

Farney Close School

Bolney Court, Crossways, Bolney, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 5RD

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

There are 59 children on roll at the school, of whom 32 access the residential provision. Children generally attend the residential provision Monday to Friday, with some children having more bespoke placements in line with their needs.

The school is available to children with social, emotional, or mental health and/or associated difficulties, such as speech and language or learning needs.

Only the residential provision was inspected.

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 November 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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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	outstanding
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The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 11 January 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy their time in residential and look forward to their stays. Children enjoy all the activities on offer and can form friendships with other children in the school. One parent explained that their child had 'gone from quiet and unconfident and lacking self-esteem to chatty and much braver in life'.

Children feel valued and cared for. They have strong bonds with the staff and each other and are not shy to seek out a hug or reassurance from staff when needed.

Staff make sure that they stay up to date with children's learning and needs. There is strong communication with teachers, thorough handovers, house meetings and communication with parents and professionals.

Staff have tracked the children who attend the residential provision against day pupils and found that children who access the residential provision have improved routines, better relationships with the staff, more confidence and greater self-esteem. This has resulted in children making remarkable progress in their education. One child is on track to achieve grade 4 this year, which was believed to be impossible a year ago.

Most children feel listened to, and their views respected. Most children know how to complain and feel confident to talk to a member of staff if they have a concern.

Children get to enjoy a range of enjoyable activities during their stays. One day a week, staff have introduced the 'Farney sarnie' at the request of children; its introduction has been a success with everyone at the school.

The condition of the houses where children stay varies. Some houses need refurbishment and are not reflective of the care that children receive. Leaders were able to show plans for a major refurbishment of the residential accommodation. Children were aware of these plans and staff felt this would make children's living environment more pleasant. However, this has yet to be implemented.

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

Children are supported physically and emotionally. When required, children are supported to stay calm by using a range of therapeutic methods, such as art therapy, Lego therapy and the Hush Room (a sensory room), alongside specialist therapists such as speech and language.

Staff have eradicated ground holds from their practice and there is a greater emphasis on supporting children and reflecting on times when physical intervention is used. This has helped to inform children's plans and has given the staff a better understanding of children's individual needs.

Risk assessments are updated regularly. However, on one occasion a risk assessment which had been updated did not reflect a child's current situation. Closed-circuit television (CCTV) is used without any assessment as to whether children require this level of supervision.

When concerns regarding staff practice arise, leaders ensure that external professionals are made aware, and that responses are in line with local safeguarding policies. This has resulted in timely conclusions to safeguarding concerns and opportunities for staff to further improve their practice.

Staff work hard to reduce known risks for children. When bag searches are necessary, these are managed sensitively. The use of mobile phones is restricted to children aged over 16. One child explained that this made them feel less anxious about messages they receive online.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The members of the residential leadership team show an in-depth understanding of the children in their care.

The members of the staff team are inspirational in their approach, and this has led to several members of staff remaining in their roles for a long time.

Parents and professionals are positive about the level of communication from the school and the impact that the residential provision has on children's lives.

During the inspection, there was widespread disruption to the electricity supply, telephone lines and internet connection due to a storm. Leaders were able to reassure staff; in turn, the staff were able to adapt their practice to ensure that there was no disruption to children's residential experience.

Leaders have responded promptly to shortfalls identified at the last inspection. As a result, all recommendations have now been addressed.

A cohesive management team ensures that children's experiences are regularly reviewed and closely monitored. The governors are now applying a level of scrutiny to the residential provision to ensure that children are well cared for and have positive experiences.

Staff feel extremely well supported. They receive regular supervisions. These sessions are adapted to meet the individual needs of the member of staff. This is an exemplar of practice and has helped staff to improve their practice and as a result children benefit from improved care.

The school social worker ensures that children who require additional support can access this at the point of need. Communication with specialist agencies is well timed and highly effective.

Leaders have bravely introduced new ideas, such as the Behaviour Forum and the Hush Room. These are school-wide and have helped to improve children's experiences. International Days have been introduced to support children to learn more about different cultures. Staff and children have also been involved in charity and community events.

All the national minimum standards are met.

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

Points for improvement

- Leaders should ensure that staff consider the individual risks that children face and use strategies that will help to reduce these risks. This includes the use of CCTV.

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: SC014513

Principal: Sara Hack

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

Matt Nicholls, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Chris Peel, Social Care Inspector

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