

Newbury Manor School

Newbury, Near Mells, Frome, Somerset BA11 3RG

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Newbury Manor School is a co-educational, residential and day independent special school for children who have autism spectrum disorders, and often have additional complex needs.

At the time of the inspection, there were 45 children on roll. The residential provision can accommodate up to a maximum of eight children at one time. The length of stay varies from one night to a full term. At the time of inspection, nine children were using the residential provision.

Newbury Manor School is part of Priory Education and Children's Services.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 2 to 4 November 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The residential special school is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of previous inspection: 10 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people requires improvement to be good

The children's progress and experiences vary. This is because opportunities to maximise some children's progress and experiences are missed. Some children's evening routines lack structure and motivation. In comparison, some children are making some progress, such as developing independent living skills, including eating independently and managing their personal care.

Children's care plans and targets are regularly reviewed. Despite this, these plans do not focus on the children's current known needs, behaviours and risks. Targets are too broad, which means that the children's progress is not maximised.

Children's dining experiences are varied. Opportunities for children to explore a range of foods that broaden their diet are limited. The evening meal does not provide children with sufficient choice. In addition, opportunities for all children to develop appropriate eating and social skills are limited.

The children's living environment is well maintained, clean and clutter-free. Despite this, there are locks on doors, there is a lack of soft furnishing and some children's bedrooms are not personalised. This means that the residential accommodation is not homely, warm and welcoming.

Children are looked after by a staff team that has a wealth of experience and provides children with warm, sensitive and affectionate care. The staff spoke fondly of the children they care for. High staffing levels are maintained. As a result, children are provided with continuity and consistency of care from adults they know well.

children's views, wishes and feelings are considered daily. Staff consult with children regularly. House meetings provide children with an opportunity to express their views and make requests. Actions taken always consider the best interest of the child.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, in September 2019, a new headteacher has been appointed, and has taken on the role of the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

There have been two safeguarding concerns reported. The DSL has worked closely with the safeguarding agencies to manage and resolve these safeguarding concerns. On both occasions, the DSL has commenced fact-finding interviews with members of staff before being advised to do so by the designated officer. In

addition, records are not well maintained; consequently, it is not clear what action has been taken, when the action was taken and what the outcome was.

Leaders and managers have assessed the risks within the locality of the school. Despite this, leaders and managers have not considered the emergency services' opening hours and response times in the event of an emergency.

Leaders and managers ensure that all residential staff keep up to date with safeguarding training. Refresher training enables the staff team members to update their knowledge and skills. Despite this, the current safeguarding training courses available to staff do not include how to safeguard children who have disabilities.

Health and safety environmental checks are completed as required. Children regularly engage in fire evacuation drills and have personal evacuation plans. These plans inform staff how children will respond to a fire. Despite this, actions identified in the school's independent fire risk assessment have not been completed within a reasonable timescale. This has the potential to place children at risk in the event of a fire.

Behavioural incidents are managed well. Since September 2021, there has been one incident reported that required staff to hold a child. This intervention was used to safeguard the child and was used for a minimal amount of time. Leaders and managers confirmed that there have not been any children reported missing from the residential provision, and that there has been no police involvement during incidents at the residential provision

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, this school has a new leadership team. At this inspection, the new headteacher and care coordinator demonstrated determination and ambition to improve the residential services provided for children. Children, staff, therapists and senior leaders who contributed to this inspection said that they have confidence and trust in the leadership team.

The weaknesses identified at this inspection relate specifically to the management oversight of the progress and experiences of all children. Leaders and managers were aware of the weaknesses identified prior to this inspection, but they had not taken sufficient or timely action. As a result, not all children are reaching their potential, because their opportunities and experiences are not maximised.

Staff said that they feel well supported, and morale is good. They confirmed that they attend team meetings, receive regular supervision and are provided with training opportunities. Staff shared how they have used the learning from a recent training course to improve their practice. Despite this good work, not all care staff are provided with bespoke up-to-date specialist training that will provide them with

the information and awareness they need in order to meet and respond to the children's current complex needs.

Independent monitoring visits take place regularly. Senior leaders are provided with detailed reports that meet the requirements of standard 20. However, the independent person has failed to case-track all children's progress and engagement. She has not identified the weaknesses found at this inspection.

The staff at the school have very positive relationships with parents and professionals. Parents' comments were positive and showed that they appreciate the staff's communication with them, and the support their children receive

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 standards for residential special schools:

- 3.1 Children's physical, emotional and social development needs are promoted.
- 5.6 Children can if they wish personalise an area of their accommodation with suitable posters and personal items.
- 7.1 The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 8.1 All children, including those with special dietary, medical or religious needs, are provided with meals which are adequate in nutrition, quantity, quality, choice and variety.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.
- 19.1 Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school.
- 21.1 The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan there is appropriate consultation. Where applicable the plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Where feasible, children in the school are aware of the content of their placement plans, and confirm that the school is providing care for them that is consistent with the plans.

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: SC033016

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mrs Rebecca McArthur

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector

Sharron Escott, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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