

Orchard Manor School

Orchard Manor School, John Nash Drive, Dawlish, Devon, EX7 9SF

Assurance visit

Information about this residential special school

Orchard Manor School is a local authority provision. It provides education for 183 children, aged three to 19 years and weekly residential care for up to 35 children. It specialises in providing education and care to children with communication and interaction difficulties, autism spectrum disorders and learning needs.

At the time of this assurance visit, 14 children were residing at the school.

Visit dates: 24 to 25 September 2020

Previous inspection date: 14 January 2020

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be 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 identified no serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Pupils are well cared for. Staff have developed trusting relationships with the pupils, and at this visit the inspectors observed staff providing them with genuine, warm and nurturing support. All pupils said that they like coming to stay here and that they like the staff.

Pupils said that they feel listened to and that they feel able to speak to staff if they are worried or concerned about something. One pupil told the inspectors that he had contributed extensively to creating a homely environment where he stays and that he is proud of this.

Pupils' care and support plans clearly identify how their needs are to be met. These comprehensive documents guide staff in how to support the pupils in managing their health needs and matters relating to their ethnicity, gender identity, religious and cultural needs.

Leaders and managers ensured that, during the lockdown period, staff made regular phone calls and, where agreed, had face-to-face contact with the pupils and their families. This demonstrates good partnership working and the school's desire to ensure that pupils are well. Pupils said that they liked this, and it was good to stay in touch. Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep themselves safe in relation to COVID-19 and the importance of social distancing, handwashing and being aware of the signs and symptoms.

The safety of children

Leaders and managers have learned from previous shortfalls in child protection procedures, and improved procedures informed by this learning are now being followed. Pupils are safe. Pupils said that they feel safe because the staff make them feel safe.

Leaders and managers provide staff with creative and well-thought-out behaviour support plans and risk assessments. These plans ensure that staff care for the pupils in line with these. Pupils are provided with continuity and consistency in support in managing their emotions and feelings.

Since the last visit, there have been three incidents of physical intervention. These incidents required low-level interventions, and staff took a reasonable response to these. Pupils have not been missing since the last visit to the residential provision in January 2020.

Fire safety requires further attention to ensure that all fire safety checks are carried out promptly and that all fire safety equipment is maintained in optimum condition.

Leaders and managers

Since the last visit to the residential provision in January 2020, leaders and managers have taken a focused and determined approach to developing a positive culture across the whole school. Staff said that they feel listened to and that the head of care supports them well.

Staff feel positive about their work. They said that teams across the school work together, especially during the lockdown period. As a result of this, pupils receive consistent care and support.

Leaders and managers have extended their independent oversight of the service. This helps to drive improvement and evidences their commitment to continuously improving the service. As a result of this, an effective action and development plan has been devised to further improve the residential provision.

Leaders and managers take complaints or issues of concern seriously. They respond effectively to these, and clear records are maintained to demonstrate a good audit trail.

Leaders and managers have responded effectively to the shortfalls in the national minimum standards and recommendations made at the last visit.

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that all fire safety checks are carried out promptly in each house and that all fire safety equipment is maintained in optimum condition.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC003895

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mark Rose

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01626 862363

Email address: mrose@orchardmanor.devon.sch.uk

Inspectors

David Kidner, Social Care Inspector

Michelle Oxley, Regulatory Inspector Manager

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
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