

# Orchard Manor School

Orchard Manor School, John Nash Drive, Dawlish, Devon EX7 9SF

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Orchard Manor School provides education for up to 180 children aged three to 19 years and weekly residential care for up to 20 children. It specialises in providing education and care to children with communication and interaction difficulties, autism spectrum conditions and learning needs. The school is part of the Special Partnership Trust.

At the time of this inspection, six children were living at the school, in two homes in the school grounds.

### Inspection dates: 15 to 17 November 2022

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account**      **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers      good

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

**Date of last inspection:** 16 November 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

Since the last inspection, leaders have reorganised the residential provision to look after 20 children in two houses. There are currently six children living there. There is a rolling programme of Year 11 pupils who stay in the houses on a short-term basis to develop extra life skills and build their friendship groups.

Children are happy and comfortable in the houses. They interact positively with the staff and are clearly familiar with them. Staff form trusting and respectful relationships with the children. They help the children to settle into routines. This increases the children's independence and helps them to take part more fully in daily activities. For example, staff have supported one pupil with a healthy sleep routine, which has increased his ability to engage in his school day.

Both houses are very clean and some homely touches have been added to detract from the purpose-built, clinical nature of the properties. However, some institutional fixtures and fittings remain, for example, lots of fire signage and toilet signs.

Leaders and managers work across the houses and the school to improve the children's daily experiences. They create opportunities for the children to increase their friendship groups and take part in joint activities. For example, Year 11 pupils are invited to stay in the houses, where they take responsibility for tasks such as cooking and organising trips out. This has increased the children's confidence and lesson attendance. This ongoing project receives positive feedback from the wider school community, including the children's families.

Leaders and managers begin early planning from Year 9 to look at next steps for children, based on their skills and aspirations. They build relationships with the children's families and external professionals to prepare the children to move on from the school. Last year, all the children moved to further education or vocational learning.

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

Leaders and managers provide consistent safeguarding guidance and support to staff and children. This helps children feel equally treated and supports a strong open culture in the school community. For example, managers hold internet safety days which the children's parents are invited to participate in, to put in place the same safety measures at home as at school.

There are a low number of restraints and each incident is reviewed effectively by managers to see what can be done to reduce the risk of another incident.

There have been no complaints or episodes of children going missing since the last inspection

Children trust and like staff. They share their worries with them and listen to their advice. Staff mostly manage individual risks associated with a child's behaviour well. These are followed up sensitively in conversations with the child.

Staff understand how to respond to a concern about a child's safety. They make sure that the child's family and statutory agencies are notified about any concerns, to help create a safety plan.

However, some risks require a more proactive approach to the development of strategies that anticipate/prevent harm from occurring. A more curious approach is required when managing some safeguarding risks. Leaders and managers acknowledge that the documentation related to risk can be recorded more clearly and cross referenced to strengthen safety planning around the children.

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

Leaders and managers have taken part in a recent restructure of the leadership team. A newly appointed head of care has not yet arrived. However, leaders and staff are resilient and form a skilled and experienced team. They have reviewed the school's vision and values to strengthen their common purpose across residential and school staff.

Staff are committed and enthusiastic. They enjoy their work. They share their skills across the site. For example, residential staff will also support day children at school. Staff have effective daily handover discussions between school and the residential houses about the children's well-being. This helps staff provide a consistent response to the children's needs.

Governors bring a wealth of experience as critical friends to the school and have up-to-date knowledge of the residential houses.

Leaders monitor children's progress and are ambitious for children's futures. They develop imaginative solutions to add value to the residential provision, which encourages the children to practise life skills and join social activities. This approach encourages children to be more independent in the wider community.

The overall level of monitoring and quality assurance by leaders and managers is thorough and reflective. However, some of the children's plans do not have realistic targets and should be updated with the children each term.

## **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 for residential special schools:

- 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. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 7.1)

## **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:** SC003895

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Nicola Jones

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Justine Hosking, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Michelle Oxley, Social Care Inspector

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