

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 227 pupils aged from three to 19 years who have education, health and care plans. The school offers weekly residential provision for up to 11 pupils with autism. At the time of the inspection, 10 pupils were using the residential provision.

Inspection dates: 31 October to 2 November 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: 15 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children say they have so much fun when they stay in the residential provision and told the inspector they love visiting. Children's day-to-day experiences are exceptional, helping them to develop their social skills and form positive relationships with their peers. The wealth of activities in the school and local community mean that children experience a wide range of different opportunities, have lots of fun and work towards completing accredited certificates. At the time of the inspection, a scout group for children with additional needs was being set up and children had organised and made decorations for a Halloween party.

Staff have built very strong and effective relationships with children. Children like the staff and enjoy spending time with them. Staff are excellent role models for the children. Staff speak about the children they care for with love, pride and respect. This nurturing, caring approach was observed throughout the inspection.

Staff are extremely skilled at communicating effectively with children. They use alternative communication tools well and, since the last inspection, have enhanced their work in this area by enabling the children to create the tools used themselves. Staff consult meaningfully with children. Children's views about their time here are important and used to help plan for their future. Children recently attended a jobs fair, to support their employability skills. A new approach has been developed to provide children with a realistic 'behind the scenes' view of the jobs they show an interest in.

Children are making very good progress towards meeting their individual targets. Staff celebrate children's achievements, and these are reflected in 'my achievements' books which provide children and their family with wonderful memorabilia of their experiences in the residential provision.

Children's written plans are comprehensive and provide clear guidance for staff about how to support children and meet their needs. Sensory plans, autism profiles and preparation for adulthood plans are especially strong. Children help to contribute to the development of their plans. A very good example of this is a child helping to produce a communication guide for staff saying how they would like to be supported.

Moves into and on from the residential provision are very well managed. The residential care manager is tenacious ensuring that moves are planned thoroughly and information about children's needs shared and understood. The time frame for each child moving in is set at a pace which is best for the child. For example, some children have several tea visits followed by overnight stays whereas others have a more immediate move. Leaders and managers assess children's needs carefully to make sure this is the right provision for them.

Staff work cooperatively with healthcare professionals and parents to ensure that children's health needs are well met. When a need is identified, staff ensure that children receive the therapeutic support they require. Support is also provided to parents and families if required.

Staff provide children with a good environment and encourage children to have input into this, which empowers them and provides them with a sense of ownership. The residential care manager has carried out research into the effective use of autism-friendly design and decor and has implemented his findings in the residential provision. However, the bathrooms are looking tired in parts and are in need of redecoration.

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

Children feel safe and are kept safe by staff. There is a strong and positive safeguarding culture. Staff work effectively with children to help them learn how to keep themselves safe. Designated safeguarding leads provide effective face-to-face training for staff and have created a training video for parents. They are also currently piloting a mobile phone app which aims to prevent harmful content being seen by a child. This system will enable leaders and managers to know about any information of a harmful nature that is being viewed, allowing them to take appropriate actions.

Staff demonstrate a very good understanding of how to keep children safe. They receive appropriate training and implement their learning from this training in practice. Consequently, safeguarding incidents are very well managed with swift actions taken to protect children. Designated safeguarding leads are very knowledgeable and have an excellent working relationship with the local authority designated officer. Records of safeguarding incidents are comprehensive and provide a clear audit trail of actions taken. These records also include incidents which do not meet the threshold for referral but provide valuable information about potential patterns and trends. Through this process, online safety has been identified as an area that is receiving additional focus.

Positive behaviour management continues to be a strength of the residential staff team. Staff are proactive and use the strength of the relationships they build and their knowledge of the children to support them constructively. Following a review of the use of reparation, staff have moved to a 'be fair and repair' approach as this is more meaningful to the children and is working well. It also helps children to have a better understanding of their emotions and behaviours and to recognise those of others and the impact these can have. Staff then support children to develop strategies to manage their behaviours. There have been no restraints in residential provision for nearly nine years and none of the residential children have been restrained in school.

Staff are not risk averse and risk is well managed. Risk assessments are comprehensive and provide clear guidance for staff on how to mitigate and reduce risk. Staff work with children to develop their understanding of risk.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers have excellent oversight of the residential provision. Leaders and managers are very well trained and experienced for their roles and are excellent role models for the staff team. They, along with the staff team, are very ambitious for the children in their care. All are innovative and use research effectively to develop the service. This has led to members of the team undertaking their own reviews of research and putting forward ideas for improvement based on what they have learned. Leaders and managers welcome this as they recognise how beneficial this learning is to developing the service for children.

Staff recognise leaders and managers as excellent and inspiring leaders. They say they are very approachable and open to ideas and suggestions. They say that leaders and managers really value them and confirm they are well supported and trained for their role. Staff praise one another for the support they provide. Consequently, it is a happy team.

Staff receive good-quality supervision and appraisals in which they are supported to reflect on their practice. This helps the individual member of staff and the team to develop. Staff training is of excellent quality. Training provided is kept under review to assess its effectiveness and how it meets the needs of the children and the staff team.

There has been a change in the chair of governors and the safeguarding governor since the previous inspection. Governors understand the residential provision well and carry out monitoring visits to speak to the staff and the children about their experiences. The reports of their visits aid in the development of the provision.

Feedback from parents is extremely positive. They say that their children love coming to the residential provision and enjoy the activities. Parents say that communication from staff is great and keeps them fully involved in their child's lives. Parents also praise staff and the parent support advisers for all the work they do to support families.

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

Point for improvement

- Decor in the residential bathrooms and toilets is tired and needs to be refreshed.

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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