are not used.

House meetings provide enjoyable opportunities for young people to share their views. Each young person chooses a meal and decides how they would like to celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays or leaving parties. Staff also take time at these meetings to publicly acknowledge young people's achievements and to praise them. Staff report that young people are highly involved in their residential experience. They are very clear about what they like and do not like. They always get a say in decisions, regardless of how big or small those decisions are. Young people are able to express their views to any member of staff whom they feel comfortable with, as well as in a group setting.

Staff provide a child-friendly and homely environment, with bright wall displays, comfy sofas and duvet covers that reflect each child's interests. A parent said, 'She is able to take part in a stress-free, home-from-home environment with people she knows well, which adds to her experience. This is something we find hard to replicate at home.'

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

Safeguarding is given a high priority across the whole school community.

Appropriate and timely action is taken when there is any cause for concern. The school makes good use of links with the designated officer and other multi-agency partners. For example, e-safety concerns were raised regarding the inappropriate sharing of images by young people while out of school. Staff were proactive in working with the community police, and using a whole-school assembly, together with individual discussions with young people, on the importance of staying safe online.

Young people are safe and secure because of the care, support and attention provided by the staff. Staff offer practical and emotional support to help young people to develop their understanding of how to stay safe. The staff use a wide range of activities, such as crossing the road safely or having one-to-one conversations with young people on relationships and how to manage their feelings.

Staff understand the greater vulnerability of young people with disabilities. The training they receive contributes to this knowledge. They act quickly on any concerns they may have, and seek appropriate advice with safeguarding professionals when necessary. Parents confirmed that they are routinely informed of any incidents, and all said that they have absolute faith in the school community to keep young people safe.

Young people have access to an independent listener. She visits on a regular basis and knows the students well. Young people can, and will, talk to her about anything that may be worrying them. This is useful as an additional safeguard for young people's well-being and safety.

Positive behaviour support is embedded and is part of the culture of the whole school. Rather than focusing on any negative aspects of young people's behaviour, the incentive schemes in use help young people to understand that they are achieving.

Positive behaviour support systems promote a holistic approach to behaviour management for young people. There have been no physical restraints used within the last year. Listening to and engaging with young people, coupled with warm and supportive relationships with young people and their parents, are key to reduced incidents and improved behaviour. Positive behaviour support strategies have been instrumental in improving learning outcomes for children. The school has devised this research-based system of support, which has been very successful.

Although young people do not go missing from the residential provision, the staff are aware of the policy and the local area procedures for this eventuality. They know the process that they need to follow should this happen. Off-site activities always include robust and dynamic risk assessments that include an assessment and the allocation of staffing levels. This helps young people to stay safe and experience successful community engagement.

Safer recruitment procedures help to protect young people from the risk of unsuitable adults working with them. All appropriate checks are carried out.

Young people know what to do if the fire alarm sounds. They practise this regularly, including 'walk-through' sessions. Personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) are completed for children who have additional disabilities, such as hearing loss. These PEEPs are well known by the staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The head of care provides excellent management, supported by the principal, governors and other leaders at the school. Leaders and managers act as positive role models and have high expectations of what young people can achieve.

Leaders and managers are ambitious and have high aspirations for young people and their families. Staff praise the head of care for her calming, low-key, quiet approach to managing the service. She shows determination to continually improve young people's experiences and progress by working collaboratively with staff and families.

A parent said, 'This is a well-run and useful house. Residential stays are an essential part of the development of our child in forming resilience and independence. If he was not doing this, I believe there would be longer term developmental or independence problems that would increase his reliance on the state in his adult years.'

Staff are highly motivated and enthusiastic about providing an excellent service for young people and their parents. A young person said, 'They are very kind and help

me to learn stuff.' Staff have high aspirations for children and use creative approaches to inspire and motivate them. For example, a member of staff has developed activities to help children to have greater focus on their learning by practising Tai Chi techniques with them. This helps them to relax so that they are ready to learn.

Staff say that they are well managed. They feel valued and listened to, and that their views are respected. They said that managers always have the best interests of the young people at heart. Supervision is reflective and is a fundamental tool for ongoing improvements. One staff member said, 'My supervision and appraisals support me and help me to improve. If I have an issue, it is listened to and acted upon. I have confidence that any concerns I may have will be listened to fairly and, if appropriate, acted upon.'

An independent person visits the setting termly to ensure that the building is safe, and that young people receive the best possible care. She provides reports of her visits to the governing body and to the residential manager. These reports enable leaders and managers to continuously improve the service and to provide a positive experience for young people.

The school has a dynamic culture where young people's happiness and progress, combined with an endlessly enthusiastic and passionate staff team, are leading to a continuously improving school.

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: SC027138

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Julie Rose

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01895 258507

Email address: julie.rose@pieldheathschool.org.uk

Inspector

Juanita Mayers, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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