

Sheiling School

Horton Road, Ashley, Ringwood, Dorset BH24 2EB

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The residential special school is run according to principles based on the work of by Rudolf Steiner.

The residential provision provides care for up to 22 children with learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities. At the time of this inspection, six children were living in one house within the extensive grounds.

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

Inspection dates: 20 to 22 June 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 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children with complex learning and physical disabilities receive a holistic package of care that includes a vast range of complementary therapies. The children are looked after by staff, led by highly qualified practitioners who are widely experienced and respected in the field of disability. The seamlessness of the care contributes to the excellent social, emotional and physical progress that all the children make in this school.

The experience of staying at the school enhances children's life opportunities. This is true for all children, including those with the most complex needs.

Children's progress is monitored and managed using a systematic scoring system. It is research informed and transparent to the entire team responsible for each child. It enables all staff to chart the day of the child and captures the finer details of their progress, such as improved communication, developing independence skills, their management of personal care and the range of foods they eat.

The school and residential staff liaise with each other effectively and consistently. Daily meetings are held to share information. The residential staff are aspirational and use play, music, art, group activities and attendance at clubs to promote continuous learning. Exceptional progress is confirmed by discussion with parents, who told the inspectors that the skills children learn at school are applied in their home life, which improves children's lives. Children extend their life experiences and become more independent. For example, one child now performs in a community dance company. One parent described the school as being 'transformational' for their child.

Staff know the children extremely well. They care for each child with unconditional positive regard. Personal care is delivered by suitably trained and qualified staff, which ensures that children's dignity and privacy are paramount. Parents and professionals are overwhelmingly positive about the impact that staff have had on their child's progress, emotional well-being and physical growth. Consequently, children with significant disabilities, who may once not have been considered able to, engage and benefit from community activities, independence, academic achievement, and have a voice in their care, decision-making and life.

The planning and matching of moving children into the school are extremely effective. In all aspects of residential living, the care and support provided to children are individualised and inclusive. This supports children to manage change better when moving on to the next phase of their lives, such as when they move to one of the on-site college houses to continue their education when they turn 19 years old.

The residential provision is a place where children flourish. All the children have uniquely personalised bedrooms and bathrooms. The provision is set in extensive grounds, including woodland. Children can play, swim in their own swimming pool, ride their bicycles and have fun. Inspectors observed the children and staff enjoying play equipment and taking part in a midsummer festival.

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

Children's safety and well-being are at the very core of policy, and safeguarding is central to everything that is done.

All staff demonstrate a clear and robust understanding of safeguarding. This is continually updated and tested by regular high-quality training and other activities, such as child protection/safeguarding team quizzes. This ensures that even the most long-standing staff are kept fully up to date with current issues of risk and are aware of new or emerging trends that are most relevant for these highly vulnerable children.

Secure and comprehensive systems are in place to ensure effective health and safety management of the school site. These systems are further secured by thoughtful and well-aligned processes to support children to live in this location and develop a measure of independence.

All staff play a vital role in the production of children's risk assessments, which are robust but appropriately permissive in facilitating learning experiences. They are continuously reviewed and adjusted based on children's presenting behaviours. Team around the child style meetings are held to reflect critically. These meetings benefit from the involvement of the whole therapeutic team. This provides staff with the right strategies to care for children.

The good quality of relationships between staff and children minimises the need to use physical restraint. Despite low numbers of incidents that have necessitated the use of physical restraint, senior leaders and managers apply a high degree of management oversight and scrutiny following each incident. This helps them to assure themselves that the use of restraint was absolutely unavoidable and to see what learning there is that could help them to further drive down the use of this practice. Records capture this analysis in absolute detail.

Behaviour is managed exceptionally well. This is because staff are particularly skilled in noticing the subtle changes in behaviour which signal that a child might be getting anxious or distressed. Staff are particularly skilled in recognising and rewarding positive behaviours. Staff can intervene and offer early support where possible to avoid incidents.

The whole staff team supports children well to make choices and decisions about their lives. By providing a wide range of accessible communication tools, and

research-led informed therapeutic support, all children are provided with safer and more-personalised care.

Senior leaders and managers have recognised the challenges with recruitment in social care. They have used creative measures to ensure that there is a consistent and safely recruited workforce.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Since the previous inspection in September 2022, the quality of the leadership and management of the school has remained consistently high. The members of the senior leadership team have continued to develop and challenge their own already high standards. Alongside other providers, the school is part of a wider south-west group, focussed on looking at and learning from best practice to support continual improvement. For example, they continue to work on refining their care plan documentation to make it even more impactful and clear for staff working with a child. This includes a colourful crib card that can be carried in a pocket or used as a ready reckoner for a child's care. This ensures that all staff can immediately access key information when they are caring for a child.

Leaders and managers have high expectations of themselves and the provision. This is underpinned by an established open culture, where inclusion and an understanding of the vulnerabilities and diverse needs of children with disabilities is fully understood. Leaders and managers openness to challenge and learning from challenge means that children's views are heard, taken seriously and acted on. Children's voices are used well to influence services and improvements. They fully embrace the 'you said, we did' approach. For example, children requested play and gym apparatus, and this is now in the grounds for all the children to access.

Leaders and managers maintain exceptionally high standards of practice built around a culture of continuous improvement. This is achieved by consulting, monitoring and reviewing regularly alongside senior academic and health leaders in the school. These colleagues are chosen carefully to help to develop specific areas of their work. Extremely effective use is made of the governance and leadership meetings. These meetings and subsequent reports are used to learn from and to improve practice in the light of their findings. A fully inclusive approach to learning means that clinical supervision and training are made effective use of by all.

Leaders and managers make excellent use of feedback from several independent professionals. All professionals spoken with rate the leadership and management of the school highly.

Senior leaders make particularly good use of published research. Their experience and knowledge in the field of disability are key strengths and are seen in the quality and rigour that are applied to management and leadership activities. The senior leadership team and key staff (health lead) understand the value of sharing their learning beyond the school. More recently, the Department for Education has asked

that they share their learning and the positive impact of the school's approach to the recruitment of overseas workers.

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: 2671699

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Corine van Barneveld

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Inspectors

Linda Bond, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Joy Howick, Social Care Inspector

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