

Hailey Hall School

Hailey Lane, Hertford SG13 7PB

Assurance visit

Information about this residential special school

Hailey Hall School is a residential and day special school for boys aged between 11 and 16 years who have learning, social, emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties. The school is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Hoddesdon. The school is a convertor academy. The residential provision can accommodate a maximum of 20 children.

The residential provision was last inspected in June 2019.

The head of care has a relevant level 5 qualification.

Visit dates: 12 to 13 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 18 June 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred

practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

The residential provision closed in March 2020 in response to COVID-19 restrictions and reopened on 8 October 2020.

The residential capacity has been reduced from 11 to three boys per night to maintain safe distancing and to ensure that children stay in their school bubbles. The residential staff were redeployed in the school during the closure of the residential provision. A child said that it was reassuring to see these staff around the school. This helped the children to maintain their relationships with the residential staff.

The school remained open during the Easter and half-term holidays for children of key workers and vulnerable children. The staff contacted the remaining children by telephone, video calls and home visits, taking into account social distancing. A parent said that this reassured her, and she was able to speak to staff daily if she needed. Staff also delivered food parcels to vulnerable children and delivered work to those without information technology equipment. This helped to ensure that children were safe and well and that they have been able to continue their education remotely.

One child said that he was glad to be back in the residential provision and getting back into a routine. He said that he had been able to attend school during lockdown and during the school holidays, so he was able to still see some of his friends.

House meetings are held every evening and the children are updated on COVID-19 restrictions that affect the residential boarding. Staff use these meetings to gain children's views on their stays and use these views to improve the children's experience of staying overnight. The children using the residential provision have an education catch-up session before commencing activities.

Staff understand children's social, emotional and mental health needs in relation to COVID-19 and the closure of the residential provision. Counselling sessions were put in place for children who were struggling with not being at school. These sessions have continued and are now face to face. A child said that he found it really helpful to have someone to talk to about his fears and behaviours.

The safety of children

The staff have written individualised comprehensive COVID-19 risk assessments for each child. These are regularly reviewed with the local authority to ensure that children remain safe.

At the beginning of the pandemic, eight children were attending the school. As risk factors for some children changed, this number increased to 15.

The children have risk assessments pertaining to school and boarding. Staff review these when needed. These risk assessments are informative and support staff to understand potential triggers of behaviour and how to reduce these. The staff use a set script with children who are struggling with a particular behaviour. This means that children are hearing the same consistent message from all staff.

Clear boundaries are in place for children, particularly regarding COVID-19. Children are reminded during the house meeting at the beginning of each stay in the residential provision of these boundaries and the consequences of breaking them.

The school's designated safeguarding lead works closely with the safeguarding trustee for boarding. Staff have reported concerns during calls or visits to children and these have been escalated to the relevant professionals.

Leaders and managers

The school's staff have placed the well-being of children at the centre of their practice during the pandemic. The headteacher and head of the residential provision have continually reviewed and updated risk assessments. They have worked closely with other education providers to share best practice and they regularly met with the local authority.

The headteacher and senior leaders had daily video calls during lockdown to ensure that all children were discussed and there was adequate staffing to manage education while keeping children safe. The use of residential staff in other departments around the school has meant that education has not been overly disrupted.

The headteacher has worked closely with the local authority. Additional laptops were gained through working with the local rotary club. These actions have helped to support the children.

The staff undertook training during the lockdown period. This ensured that they were up to date with safeguarding and other training before the children returned to the residential provision.

Parents spoke highly of the headteacher and staff, who they said went above and beyond expectations by contacting them and their children regularly, providing

school work and, in some cases, enabling their children to attend school during lockdown and holidays.

Residential special school details

Unique reference number: SC056397

Headteacher: Paul Delamaine

Inspector

Trish Palmer, Social Care Inspector

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