

# Fosse Way School

Fosse Way School, Longfellow Road, RADSTOCK BA3 3AL

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

The school is an academy special school. It provides education for 221 pupils aged three to 19 years who have education, health and care plans. The school offers weekly residential provision for up to 11 pupils who have autism spectrum disorders. At the time of inspection, 10 pupils were in the residential provision.

### Inspection dates: 15 to 17 March 2023

**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:** 21 September 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

The children are overwhelmingly positive about staying in the residential provision. Several children told the inspector that they 'love it' with one child giving a 'double thumbs up' to confirm this. Children very much enjoy the activities on offer and say that the staff are 'great' and that they 'like spending time with them as they are good fun'. The quality of these activities and positive interactions have far-reaching benefits for the children, particularly around developing and maintaining friendships, building confidence and learning to play cooperatively.

The strong cohesion between the care, therapy and education teams means that children's needs are met holistically. As a result, children make excellent progress in several areas. Particularly notable are the positive developments in communication. Children's vocabulary has increased, which has led to a reduction in their need to use symbols to communicate. Further innovations in communication are being developed through collaborative work with a specialist external company. Children are confidently prepared for adult life. They have developed their independence and skills for life, such as being confident at practice interviews, preparing meals for themselves and making meaningful choices and decisions.

Staff are excellent role models for the children. The way they treat the children has had a very positive effect on how the children treat each other. Staff speak fondly and with pride of the children they care for. They ensure children's achievements are celebrated.

The family support provision has gone from strength to strength, with more families accessing the support. This support is highly valued by parents and carers and has helped to support positive relationships and provide children with consistency at home and at school.

Children's plans are excellent documents, fully bespoke and designed in such a way that children can easily understand them and contribute meaningfully to them. These plans are detailed, current and provide clear guidance and working strategies for staff. Throughout the children's plans, the child's voice and views and those of their families are strongly represented and actioned.

Careful assessment takes place for any new child accessing the residential provision to ensure the success of such a move for the new child but also the continued success of existing children. The timescale for a new child moving in is individualised to the needs of that child and their family.

Staff continue to improve the residential environment. Since the previous inspection, there have been two new kitchens that children enjoy using. Leaders and managers have learned from their research on how the environment affects children with

autism spectrum disorder. This has led to successful changes in décor in the residential provision and is now being taken forward into the school buildings. Children are fully involved in choosing the décor for bedrooms, which are personalised. Children are proud of their rooms.

Children's educational attendance is very good. Most of the residential staff also provide support in class, which gives children confidence and consistency of approach.

Children's health needs are well managed. However, there have been some medication errors. Swift and effective action has been taken in light of these and outcomes of the investigations have been used to improve practice.

All national minimum standards are met.

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

Children feel safe and are kept safe at the residential provision. Staff continue to find creative ways to help children to develop the skills to keep themselves safe. Of most significance is the work around positive image, healthy relationships, appropriate touch and online safety. Consequently, children's relationships with each other are positive, and they know what appropriate interactions they should expect from adults and others.

The 'SoSAFE' program, which is helping children to develop safe relationships, is very much embedded into the school ethos. Children, supported by staff and families, use the techniques effectively at school, home and in public. An external specialist supports staff to develop their understanding in this important area so that they are appropriately skilled and have up-to-date knowledge to best help children. This specialist also works directly with children.

Safeguarding processes are robust; recording improvements now mean that records of safeguarding events are centralised and comprehensive. Swift action is taken regarding events that both meet and do not meet the threshold for referral to the local authority designated officer. Information is quickly shared with professionals involved in the children's lives. This means children's safety is enhanced in the residential setting, in education and at home. Leaders' and managers' scrutiny of safeguarding events is excellent. This includes the monitoring of trends, identifying patterns and taking effective action. Staff receive good-quality training and are aware of their safeguarding roles and responsibility.

Supporting children's emotional health and positive well-being is a strength of the school. Emotional literacy sessions help children to recognise their feelings and find ways to express them appropriately. Staff are attuned to children and quickly pick up on early signs that they are starting to feel unhappy or upset. They help children to use their individual strategies to manage these feelings. Children have helped to

devise their own bespoke support plans and are reminded to use them at these times. Consequently, restraint continues not to be used and has not been used for several years. This indicates the level of creativity employed to manage behaviour in a positive way.

Risk assessments are comprehensive and provide clear guidance for staff on how to mitigate and reduce levels of risk.

Staff recruitment follows safer recruitment practices. There has been an improvement in the quality of interview notes and the rationale for an appointment is clearly recorded.

Fire safety is well managed. All staff and children regularly take part in fire drills to ensure they know what to do should the fire alarms sound. Staff are very aware that some of the children find it difficult to manage loud noises so bespoke support is in place for these children.

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

This setting has a strong track record of consistently providing children with good-quality care and positive experiences. This year, leaders and managers have built on these solid foundations to improve practices further using current relevant research to ensure staff give children exceptional opportunities to develop.

Leaders and managers are highly experienced and well trained for their roles. Their oversight of the residential provision is effective. There is a constant desire to improve; keeping up to date with current childcare practices is providing children with the best possible care.

Staff morale is high, and team members work well together. They respect each other and their managers. Staff receive very good quality supervision. Supervision sessions are reflective and provide challenge when needed. There is clear evidence of issues being addressed and support provided for staff when needed. The focus on staff well-being is important and includes access to expert, external support services.

Staff training is of an excellent quality. The training provided is kept under review to assess its effectiveness and ensure that it is focused on giving staff the skills to best meet the children's needs. All staff have or are working towards their level 4 qualification.

There has been a change in the chair of governors and the safeguarding governor since the previous inspection. Monitoring visits carried out by this governor cover the required areas; reports are detailed and provide challenge to leaders and managers and support the development of the residential provision. Leaders and managers feel well supported by the governing body.

## **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:** SC041476

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Fiona Skinner

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

**Telephone number:** 01761 412 198

**Email address:** fskinner@fossewayschool.com

## **Inspector**

Wendy Anderson, Social Care Inspector

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