

# Kings Mill School

Victoria Road, Driffield YO25 6UG

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Kings Mill School is a residential special school that is maintained by a local authority. The school is in the heart of the town of Driffield. It provides education for 138 children aged from two to 19 years. All children have complex needs, including those on the autistic spectrum.

Up to 36 children access the residential provision. Children can stay in the residence up to four nights per week. The residence is open one weekend in four for one child with a specialist care package. Many children have multi-sensory needs. All children have education, health and care (EHC) plans.

### Inspection dates: 4 to 6 October 2022

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>requires improvement to be good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The residential special school is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

**Date of previous inspection:** 6 October 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good**

Staff shortages limit the children's experiences. The staff try their best to minimise any impact of this, but sometimes planned activities, particularly in the community, cannot go ahead. Staff from the school are helping to cover staff shortages in residency. Changing staff does not provide consistency of care for the children. A recent recruitment drive has been successful and new staff are waiting to start.

The residential provision environment is not always good. Some areas need maintenance. There are areas which look tired, have broken furnishings or have items which could be a hazard to children. Hazardous items include an old door lock left on a child's bedroom door. The lock can be locked from the inside, leaving staff needing a code to get in. There is also other equipment fitted which is no longer used and detracts from the homely feel. Some children's rooms lack personalisation. The manager is aware of the issues and started to address them during the inspection.

The children enjoy their time in residency. They take part in a range of activities which staff tailor to their likes and dislikes. The activities help the children to develop social skills and confidence. The children benefit tremendously from on-site facilities such as the swimming pool, which is adapted to their needs. Time in the residential provision gives children social opportunities, some for the first time. Some children make new friends, which they value. These friendships are supported and promoted by staff.

Children benefit from a range of on-site therapies. The therapies include massage, and speech and language. The therapy sessions promote general well-being, alongside helping children to manage their emotions.

The staff have good relationships with the children and show appropriate care and affection. These established relationships give staff increased knowledge to interpret how children feel. This helps children, including those who do not communicate verbally, to have their needs recognised and wishes understood.

Children benefit from school staff and residential staff working together. The staff from school and residency share strategies to help the children manage routines and progress their independence skills. Teachers take extra time to make sure they support staff to help children settle into the residential provision. Because of this shared way of working, children become less dependent on adults and more confident in social activities and daily life skills.

When children move into the residential provision, plans for their introduction are thorough. Staff gather and share information with a wide range of professionals.

Additional training is provided to ensure that staff skills match the specific needs of the new child.

**How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good**

The staff use strategies set out in children's risk assessments. They demonstrate knowledge of how to support each child. Individualised risk assessments are specific to children's needs. The residential manager ensures that there is a regular review of risk assessments, so they remain accurate.

The use of physical intervention is rare. The staff try a range of ways to manage the children's behaviour positively. When incidents of physical intervention do occur, there is no evidence the residential manager speaks to children and staff about their feelings. The lack of information does not help managers to understand how best to support children and staff in the future. There is management oversight of incidents. The analysis of managers' oversight is not fully documented. The lack of analysis is a missed opportunity for managers to improve care for children in crisis.

Regular checks of fire equipment are carried out. The children and staff also complete regular evacuations to make sure they know how to get all children out of the building in an emergency. There is increased fire signage to help staff and children recognise fire exits. This meets a recommendation raised at the last inspection.

The staff know how to report any concerns about the children. They use online recording systems to share information to help keep the children safe. The staff feel confident to share safety concerns with senior staff responsible for safeguarding.

Children's safety is a priority. Any allegations and safeguarding concerns are followed through swiftly by safeguarding leads. The safeguarding leads work closely with other professionals such as the police and the local authority designated officer to help keep the children safe.

Safe recruitment procedures help leaders to check that staff are safe to work with the children. The full procedures had not been followed in one case. One member of staff had recruitment checks, but had been missed off the single central record. This was rectified during the inspection.

**The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

The head of care has been in post since 2019. He has returned to work after several months. An acting head of care has covered the post during this time. Her ability to fulfil management duties has been difficult due to staff shortages. She has been working constantly to make sure shifts are covered to allow the service to keep running for the children.

There are gaps in the oversight of the residential provision. The gaps in managers' oversight means they are not always able to identify where there are areas for development. For example, in daily recordings, some details are missed. Where potential issues arise and need following up, managers' oversight is not always clear. This leaves room for errors that could affect the children's well-being.

To meet a recommendation set at the last inspection, staff have completed safeguarding and county lines training. Managers do not have effective systems to monitor staff training. As a result, they do not always know which staff have training outstanding.

The independent visitor regularly visits the residential provision. The independent visitor's reports vary in quality. They do not always report on key areas. For example, they do not always provide an analysis of the quality of accommodation in residency. It is not clear if staff have been consulted during some visits. This is a missed opportunity to develop the service and raise the standard of the accommodation provided to children.

The governors monitor the residential provision. They do this through regular visits to residency and through reports provided to them by the managers. They ensure that developments are made where needed to improve care for the children.

Some staff feel supported by leaders and others do not. Some feel their views are not taken on board. All staff are receiving supervision and yearly appraisals. This is an opportunity to reflect on their practice and set goals for further development.

Leaders and managers have good relationships with other professionals in school and other agencies. These positive relationships promote effective communication. The effective sharing of information is helping to make sure that the children's needs are met. The head of care works closely with parents to make sure the children have what they need, and that they enjoy staying in the residential provision.

The headteacher and the residential leads have ensured that they met all the national minimum standards and recommendations set at the last inspection. They are aware of the strengths of this service and are keen to make improvements. The headteacher and the residential leads had already identified some of the shortfalls at this inspection. They have plans in place to make necessary changes. They have taken on board the new areas for development, and they are already making plans to address these.

## **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:

- Leaders should ensure that there is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of residential and care provision in the school. Leaders ensure that there is a mutually supportive and reinforcing approach, between (i) the educational provision and (ii) the residential provision, which is centred around the child. Individuals working in each aspect of provision should be able to challenge each other where necessary. The school should have processes in place to ensure this is the case. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 2.5)
- Leaders should ensure that the school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities consistently and effectively so that the standards are met. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 2.4)
- Leaders should ensure that monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: conversations with children, the senior management team and staff; conversations with social workers where relevant; conversations with parents/carers where relevant; checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, bullying, restraint (including restrictive interventions), risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children including in relation to residential provision; evaluation of the quality of the provision and effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded; and assessment of the suitability and physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the residential provision and the external environment. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 3.2)
- Leaders should ensure that all children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) incidents of restraint they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by, where possible within 24 hours. Discussions should take account of the age of the child, their capacity and cognitive ability and communication needs, and the circumstances of the restraint. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 20.5)
- Leaders should ensure that good-quality sleeping accommodation is provided for children. It is well organised and responsive to children's needs and is managed with ongoing assessments of risk (which should be documented) and the findings acted upon to reduce risk for all children. Accommodation gives children appropriate privacy, taking into account sex, age and any individual needs. Where children share a bedroom, they are able to express a preference about who they share with. To minimise disruption the school should aim to avoid mixing

accommodation arrangements for children on longer placements and those on short breaks. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 9.1)

- Leaders should ensure that the single central record must cover the following people: For schools, all staff, including teacher trainees on salaried routes (see paragraph 296), agency and third-party supply staff, even if they work for one day, (Keeping Children safe in Education, page 70, paragraph 268, 269)

## **Recommendation**

- Leaders should consider providing clear analysis of oversight of physical intervention and any outcome from this. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 20.1)

## **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:** SC055984

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Mrs Alison Hall

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

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## **Inspectors**

Jamie Richardson, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Rachel Ruth, Social Care Inspector

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