

Sheiling School

Horton Road, Ashley, Ringwood, Dorset BH24 2EB

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The residential special school is run according to principles inspired by Rudolf Steiner. The residential provision provides care for up to 22 children with a learning disability and/or physical disability. At the time of this inspection, eight children were living in one house within the extensive grounds.

This is the school's first inspection since it changed its registration from a children's home to a residential special school in December 2021.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 September 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 outstanding

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children receive good-quality care, despite ongoing challenges with staff recruitment. Leaders and managers made the difficult decision to only operate one house in order to use staff numbers effectively and to maintain a good standard of care for children. Staff have strong relationships with the children. They treat children with kindness, care and respect.

Children's day-to-day experiences are good and they are making good progress. Care is individualised, with targets and next steps taken at a pace to suit each child. This approach promotes progress, as it provides the child with processing time. The effective use of social stories is a key part of children's care. Staff use these along with other augmented communication systems to enable and empower children to make choices, to gather their views, and to prepare them for managing change and/or events. Staff are very skilled in communicating effectively with children. All information is in an accessible format for each child and promotes inclusivity.

Care plans are written with a strong focus on the individual child and detail the support they need to develop their independence. These are live and evolving documents that provide clear and consistent guidance for staff. Care plans link effectively to other plans such as behaviour support, health, and privacy and dignity plans. This means information is current and consistent. When possible, children are involved in the creation of their plans.

Children's healthcare needs are well met. Staff receive the required training to support children's health. There is excellent oversight of all health and therapy matters by managers. This includes reviews of medication errors, with lessons learned from investigations used to improve practice.

Children benefit from having access to a core therapeutic offer as part of the curriculum. The therapeutic plans for children track the impact of therapy and progress effectively. Currently, there are several therapeutic plans for each child. Leaders and managers are in the process consolidating these into one plan.

Children live in a lovely, warm and welcoming homely environment. In addition, they benefit from having access to extensive grounds and school facilities. Children's bedrooms are personalised, well furnished and include lots of photos of their family and pets. Children are part of the home and fully involved in the life of the school community. There is a sense of calm across the site which comes from the staff. This provides children with a tranquil and nurturing environment.

Children take part in a range of activities both on and off site. Staff support children in their interests as well as helping them to try new things. Staff arrange events where families are invited, so they can see what their child's life is like at the school and meet other parents.

Parents are very positive about the care and progress of children. They praised the staff for the support they provide for the family. One parent said the quality of their lives as a family has improved and they now feel more confident in doing different activities with their child. Parents feel communication from staff is good, which keeps them very involved in their child's care.

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

Staff ensure children are kept safe. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding practices and clearly understand the additional vulnerabilities of the children they care for. Staff are confident that any concerns they raise are taken seriously and are acted on quickly to safeguard children. Records of safeguarding events are comprehensive. Lessons learned are used to improve practice. Leaders and managers have built effective working relationships with the local authority designated officer, who is contacted when necessary.

Risk is appropriately managed. Staff are not risk averse. They use risk assessments effectively to provide clear guidance for staff and pre-empt any adjustments needed.

Behaviour management is excellent. There are strong behaviour leads who closely review and audit all aspects of behaviour management. Clear behaviour management plans and guidance are in place, which include restraint holds that can be used if needed for each child. Currently, tools are being developed to increase the effectiveness of meaningful conversation with children after an incident or a restraint. Some children have been creating their own Picture Exchange Communication System symbols to identify and name their feelings. An example of this is children taking photos of their own faces to show how they look when they are happy, sad, angry or upset.

Recruitment of all staff, including temporary staff, follows safer recruitment practices and seeks to protect children from those who may wish to harm them.

Fire safety is well managed. When needed, children have personal evacuation plans. These are clear, current and provide good guidance for staff about the help children need.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers comprehensively and effectively oversee all aspects of the residential provision. This informs their accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Leaders and managers are inspirational and are clearly ambitious for children and the staff team. They have a clear vision for the residential provision which is based on high standards of care and achieving the best outcomes for the children. This is linked to the very effective review systems used that drive improvements. They have a strong understanding and ownership of their roles and responsibilities, which influences the quality of care provided. Leaders and managers

are well supported by the trustees, who also have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Leaders and managers made the difficult decision, due to staffing issues, to reduce the number of children in the residential provision. Currently, only one house is open, with eight children living there. The move from the previous children's home registration to a residential special school and the reduction in the number of houses and children was very well managed. Children have been successfully prepared and supported to live in a new group.

Recruitment is an ongoing issue. Leaders and managers continue to review how and where they recruit. This includes an excellent staff well-being offer, as it is recognised that the staff are the school's most valuable resource. Staff told inspectors that they appreciate this approach. Whenever possible, the same agency staff are used, to provide consistency of care, and some agency staff have been taken on as permanent. Currently, the written rota does not consistently state the mitigations and actions taken to ensure staffing levels are adhered to. It is not consistently clear who is providing cover for short periods of time.

Staff receive regular supervision. These sessions are reflective and help to develop and support staff. Written records of these sessions vary in quality from appropriate to good.

Good-quality staff training and induction are in place. This supports the development of the staff, enabling them to provide good and effective care to the children.

Staff well feel supported by leaders, managers and each other. Staff are confident to approach senior managers to discuss any problems or ideas for the development of the residential provision. Staff feel valued and listened to and see themselves as a cohesive team across all aspects of the school and college. There are seamless links between care and education teams, which promote effective communication about children's needs. Support workers are present in class, which promotes the sharing of practices and ideas.

There is a clear statement of practice and principles that accurately reflects the provision. The service's website is very inclusive and created with children in mind.

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

Point for improvement

- School leaders should ensure the rota consistently records who is working in the home, no matter what the duration of cover they are providing.

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: 2671699

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Corine van Barneveld

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01425 477488

Inspectors

Wendy Anderson, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Kendra Bell, Social Care Inspector

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