

# 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 school with a residential provision catering for boys with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. It currently offers education for pupils aged nine to 16 years old. Currently, there are 138 pupils at the school, up to 12 of whom are residential pupils. There are 12 bedrooms in the residential house, and boarding is offered for 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 inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

### Inspection dates: 23 to 25 January 2024

**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:** 14 February 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

Children enjoy their stays in the residential provision. They said that they particularly enjoy the activities, having a break from younger siblings and meeting up with their friends. Two children said that their favourite part of residence is the staff. They said that they know they can talk to any of the staff if they feel unhappy.

Children choose to stay in the residential provision. They talk to staff and their parents about how many nights a week they can stay over. Children generally start by staying for one night a week and then, when they say they are ready, they increase the number of nights that they stay. If they want to reduce the number of nights, managers listen and support their choices.

Children make lasting friendships in the residential provision. Friendships help children to build on the network of people they can rely on and talk to. Often these children live some distance apart and so have only built these friendships because of the time they spend in the residential provision.

Children are encouraged to call home every evening. Parents appreciate this contact with their child over the week. Furthermore, staff contact parents and carers at least weekly to talk about the experiences their child has had during the week.

Children are provided with a good choice of healthy nutritious meals. They are also supported to cook for themselves as part of learning life skills. Staff also support children to have nutritious meals when they are at home. They collect surplus food from local supermarkets and give the food to the children to take home with them.

Children participate in a wide range of activities from football in the school's gym to movie night in the residential provision. They also enjoy trips out to swimming, rock climbing, ski slopes, trampolining, to the shops and local parks. At the beginning of this academic year, some of the residential children also went to France with the school. This was very well planned and executed. Children had experiences that they have not previously had, such as going abroad and jumping in the sea. Activities are appropriately supervised and allow children to have fun in a safe environment. Children develop their self-esteem, confidence and resilience because of the activities they participate in. A parent said about his child: 'His confidence has grown because of what they are doing.'

The residential provision is a vibrant, diverse community. Children have positive role models from their own ethnic background. This means children can relate to the adults in the residential provision, and the adults have a good understanding of each child's culture and heritage.

The environment is homely in areas such as the large lounge/dining room. Children's rooms are all single occupancy and have ensuite facilities. The children have chosen

the bedding they have. They particularly enjoy the games room, which is well resourced with a range of table games, such as pool and table tennis, as well as games consoles. Some communal areas need decorating, as the paint is chipping. Also, the 'quiet room' is an empty room that is uninviting. 'Children said that this is somewhere they go if they need to calm down.' However, the empty room does not support this idea.

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

Children say that they feel safe. They say that bullying is not an issue because staff 'sort it out' straight away. Staff know how to keep children safe.

Safeguarding children is central to what staff do at this school. Low-level concerns are recorded alongside any major concerns. The designated safeguarding lead is the head of care and part of the senior leadership team. This ensures that the safety of children remains high profile in the school. Staff work with other agencies to ensure that children are safe. Any allegations against staff are managed well by the headteacher, who works closely with external safeguarding agencies to keep children safe. Vetting procedures help to protect children from unsuitable adults.

Children are polite, well-mannered and helpful. Staff talk to children about how they are feeling and what sort of day they have had. Children mirror the adult supportive role models they encounter by caring for each other and the staff.

Staff build warm and nurturing relationships with children. They understand how important it is for children to trust them. Consequently, incidents are rare because staff know the children well and know how to support each child to help them reduce their anxiety or frustration. This means that behaviour in the residential provision is generally good. Since the last inspection, staff have not used physical intervention.

Children have been given appropriate consequences for their behaviour, but none have been given since October last year. Staff prefer to ask children to sit quietly or to talk to them about their concerns. Children's behaviour has significantly improved as a result.

The medication policy/procedure is not specific to the residential provision and is not detailed about the administration procedure that staff should follow. Additionally, staff do not follow the current procedure because they do not refer to the child's consent form when administering medication. This is because staff know the children well. However, this practice has the potential for making an error.

The toilets on the ground floor are for adults and children. These are old, uninviting and behind a door at the end of a corridor. Toilet doors have bolts on and there are urinals in the male toilets. Staff are aware of the risks around this area and have plans to reduce the risks. For example, by only allowing one child to access the toilets at any one time. Adults do not access the toilets while children are using the area. However, this has not been formalised into a risk assessment to reduce

potential risks. However, children do have access to their own ensuite toilets in their bedrooms.

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

The head of care is qualified and experienced. She has good systems to monitor the residential service. She has a good understanding of the strengths and has plans to address shortfalls and move the service forward. Children's views and wishes are important to her. She was able to give several examples of when children's requests have been actioned. Importantly, children choose to come into residence and have a say about how many nights they can stay for.

There is an established team of staff, who are appropriately qualified and experienced. They are committed to ensuring that children are safe.

Children's views are clearly important to staff. For example, children requested new board games and asked if their rooms could be decorated. These requests have both been actioned. Additionally, when children in the student council expressed concerns about social media, staff provided strategies that could help resolve their concerns.

The chair of governors has good knowledge of the school and the residential provision. She is aware of the shortfalls, for example not currently having a residential governor. However, there are plans in place to address this. In the meantime, governors are supporting the residential provision by visiting from time to time.

The independent visitor has now visited the residential provision twice. He talks to children, staff and the head of care. He looks at the relevant records and reviews the environment. He provides leaders and managers with a comprehensive report that supports improvement.

Parents hold the residential provision in high regard. They talk about the significant progress that their child has made since being in residence. For example, one child is unable to sleep at home but sleeps well in residence. This enables the child to be ready for learning the next morning.

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

### **Points for improvement:**

- School leaders should consider brightening up the quiet room to make this area more inviting. (National minimum standard 9.4)
- School leaders should ensure that the décor of the residential provision is consistently maintained to provide a homely environment. (National minimum standard 9.4)
- School leaders should formalise the plan to keep children safe while they are accessing the communal toilets downstairs. (National minimum standard 13.1)
- School leaders should update the medication policy to include a more detailed guide for staff when administering medication and to make it relevant to the residential provision. They should also ensure that staff follow the policy when administering medication. (National minimum standard 12.6)

### **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

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## **Inspector**

Joanne Vyas, Social Care Inspector

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