

Holly House School

Holly House School, Church Street North Old Whittington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire
S41 9QR

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Holly House School is a maintained residential community special school for children who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The school provides education for 44 children aged seven to 14. The residential provision is in an annex to the main school and provides accommodation for up to eight children each night from Monday to Thursday during term time.

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.

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 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: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Residential stays have a profoundly beneficial impact on children's lives. One parent said of the residential provision: 'It is phenomenal.'

Children benefit from a wide range of stimulating opportunities. This means they expand their horizons, develop new skills and their confidence grows. This supports children in all areas of their development and progress.

The staff team are talented and have extensive knowledge and experience. They take part in a wide range of activities with children. This teaches and supports children to develop new skills and interests. One child said: 'Staff are brilliant.' Children thrive because of this excellent staff support.

Partnership work with families is excellent. One parent said: 'Staff are very supportive of parents. Always checking on us to make sure we are okay.' During the COVID-19 pandemic, this has promoted well-being and reduced a sense of isolation.

Evidence-based research informs care practice. The team have in-depth training to understand the impact of early adverse childhood experiences. They work with children and their families to promote well-being. This supports the emotional and mental health of children and their families.

Staff's planning for children's stays in residential care is meticulous. Children who are new to the residence benefit from gradual transitions. Staff work with children, families and multi-disciplinary teams to develop tailored care plans. This means children receive bespoke care which enables them to settle, be safe and have fun.

Children leaving the residential provision are sensitively prepared. Staff organise leaving meals, holidays and parties. Children leave with a professional photograph album of their experiences and activities. This means they have a permanent memory book of their time at the school.

Children develop a strong sense of citizenship. Staff encourage and support children to undertake a wide range of fundraising activities. Because of this, children develop a sense of pride and responsibility.

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

Safeguarding children is of paramount importance for the residential team. In one situation, the team provided a bespoke package of care to support a vulnerable child. The staff went over and above expectations to safeguard and prevent risk of serious harm. This child said: 'Staff are like family.'

Safeguarding incidents within the wider school are not repeated in the residential provision. There have been no safeguarding incidents. Physical interventions are not used to manage behaviours. Children do not go missing from the residential provision. This is because children want to stay in the provision, they receive care from very good staff and have fun during their stays.

The management of risk is exceptional. Detailed risk assessments provide clarity to staff to minimise and manage risk. This enables children to take part in a vast array of stimulating and exciting activities. This means children can take managed risks and develop their skills and independence.

Children who stay in the residential provision have a strong sense of safety. The proactive safeguarding practice of managers and staff means that children know who to confide in should they have any concerns or worries.

The care children received during the COVID-19 pandemic has been exceptional. Parents and children confirm this with very positive feedback. There have been no COVID-19 cases in the residential provision. The provision has not closed at any time due to COVID-19 risks. This means children have been able to continue having fun and learn at the same time.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leadership and management of residential stays are exceptional. The head of care provides strong leadership. He leads a committed and knowledgeable staff team. The team continue to provide outstanding standards of care.

Managers are passionate about improving the lives of children. They teach children how to overcome barriers and strive for their goals. The culture of high aspiration is embedded in staff practice. As a result, children thrive in a nurturing environment.

Managers prioritise the continual development of the setting. The physical environment is stunning, vibrant and of a high standard. Children love the creative interior, with themed bedrooms and a range of play and games rooms. The garden has a section to teach children science, engineering, and mechanical skills. The team are innovative and restless in looking for ways to improve the setting.

The independent visitor ensures rigorous quality assurance of the residential provision. She said: 'The team from the top down are so child focused and nurturing. They are a formidable team.'

Partnership work enables children to achieve their potential. Parents and professionals contributed to this inspection. They all commend the work of the home.

Staff training is a high priority. Qualified staff continue their professional development. They are enthusiastic and embrace training opportunities. They expand their knowledge and skills, but also provide excellent role models to the children.

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: SC056234

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mr Iain Williams

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector

Amanda Ellis, Social Care Inspector

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