

Sidestrand Hall School

Sidestrand Hall School, Cromer Road, Sidestrand, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 0NH

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Sidestrand Hall School is a day and residential special school on the North Norfolk coast. It is maintained by Norfolk County Council. The school caters for children and young people aged between seven and 19 with complex needs.

There are 192 pupils on roll. The total number of residential pupils is currently 24. Residential pupils can board between Monday and Friday for up to four nights.

The residential provision comprises of three houses, a flat situated in the main school building and Clement Lodge, which provides accommodation for children with autism spectrum disorder.

The head of boarding has been in post for 11 years and has a relevant qualification.

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

Inspection dates: 6 to 8 December 2022

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

Date of previous inspection: 1 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children benefit from good relationships with staff who understand their needs. These relationships support children to progress in a range of areas. Consequently, children have grown in confidence and developed their social skills in the residential provision.

Staff from the residential provision work well with school staff to help children to make educational progress. Residential staff use children's education, health and care plans to inform the children's progress targets. This helps children to make progress against these targets. The staff encourage children's interest in learning during their residential time. Children enjoy trips to the local library, and are encouraged to research information about specific topics. This increases their knowledge about these areas while also equipping them with valuable learning skills.

The children enjoy their time at the residential provision. Social activities provide opportunities for learning and development. The staff help the children to develop their independence skills, such as making their beds and preparing food. Parents said that they have noticed children using these skills at home.

Children like the positive reward systems used in the residential provision. They see this as a motivating factor. Staff are alert to positive behaviour, celebrating and reinforcing this when it occurs. This contributes to a happy atmosphere.

The children enjoy the residential activities. These include activities at the school such as sports in the gym or board games, as well as organised trips such as shopping, visits to animal sanctuaries and local community resources.

There is a phased process for children's induction to the residential provision. This is carried out at the child's pace. For one new child, clear information was gathered in advance of their stay. This allowed staff to prepare visual aids to help the child understand the plan. This approach helped to reduce the child's anticipated anxiety and has helped them enjoy the residential experience.

Children say that staff listen to them. Regular planning meetings take place with the children at the start of each evening. In these meetings, children and staff identify what children would like to happen, while also agreeing what has to happen. This approach helps to achieve a balance between fun and learning for the children.

The quality of the residential accommodation has improved over recent years. Children personalise their bedroom spaces. The lounges are warm and welcoming. Mealtimes are communal affairs, with each child contributing to the experience. This ranges from setting the table, cooking a meal or washing up afterwards.

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

Children feel safe. They are comfortable in the care of staff. The staff provide children with good guidance. As a result, children increase their understanding about how to keep themselves safe.

The management team ensures that good risk assessments are in place. The team completes these with education staff and regularly updates them. As a result of this integrated approach, children's safety increases.

The staff receive training in a range of safeguarding areas. All of the staff have had training in safeguarding disabled children. In addition, since the last inspection, staff have had training in ligature removal. These learning and development opportunities help staff to understand risks and reduce them.

The management team ensures that appropriate safe recruitment checks are completed. Well-organised records show that suitable health and safety checks are in place. These help ensure children's safety.

The staff support children without the need for physical interventions. The staff do this gently, carefully and effectively. Safeguarding incidents are generally managed well. Staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and follow the procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns.

Children can talk to staff or their friends if they are worried or upset. Information about the independent visitor is made available to children. The independent visitor sent the children some Christmas treats. When children were asked who these were from, they were able to say who the independent visitor was, describe the visitor's role and how they could contact them.

On one occasion, designated safeguarding staff did not ensure that the outcome of a child protection investigation was known by the school. The investigation did not relate to issues at the school. Staff's responses to the original concern safeguarded the child. However, the failure to follow up the outcome of the investigation increased the risk of staff being unaware of potentially important information.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A strong, skilled, experienced and well-respected management team oversees the residential provision. The management team has a good understanding of individual children's plans and progress.

The staff receive regular support and supervision from the management team. Formal supervisions are planned with an agenda and captured in detailed records. The staff feel well supported, guided and listened to. The staff have access to a good range of training opportunities. Managers maintain good oversight of staff training attendance.

The management team ensures that there are sufficient staff to meet the needs of the children. Agency staff are not used. Careful recruitment, combined with good management support, has helped children to experience good-quality and consistent care.

Since the last inspection, a senior member of staff has been given the responsibility for developing opportunities for children to broaden their cultural awareness. This has resulted in some good, creative learning opportunities.

The management team has addressed the shortfalls identified at the last inspection. Responses to safeguarding concerns have improved, the complaints policy has been amended and staff have received the required training. In addition, children benefit from increased community-based activities.

The management team welcomes external scrutiny. For example, managers have developed relationships with the local police. These relationships help to reduce the risks of a closed culture developing. However, the recent monitoring by the independent person has not included contact with parents. As a result, parental feedback is not captured through this independent process.

The management team has a generally good understanding of the quality of care. However, records do not always capture the manager's actions or evaluations following incidents.

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

Points for improvement

- School leaders should ensure that designated staff monitor and review the outcome of any external child protection investigation relating to children at the school.
- School leaders should ensure that recording systems capture the actions taken in response to incidents and any monitoring or evaluation by managers.
- School leaders should ensure that monitoring by the independent person includes conversations with parents and carers.

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: SC042606

Headteacher: Sarah Young

Type of school: Residential Special School

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Inspectors

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