

Parkwood Hall Co-operative Academy

Parkwood Hall School, Beechenlea Lane, Swanley, Kent BR8 8DR

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Parkwood Hall Co-operative Academy is a residential special school providing day and residential placements for pupils between the ages of seven and 19 years who have a wide range of special educational needs, such as speech, language and communication needs, moderate to severe learning difficulties, and autism spectrum disorders, and includes those with ongoing medical needs. At the time of the inspection, there were 17 residential pupils. In total, the school can accommodate 20 residential pupils. The pupils reside in residential units within the main building.

At this inspection, Ofsted only considered the residential provision.

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

Inspection dates: 2 to 4 February 2022

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 October 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The care and support that the pupils receive bring consistency and stability to their lives, and they become more focused on their learning. The staff know pupils well and are sensitive to their needs and vulnerabilities. This enables them to deliver highly individualised care. The staff display warmth and affection for the pupils, and they show ambition for what pupils can accomplish. These factors combine to provide the pupils with an environment in which they make significant progress in all areas and expand their life opportunities.

Leaders and managers are strongly invested in ensuring that the voice of parents and carers is clearly heard in decisions about their children. The staff work closely with parents, carers and external professionals when pupils move into the residential provision. Care is taken to progress at a pace that is appropriate for each pupil. This reduces the chances of a breakdown in living arrangements and gives pupils a positive experience of their learning environment.

When the time comes for pupils to move on, staff go to great lengths to work with families and external agencies to ensure that the next step is the right step for each pupil. This helps pupils to continue their progress and make best use of their life opportunities.

Although both education and care staff are highly committed to supporting the pupils' best possible progress, they are not currently working together effectively enough to achieve the best possible outcomes for the pupils. This can limit the progress that some pupils make.

The plans to guide staff in supporting the pupils' progress are not always being updated to clearly show the progress that they are making and how their needs are changing. This leads to some inconsistent and ineffective staff practice and dents the pupils' progress.

The catering staff meet the dietary and nutritional needs of pupils exceptionally well. This means that pupils enjoy their food and make the expected progress in their health and development. Pupils are supported and encouraged to make use of the wide range of fun indoor and outdoor activities. This contributes to a positive residential experience and supports their formal learning.

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

Staff are highly vigilant to any sign that a pupil might be at risk, and they are quick to respond when concerns arise. This includes their circumstances outside the school. Staff have supported parents to learn how to monitor and support their children's safe use of the internet, and they liaised very closely with parents when concerns

about a pupil self-harming arose. Leaders and managers readily make referrals to external professionals to support pupils and their families to reduce risks. This comprehensive approach helps to protect pupils and keep them safe both inside and outside school.

The pupils say that they feel safe and able to talk with staff if they have things that are worrying them, including things at home. They feel protected from bullying and express a sense of community and friendship with other pupils.

Staff have become more skilled in avoiding the need to use physical measures to restrict and direct pupils when they become a risk to themselves or others. Together with strong leadership, these developments have resulted in a substantial decrease in the use of restrictive measures. This promotes a positive environment in which the pupils can make best progress.

Facilities for the residential pupils are of a high standard and are well maintained. Fire safety is taken very seriously and actions from annual safety assessments are completed within the recommended timeframes. Regular fire drills are held for all zones of the school and the performance of staff and pupils is clearly recorded for any lessons to be learned. Good standards of health and safety practice contribute to the safety and well-being of the pupils.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers demonstrate a strong focus on the progress and well-being of the pupils. They are enthusiastic about what they can achieve and proud of the progress that the pupils make. Leaders and managers have maintained a drive to continue improving standards of learning and care during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pupils say that they feel 'pushed to do the best they can' and are encouraged to think about what they would like to do when they leave school.

There is good managerial grip on the day-to-day running of the residential provision, and the staff are supportive of each other and motivated to support the pupils' best possible progress. The support, however, that staff receive through their individual supervision is inconsistent and the quality wanting. This weakens consistency in good care practice, as well as staff retention.

Safer recruitment practice is sound, and the probation process for new staff is thorough. Due to a recent and necessary restructure of the business team, the human resources function has been reorganised with the intention to improve the HR coordination and strategic oversight. This includes the planning and coordination of staff training and the monitoring of staff attainment of required qualifications. Some staff have expressed unmet training needs relevant to maintaining effective links between teaching and residential staff. These weaknesses make it difficult for the school's leadership and management to fulfil their responsibility to ensure that standards are met.

Leaders and managers show awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are very open and responsive to feedback that they receive about where improvements can be made. They have taken effective action to address the three recommendations made at the previous inspection. These were in relation to recording the rationale for room allocation, having an effective CCTV policy, and ensuring that staff and pupils are debriefed following serious incidents.

Leaders and managers display ambition for the improvement and further development of the service. They are effectively held to account by governors who demonstrate strong commitment to the effective running of the school and the continuous improvement to the care and education of the pupils.

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:

- There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of residential and care provision in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', 13.2)
- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', 13.4)
- 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. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', 19.1)
- 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. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', 21.1)

Recommendations

- Leaders must ensure that individual staff supervision is regular and effective and guided by clear policy.
- Leaders must ensure that the staff's training needs and activities are coordinated and receive effective management oversight.

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: 1159380

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Anna Mansaray

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Inspector:

John Pledger, Social Care Inspector

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