

Lakeside School

Lakeside School, Winchester Road, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 2DW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Lakeside School is a maintained local authority day and residential special school for boys aged between 11 and 16 with social, mental and/or emotional health difficulties. Many have associated difficulties, including autism spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. At the time of the inspection, there were 97 children on roll, including 16 residential pupils. The residential provision consists of two houses located on the school campus.

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: 15 to 17 March 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 15 July 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make exceptional progress from their starting points. Staying in residential enables children to develop their independence and emotional security. Children can explore their identity safely and without discrimination.

Children moving into residential benefit from a detailed admissions process. The school's own social worker and outreach team sensitively support children to access education. Thorough assessments then enable staff to offer places in residential to children who would benefit the most. This process means that all staff work seamlessly together to have a detailed knowledge of children's plans. Set targets ensure that children make exceptional progress, particularly in their emotional and social development.

Children participate in a range of individual conversations, student council meetings and group meetings where their views are shared. Children's views are considered, and action taken by staff. For example, this has resulted in children being able to suggest improvements in their care, such as in the food they eat and activities they do. Children know how to make a complaint but do not feel the need to.

Children are happy and comfortable in their space and speak highly of the care they receive. Parents are consistent in their praise of the exceptional progress children have made as a result of the care and support they receive. One parent said, 'I was nervous about my child accessing residential at first, but staff have been amazing, and he returns home so happy after staying.' Another parent described how, because of her son's improvement in his behaviour and coping skills, he is now playing for his town's under-13 football team. This was previously felt to be an unreachable goal for him.

Children's life experiences are enriched because of their engagement in a wide range of opportunities they receive in residential. As a result of a school residential trip, one child, who struggled with school attendance and was withdrawn, was able to go on holiday for the first time. The confidence he gained from this experience was transformational in terms of his outlook and confidence. He now loves going to school and is engaging well.

Children absolutely love the activities on offer and staff create an inclusive culture where everybody participates and everyone has fun. This keeps children healthy, teaches them teamwork and creates a culture where all children feel a sense of achievement, value and belonging.

Children's access to a range of therapies underpins progress and promotes their self-confidence and resilience. This is a strength of the school and benefits the children greatly. For example, children are now able to attend education on a full-time basis,

cope with the stresses of working in peer groups and embed new learned strategies, tolerance and acceptance.

Significant meaningful relationships have developed, often over a number of years, and this helps children feel valued, cared for and have trusted adults with whom they can share their thoughts, feelings and concerns. Children voice their views and opinions in a variety of forums, such as circle time and key-working sessions. Staff are aware of individual communication preferences and facilitate this with sensitivity and insight.

Children leaving the school do so equipped with the skills needed to navigate into adulthood. One ex-residential pupil was keen to share his experience with the inspector. The child was nurtured by school and residential staff to develop skills which resulted in them getting a place at college to pursue their dream career. Residential staff also taught the child how to use public transport so they could travel independently to college. He is now enjoying life in college and attributes this to the care and support shown to him while at residential. The child said, 'The staff are amazing and really cared about me. I can never thank them enough.'

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

Children are kept safe physically and emotionally. Children explore their feelings and staff creatively use physical and team activities as a positive tool. This is not only to have fun and stimulate physical exercise but to learn skills such as working together, how to lose, and empathy for those who need more support. Children look forward to their time in residential and have a real bond with each other.

During restrictions due to the pandemic, many children had limited access to school. Residential staff supported catering staff to prepare and deliver food parcels to the most vulnerable children in school. This support continued during school holidays and staff were committed to ensuring that all children, not only residential children, received a nutritious hot meal daily. This commitment from staff was appreciated by children, parents and professionals at a time of increased worry and uncertainty for many. This shows an ongoing commitment from staff to children's safety and well-being, even when they are not in school.

Positive communication with others helps to improve children's experiences. Close relationships with parents and external professionals enable staff to be aware of children's well-being inside and outside school. Children are supported if they are away from school by the social worker and outreach team, which helps them feel valued and cared for.

Residential staff play a key role in the daily school briefings. Staff communicate updates on children's progress or concerns so that teachers are aware and able to significantly reduce any known risks and celebrate successes. These handovers ensure children receive consistent care and are prepared to transition from residential

to school seamlessly. This is a significant step forward for all children, bearing in mind their starting points.

Children are supported sensitively to consider areas such as bullying, culture and diversity. Staff are skilled at creating sessions and tailoring these to promote engagement for the children to benefit from. One-to-one sessions and group meetings give children a non-judgemental space to explore sensitive topics and enhance their understanding.

When children are unsettled, physical intervention is used appropriately by staff to reduce the risk of harm to the child and others. The records are detailed and overseen by leaders soon after the incident. Leaders scrutinise these records and discuss incidents with staff and the child. However, records lack detail of these conversations, and it is difficult to determine what learning has come from them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Inspiring leadership sensitively supports staff to enable children to make meaningful progress. Leaders are passionate; they want the best for their children and creatively celebrate achievements whenever possible. Residential staff have been at the provision for a long time and are happy and settled in their roles. Children have made excellent progress socially, emotionally and behaviourally because of the passion and commitment of skilled staff in the provision.

Parents are extremely positive about residential and the progress their children have made. Parents were positive about the communication from staff and the efforts made to help their child settle into residential. One parent explained, 'He's become more confident, his education has come so far, he couldn't read and write. He's got friendships, he's doing amazingly.'

Governance is effective and maintains good oversight of residential care practice. This assists improvements in areas such as safeguarding practice, encouraging children's views and giving staff an opportunity to feed back about the performance of the residential provision. The positive impact of this external scrutiny is acknowledged and enjoyed by leaders and staff alike.

Children's views are acted upon and help to shape activities in place and trips away. Leaders have planned a summer 'staycation' for children at their request. Residential pupils asked to make the most of the empty school premises to have fun and access local activities, to enjoy using nearby resources.

The building is well maintained and safe for children to access. However, the residential decor is tired and needs attention and some refurbishment to create a more welcoming, homely space for children. This shortfall is acknowledged by leaders, who have a plan of works to improve the residential area.

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

Recommendations

- Debriefs after incidents of physical restraint need to be more detailed and clarify any learning points or practice improvement.
- Decor in some areas of the residential provision needs to be improved and refurbished in order to make this a more welcoming and child-friendly environment.

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: SC012456

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Gareth Evans

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Inspector

Matt Nicholls, Social Care Inspector

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