

Treloar School

London Road, Holybourne, Alton, Hampshire GU34 4GL

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Treloar School is a non-maintained residential special school, approved by the Department for Education for the care and education of young people aged seven years to 19 years who have physical disabilities. The students are accommodated in a purpose-built house or attend on a daily basis. The school site is accessible to all students. There is a medical centre staffed for 24 hours a day and medical professionals also visit the school. Additional support is provided by professionals, including those from educational psychology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy. There are also rehabilitation engineers, caterers and a transport department on site.

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 March 2018

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: 22 March 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- The children and families receive an exceptional, inspirational service from a dedicated, multi-disciplinary staff group which is supported by a motivated and aspirational management team.
- The children make excellent social, emotional and educational progress as a result of the support they receive.
- The children benefit from comprehensive, timely and accessible healthcare.
- A culture of learning from mistakes thrives within the school.
- Innovative approaches to meeting the children's needs result in sustained improvement in their lives.
- The children have access to a wide range of creative and inclusive leisure opportunities.
- The children, their families and professionals are positive about the quality of safeguarding practice in the school.
- The staff have a solid understanding of how to raise concerns. When concerns are raised, they are promptly responded to by a dedicated safeguarding lead.
- Highly effective and proactive planning takes place to ensure that risks and complexities arising from children's needs are understood.
- Strong and effective systems are in place to ensure that managers abide by safe recruitment practice.
- The school works hard to maintain positive and participative links with families. Families provide outstanding feedback on the quality of the school.
- A strong culture of monitoring and improvement is embedded within the school

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Not all governors' visits have had a sufficient focus on the residential provision.

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that monitoring visits are sufficient in number and timely, and include consideration of the response to previous action points.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children make excellent progress as a result of the support they receive at this exceptional school. The staff have a comprehensive knowledge of the children, developed through multi-agency working. Multi-agency working in this school is more than a meeting, it is an embedded culture. Throughout the inspection, inspectors saw practice that routinely exceeded the standards of good and was worthy of further dissemination.

The children communicate the difference that staying at the school makes for them. One child spoke of the effect that the provision of physiotherapy on site has had. The availability of this at a time that suits her means that she is no longer having to get up at 5.00am to travel long distances. As a result, she is no longer exhausted early in the school day and is able to participate fully in lessons and to benefit from a full education.

Comprehensive healthcare provision is available at the school. Children whose health needs are complex and require multiple medical appointments are able to access the support they need quickly and without fuss. This makes an enormous difference to the children's physical and mental well-being as well as minimising the amount of time children miss from school. A parent said: 'This is an incredible school. The care my son receives is exceptional and has proved life-changing. The staff have addressed a major physical issue he had before starting with them, which has significantly decreased the daily pain he used to live with, hence enabling him to sleep through the night and concentrate on his learning.'

A culture of learning from mistakes thrives within the school. The staff see reporting errors and mistakes as of fundamental importance. They do not fear disproportionate consequences or unnecessarily punitive responses. As a result, managers are able to analyse data about errors, look beyond individual blame and identify changes that need to be made to systems. Consequently, staff feel supported and children are safer.

Every activity and interaction is designed to promote and develop the children's independence. As one child astutely observed: 'It all comes back to independence.' This approach enhances children's life opportunities and, consequently, the children make sustained improvements in their independence.

The staff work with children and their families to identify individualised goals linked to education, health and care plans. The staff support the children to develop friendships and to socialise. The children frequently identified the opportunity to spend time with friends as being their favourite part of staying in residence. Parents also see the difference the school makes for the whole child. One said: 'I am really happy with everything, it's an amazing school, and she's made fantastic progress

with her sense of humour and communication. She amazes me every day with her progress and love of the school.'

The children receive comprehensive support from a multi-disciplinary team. The children benefit from strong, positive relationships with the staff who support them. In response to a question about the most important thing that inspectors needed to know about staying at the school, a child said: 'The staff are wonderful.'

The staff understand the children's needs and the plans that are in place to meet them. The team includes care staff, health professionals, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and education professionals. The staff report excellent working relationships between the professionals. Care staff talk about their views being welcomed. They are involved in the planning of interventions with specialists. They say that they are encouraged to raise questions and concerns about interventions during the planning stage and after implementation. This openness to challenge and debate enables feedback to be received and acted upon. As a result the interventions are adapted and quality improves.

The staff understand the importance of children who have complex eating issues having the opportunity to taste and try different foods. The dietician, speech and language therapists and occupational health therapists work closely with the specialist diet chef to produce specialised food. They present pureed food with exceptional care and planning. Through innovative and ever-evolving practice, children who need their food pureed receive a choice of meals that have been carefully moulded to look almost identical to their original form. One child has sent a card thanking the chef for making his food look like the food his friends eat. He says that he no longer feels like a baby when he sits down to eat. This increases his self-esteem and increases his motivation to eat.

The children say that they are listened to and are able to influence the way in which the school is run. Their views are routinely sought. The children are active participants in interviews, including interviews for senior staff members. Their views are given significant weight when decisions about appointments are made. The staff fully understand how children who do not communicate verbally express their thoughts. They use this knowledge to support and encourage the children to participate in decision-making and engage in social communication.

The children have access to a wide range of creative and inclusive leisure opportunities. They get to experience things that they never thought they would. The children communicate with excitement and enthusiasm about activities such as skiing and sailing. Routine evening activities within the school are equally engaging and anticipated. Enthusiastic staff, who understand what excites and motivates the children, lead activities each evening that are thoroughly enjoyed.

The children and their families benefit from a clear, comprehensive, multi-agency approach to transition in and out of the school. A methodical risk-rating system is in place to identify those children whose transition from the school is likely to be the

most complex. This enables early intervention, planning and support to facilitate effective moves.

The staff embrace reasoned risk-taking to provide children with opportunities to prepare for life after the school. The children are encouraged and supported to take personal responsibility for elements of their care, for example in administering their own medication.

The staff support children to maintain contact with their families while staying at the school. The staff recognise how important this contact is for children and their families.

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

Families, children and staff report that children are safe in the school. The children say that they can communicate with staff if they are worried or upset. They say that staff would help them. The staff support the children to know who the safeguarding leads are in the school. One child described who the designated safeguarding lead is and referred to him as 'the main person who keeps you safe'.

The staff understand the increased vulnerability of disabled children. The training they receive contributes to this knowledge. Leaders and managers are able to articulate clearly the factors that contribute to this increased risk of abuse.

The staff have a solid understanding of how to raise concerns. The culture of openness and the encouragement that staff are given to challenge, irrespective of hierarchy, increase the potential for concerns to be shared. When concerns are identified, the designated safeguarding lead promptly shares these with the appropriate authorities and seeks advice appropriately. When advice is given it is followed.

Professionals speak positively about the quality of safeguarding practice in the school. Dialogue with safeguarding professionals is not merely reactive. A social worker said, '[Child] is safe there. I had a call from the safeguarding lead just to have a catch up to see if anything has changed. You don't get that often.'

The staff work with children to help them develop their understanding of how to stay safe. A social worker said: '[The child] has been taught to think about their personal dignity. For example if [the child] is having personal care with staff and someone knocks on the door [the child] now tells them to wait.' Another professional said, 'She is totally reliant on staff to do personal care. She feels in charge about how [staff do] this for her. She feels empowered about this, which decreases her vulnerability. She's not "done to" she's supported. This also helps with her self-esteem, self-worth and confidence.'

The staff and managers regularly monitor and evaluate risk assessments. A new

computer system makes risk assessments more robust and accessible to staff. The staff are not risk-averse. They want the children to have exciting and positive experiences while staying in the residential provision.

Highly effective and proactive planning takes place to ensure that risks and complexities arising from children's needs are understood at the point of admission. This contributes to good staff knowledge of the children and increases the likelihood of successful transition. As a result, no placements have broken down.

Although children do not go missing from this service, the staff are aware of the policy and procedures. They know the process that they need to follow should this happen.

The multi-disciplinary team devises comprehensive behaviour management plans, which support the staff in working with the children. These plans are reviewed and updated regularly.

The staff rarely use restraint. When this approach is used this is to protect and safeguard the child. Afterwards, the staff complete a comprehensive incident report. The child is debriefed using their own specific method of communication. The staff and managers reflect upon these incidents and actively look to learn from them.

The staff support the children to be able to recognise signs of bullying. They support the children to report concerns. The staff challenge inappropriate behaviours. They discuss with children how to complain and raise safeguarding concerns. A child commented: 'It's good here because we don't get bullied because we are all the same.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Knowledgeable, passionate and enthusiastic managers lead the service. Impressive child-focused team leaders support them. They have high aspirations for the children and for the staff. The strong culture of embedding excellence is led from the front and is recognised by the staff. Leaders and managers have a solid understanding of the progress and experience of children within the school. Managers know the individual children well.

Leaders and managers have ensured that the high-quality care seen during previous inspections has been sustained. They have done this through ensuring a complete lack of complacency.

The staff work as a team. The multi-agency ethos thrives within the school. The staff are highly motivated. They understand what is expected of them and they have pride in their work and in the wider school. They are fully invested in the ethos of the school.

The staff say that they are well managed. They feel valued and they believe that

managers have the best interests of the children at heart. They see management actions through a prism of child-focused improvement. The staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisal. They have access to a variety of training courses.

Staffing levels are suitable and sufficient to meet children's needs. The children receive support from staff who themselves feel thoroughly supported. Leaders and managers are acutely aware of the potential emotional effect of the work staff undertake. The emotional and mental well-being of staff is taken seriously. Staff across the site are trained as mental health champions. Staff are able to access counselling schemes to assist them when they are struggling. Some of the children who use the service have life-limiting conditions. Therefore, sadly, the staff and children sometimes experience loss. The staff, leaders and managers work to support children to process these experiences. Powerful, personal and poignant memorials are located in discrete areas of the site. These allow children to be remembered in sensitive ways.

Strong and effective systems are in place to ensure that managers abide by safe recruitment practice. Comprehensive checks take place prior to staff commencing employment. Any gaps in employment history are followed up and references are verified. Any discrepancies between information in applications and information in references are explored. Any adult living on site who is not employed by the school is subject to appropriate checks and these individuals sign an agreement about expected behaviour. This lessens the potential for inappropriate people to gain employment in the school.

Managers ensure that the physical environment is maintained to a satisfactory level. There is plenty of space for children to be able to manoeuvre their wheelchairs. There are large communal areas. In addition the children have space if they want to spend time on their own. The house is decorated to a good standard. Displays of children's artwork is in abundance around the house. Children's bedrooms are personalised. Children say that they are able to personalise their rooms and that staff help them.

Placement plans are clear, informative and individualised. They support the staff in understanding the individual needs of each child and the plans are updated regularly.

The school works hard to maintain positive and participative links with families. Staff seek regular feedback and communicate frequently. Managers learn from the feedback to improve further. For example, communication about activities that children participate in has been strengthened in response to parental feedback. Parents who provided feedback as part of the inspection gave outstanding commentary on the quality of the service. One parent said: 'Communication between care staff and parents is excellent; my son is thoroughly enjoying his residential experience.' Another said: 'My son is exceptionally well looked after in Gloucester House. I cannot say one negative thing about the staff and the care he receives. He is always meticulously clean and any issue, however small, is addressed immediately.'

The staff have a positive attitude towards their work and the children. One special place.' A third parent said that, 'Staff have a good understanding of his needs and adapt things to support him. They listen to me as a mum, which is really important.'

There are examples of innovative practice that are worthy of wider dissemination. This includes the work to support children through new and creative technologies. Innovative technological solutions to the barriers children experience with communication and mobility are investigated by an inspired and passionate 'tech' team.

A strong culture of monitoring and improvement is embedded within the school. Staff report that their practice is overseen and reviewed. Regular practice audits take place. A dedicated quality assurance manager compiles detailed reports each month that consider a wide range of performance data. These reports are routinely considered in governors' subcommittee meetings. Detailed reports are submitted after governors undertake monitoring visits. However, not enough of these have had a sufficient focus on the residential provision. While the overall quality of monitoring is very high, governors' monitoring visits is an area that would benefit from improvement.

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: SC012024

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Head of Residential Services: Helen Goodenough

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Inspectors

Ashley Hinson, social care inspector (lead)
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