

Millgate School

Millgate School, 18 Scott Street, Leicester LE2 6DW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The school is run by Discovery Schools Academy Trust. It caters for children aged between seven and 16 with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

The number of children on roll at the school is 123. The school has a residential facility that can accommodate up to eight children per night. The number of children and young people resident at the time of this inspection was four.

The residential provision is overseen by the headteacher.

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

Inspection dates: 6 and 8 December 2022

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected outstanding

The effectiveness of leaders and managers outstanding

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 previous inspection: 16 November 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make excellent progress which is sustained over time. This is because of the very positive impact of their residential stays and the close relationship between school and care. There is a whole-school approach, which enables children who have complex needs to thrive in a nurturing environment. They are cared for by skilled, experienced and committed leaders and staff.

Children consistently said that they have fun and that they 'love it'. The views of parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the care their children receive. The opportunity to access residential care has, for some children and families, prevented family breakdown.

Children have exceptional experiences and opportunities through the school curriculum, and within the residential provision. They lead stimulating academic and social lives. A range of activities encourage children to develop their social skills and confidence, such as swimming lessons and trips out to youth clubs.

A priority for the residential provision is developing the children's long-term independence skills. This will enable children to lead full lives when they leave the school and residences. Children enjoy choosing their own bedding at the start of a stay and can now confidently make and strip their own beds. They enjoy opportunities to cook and bake food. Children's confidence grows, as does their abilities. This helps them to make excellent developmental progress.

There is very close tracking of the children's educational outcomes. There is evidence of a direct link between children's academic outcomes and their stays in residence. Children's achievements are also tracked when they leave the school. The data shows that children who have attended residence, in the past, are more likely to maintain college or further education places. Staff are ambitious for children's futures and want them to succeed, whatever they may go on to do.

Children make significant progress, with improving their behavioural, emotional and mental health. This is because managers and staff understand children's individual needs and effectively support a wide range of health, emotional and psychological interventions which benefit children.

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

Staff and managers have an excellent knowledge of the risks that children are susceptible to. Managers and staff have excellent working relationship with the police and other external professionals. This relationship has helped prevent children getting involved in risky situations. A police liaison officer said, 'Staff are strong

advocates and represent the highest levels of safeguarding. They just seem to get it. They do not pass the buck. They understand their role in safeguarding. The residence absolutely helps keep those children safe.'

The strong relationships between staff and children usually lead to children being settled and calm during their stays. Staff are highly skilled in helping children to regulate and improve their behaviours over time. Behaviour management strategies are well considered and followed by staff. Residential care staff are consistent in their approaches and boundaries, but always empathetic and nurturing.

The use of physical intervention is meticulously monitored, reviewed and tracked to identify any patterns and trends. Physical intervention is used proportionately. The number of incidents is low, and they are managed extremely well. Recording could be improved by adding greater depth to the description of what happened, to show why the decision to use physical intervention was made. A social worker said, 'They go above and beyond. [The child] feels secure and safe. They are a saving grace. [The child] looks forward to going there.'

Families rarely raise any concerns. When they do, they are listened to. There is always a highly respectful, helpful approach from the managers and staff. Families know that they can rely on staff for help and support, and they often do.

The recruitment of new staff is safe and in accordance with safer recruitment processes. This helps to prevent unsuitable adults from having contact with children. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and know what to do if they have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child. Managers have promoted an open and transparent safeguarding culture. Reporting procedures are well understood and used by staff should they need to. Whistle-blowing systems are easily accessible to staff. As a result, the risk of abuse is significantly reduced and an open, transparent culture is promoted.

Recently, bedroom door alarms were introduced to enhance children's safety at night. Leaders should ensure that children understand why the alarms are in place, that their use has been appropriately risk assessed, and that permission for their use has been gained.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The school continues to offer exceptionally high-quality care. The senior leadership team is open to learning and feedback. They continuously challenge themselves to do better. Overall, this leads to exceptionally positive outcomes for the children.

The value of residential care is well understood and celebrated in this school. Leaders and managers recently developed and implemented a welcoming activity used within residential care; this has now circulated across the school. Leaders and managers continually evaluate the care practice from within residential areas of this school. This is then used to very good effect across the school. This is excellent practice. Children

are listened to, and their ideas are highly valued. For example, representatives from the residence are part of the school council. Their ideas and suggestions are valued and listened to, building children's confidence.

Children's targets, as set out in their education, health and care plans, are incorporated into their residential stays. As a result, children achieve the objectives as set out in plans and have fun.

Leaders and managers extensively analyse the quality of the day-to-day care provided. The skilled and experienced independent visitor has very good oversight. Her approach drives further improvement. The advisory board further supports and provides challenge, scrutiny and support to the senior leadership team. This supportive challenge means that leaders are never complacent and constantly aim to achieve more for the children.

Staff feel valued and well supported. They have access to a wide variety of training to help them meet the needs of the children. The approaches of managers and leaders continues to be research informed.

The impact of feedback from the last Ofsted inspection was well received by senior leaders. Senior leaders have used it as a tool for improvement. There is now an increased senior leader presence in residence. A new care plan format is in use. Entitled 'My flat plan', the document uses children's views and opinions to influence their own care. Senior leaders and staff hold development sessions that focus on the ongoing development of the residences and how this can continue to enhance children's lives. This continues to demonstrate the value placed on residential care in this school.

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

Points for improvement

- Review use of bedroom door alarms to ensure that there is appropriate risk assessment and permission in place. (Linked to NMS 14.3)
- Review the level of detail recorded in physical intervention records to ensure that the description in the record is clear. (Linked to NMS 20.6)

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: SC006452

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Sara Marsh

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Inspector

Catherine Honey, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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