

# Radlett Lodge School

Harper Lane, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 9HW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

This residential special school is run by the National Autistic Society. There are currently 45 pupils aged from four to 19 on roll. The residential building is situated next to the school. Up to 12 pupils can reside either on a weekly, termly or flexible-stay basis. There are currently 10 residential pupils. The children have autism spectrum disorder.

The head of the residential provision has been in post since September 2022 and was previously the deputy of the residential provision. She has the relevant experience to manage the provision and is working towards a relevant level 5 qualification.

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

### Inspection dates: 26 to 28 September 2022

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>good</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 24 January 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children who stay in this residential provision are loved and cared for by a dedicated and knowledgeable staff team.

Children continue to make excellent progress because of their stays in the residential provision. A parent said that her child is now using more words, and another said that her child is using the toilet independently. Boarding is seen as an important part of the school. Effective partnership working between school staff and residential staff ensures that children receive good-quality, consistent and individualised care and support.

Children who can are encouraged to contribute to their care plans. Staff involve parents in planning children's care. A parent said that it is important to them to feel involved in how staff look after their child.

Staff have an excellent understanding of children's individual communication needs. Staff carry and use communication pictures to help children to express their wishes, feelings and choices. Children regularly see that their requests are actioned by staff.

Children have strong, trusting relationships with staff. They say that they know the staff care for them, and this helps them to feel safe and relaxed.

Staff clearly enjoy time with the children. Staff have made excellent links in the community so that children can enjoy swimming, golf and going to restaurants as part of their activities. A social worker said about their child: 'His needs are being met. He is making progress with his communication and expressing his needs, likes and dislikes. He has increased his vocabulary and made progress in his fine motor skills. He is safe and well looked after.'

Children have an individualised visual book of brilliance in which staff record children's achievements, targets and magic moments. How staff use and update these books has significantly improved since the last inspection. Staff have a weekly session with children during which they discuss children's targets and progress. Staff display children's certificates of achievement so that children know staff are proud of the progress they have made.

The residential provision meets children's sensory needs. Some rooms are plain and calming so as not to overload children with sensory issues. Another lounge is brighter and has things on the walls. Children can choose rooms which make them feel safer and happier. They have personalised their bedrooms. Staff encourage them to bring items from home that help them to feel happy and settled.

Parents say that the staff support the family, which has a positive impact on the whole family. However, there is a lack of evidence to illustrate the impact of this support on families.

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

Leaders and managers safeguard children effectively. They work with safeguarding agencies and have successfully challenged professionals when appropriate. They work jointly in partnership with parents when concerns arise.

Staff understand the children's vulnerabilities. Managers are focused on finding solutions to reduce risk. Managers and staff advocate for children to be a visible part of the community. Children enjoy a range of experiences because the staff find ways to support them safely.

Staff have a good understanding of how to raise concerns. The culture of openness and the encouragement that staff are given to challenge others and to report concerns help to keep children safe. When concerns are identified, the designated safeguarding lead promptly shares these with the relevant professionals and seeks and follows advice.

Staff use verbal praise and reward charts so that children know when they have done something well.

Professionals and parents speak positively about the quality of safeguarding practice. A member of staff said, 'Our strength is the care that we give the children. They are safe and looked after well, they are happy.'

Staff help children to understand how to stay safe and develop friendships safely. Staff anticipate when children may become unsettled. They are responsive to children and help them to settle by explaining what is happening.

Records of concerns or incidents are clear and concise and followed through by the designated safeguarding leads. Managers speak to staff and children about incidents, and parents are kept informed of any outcomes. A social worker said, 'The information-sharing with the local authority is excellent.'

Staff work with children to help them stay safe online without compromising their independence and privacy. Staff work consistently with parents to ensure that robust internet filters are used when the child is at home. However, during school holidays, there is no clear system to ensure that safeguarding concerns are managed without delay.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Knowledgeable, dedicated and enthusiastic managers lead this residential provision. An impressive child-focused team supports them. Since the last inspection, the head

of care has taken over the role of deputy principal for pastoral care, and the deputy has been promoted to the head of care role. This was a smooth transition for the children as both members of staff are still involved in the residential provision.

Regular independent visitor reports support the managers to develop the residential provision through their recommendations.

The staff work well as a team. The multi-agency ethos thrives within the school. Staff are highly motivated. They understand what is expected of them. They take pride in their work and the progress that the children make.

The principal sees well-being as an important factor in ensuring that staff feel valued, cared for and listened to. There are regular staff meetings and supervision sessions which support staff to develop their practice and share information.

Parents speak positively about the residential provision. A parent said: 'Residential is the best part of the school. The staff communicate well. I really like the way it is set up. My child enjoys good activities. He is developing more life skills; staff are teaching him to cook. There are small windows for success, and the staff use these. He feels well supported by the staff.'

The principal has met the recommendations and points for improvement raised at the last inspection.

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

### **Points for improvement**

- School leaders should ensure that during school holidays, there is an effective system to manage safeguarding concerns.
- School leaders should evidence the work that staff do with parents and the positive impact that this has on families.

### **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:** SC019505

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Geraldine Mendonça

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Telephone number:** 01923 854922

**Email address:** radlett.lodge@nas.org.uk

## **Inspectors**

Trish Palmer, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Jamie Cousins, Social Care Inspector

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