

Orchard Manor School

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

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Orchard Manor School provides education for 186 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 conditions and learning needs.

At the time of this inspection, 10 children were residing at the school, occupying several homes within the school grounds.

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: 16 to 18 November 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: 14 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of pupils and young people: good

Pupils benefit from having positive relationships with staff. Staff provide warmth and nurturing care to pupils, who speak positively about the staff. Parents are happy with the care provided, and feel that their children are making progress often from a very difficult starting point and previous problematic school placements. Parents receive regular communication from carers and are involved in the plans for their children. Care staff continue to provide support to new carers to help them provide personalised care for pupils who have moved from the residential provision.

Pupils stay in personalised, homely and well-maintained accommodation which meets their needs. They are cared for by a stable team of qualified staff members who know them well. Pupils have the security of routines and familiarity in the home setting. Moves to and from the home are managed well and support plans are based on pupils' individual needs.

Pupils are supported by staff to keep healthy and active; they are provided with well-balanced and nutritious meals based on their preferences. Pupils are encouraged to help with appropriate daily living tasks, which develop their sense of belonging and their practical skills, for example cooking with staff and preparing meals with staff for everyone in the home.

Pupils attend education on a regular basis and are supported in their learning at school and in the residential settings. Their progress is tracked by comprehensive systems to ensure their education plan is progressed, especially when moving onto post-16 education. Progress is recorded and achievements are celebrated. This year, 100% of school leavers went on to further education, employment or training.

Pupils are encouraged and supported by staff to participate in a range of activities. They develop physically, socially and emotionally from spending time in nature, involvement in team sports and trying out new experiences.

Pupils' voices are evident throughout the school. Their views, feelings and wishes are sought on a regular basis and in a variety of ways. The school provides a 'you said, we did' feedback report for pupils. Pupils' views and care needs are clearly noted in their care planning and they can influence the care, support and education provided.

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

Pupils feel safe and are kept safe in this school. Potential risks are well identified, and action is taken to minimise these while allowing pupils to take age-appropriate risks and broaden their experiences.

Staff understand how to interpret pupils' behaviour. They understand the links between behaviour, communication needs and the impact of additional learning

needs. Behaviour management plans are reviewed on a regular basis and contain triggers and effective response plans for staff. Staff are tuned into the individual communication methods of each pupil and can respond accordingly. Behaviour management is focused on de-escalation, which avoids pupil anxiety and frustration, helping them to trust staff.

Pupils do not generally go missing from the school, and staff tend to know where pupils are. The pupil-to-staff ratio supports pupils' safety. Where appropriate, pupils can independently make use of the local community facilities.

All staff are trained in safeguarding practice and know how to respond if concerned about the welfare or safety of pupils. Work in partnership with other agencies is evident and the school keeps up to date with reviewed legislation and guidance.

Fire safety has improved; all staff have done fire warden training. Pupils who need additional help in an emergency have a specific evacuation plan. All pupils are given the opportunity to take part in fire drills.

Arrangements for the administration storage and the administration of medication are suitable.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The head of care is a dedicated and qualified professional. He has a visible and strong presence in the school. He is respected by the staff and trusted by pupils. He is focused on continuous practice development and on making the best of the opportunities available for progressing pupils' learning and development. Development plans are also in place to encourage the use of more residential placements and extend social learning opportunities and residential experience for pupils post 16.

The SOP provides concise and clear information about the services and support offered. This document has been recently reviewed and the school meets the aims and objectives as described. The school meets the requirements of the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Managers, leaders and staff have shown considerable resilience in managing significant changes in the school, including the merging of two schools and academisation. Staff rallied in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, identifying and offering continuing support depending on the needs of the pupils and their families. The residential homes remained open for the most vulnerable pupils.

Across the school, staff are ambitious for the pupils. Work with other agencies and in partnership with parents enhances the support available to pupils and improves their progress. School and care staff increasingly work together and in each environment to support pupils.

Staff receive good management support and guidance. All care staff hold a professional care qualification. Essential and specialist training enables staff to successfully fulfil their responsibilities to pupils. Team leaders have completed or are undertaking management training at degree level. Supervision is provided on a regular basis and all staff have an annual appraisal, which promote development and learning.

In-house and independent monitoring, review and reporting enhance the safety of pupils and support practice development.

Governors of the school are provided with relevant training. They are clear about their roles and are enthusiastic about making a difference and driving improvement.

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: SC003895

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Paul Donkersloot

Type of school: Residential Special School

Telephone number: 01626 862363

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

Inspectors

Janice Hawtin, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Kendra Bell, Her Majesty's Inspector

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