

St. John's School (Seaford)

Firle Road, Seaford, East Sussex BN25 2HU

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

St. John's School (Seaford) is a non-maintained specialist school that works with children with complex learning disabilities, including some children who may have difficulties resulting from autism spectrum disorder and pathological demand avoidance syndrome. The school provides education and care for up to 40 learners. Currently, 28 pupils and students attend the school. At the time of this inspection, there were two children who attend the residential provision for five days a week, and one child who attends two days a week. The residential provision can accommodate up to 16 children. This was a welfare-only inspection and did not look at the quality of the education provision.

Inspection dates: 13 to 16 June 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 previous inspection: 29 November 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The chief executive officer and trustees made the decision to close the children's home and linked school at the end of this summer term 2023. Staff have sensitively informed children and are committed to supporting the children right up until the day they leave. Staff are planning a farewell party and have started to prepare memory books and mementos of children's time spent living in the home.

Transitions for children moving on are well under way. This is being overseen by the new executive headteacher, admissions team, head of learning services and care managers. Although plans are not finalised for all the children, there is good evidence of working collaboratively with parents, allocated social workers and education professionals. For two children, transitions have already started to the linked further education college and staff are actively supporting and helping children with these plans.

Staff know children exceptionally well. These relationships are deeply valued and treasured by children. This is seen in their broad smiles, positive interactions and by initiation of touch and affection.

Staff provide children with different food options and menu choices. Staff encourage the children to independently prepare and cook meals daily, offering physical and verbal assistance where needed. Children value this support and feel comfortable asking staff for help where needed.

Staff support children to enjoy a range of leisure activities, in and away from the home. Staff tailor this around the children's interests and their requests. Beautifully prepared memory books capture trips to the seaside, watching sunsets and 'catching' fictional characters.

Staff support children to receive therapy in line with their relevant care plan documents. The in-house therapy team attends staff meetings regularly to discuss the children's sensory needs and assessed programmes and equipment. Staff understand and follow these plans for children meticulously.

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

Children are supported by skilled and experienced staff who understand children's risks and vulnerabilities. Managers review staff ratios to ensure that children receive good leisure opportunities away from the home. At times, this means the core staff are supported by agency staff. Managers suitably vet agency staff and select individuals to return on a regular basis. This means children are being supported by familiar adults.

Risk assessments identify children's individual needs and guide staff in how best to keep children safe. Strategies are suitable and clearly detail measures in reducing risks. These are kept under review by assigned key workers.

Key workers write and review children's behaviour support plans regularly. These plans are comprehensive and include relevant and necessary information in guiding staff in reducing worries and anxieties for the children. There have been no physical interventions used in the home since the last full inspection.

Safer recruitment practices are good. Managers work hard to ensure that they have the relevant information, checks and verifications prior to staff working with children. No new staff have been recruited since the last full inspection. The previous recommendation has been met.

Health and safety is well managed in the home. There is clear managerial oversight and staff understand how and where to report concerns.

Since the last full inspection, there has been a significant medication error in the home. Staff were quick to identify this and managers took swift action to prevent a recurrence. Learning outcomes have been embedded into staff practice following a thorough investigation. All staff are trained in administering medication and staff are knowledgeable in the medications children take and how this helps them.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last full inspection, the headteacher, head of care, deputy manager, chair of governors and the lead residential governor have left. Suitable management arrangements for the residential children are in place. There is excellent monitoring and oversight of children's care plans, progress and moving-on plans.

Staff receive appropriate training to keep children safe and meet their individual needs. Staff training is up to date and there is good leadership oversight. Managers endorse recommended training following serious case reviews. This means staff knowledge stays fresh and current with national advice and guidance. All staff receive in-depth safeguarding training, including annual keeping children safe in education.

Team meetings are fundamental and are used effectively in the home. Staff regularly discuss the children and their care plans. The long-standing staff team brings a wealth of knowledge and experience that underpins their child-centred practice. This helps provide good outcomes for children.

The independent person visiting the home provides a good level of scrutiny, rigour and professional challenge. Care managers value this and are quick to respond to recommendations in a timely manner.

There were no shortfalls found or recommendations made during this inspection.

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: SC050366

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Angela Tempany

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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