

Dawn House Residential School

Dawn House School, Helmsley Road, Rainworth, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG21 0DQ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Dawn House School is a non-maintained residential special school. It is one of two schools run by the national charity 'I CAN'. There are currently 72 children on roll, who range in age from seven to 18 years. All children have difficulties with speech, language and communication. The school can accommodate up to nine children who reside at school during the week in term time. The residential accommodation is located on the school site. The school is situated in the village of Rainworth, Nottinghamshire. The last inspection of the residential provision was in June 2021.

Inspection dates: 20 to 22 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 good

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

Date of previous inspection: 29 June 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy spending time in the residential provision. For some children it means not spending lots of time travelling to and from the school. This means they are better able to access their learning because they are less anxious or tired from travelling.

Staff have warm and nurturing relationships with children. The children have trusted adults who they can turn to and share any concerns they may have.

Children make significant progress with their independent living skills, communication and social skills. This means that children are better equipped to move successfully into adulthood when they leave the school. A parent said:

'The difference has been amazing. He has made so much progress. When he started, he could barely speak. Now he can speak in sentences. He couldn't speak on the phone but now he can talk for hours. He has made great progress.'

Children enjoy a wide range of activities in the residential provision and in the local and wider community. For example, they visit the local cinema, go fishing, go for walks and go swimming. They enjoy the gardening club and have successfully grown a wide range of vegetables. They also enjoy the football and music clubs.

Children make friendships with their peers, which has supported them to grow in confidence and self-esteem. This has, in turn, developed their communication skills even further.

Home-cooked meals provide children with a healthy and well-balanced diet. Children are encouraged to try food that they would not normally eat. Children help with cooking meals and preparing snacks. They also set tables and tidy up after meals. Children enjoy participating in the gardening club where they grow a wide range of vegetables, which educates children about where their food comes from. However, the larger dining area in the residential provision is sparse and lacks soft furnishings. This means that the room can become loud during busy mealtimes. If children struggle with the noise, they are supported to eat in a quieter place according to their preference.

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

Children feel safe in the residential provision. They are carefully and sensitively supported to become more independent. This independence enables them to safely enjoy additional responsibilities and learn new skills that support their growth and development.

Staff use their skills and their relationships with children to support children's behaviour positively. They are confident in this area of practice. There are very few incidents in the residential provision, and restraint is only used as a last resort. Any incidents of restraint are clearly recorded. However, delays were identified in managers formally evaluating records. Managers meet regularly to review physical interventions and any behaviours that are of concern. A new electronic recording system means that managers' oversight of incidents is now far better.

Staff and managers are confident in their safeguarding practice. They are fully up to date with specialist training for the designated safeguarding officer role. Staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training that equips them to report any cause for concern. For example, staff have raised concerns when a child has not arrived for his stay with all the required items, including medication. Staff work with appropriate agencies and parents to safeguard the child.

Staff have a good understanding of risk management and have updated their practice in line with children's development. However, written risk assessments do not reflect current practice. Risks for children are known, but some of these risks have not been either identified or updated within the written assessments. For example, it was identified that staff no longer follow one child's travel plan within their risk assessment. There have been occasions when a child has tried to hit another child. The risk of bullying is not identified as a risk factor within children's risk assessments. Nevertheless, staff support children well with their relationships with each other, and bullying behaviour is rare.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers make child-centred decisions and have high aspirations for children. Children are included in the decisions about the care they receive and changes to the residential provision. This means children are fully involved and can communicate their views about the residential provision.

The residential services manager is experienced and holds a relevant qualification. She is part of the senior leadership team for the school and is an deputy designated safeguarding lead. This ensures that this small part of the school, the residential provision, remains high on the school's agenda.

The senior leadership group has a good understanding of the strengths of the residential provision and has formulated a plan to tackle shortfalls, particularly in record-keeping. The group is ably supported by a well-informed governing body which has a good understanding of the school and its residential provision. There is a specific governor with responsibility for oversight of the residential provision. The governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge for the school.

An independent person visits the school every half term to monitor the effectiveness of the residential provision and ensures that children are safe. He provides good informative reports that support leaders and managers to continually improve the provision.

The residential services manager provides good support to a small team of experienced staff. Staff have good training opportunities, which include regular updates and informal workshops within team briefings. Staff work in partnership with therapists and teaching staff in the school to ensure they have the relevant skills and knowledge to support children's complex communication needs.

Staff work closely with other professionals. These include children's mental health services and safeguarding agencies, to ensure that children receive a good-quality service that addresses all their safety and well-being needs.

Staff communicate effectively with parents about the experiences and progress of their children. Parents are complimentary about the care of their children. They feel very well supported, and one parent said that this support has prevented family breakdowns.

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 standard(s) for residential special schools:

- 7.1 There is a written plan in place for each child resident in the school setting out how their day-to-day needs will be met, known as the placement plan. The plan is thorough and specific to the child and is agreed, as far as is practicable, with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child. Children have an opportunity to contribute to their plans. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet, assesses any risk 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 EHC plan and reflects any changes to the EHC plan.

Points for improvement

- Consider reviewing the residential dining environment to ensure that it supports the sensory needs of all children who access it. (Linked to NMS 9.4)

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: SC008761

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Jenny McConnell

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Inspectors

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