

# Hebden Green Special School

1 Hebden Green Special School Grounds, Winsford, Cheshire CW7 4EJ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this residential special school**

Hebden Green Community Special School is a local authority maintained school for children who have physical disabilities and associated medical and/or sensory needs. The school provides education to children aged between two and 19 years. The residential provision caters only for those from Year 5 upwards.

The residential provision can accommodate up to 20 young people, but currently a maximum of 12 pupils stay each night. Forty-two children and young people are accessing the residential provision. The residential provision is staffed by care staff employed by the local authority and supported by a team of qualified nurses employed by the National Health Service.

### **Inspection dates: 3 to 5 March 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 June 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Residential pupils succeed because they live in a highly inclusive setting where their individuality is recognised, supported and celebrated. Because of their stays, residential pupils are making excellent progress in all aspects of their development. Highly individualised, nurturing care and support mean that residential pupils make sustainable progress. Residential staff work collaboratively with staff across the school and with healthcare professionals and use their in-depth knowledge of each residential pupil to ensure that support advances each residential pupil's development. Residential pupils relish the opportunities to stay in residence. Parents and carers said that they would not want their children to be anywhere else.

Parents acknowledge the valuable contribution that the experience of staying at the school has made to their child's progress. One parent said, 'She has come on in leaps and bounds. She loves going to stay with her friends and she is looking forward to her future.' Another parent said, 'His progress is amazing. He can now wash and dress himself with little support.' Parents noted positively how residential life provides opportunities for pupils to make friends, become involved in activities and learn to socialise.

Residential pupils' needs are met exceptionally well in residence. This is because staff have an innate understanding of each young person. They create bespoke care plans that allow the uniqueness of each pupil to shine. Each pupil has their own preferred way of communicating and staff intuitively know these well. Therefore, pupils can communicate effectively in matters such as choosing meals and activities, asking for help in personal care, discussing health matters and in everyday living.

Each pupil contributes to an assessment of their individual needs, and their wishes play an important part in the targets that are developed. Teachers and residential staff work closely together to set suitable targets that the pupils can achieve in both settings. Targets are adjustable and are reviewed regularly.

A key strength of the setting is enabling residential pupils to become as independent as possible. Preparation for independence starts in Year 9. The pupils' targets are set around self-help skills, caring for themselves and preparing for employment. Older pupils have dedicated time in an independence flat and they are expected to keep the flat clean and tidy, and to prepare meals for themselves and plan their evening. As a result, young people are flourishing.

Plans to help young people move on into adulthood begin early. This provides extensive opportunities to decide on the way forward for them based on their individual needs. Care staff are well versed in these plans and are continually working with the young people on developing their independence and skills for life. As a result, young people move on successfully to the next stage of their lives.

Residential pupils have access to excellent support for their health needs. A team of qualified nurses completes thorough and comprehensive health plans covering all aspects of each residential pupil's healthcare needs. The staff have a continuous focus on the well-being and emotional health of residential pupils. They are attuned to the signs and behaviour of residential pupils and closely monitor their mental health. Effective support is provided in the residential setting, with referrals to external specialists when necessary. Further to this, care staff have an abundance of training in specific healthcare needs, such as those associated with epilepsy, PEG feeds, autism spectrum disorder, and moving and handling. Therefore, staff have a wide range of skills and knowledge to support the residential pupils effectively.

The views of residential pupils are important to staff. The active student council provides a forum for pupils to put forward their views through their representatives. Residential pupils also attend a residential meeting to express their ideas. Early in the year, they had an idea to change an empty room into a youth club. This is now complete, with a gaming area, football table and library area. The pupils enjoy meeting here and spending time with their friends. This demonstrates that residential pupils see the outcomes of their views and that staff listen and value pupils' input. Further to this, the head of care has trialled a Saturday club, which lots of pupils attended. Further dates have been arranged.

Through extensive funding and charity donations, the residential area has been significantly improved. One company has decorated all the residential bedrooms and privacy blinds have been installed. A new swimming pool with multi-sensory equipment has been fitted and the use of this has been extended to the public. There is a new bespoke playground with wigwams, chill area, a fort slide that is accessible to all, a football and basketball pitch, outside gym equipment and race tracks. The residential pupils excitedly showed the inspectors around. One young person said, 'It is fab. It is exactly how we designed it. I cannot wait to try all the new things.'

Direct feedback from residential pupils, parents and external professionals about the quality of care and the difference it makes to the pupils' lives is overwhelmingly positive. One residential pupil said, 'I love coming here and playing with my friends, but more importantly I am so much more confident, and my future looks bright.' Another pupil said, 'I can now help out at home. My parents are amazed at what I can do now.' A parent said, 'I cannot believe how much she has grown. This is all down to the staff.' Another parent said, 'He has gone from being socially isolated to having lots of friends. He eagerly packs his bag for his overnight stay.'

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

Protecting residential pupils, and educating them to keep themselves safe, are priorities for staff. Staff know the residential pupils very well. Detailed, comprehensive care plans and risk assessments identify residential pupils' individual

needs, with specific guidance for staff on implementing support to protect them and help them progress.

Effective safeguarding measures promote the welfare of pupils. Staff are well trained and confident in their safeguarding role. Concerns about pupils are promptly passed on to the experienced team of designated safeguarding officers. Consultations and referrals to external safeguarding agencies are appropriate, timely and of excellent quality. Safeguarding issues are recognised and responded to promptly, including an understanding of neglect for children with complex needs. This leads to effective multi-agency working around each child, in line with their local authority protection plan.

Staff are well versed in the school's child-protection procedures and have annual refreshers in safeguarding and child protection. This training is customised so that it is relevant to the children they care for. Safeguarding is enshrined in everything the staff do. Ultimately, this means that young people are safe and protected effectively from harm.

Governors with a responsibility for safeguarding have received a range of training in child protection and safeguarding. They have a secure understanding of their role and are not afraid to challenge the head of care or the senior management team on any safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding remains a key element of all governors' meetings.

Extremely positive relationships between the staff and the residential pupils are at the heart of behaviour management strategies. The residential pupils develop a sense of safety, protection and trust in the staff, through staff's thoughtful and consistent support. Pupils respond positively. Individual behaviour management plans focus on proactive early intervention to de-escalate potentially difficult and challenging behaviour. As a result, no pupil has been restrained for their or others' safety.

Residential pupils do not go missing. This is because of the level of their disabilities and the high staffing levels. However, staff are very aware of the action they would take should this occur.

Nursing staff are suitably qualified and experienced. They are supported by a pharmacist who carefully checks and monitors prescribed medications for each child. Both roles complement each other well and ensure that the administration of medicines to children with complex needs is thorough and timely. There is appropriate interface with residential staff, who receive a medication administration record chart of prescribed medicines at the start of each residential stay, along with a care plan outlining the nature of conditions and responses required. There is excellent communication with parents, and staff will follow up if medications have not been sent into school to ensure that the explanation provided is understood and that support is offered as appropriate.

A comprehensive range of detailed health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks protect the residential pupils. Regular fire drills ensure that staff know what to do in an emergency. Staff undertake regular training in fire evacuation and the use of evacuation chairs. This keeps the pupils safe.

Robust systems are in place for the safe recruitment of staff. These assess their suitability to work with pupils. Visitors are monitored and effectively chaperoned. Residential pupils are provided with an excellent level of supervision based on their age, understanding and ability, to make sure that they are safe in the residential setting and in the community.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The residential provision is an intrinsic part of the school. It is highly valued and is fully embedded in everything that the school does. Highly insightful and inspirational management by the headteacher, head of care and senior managers actively promotes a culture that ensures that residential pupils are always listened to and respected as individuals. Through regular multi-disciplinary senior meetings, governing body liaison and pupil council meetings, a positive cycle of review and communication is sustained that has the residential pupils' views, needs and development at its heart.

The head of care and the deputy are highly committed to the ongoing development of the residential provision. They lead by example and they enable staff to consider the best ways of working that enable them to deliver the highest possible care to all pupils. They have created an inclusive culture that enables staff and carers and parents to be fully involved in decision-making. Thus, they all have very strong ownership of the provision. A parent said, 'It is amazing. We are fully included in everything and I feel my input is valued.' One parent has set up a charitable group to support the residential setting and to help make funds available for any new ideas.

Everyone in the residential setting works in a highly effective, collaborative manner to support the pupils. This is exemplified by the sharing of staff skills and expertise across the school and residence. Seamless handovers from school staff to residential staff and vice versa mean that everybody knows about each pupil's day and evening. Therefore, any changes in health or behaviour and any incidents are clearly known about.

All staff share a commitment to supporting residential pupils to fulfil their potential and become active, independent young people. The head of care, who is passionate about her role, and the deputy head of care are committed to ensuring that the staff team provides opportunities for residential pupils to receive high-quality care, appropriate emotional support and opportunities to develop their social skills and independence. The strong and effective senior leadership team strives continuously to improve the experience of pupils in the residential setting.

The skilled and experienced staff team receives constructive support from managers. Through training, regular reflective supervision and collaborative working with school staff and healthcare professionals, staff continuously look for ways to improve the care and support they provide for residential pupils.

Analytical and evaluative monitoring by the head of care leads to significant changes, resulting in improved outcomes for pupils. Recently, the pupils have been carefully matched in groups during their stays so that the support they receive during these times can more effectively meet their needs.

Leaders and managers have maintained high standards and continue to improve the service. They have taken on board recommendations made at the previous inspection to improve practice. The independent visitor's report focuses on the quality of care experienced by the residential pupils. All quality assurance information is routinely considered in governors' meetings, and prompt action is taken to address any shortcomings.

## **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:** SC006614

**Headteacher:** Alison Ashley

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Pam Nuckley, Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Lorna Schlechte, Social Care Inspector (HMI)

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