

Fosse Way School

Fosse Way School, Longfellow Road, Radstock BA3 3AL

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The school is an academy special school. It provides education for 218 students aged three to 19 years who have education, health and care plans. The school offers weekly residential provision for up to 11 students who have autism spectrum disorders.

This inspection was aligned with the inspection of the education provision.

The residential provision forms part of the main school building. The residential provision was last inspected in October 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.

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 15 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff treat children with dignity and respect, valuing children's ideas and supporting them to express these. Staff are proud of the children's achievements and celebrate their successes.

Children make good progress in improving their self-confidence, communication and social skills. For some children, spending more time in the residential provision during the pandemic has had a beneficial effect. For example, it has improved the way they use their augmented communication systems, which has meant that they are more able to express themselves. For other children, it has meant that they have spent more time with other children.

Staff demonstrate skill in their communications with children. Developing children's communication skills is a highly positive feature of this service; proactively promoted by the head of care. In addition, care staff and the speech and language team work cohesively, to support the ongoing development of communication.

Since the previous inspection, there has been a review of children's plans. These developments have led to the plans being more detailed. They provide staff with increased guidance and effective working strategies. These improvements are relatively new and are currently being embedded in practice.

Children's health needs are well managed. Medication errors have been thoroughly investigated and the outcomes of these investigations have been used to improve practice.

Children enjoy their time in the residential provision. They get to take part in a wide range of fun and purposeful activities. During the pandemic, staff creatively adapted activities to ensure that children continued to have a wide range of opportunities and experiences. Children particularly enjoyed the Christmas panto.

Since the previous inspection, some children have left. Unfortunately, planned celebrations did not take place, due to suspected COVID-19 cases. Despite these difficulties, staff supported children effectively, so that the children could successfully move on to the next stage in their lives.

New children have moved into the residential provision. This has been very well managed, with leaders and managers carefully considering children's needs to ensure that they can be met. The timetable for children moving in varies, as it is tailored to the needs of the individual child and their family. This approach has proved successful.

Staff continue to improve the environment, with input from children. Since the last inspection, there has been new furniture purchased and a new kitchen is about to be

installed. Children and some parents have been involved in choosing the decor for bedrooms which are decorated and furnished according to the children's tastes. Children like their bedrooms. There is ample communal space for the number of children. In addition, children benefit from accessing the school's facilities during the evenings.

Children's education attendance is good. Most of the residential staff also provide some support for children in class. Children's information and plans are shared across the school, which promotes consistency.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are appropriate, with referrals being made as required. However, the current safeguarding recording system does not consistently contain a record of all actions taken. Some information was found in other records, but not all of it was dated, so it was not possible to clearly evidence when these actions took place. The quality of safeguarding investigations is good. Leaders and managers use the outcomes of these investigations effectively, to improve policy and practice.

Those staff who were spoken to during the inspection had a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. These include undertaking work with children to develop their understanding of what makes a safe relationship, how to stay safe in the community and how to keep safe online.

Positive behaviour management is a strength of the residential provision. Staff adopt a proactive approach which has been very successful. This approach focuses on understanding the child's behaviours and the root cause of them, helping the child to identify emotions and helping the child to develop self-management strategies.

Risk assessments are comprehensive and provide clear guidance for staff on how to mitigate and reduce levels of risk.

The quality of staff recruitment files is good, except for records of staff interviews. Interview notes are not of a consistently good quality. They contain no clear evidence of how the decision to appoint is made, and are not consistently signed and dated by the author.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders' and managers' oversight of the residential provision is good. Leaders and managers are suitably trained. The head of care is effective in his role. He has high aspirations for the children and the staff. He clearly communicates these to the staff, and they share in his vision. Staff particularly praised the head of care for his support, and all felt that having a deputy head of care has been a great addition to the team.

Staff receive regular, good-quality supervision. However, currently, supervision records do not clearly document what has been discussed and agreed during the supervision sessions, and do not show evidence that matters raised in the previous sessions have been revisited. This is also the same with team meeting minutes.

Staff training is of a good quality and is closely linked to the needs of the children, the needs of the individual members of staff and the needs of the team. Training includes input from external professionals when needed.

The monitoring carried out by one of the governors covers the appropriate areas, but it is not consistently challenging to aid in the development of the residential provision.

Feedback from parents has been very positive. They praised the staff for their commitment to the children and the care they provide. Parents also said that they appreciate the support that staff have given to them.

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

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standard for residential special schools:

- The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action is taken as appropriate. (NMS 13.8)

In particular, ensure that safeguarding records consistently contain a record of all actions taken.

Recommendations

- Ensure that staff recruitment records contain good-quality interview notes and clear evidence as to how the decision to appoint is made. Also, ensure that these records are consistently signed and dated by the author.
- Ensure that the governor's monitoring increases its level of challenge, to aid in the development of the residential provision.
- Ensure that at the outset of staff supervision sessions and team meetings, the actions from the previous meeting are reviewed.

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: SC041476

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mrs Emily Massey

Type of school: Residential Special School

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Inspector

Wendy Anderson, Social Care Inspector

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