

Pield Heath School

Pield Heath House RC School, Pield Heath Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3NW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Pield Heath School is a non-maintained and co-educational school for children and young people between the ages of seven and 19 years with additional learning needs. The school is under the trusteeship of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and is based in Hillingdon, London.

The school's website states that it offers day and residential provision to children and young people with a diverse range of needs, including moderate to severe and complex learning needs, sensory processing difficulties and associated speech, language and communication difficulties, including autism spectrum disorder. All the children have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school offers up to 100 education places and up to 22 residential places. Young people use the school's residential provision on an overnight short-break basis up to three nights a week, Monday to Wednesday, during term time.

At the time of this inspection, there were 100 students on the school roll, six of whom access the residential provision. The six residential students come from four local authorities; five are young adults and one is 16 years old.

The residential provision is located in a separate building within the school grounds. The head of care is suitably qualified and has been in charge of the residential provision for five years.

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: 25 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people enjoy their short breaks at this school. One parent described the residential provision as a second home to her sons.

All parents spoken to talked highly about the positive impact of the residential provision on their children's experiences and progress. They highlighted the role that the residential provision had in helping their children to develop social and life skills and independence.

Staff help young people to create positive memories and build on their life stories. Photographs show young people learning while happily engaging in various activities, on their own or with others.

Young people are kind to each other and have developed great friendships. Throughout the building, staff have displayed visual equality statements to help young people to understand the importance of respecting differences and celebrating diversity.

The biggest strength of the residential provision is in the continuity of the positive relationships between the young people and staff. This is particularly significant for young people who rely on familiarity to manage their anxiety. For example, when a young person moved from his family home to supported-living accommodation, it was the school staff who provided the stability in this young person's life. However, this young person's support plans insufficiently considered the impact on him of his new living arrangement.

Professionals from health, education and care work together across the school to provide high-quality support to young people. However, the arrangements for keeping records undermine the effectiveness of the school's multidisciplinary approach. For example, residential staff are not able to access the young people's communication and sensory passports. One young person's emergency healthcare plan was also not available on his file and there was some confusion about where it was kept. This issue was resolved during the inspection.

Young people's individual targets in residential time link to their personal interests, learning plans and overall development goals. For example, staff encouraged one young person to sweep colourful pom-poms with a brush into a pan. This activity helped her to develop her visual and motor coordination as well as her life skills. Another young person was on a work experience placement at a hotel. Making beds perfectly suited his interest in order, tidiness and repetition.

Parents said that their children love their sleepovers at the school. Young people were unhappy when they could not go to the school because of the COVID-19 pandemic. They were not able to fully understand the reasons for the lockdown. Staff

said that, during the lockdowns, some young people took a step back but have moved forward since returning to their usual routines, which include accessing the residential provision.

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

Young people have developed trusting relationships with staff and a sense of safety that comes with that trust. Parents have confidence in the staff keeping their children safe.

Staff have created a nurturing and calm environment in which young people's needs are understood and met. Staff's excellent communication skills help young people to engage positively. Staff sensitively guide young people to regulate their emotions and behaviours. There have been very few incidents in the residential provision since the last inspection. Throughout this inspection, the young people's behaviour was impeccable.

Health and safety checks ensure that the environment is physically safe. Young people take part in regular fire drills. Staff talk with them about what to do if there is a fire. A visual fire emergency procedure provides additional guidance to young people. However, the fire exits are not clearly marked and none of the young people have written personal emergency evacuation plans. These weaknesses undermine the otherwise good fire-safety arrangements.

Training on a wide range of safeguarding topics enables staff to identify and assess the risks to young people. Staff provide individualised support and supervision to young people, in line with their risk assessments and risk-management plans.

There have been no incidents of a young person going missing from the residential provision. The documents that staff have prepared to give to the police if a young person goes missing do not include all relevant information. For example, information that a young person suffers with epilepsy, is on an emergency care plan and usually carries his emergency medicine with him is not included. The head of care said that this information would be shared verbally with the police, if the young person went missing. However, the lack of this information in the document creates an unnecessary risk.

The head of care is the designated safeguarding lead for the whole school. This shows the value that the school places on the welfare of the young people who access its residential provision. The safeguarding team meets regularly to consider young people's welfare and safety.

The school's safeguarding leadership team works closely with social workers to promote young people's safety. An example of good practice is when the school provided a listening ear to a parent, identified a risk of domestic violence and ensured that the family members accessed appropriate support and that their child remained safe.

The school's safeguarding team has good links with the local authority's designated safeguarding officers. In partnership, they ensure that any information regarding allegations or whistle-blowing is carefully considered and that lessons are learned from the cases. The school has an action plan to raise awareness of sexual harassment in the workplace.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers provide a value-based leadership that focuses on giving young people the best chances to have positive experiences and make progress in their lives. Leaders and managers are highly respected within the school and in the community for having the best interests of young people at the forefront of their decision-making.

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for the school, its residential provision and the young people. An example of this is the individualised support and the wide range of resources that the school made available to young people and their families during the period when the school was closed due to COVID-19. This included online material, and access to the school's secure grounds and outdoor facilities during the pandemic-related restrictions.

The head of care ensures that the residential provision is organised well and that it runs smoothly, regardless of the circumstances. For example, the head of care carried out night duties when a night staff member was unable to return from abroad because of travel restrictions.

The same residential staff have been working together for over a decade. The level of staff satisfaction with their working environment and the management support they receive is reflected in the extraordinarily high staff retention. However, some annual appraisals of staff are overdue.

Leaders and managers monitor the residential provision closely. Their comprehensive monitoring reports enable the governing body to have an oversight of the school and its residential provision. The governors value the school's transparency and commitment to children and young people.

External monitoring provides additional quality assurance. A consultant who is independent of the school visits the residential provision regularly and writes detailed reports that highlight the strengths and identify any areas for further improvement.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that young people's care plans are kept updated when new information becomes available.
- The registered person should ensure that all staff can easily access young people's emergency healthcare plans and any other information that helps them to support young people, such as communication and sensory passports.
- The registered person should ensure that the information to be given to the police, if a young person goes missing, contains all relevant information about their health needs and any associated risks.
- The registered person should ensure that all fire exits are clearly signed and that young people have personal emergency evacuation plans.
- The registered person should ensure that all staff have an annual appraisal of their performance.

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: SC027138

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Julie Rose

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Inspector

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector

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