

# Orchard Manor School

Orchard Manor School, John Nash Drive, Dawlish, Devon EX7 9SF

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this residential special school**

Orchard Manor School provides education for up to 180 children aged three to 19 years and weekly residential care for up to 20 children. It specialises in providing education and care to children with communication and interaction difficulties, autism spectrum disorder and learning needs. The school is part of the Special Partnership Trust.

At the time of this inspection, five children were living at the school in two homes located within the school grounds.

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

### **Inspection dates: 28 to 30 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:** 15 November 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

Children who stay in the residential provision of the school make good progress from their starting points. They progress not only academically but also, for example, in developing confidence and social skills and becoming independent on public transport. This means that some of the children are able to travel independently when visiting their family.

Most of the children have lived at the school for more than four years and have a strong sense of belonging to the school. Children benefit from consistent care from an extremely stable and experienced staff team. This stability helps positive relationships develop between children and those who care for them, leading children to feel comfortable and safe. Parents and professionals were really positive about the impact the residential school has had on their child. They are confident that the staff understand their child and the child's particular care and health needs.

Children spoke positively about their experience at the school, and inspectors observed extremely warm and caring interactions between the children and the staff. In particular, the children like the range of interesting extracurricular activities. These include swimming, completing the Ten Tors challenge, building a model railway, playing on the bike track and going to the cinema. The children enjoy time on their own playing games and told the inspectors that they also, as a group, 'love' visiting a favourite restaurant.

Records, including care plans and risk assessments, are kept up to date and reviewed regularly. The inspectors found these records to be personalised, and they demonstrated progress and consultation with the child and the parent. Leaders and managers recognise that these records would be improved by aligning their review dates.

The residential houses are very well equipped, comfortable and homely. There is space for all the children to socialise and have quiet time.

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

Children who contributed to the inspection told the inspectors that they felt safe, and these views were echoed by parents and professionals.

When children move into the residential provision, staff have plans to help support and care for them safely. Matching children to live alongside one another is taken very seriously, and professionals carefully plan the needs of each child. Leaders and managers recognise the importance of making explicit the process of reviewing the matching when a child turns 18.

Risk management is effective and is supported well by comprehensive assessments that are regularly updated. These documents alert staff to the children's known risks and how to respond to keep children safe, both inside and outside of the residential accommodation. Considering the children's complex needs and disabilities, the staff are not risk averse.

Records capture the varied conversations that the children and staff have to discuss sensitive subjects. In particular, key-worker sessions are used extremely well to help the children understand how to navigate the risks of independence. Relationships between the children and staff are really positive, and they contribute to how well the staff support the children when they are upset or worried.

Children do not go missing, and staff do not use physical intervention or restraint within the residential provision.

The health and safety lead demonstrates effective oversight across the whole school site. They prioritise routine maintenance effectively. Personal emergency and evacuation plans are in place for those children requiring additional support in the event of an emergency.

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

Since the previous inspection in November 2022, the senior leadership team has continued to meet the national minimum standards successfully. Development plans from the overall strategic plan set out clearly what needs to be achieved to meet the aim of providing exceptional care. The head of care joined the school in January 2023. She joins a senior team that demonstrates strong leadership. The team is professionally curious and endorses an open culture of learning and challenge.

Senior leaders apply a high degree of reflective and critical management oversight across all records. They have a number of systems and processes in place to assure themselves of the progress, outcomes and overall safety of the children in the school and residential provision.

A key strength of the senior leadership team is the efforts it makes to ensure there is a stable and skilled workforce. Staff feel supported by the leadership team. Established members of staff who have worked at the school for many years continue to be motivated and willing to embrace change and new initiatives.

Senior leaders are visible and supportive in their approaches. Staff report that supervision and training are of a good standard. This helps all staff to remain up to date with current research and practice. Cohesive teamworking is further strengthened by good-quality daily handovers and team meetings.

## **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:** SC003895

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Nicola Jones

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Linda Bond, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Sarah Sheffield, Social Care Inspector

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