

Saxon Hill

Saxon Hill Special School, Kings Hill Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS14 9DE

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Saxon Hill is an academy school for children with a wide range of physical, complex medical, sensory, communication and /or learning difficulties. The school has a 14-bed residential provision called the Sleepover Club that offers overnight care to children who attend the school and are aged between five and 18 years.

There is a dedicated team of care staff that operates independently of, but in close liaison with, the teaching staff and other members of staff. The sleeping accommodation comprises six twin bedrooms and two single rooms. There are currently 130 children on roll at the school, of whom 41 currently access the residential provision. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school/on this site.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 October 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of last inspection: 16 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children accessing this residential provision continue to make outstanding progress. This is because staff's knowledge of the children is excellent and the quality of care they provide to children is exceptional. Also, staff work closely with education and healthcare staff to provide individualised care and support that meets children's complex needs. This means that children receive outstanding care and support from a child-focused, highly motivated and committed staff team.

Staff work closely with children's parents and carers. These excellent relationships mean that children benefit from seamless care and support. One parent said, 'My daughter is extremely happy and has made excellent progress. Staff are always welcoming.' Another added, 'This school has changed our lives and has given us a future for our child. The entire team of staff are brilliant with the children and parents. To do what they do is beyond wonderful, I'm always so grateful and humbled my child is there being educated.'

Relationships between staff and children are warm and nurturing. Inspectors observed staff and children having fun and taking part in activities together. Since the last inspection, staff have been creative and have introduced a gaming system with personalised controls to meet all children's needs. This now means that all children can take part. This creative approach has had a significant impact on the engagement of all children and allowed them to have fun and participate.

Staff meet children's complex health needs extremely well. Staff are highly skilled and continue to develop their skills to ensure that children's additional needs are met effectively. For example, staff receive specific training in the safe administration of medicines. Furthermore, managers and nurses conduct regular audits of medication to ensure that practice remains safe.

Staff support and promote children's independence skills remarkably well. They ensure that children are treated with dignity and respect. In addition, school and Sleepover Club staff work closely together to promote independence in line with children's specific communication needs. This supports them to develop the social, emotional and cognitive skills that will help them in their move towards adulthood. Staff continually celebrate children's successes and achievements, and children grow in confidence because of this.

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

The school's safeguarding team has a strong and consistent approach to safeguarding children. There is an effective system in place for addressing any concerns about children. Staff know how to raise concerns or worries about children

and leaders ensure that they respond immediately. One parent said that the school 'is an amazing school for amazing children run by an amazing team of teachers, leaders, support staff and nurses. There are few places I can leave my child with all his complex needs, but I know five days a week he's in the best care.'

Children are safe and protected from harm. Staff put in place individual support plans and risk assessments to keep children safe. Communication with parents, school colleagues, nurses and external professionals is especially strong. This ensures that staff have a comprehensive understanding of children's risks. As a result, staff have up-to-date and specific guidance to support children to safely take part in the Sleepover Club.

Staff and leaders respond exceptionally well to support children when they become anxious or during times of crisis. A trauma-informed approach is understood and used by staff to reassure children and reduce their anxieties. Leaders ensure that regular assessments and research are used to help staff gain a better understanding of children's needs. This proactive approach means that incidents with children significantly reduce. There have been no incidents requiring physical restraint since the last inspection.

Staff and the school's health and safety team embrace their responsibilities for keeping children safe. They quickly address any known hazards or risks to children's physical welfare and safety. This ensures that the premises and grounds are maintained to a high standard, with good risk awareness and risk management. Furthermore, the environment is also adapted to meet the specific needs of the children. For example, leaders have ensured that the bathroom and wet room doors have been widened for one child to have access. As a result, children feel valued and thrive.

All residential and school staff are subject to robust recruitment processes. Leaders ensure that the required safer recruitment checks are carried out. Furthermore, they follow up on concerns and seek further information about staff to provide assurances that staff are suitable. Consequently, leaders are confident that children are cared for by staff who are safe to do so.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The Sleepover Club benefits from strong and effective leadership. Leaders have high expectations for children, and they make sure children receive excellent support to meet these expectations. There is a clear vision for the way the school operates and Sleepover Club staff mirror this approach. This consistent approach is adopted across the whole school and school staff are equally part of the vision.

The governing body is highly committed to the children. Governors' knowledge of the school, its history and the challenges it faces is extensive. Governors recognise the value of the Sleepover Club, not only the impact it has on children's educational progress but also the significant impact it has on children and their families' lives.

Monitoring of the provision is effective and is undertaken by the local authority, independent person and the governor with responsibility for the provision. There are also external safeguarding audits undertaken by the academy trust. Leaders ensure that all actions are acted on in a timely manner. This management oversight means that the service continues to improve and meet children's needs.

Despite the excellent progress, leaders continue to strive to make improvements in the care and education that children receive. There is good research used to enhance the learning experience for teachers and children. Since the last inspection, they have introduced new 'sprint initiatives' and development plans to enhance the staff team's knowledge and practice. Furthermore, leaders are creative and always looking for ways to engage children and improve their communication. This commitment and passion help the service to grow and get even better.

Staff feel motivated and supported by the leaders and managers. They benefit from receiving regular practice-based supervision. This enables them to reflect on their practice and identify areas for professional development. A range of training in safeguarding, medication and care practice ensures that staff have the appropriate skills to care for children. All residential staff have the required qualification for working with children. As a result, a suitably qualified and experienced staff team provides high-quality care for children.

Leaders work in partnership with parents and external professionals. This means that children receive well-organised packages of care and education. External professionals speak positively about the care that children receive. One professional summarised this care by saying, 'It is wonderful to see how the pupils progress and enjoy their time with their friends at Sleepover. For many of them, this is the only time they get to do sleepover like their siblings, and it encourages them to become more independent in a safe and caring environment.'

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: SC038728

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Melanie Newbury

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Inspectors

Dave Carrigan, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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