

Lindsworth School

Monyhull Hall Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, West Midlands B30 3QA

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Lindsworth School is a maintained residential special school catering for boys who have social and/or emotional difficulties. It currently offers education for pupils aged nine to 16 years old. Currently, there are 132 pupils at the school, 13 of whom are residential pupils. There are 12 bedrooms in the boarding house and boarding is offered two, three or four nights a week. The residential provision is situated in a large, detached house, spread over two floors and located on the school site, close to the main school. Residential pupils can use the school's sporting facilities during residential time.

The residential schools principal coordinator oversees the residential provision and is suitably qualified and experienced.

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

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 February 2023

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 last inspection: 14 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress and enjoy their experiences while in residence, and build good relationships with their peers. Children value the opportunities the school gives them. One parent told inspectors that this is a 'remarkable school with amazing staff'.

Experienced and skilled staff know children extremely well. They talk passionately about children and how important their happiness and progress is to them. Staff are creative in helping children settle when they start their residential stays. Staff understand that sometimes children take time to settle, so they persevere with a calm, thoughtful approach. This results in a strong culture of care and support that means that children are settled and happy when they stay over.

Children have realistic targets to work to. They are regularly reviewed with children, meaning children are fully involved in their own development. Staff act on children's views and give children opportunities, formally and informally, to shape the experiences they have. For example, children and staff have daily meetings where children can openly share their thoughts and feelings. The trusting relationships children have with staff and their peers mean these meetings are meaningful.

Children have access to a wide variety of activities. They make good use of the on-site multi-use games area, and the games room with table tennis and pool tables and computers. Children can use the large kitchen to cook and bake. They can also go off site to go swimming, to the shops, and to enjoy other community-based activities. These opportunities help children to broaden their experiences and build their ambitions.

Transitions between residence and school are well supported. When in residence, children have a predictable daily routine which adds stability to their experience. Inspectors saw children calmly preparing for their day with a healthy, filling breakfast. This helps them start the day well and prepare for learning.

Staff communicate well with children's parents and with school day staff. The excellent communication between the school and residence means all staff are well informed about children's strengths and struggles. Communication with some external professionals is an area to develop, which the school is aware of.

The communal areas of the residential accommodation are bright, spacious and comfortable. However, some bedrooms and upstairs areas have not been well maintained and there is also a lack of personalisation in some children's rooms. This detracts from the homely feel that staff aim to achieve.

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

Children enjoy and value being in residence as a safe and caring place to live for part of their week. They know they are well cared for by skilled and trusted adults who they know well. Staff use a calm and quiet approach, which children respond well to. Expectations in residence are clear and this helps children to feel settled.

The safeguarding team has clear systems in place to oversee safeguarding across the school. In addition, staff know their safeguarding responsibilities well. As staff know children exceptionally well, they are alert to any changes in behaviour or presentation that may give cause for concern. Staff are confident that senior staff would listen to them and act as needed. This means that leaders are quickly alerted to any worries.

The headteacher takes allegations about staff seriously. She uses her professional judgement about when to involve other agencies. However, records do not always show this thoughtful consideration, which is a missed opportunity for transparency. There have been no concerns raised about residence since the last inspection, and a concern in the wider school was addressed well.

Children do not go missing from residence and children who stay over feel they are supported. Staff do not tolerate bullying. Children mirror this view and staff support them to understand how to be kind to one another. As a result, residence feels inclusive, and children enjoy their time there.

Senior leaders ensure that staff complete training in all safeguarding areas, including radicalisation and female genital mutilation. While there are no current concerns in these areas, senior staff insist that staff maintain a broad safeguarding knowledge to maintain their vigilance to potential concerns.

The school monitors internet use proportionately. This means that children have ease of access, but the safeguarding lead is alerted to any concerns. However, concerns are rare, as children understand the school rules for internet use.

Leaders put in place behaviour plans and risk assessments to support staff to care for children. These, alongside staff's excellent understanding of children, mean that children experience consistent responses at difficult times. Staff are highly skilled at defusing any challenging behaviour very early, so these rarely escalate.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The senior leadership team is united in its commitment to providing good experiences for children, and for them to make progress in residence. Children's needs and well-being are central to the school's ethos and senior leaders model a child-centred approach. Residence is a well-integrated part of the school, and staff and children know this. The school leadership team is a significant contributory factor

to the positive culture of care and attention to children's individual needs that is evident throughout residence.

Staff complete regular reviews of targets with parents. This helps there to be a clear link between residence and home. One parent told inspectors that 'staff are all very approachable and supportive of my family as a whole'. Consultation with parents who do not live in the family home is less obvious and leaders are actively seeking to develop this further.

Staff access regular training and supervision so they can discuss children and reflect on their practice. Leaders also support staff by being present and accessible day to day. This means that staff have guidance and advice when they need it. Many staff have worked in the school for a long time, and they continually refresh their approach. Leaders talk passionately about how proud they are of the work staff do and staff commitment to children.

Leaders review their statement of principles regularly. As a result, the school is providing experiences to children in line with its stated aims.

Leaders provide reports to governors, so they have some overview of what is happening in the school. The chair of governors reports this is helpful but the current approach to governors' oversight is not as effective as it should be, and minutes are not provided accurately or in a timely way. Leaders have realised this and are seeking to address this concern. In addition, some aspects of leadership monitoring systems, such as in relation to fire drills, are underdeveloped. This hinders leaders' view of residence in a small number of areas.

Leaders have recognised the new national minimum standards that came into force in September 2022. There are some areas that are not yet meeting the required standards, such as the requirements of the independent visitor visits and children's files containing accurate information. These shortfalls do not reduce children's positive experiences when they stay at the school.

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

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:

- The school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities consistently and effectively so that the standards are met. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 2.4)
- Monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: conversations with children, the senior management team and staff; conversations with social workers where relevant; conversations with parents/carers where relevant; checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, bullying, restraint (including restrictive interventions), risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children including in relation to residential provision; evaluation of the quality of the provision and effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded; and assessment of the suitability and physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the residential provision and the external environment. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 3.2)
- Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the headteacher (or school equivalent) and where applicable the governing body, trust, or proprietor. Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body) within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary. The governing body, trustees, or proprietor of the school should record a formal response to each written report. Monitoring reports and formal responses should be retained by the school and made available during an inspection and, on request, shared with any placing authorities and with the local authority where the school is located. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 3.3)
- Good quality sleeping accommodation is provided for children. It is well organised and responsive to children's needs and is managed with ongoing assessments of risk (which should be documented) and the findings acted upon to reduce risk for all children. Accommodation gives children appropriate privacy, taking into account sex, age and any individual needs. Where children share a bedroom, they are able to express a preference about who they share with. To minimise disruption the school should aim to avoid mixing accommodation arrangements for children on longer placements and those on short breaks. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 9.1)

Points for improvement

- School leaders should ensure that accurate minutes from governors' meetings are received in a more timely way from the clerking provider to aid governors' oversight.
- School leaders should ensure that children's records are clear and accurate, without conflicting information.
- School leaders should ensure that monitoring systems across residential are developed and made clearer.

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: SC017171

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Kathryn Beale

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 0121 693 5363

Email address: enquiry@lindsworth.bham.sch.uk

Inspectors

Karol Keenan, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Alison Smale, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023