

Barndale House Special School

Howling Lane, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 1DQ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This is a maintained residential special school. There are 38 children on roll. This service is for children between the ages of two and 19 years old. There are 13 children who currently access the residential provision, which is on the upper floor of the main reception building. The children may have a range of learning difficulties and some may have additional complex needs relating to their health and physical disability. The school is in Alnwick, Northumberland. The residential provision was last inspected on 22 January 2019. The school was last inspected on 14 and 15 January 2019.

The school offers residential accommodation for girls and boys who stay for a minimum of one night per week, excluding weekends and school holidays. There is a new headteacher in post who is leading the residential provision supported by two heads of care.

Inspection dates: 22 to 24 October 2019

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: 22 January 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children like to stay in the school's residential provision. The children have lots of fun and they develop their social skills, confidence and independence. The staff know the children very well. The children like to spend time with the staff because they enjoy the close appropriate bonds they have with them. The staff's in-depth knowledge of each child enables the staff to plan the care to meet each child's complex needs.

The staff help the children to manage their anxieties, which enables them to try new experiences and helps them to spend time with their friends. The experiences that the children enjoy include strawberry picking, going to the cinema, spending time at the youth club, trips to the beach, picnics and visits to the park.

The children learn a range of life skills, such as cleaning their teeth, how to do their shopping, using money and bathing. The children's individual learning targets enable the staff to focus on the children's specific development needs and help them to monitor their progress.

There is a focus on improving the sharing of information between the school staff and the residential staff. The integrated approach between the school and the residential provision is benefiting the children's learning because the staff have a good understanding of the child's level of functioning in both settings. The ongoing development of the 24-hour curriculum is helping to continually reinforce the children's learning.

The children's complex health needs are well supported by the school nurse. Robust procedures for handling medication ensure that there are no medication errors. The children maintain good physical health. The staff teach the children the importance of a healthy diet and they support the children to access a range of physical activities.

Picture books which show the children enjoying special times in the residential provision show the progress the children are making socially. The pictures also help the children to remember the happy times they spend here.

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

The children benefit from structured daily routines. The children's anxieties reduce as they become familiar with their surroundings and routine. There is no use of physical intervention. The staff use their strong relationships with the children alongside a range of visual communication aids to help children to express their feelings.

The children's risks are well known by the staff. Good levels of staff supervision help to keep the children away from known hazards. Some of the children's risk

assessments do not consistently provide staff with clear guidance on what to do if a risk occurs. The risk assessments do not always give a clear indication of how recent the risks are, making it hard to evaluate the level of current risk.

Safeguarding incidents are reflected on by the designated safeguarding lead. He takes learning from incidents and delivers targeted training to the staff. This training helps to reduce future risk to the children. The designated safeguarding lead closely monitors safeguarding concerns. He is quick to share information with relevant professionals to help keep the children safe. The staff undertake a range of additional training to help them understand wider risks to the children. The additional training includes courses relating to the issues of criminal and sexual exploitation.

The children and staff undertake fire practices. The improved recording of fire practices helps the heads of care to monitor when children experience a fire drill. The children's personal evacuation plans do not always reflect the children's behaviours, which could impact on them leaving the building quickly in the event of an emergency.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The new headteacher is highly ambitious and focused on making continuous improvements in the residential provision. He is striving to create a more integrated approach between the school staff and the residential staff. The developments he is making are strengthening the delivery of the 24-hour curriculum. Although the residential provision is managed daily by two dedicated heads of care, the headteacher is developing a good oversight of the residential service. The increased oversight is enabling him to support the heads of care to drive forward improvements.

The staff receive regular supervision, which helps them to reflect on their role. The staff are motivated by the changes the headteacher is making. The staff said that they feel included and valued. The new feeling of inclusion and support is boosting staff morale and motivating the staff to keep improving care practice and progress for children.

The headteacher, and the heads of care, know the strengths of the service and the areas that they need to develop. They are working towards a focused action plan which will improve the residential provision.

The school governors are positive about the new headteacher's leadership style. They are seeing positive changes in the residential provision resulting in increased staff enthusiasm and drive. To support the school moving forwards, there is a focused development plan, which the governors feel is inclusive.

The headteacher and the heads of care make it a high priority to ensure that the complex needs of children are met. To help them meet the specialist needs of the children, the headteacher and the heads of care ensure that information is shared

effectively with other professionals, such as the school nurse, social workers and the children's families. One parent said: 'The staff speak regularly with me. There is excellent communication. Nothing is too much trouble for them.'

The residential provision is meeting its aims and ensures that the children's different abilities and individualities are celebrated. They are ensuring that every child's special qualities are recognised and nurtured.

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

Recommendations

- Consider improving the children's personal evacuation plans to reflect their current behaviours which could impact on them leaving the building quickly in the event of an emergency.
- Consider improving the detail in the children's risk assessments to provide staff with clear detail of what to do if the risk occurs. Consider including a chronology and providing a clear indication of how recent risks are to help evaluate the level of current risk.

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: SC041487

Headteacher: Mr Daley Barber-Allen

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

Jamie Richardson: social care inspector



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