

The Grange Therapeutic School

15-17 Somerby Road, Knossington, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 8LY

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The school is an independent residential special school for 69 children aged eight to 18 years, 12 of whom can live at the school during the week. The residential accommodation is provided in two houses, one of which is located on the school site. The second house is in the village of Knossington, a short walk from the main school building. The school is situated in a rural location close to the town of Oakham in Leicestershire. The school caters for students who have social, emotional and mental health needs, autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit disorders and mild learning difficulties. The residential provision received its last full inspection in November 2019.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

We last visited this setting on 6 October 2020 to carry out an assurance visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

Inspection dates: 6 to 8 July 2021

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 November 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

There are excellent relationships between children and staff. Strong, stable and trusting relationships mean that children thrive in the residential provision. Children are extremely positive about the care they receive. One child said, 'The staff have been fantastic. The team leader is amazing. No matter what I needed it would get done, they have always been there for me.' Another child said: 'The amount of support I get is unreal.'

Staff help children to regulate their emotions so that they learn to interact well with others. Behaviour management strategies are well thought through and ensure that children receive consistent responses from school and care staff. As children's behaviour improves, they make significant progress at school. They are able to focus on learning and have fewer incidents. Children who were not engaged in education prior to attending the school are now fully engaged.

Communication between school and care staff is excellent. This cohesive and consistent approach has been further strengthened by input from specialist psychological support services. This service helps staff to improve the care given to children and to explore new, innovative ways of helping them.

Children have rich and varied experiences during their residential stays. Staff provide children with challenges and enable them to take managed risks within a nurturing environment. As children learn new skills, they grow in confidence and develop better self-esteem.

Children communicate their views, wishes and feelings in a variety of ways. Their views are listened to and respected. Direct work with children is highly creative and child centred. Any incidents or concerns are always followed up with key-work sessions. These sessions are carefully planned so that children can reflect on any issues of concern without feeling stigmatised.

Children are supported exceptionally well as they prepare to leave the school. Because staff are so ambitious for children, the children set higher expectations for themselves. The approach of staff instils confidence in children. The school maintains a connection with children and continues to support them for many years after they have left.

Parents and social workers are very enthusiastic about the service. Professionals and parents confirm that children make significant progress at the school. They particularly note the very clear and helpful communication between themselves and the staff. A parent said that their child 'has been given opportunities that we didn't think were possible. The staff genuinely care and go above and beyond every single day.'

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

Staff know the children very well. The quality of relationships between staff and children enables clear routines and boundaries to be set. This helps children to feel safe and secure.

Staff are creative in helping children learn how to keep themselves safe. They support children to understand risks at school, at home, in the community and online. For example, there is a 'no question too silly' box in the house. Staff respond to this with shared group discussions and provide opportunities for peer group learning.

Innovative training has helped staff to have a better understanding of safeguarding and child protection. The head of care has delivered good-quality training for staff about safeguarding processes. This includes ensuring that staff have a comprehensive understanding of whistle-blowing procedures.

Staff are empathetic and take time to ensure that they understand the reasons why children become anxious or upset. They know how to help children during these times because they have been trained in therapeutic approaches.

It is rare for children to go missing from the school. However, when they do, there is a highly coordinated approach to ensure the safe return of the child. Good, reflective debriefs are completed for staff and children. Managers carefully review each incident to identify areas of potential improvement or learning opportunities.

Careful and effective recruitment procedures help to protect children from unsuitable adults.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The highly competent head of care has led the rapid and marked improvement of the residential provision since the last Ofsted inspection. The residential provision's leadership team is inspirational, confident and ambitious for children in their care. Meticulous management systems are in place. These provide good analysis of the impact of the care provision and the progression of each child. This ensures that all children are supported to achieve the best outcomes.

Governance and external monitoring are strong. The school governors' oversight ensures a high degree of scrutiny and has been a key factor in the high quality of care provided to children. The chair of governors works closely with the head of care, empowering her to improve the service.

Managers have made a determined effort to improve the skills and knowledge of care staff. They have provided staff with extensive training. As a result, staff are highly skilled practitioners who are empathetic and nurturing.

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested the commitment and dedication of this staff team. Disruption to children's learning and support within residential care has been minimal. During the lockdown periods, staff have worked creatively to ensure that the residential provision operated safely.

Staff receive regular and good-quality supervision. They are provided with additional opportunities to reflect on their therapeutic practice with the school's clinical lead. This ensures that there is a cohesive approach between the education, care and therapy services. The impact of this 'team around the child' approach is clear to see in staff practice.

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: SC001831

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Ollie Sharp

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

Bev Allison, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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