

The Grange Therapeutic School

15–17 Somerby Road, Knossington, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 8LY

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The school is an independent residential special school for 69 children aged eight to 18 years, 12 of whom can reside at the school during the week. The residential accommodation is provided in two houses, one of which is located on the school site. The second house is located in the village of Knossington, a short walk from the main school building. The school is situated in a rural location close to the town of Oakham in Leicestershire. The school caters for students who have social, emotional and mental health needs, autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit disorders and mild learning difficulties. The residential provision was last inspected in January 2019.

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 November 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
How well children and young people are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good

The residential special school is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of previous inspection: 29 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

The residential provision has been through a very difficult period since the last inspection. Key staff have left one of the residential houses. Serious incidents have occurred and there has been a serious allegation against a member of staff. However, robust action has been taken, in a multi-agency forum, to ensure that children are safe. Staff have made sure that children leaving the school have had positive endings to their education.

There are two residential houses. One is very settled, with a strong leadership team and an established staff team. Children settle quickly and make significant progress in all aspects of their lives.

Children also make good progress in the other house. However, the permanent staff team has been halved and there has been weakened leadership in this house. The staffing levels remain appropriate for this house because teaching staff (often senior leaders, including the headteacher) fill the gaps. This works well for the children but means that the reduced permanent staff carry out all the routine tasks. This includes writing children's records, carrying out personal support work with children and administering medication.

Children are not consistently encouraged to eat healthy meals and snacks. Staff do not discuss healthy alternative meals with children when children do not like what has been planned.

Medication is safely stored but some improvements need to be made to the way medication is given to children to ensure that it is safe and hygienic. Protocols for 'as required' medication are detailed but need to be agreed by a medical professional to enable staff to make sound decisions. Leaders have already addressed some of these concerns.

Staff could provide more opportunities for children to read, to help them to become accomplished readers.

Some children were moved out of the residential provision due to safeguarding concerns. However, children were creatively supported to ensure that they ended their experience at school positively and left achieving qualifications. This was highly commendable and demonstrated a real commitment from the headteacher to the current and future outcomes for children.

There are excellent relationships between children and staff. Children are able to communicate their views, wishes and feelings, which has been significant progress for some children.

Children make very good progress in a number of aspects of their lives. This also has a positive effect on their family life. Parents report improved behaviours within the family home, alongside improved relationships with family members. A child said that he thinks the home is the best and that he felt completely safe.

There is unanimously positive feedback from parents and social workers about the service. Parents feel that children make significant progress and that communication between them and the staff is excellent.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Two disclosures have been made by children about other children harming them or threatening to harm them. One of these disclosures has been responded to, but the records are poor. Only one disclosure was reported as a safeguarding concern but neither has been treated as a child protection issue. It is difficult to ascertain what action has been taken to support the children involved, and to ensure that they are safe in the residential house.

Thorough and detailed risk assessments are produced regarding children. However, these are not always adhered to and sometimes they reflect historical information that may no longer be relevant. Furthermore, the risk assessments have not been updated after disclosures or incidents.

Very detailed control measures to keep children safe have not been adhered to. These control measures detailed staffing ratios and levels of supervision, direct work required and the use of door alarms. During the inspection, immediate action was taken by leaders to rectify these shortfalls and ensure that children are safe.

There are no processes in place to check children's bedrooms for potential unsafe items. This is particularly of concern at a time when staff know that children may be vulnerable to bullying, self-injurious behaviours or may harm another child.

Recording is poor. The recording of safeguarding concerns is not easily accessible on the electronic system and there is not a clear chronology of events. Not all safeguarding concerns have been recorded on the system, for example the two disclosures from children. The lack of recording does not enable leaders and managers to monitor patterns and trends effectively. There is no clear chronology of the actions taken to keep children safe. The recording of daily events in one house is vague. Incidents are not properly recorded, and institutionalised language is used.

There is a lack of understanding about the impact of sexually harmful behaviours on children. Staff appear to normalise the use of sexualised language and behaviour in the residential setting. Staff have not had the training to enable them to manage and respond to sexually harmful behaviours from children.

Giving house keys to children is clearly an established practice and demonstrates

trust between staff and children. However, children having access to restricted areas could be a security issue.

There has been one allegation made against staff since the last inspection. The response from leaders and managers was robust and a full, child-centred investigation has been carried out.

There is evidence of good safeguarding practice in one of the houses. Staff are clear about policies and procedures and understand their duty of care. Children report that they feel safe and have a wide range of opportunities to share their views and experiences. Children in this house are clear about behavioural expectations, rules and boundaries.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

The headteacher is committed to the residential provision at this school. He and other leaders have shown passion and commitment to children through a very difficult period, when the stability of staffing has been of concern.

The headteacher and other leaders demonstrate openness, honesty and reflection about the residential provision and the turbulent time that they have experienced since losing significantly experienced staff. They show a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and have responded swiftly to issues raised throughout the inspection.

The headteacher has been committed to getting the right staff into the service who fit with the ethos of the school. This has proven difficult and problematic, but he has prioritised appointing the right people to care for the children. There has been a recent positive appointment of a new head of care.

There is good communication between leaders and managers, other agencies and parents. This ensures that there is a multidisciplinary approach to help children make good progress with their health and well-being.

The chair of governors has a good understanding of the school and the challenges affecting it. She is solution-focused and provides good support and challenge.

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

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:

- 11.1 The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 12.1 The school has and consistently implements a written policy on managing behaviour, including promoting good behaviour. This policy includes: measures to combat bullying, including cyberbullying, and to promote positive behaviour; school rules; disciplinary sanctions; when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed; and arrangements for searching children and their possessions.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.
- 13.9 The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.
- 15.1 There is a sufficient number of competent staff deployed appropriately, both as a staff group and on individual shifts, to fulfil the school's Statement of Purpose and meet the individual needs of all children resident in the school.
- 19.1 Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school.
- 22.1 Every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress which can be read by the child at any time (except where the data controller is not obliged to supply the information to the child), and add personal statements or statements correcting errors.

Recommendations

- Consistently encourage children to eat healthy meals and snacks. (Linked to NMS 3)
- Ensure that medication is given hygienically and in a calm environment. Ensure that a medically approved protocol informs staff about when to give 'as required' medication. (Linked to NMS 3)
- Provide further opportunities for children to read. (Linked to NMS 10)

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: SC001831

Headteacher: Ollie Sharp

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01664 454 264

Email address: office@knossington.rutland.sch.uk

Inspectors

Joanne Vyas, social care inspector (lead)

Bev Allison, social care inspector



The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019