

St Anne's School and Sixth Form College

St Helen's Drive, Welton, Brough HU15 1NR

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This is a local authority maintained residential special school. The school has 143 pupils on roll, aged from 2 to 19 years, who have a range of severe and complex needs. The school has an attached residential facility, 'The Residence', which has separate access from the school. Currently, 47 pupils use The Residence, with up to 14 pupils staying each night. Pupils stay at The Residence for short breaks of one or two nights each week, on a regular basis. There is flexibility for extra nights and longer stays, both on a planned and an emergency basis. Pupils also stay at weekends and during some of the school holidays. The school is in the village of Welton near the town of Brough. The residential provision was last inspected in November 2016.

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 November 2017

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: 14 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- The leadership team and governors are ambitious and inspirational in maintaining an excellent quality of service.
- The leaders and governors are systematic and proactive in their self-assessment, and are committed to continuous improvement.
- The staff team members are united and fully behind their managers in providing pupils with exceptional care.
- The residence is seamlessly integrated with the school. Pupils benefit immensely from the impact it has on their learning and development.
- Pupils' individual health and welfare needs are extremely well supported.
- The pupils flourish in a caring and nurturing environment.
- Staff know the pupils really well and disability is not a barrier to pupils' enjoyment and achievements.
- Parents are thrilled with the service and the impact it has on their children, as well as the help and support they receive as parents.
- Safeguarding practice is comprehensive. The focus on pupils' well-being makes an essential contribution to how much pupils feel safe and secure.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Develop the SchoolPod system and the collection of data on pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Use this improvement both to provide governors with a more strategic overview of behaviour management and to fully describe and highlight the progress that individual pupils make (NMS 13).

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Pupils benefit immensely from the nurturing and caring environment, and the way in which staff promote their psychological and emotional needs. Pupils are safe and they take part in a wide range of activities. Their unmistakably positive experiences enhance their all-round learning.

The head of care carefully plans new admissions. There are thorough transition plans for new pupils using the residence. Parents learn about the residence from open days and the parent support network. The staff are patient when describing to parents and pupils what the residence provides.

The residence has a positive impact on pupils' well-being, behaviour and communication. This contributes to their sustained outcomes, which is a major strength of the school. Pupils trust the staff, and enjoy strong positive relationships with them, based on secure emotional attachments. This supports their ability to experience new opportunities and succeed in their development. Staff also give emotional and practical support to parents. Parents commented: 'There is always time for me to be listened to and communication is very good'; and, 'This has always been an excellent provision; cannot praise it enough.'

The care of pupils is exceptionally individualised. Staff make excellent use of the school's resources and pupils benefit from the fact that they are cared for in small groups and on a one-to-one basis when needed. Staff are accomplished at meeting pupils' diverse needs, such as those associated with their sensory impairments, physical and learning disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders. A social worker commented, 'The school are fantastic at promoting good outcomes.'

The planning of activities takes into account pupils' needs and interests, and provides new opportunities for pupils to broaden their interests. There lots of fun things to do, such as Rock Tots, art, games and jigsaws. Pupils complete a summer lifestyle activity, help with fund raising and take part in community projects. They enjoy the summer camp and take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Staff take the time to persuade pupils to join in and enjoy themselves. These experiences add to their learning and pupils benefit from opportunities that they would not have at home. Consequently, pupils become more confident, and make excellent progress in the development of their social skills and independence. As one parent commented, 'The school has done more than I thought possible.'

Staff purposefully promote the physical and emotional health of pupils. Staff are trained to support pupils' complex health needs and are very good at contacting parents with any concerns. The management of medication is consistently accurate and robust. Staff work effectively with parents to ensure pupils' medication needs are

met.

Pupils have a really strong voice regarding their care and the management of the residence. Care practice takes extensive account of both verbal and non-verbal communication. Staff are adept at recognising when pupils' moods change, and fully respond to their emotional needs. There are high levels of non-instructed advocacy. Pupils have frequent, regular access to external, independent advocacy which promotes their views further. The thorough way that staff take account of all pupils' needs helps the pupils to feel happy, relaxed and at ease with their care staff.

Pupils' attendance at school is good and they make substantial progress, taking into account their complex needs. The quality of practice is such that there is sustained improvement in pupils' education, and in the emotional, social and psychological well-being of pupils. Pupils' experiences of the residence and the school are outstanding. This includes their work experience and their participation in mainstream settings, as well as the array of vocational opportunities available to them and the qualifications that they can work towards in the sixth form. This significantly broadens their horizons and develops their skills as they move into adulthood.

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

Leaders and staff give pupils' safety top priority. Staff are adept at and sensitive in supporting pupils with complex needs and challenging behaviour. Consequently, pupils experience dedicated nurturing and care from the staff, which helps them feel safe, comfortable and secure. Staff use the space and resources of the residence creatively, including the sensory room, which has a strong calming effect that benefits pupils. Parents feel reassured that their children are in safe hands, and give feedback such as: 'My daughter is always well supervised and kept in a happy, safe environment'; and, 'They take good care of him.' Social workers also spoke highly of the way that staff keep pupils safe.

Bespoke individual care plans and a strong focus on mental health promote the pupils' well-being and resilience. Pupils learn to adapt to sharing the residence with their peers; they make friends, develop their social skills and take on new challenges.

There is a plenty of safeguarding information on the school's website to assist parents. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe by participating in educational activities in school and through receiving additional targeted support. For example, they learn about appropriate relationships.

Staff routinely promote pupils' respect for each other and their understanding of sharing. This ensures that pupils benefit from an environment that is free from abuse, discrimination and bullying. In turn, pupils are willing to help complete chores and support each other.

An independent visitor and a representative of the local authority's children's rights team both visit the residence. They provide additional advocacy for pupils, which is another way of promoting their safety and well-being.

School leaders work closely with the placing and local authorities. They put their knowledge of pupils and their home life to good use. This results in the delivery of additional help and support to families, and protects pupils from harm. Likewise, any concerns about staff practice are thoroughly addressed. School leaders are committed to learning from any incidents and they take action to improve any weaknesses in practice. The governors are proactive in raising awareness of this vulnerable group of pupils, and persuaded a representative from the Department for Education to visit the school and consider amending national safeguarding guidance. The governors are experienced leaders, and recognise that more needs to be done. One of the governors is part of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, and maintains good oversight of the school's safeguarding practice.

A substantial amount of safeguarding training takes place and staff are regularly assessed on their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, practice is solid and thorough and there is an accomplished approach to managing any risks. The head of care plans and organises short breaks effectively to reduce the possibility of there being any negative impact between pupils as a result of them staying at the residence together. Equally, the high levels of support and supervision provided for pupils keep them free from harm. Staff know the pupils' individual vulnerabilities and act accordingly to keep them safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

School leaders have sustained the outstanding quality of the provision across the school and the residence. They are ambitious and inspirational in their achievement and their efforts to do the best for the pupils. Care staff welcome and share this approach. There is a strong, cohesive team that has the best interests of pupils at heart.

The leadership team and governors have responded proactively to the last recommendation made at the previous inspection. This has had a very positive impact. Pupils who use the residence are now able to continue to do so post-18, while they finish their sixth-form education. Pupils and parents are very pleased with this improvement. The leadership team members are united in promoting the residential provision as an integral part of the school community.

School leaders are constantly reflecting and finding ways to make improvements. There is a new parent support line that gives parents additional help and guidance. The school is part of a domestic violence initiative, though it is too early to judge the impact of this. The care and support of pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders is improving and the school has been accredited by the National Autistic Society.

There is a strong and growing focus on promoting mental health, with support from a national charity that works alongside pupils and staff.

Excellent management arrangements for staff training, support and supervision ensure that all staff have a very good understanding of pupils' needs. Staff are skilled and experienced and there is a very low staff turnover rate. The staff are highly motivated, and consistently provide pupils with exceptionally positive experiences in the residence. Pupils accomplish and sustain high levels of personal, social and emotional development. They become far more independent as a result.

Staff undertake a wide range of training courses based on the complex and diverse needs of vulnerable pupils. This is strengthened by a thorough induction, regular team meetings and detailed communication regarding pupils' needs. Staff handovers between shifts are thorough, and are focused on pupils' needs. High staffing levels and versatile shift-leading provide opportunities for pupils to receive one-to-one support. Short breaks are organised effectively so that pupils feel safe and secure, and enjoy themselves. Consequently, pupils benefit significantly from the adaptable and resourceful individualised support that they receive.

There is very good communication between staff, parents and placing authorities. New personalised diaries give parents more information about their children's short breaks in the residence. These also provide an effective way of sharing details about changes in behaviour, medication needs and pupil's achievements. Social workers are well informed and the school makes strong contributions to child in need, child protection and care planning arrangements. Excellent partnership working extends to the way that staff work closely with health professionals. A partner agency commented: 'Staff are very responsive to changing needs of pupils, the pupils love staying at the residence, it is very nurturing and pupils are very settled and very happy.' The strong multi-agency working ensures that pupils get the best all-round support, including specialist help with their communication, mental health and learning disabilities.

Governance and monitoring are thorough and comprehensive. There is improved oversight and accountability with regard to independent half-termly monitoring reports. The governors supplement these arrangements with regular visits to the residence. They rigorously assess the quality of care for pupils, and ensure that high standards are maintained. Particular attention is given to the well-being of pupils. The manager completes an annual self-assessment of the national minimum standards, which promotes the process of continuous improvement. School leaders are committed to developing these systems further. The intention is that this will give governors a better strategic overview of behaviour management, and that the data on pupils' development will be more sensitive to their individual needs

The robust levels of monitoring, review and evaluation all evidence a high-quality provision. This is reflected in the views of parents, which are encapsulated in this comment, 'We could not wish for a better school for our son. All the staff are

professional, caring and dedicated to the safety and well-being of the pupils. They make school a fun and safe place to be. The progress and confidence he has gained since attending is down to the hard work and dedication of each member of staff. Any issues we've had (which have been few and far between) have been dealt with swiftly. We would not hesitate to recommend St Anne's to others.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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: SC056736

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Lesley Davies

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01482 667 379

Email address: stannescommunity.specialschool@eastriding.gov.uk

Inspector

Simon Morley, social care inspector (lead)



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