

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 83 children aged eight to 18 years, 14 of whom can live 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 in the village of Knossington, a short walk from the main school building.

The school caters for children who have social, emotional and mental health needs, autistic spectrum disorders, attention deficit disorders and mild learning difficulties.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 21 and 23 June 2022

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 **good**

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: 6 July 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make substantial progress from their starting points when staying in the residential provision. They quickly make progress with their emotional well-being, life skills and social skills. This is because staff quickly develop warm and nurturing relationships with them. Staff are experienced and successful at developing such good relationships with children, once they move into the residential provision. Excellent planning helps children to settle quickly. One child said: 'The planning was done at my pace and the staff were really nice.'

Children are engaged in a variety of hobbies and interests that are highly individualised. Activities are planned exceptionally well. This ensures that all the children are relaxed, happy and safe. Children are engaged in activities such as motocross, going to the gym, fishing, horse riding, martial arts and playing musical instruments. Staff are tenacious in supporting children to find something that gives them a sense of achievement and pride in their accomplishments.

Children communicate their views, wishes and feelings through a variety of means. Staff encourage children to express their ideas and make choices. Their views are listened to and valued. For example, a child asked for a string of lights in his bedroom. He chose these and proudly showed them off. This helps children develop confidence and self-esteem.

The staff have planned and unplanned discussions with children in the form of key-work sessions. These are creative and child-centred. Staff talk to children about keeping safe, personal hygiene and independence, among many other topics. The staff carefully consider the environment children are living in and their sensory needs and communication styles. This thoughtful and considerate approach helps children express themselves and maximise their opportunities in the residential provision.

Children's health and well-being is at the centre of care practice. The therapy team is fully integrated into children's care experiences. Children benefit from individualised packages of support. This holistic approach extends to children's families. Some parents benefit from therapeutic parenting intervention training provided by the therapy team. The therapy team lead said: 'The therapeutic model of high expectation and high nurture and high boundaries is applied across the school.' Staff are well rehearsed and consistently apply the preferred therapeutic model at the school.

Children have been supported exceptionally well when the time comes to move from the school. This includes supported visits to new provisions. Children who were not engaged in education, or were experiencing challenges with education prior to attending the school, are now on track to achieve qualifications. They now have high aspirations for their future. They receive regular support about next steps and

experience individualised planning to help them move on from the school. This includes children being supported practically and emotionally with further education and training opportunities.

Staff are innovative when providing opportunities for developing children's life skills. For example, feedback from children about their lack of experience of using public transport led to an innovative project. Older children have now been supported to travel independently on public transport. Staff have equipped them with invaluable life skills.

There is unanimously positive feedback from parents about the residential provision. Parents feel that their children make significant progress and that communication between themselves and the staff is excellent. A parent said: 'Everyone is working together, including the therapy team. [name] had two years out of education, but is now integrated far more and living a life with opportunities and engaging in education.' Another said: 'Everyone cares and it is top down. The head of school radiates the message that children need to feel loved and cared for.'

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

Staff know the children very well. They have warm and nurturing relationships with children, whilst offering clear routines and boundaries. This helps children feel safe and secure.

Creative and innovative interventions help children to reduce the risks to themselves. Children who have had significant and serious emotional health and well-being needs have been supported by staff to reduce these risks. This has been life changing for some children. One parent said: 'I have not won the lottery by my child being here, it is bigger than that. The school has literally saved my child's life.' The school offers a holistic approach with effective communication between therapy services, education and care to achieve significantly improved outcomes for children's mental health.

Physical interventions are rare. There are strong bonds between staff and children. This, combined with staff having an extensive understanding of children's needs, and the use of therapeutic approaches, significantly helps children to regulate their emotions and manage behaviour.

Staff are skilled and creative at utilising opportunities to share knowledge and information with children on relevant topics. This helps children to stay safe. This is completed in a variety of ways, such as weekly meetings, 'bite-size' group discussions, key-working sessions, and daily conversations. For example, a child gave a presentation on raising awareness on issues affecting transgender people.

When children's behaviour becomes a concern, staff work well together with education, therapy staff, parents and external professionals. This provides an holistic and coordinated approach to supporting the child and improving behaviour.

Children rarely go missing from the residential provision. If there is an incident, there is a highly coordinated approach. The child is returned safely and quickly. There is reflective debrief for all staff and children. Plans are reviewed, amended and reflect the risks. There is a focus on plans on reducing further incidents. A child said: 'Staff routinely put new plans in place when children need this.'

Children have been well supported by staff about potential online risks. Children understand what to do if they are unsure or alarmed by any online material. Indeed, children have taken appropriate action to keep themselves safe. For example, children have shared information with staff immediately. This is testament to the excellent relationships they have with staff. Staff have discussions with children, raising awareness of online risks. Staff follow effective safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff are vigilant and professionally curious. Relevant safeguarding agencies are notified, and safety plans are reviewed. This promotes children's safety and well-being online.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Recent changes to the leadership team mean the team is in its infancy. There have been several promotions within the care team. This has created vacancies in the staff team. Therefore, there are several new members of staff. New staff have benefited from new, comprehensive induction processes, which have led to new staff settling quickly into their roles.

Managers are passionate about providing a service for children that enables the children to make excellent progress in all areas of their lives. Managers are child-centred and have a clear focus on the individuality of the child.

Managers have good systems for overseeing the provision. This enables them to quickly address any shortfalls. However, oversight of night-time provision is limited and informal. Night-time staff know the children well and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

There are good plans for service development and some new systems have been implemented. This includes a better induction system for staff, and staff development has become more formalised to assist with tracking staff development as their careers progress.

There is a strong governor presence within the residential provision. Governors know the residential provision well. They are well informed and provide a good balance between support and challenge. The chair of governors said that she enjoys visiting this school because: 'It's a lovely warm, buzzy place that gives you a hug.'

Staff love their work. They are enthusiastic and passionate about providing exceptional care for children. They feel very supported by managers and each other. Staff are provided with good training opportunities to ensure that they have the skills

and knowledge to meet the complex needs of the children in their care. Staff are child-centred and provide warm and nurturing care for the children.

Managers are not aware of important recent research into sexual abuse in schools. 'The independent inquiry into sexual abuse in schools' is a particularly important report for residential schools. Therefore, managers have not considered recommendations from this report or reviewed if there are implications for their care practice.

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

Points for improvement:

- Consider formalising spot checks at night by managers to ensure that management oversight of care during the night is robust. (Linked to NMS 13)
- Consider recent relevant research reports and the implications of these for practice. (Linked to NMS 19)

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/teacher in charge: Ollie Sharp

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