

Horton Lodge

Staffordshire County Council, Rudyard, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 8RB

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Horton Lodge is a local authority-maintained residential special school for 54 boys and girls aged two to 11 years who have physical disabilities and/or associated learning difficulties. Some of the children have additional visual, hearing and/or speech and language difficulties. The school's education is based on conductive education. The residential provision operates from Monday to Thursday, with six to 10 pupils residing at the school on any one night. The residential provision is called Kiplings and is in a separate wing of the school.

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 December 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: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make good progress in all areas of their development as a direct result of their residential experience. The head of care and her staff know and understand children's needs extremely well. They help to devise bespoke care plans that incorporate children's often complex health needs, their educational needs and their developmental targets. As a result, children benefit from consistent, well-planned and personalised care.

One parent told the inspector, 'It is an amazing provision that enables our son to develop and enjoy social time with his peers. He is very happy in the setting and is encouraged to develop his social skills and to be as independent as possible.'

Staff are highly skilled in using a wide and varied range of communication methods, including pictures, visual aids and sign languages, to seek children's views, opinions and wishes. The KISS (keep, improve, stop and start) survey was recently conducted and has proven highly successful in enabling children to have a greater influence over decisions about their residential stays. This includes making key decisions on what activities they want during their stays.

Regardless if children stay for an extended day or an overnight stay, their time at the residential provision is an abundance of fun and laughter. Children enjoy each other's company and, together with staff, engage in a wide range of stimulating activities. This includes playing in the school grounds, sensory play, and arts and crafts. Staff creatively adapt activities to enable children of all abilities to participate.

Managers and staff carefully consider each child's abilities, needs and friendships when planning each child's stay. In this way, children are supported to settle and to build positive relationships with their peers and the staff.

There are detailed health plans in place for each child. These plans help the staff to understand each child's health needs. When required, staff receive training to support children's medical needs. Medication is stored securely, and clear records are maintained of all medication dispensed. Managers conduct regular audits of medication to ensure that practice remains safe.

A highly creative communication system helps families to remain in close contact with the staff. This includes families getting updates in the evening and in the morning when their child has stayed at the residential provision.

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

Child protection and safeguarding is well managed. Policies and procedures provide guidance for ensuring that safe practices are maintained. Staff handle potential safeguarding or child protection issues through excellent communication, consistency and strong management direction. Managers use an electronic information-sharing programme effectively to track and monitor the progression and impact of potential

concerns.

Children have individual risk assessments as part of their care plans. If a child's needs change, new information becomes available or new behaviours emerge, the risk assessments are promptly updated. Staff prioritise rewards and positive reinforcement. They diligently monitor and manage children's moods and behaviour and listen carefully to what children are saying. This approach reduces opportunities for conflict and defuses potentially challenging situations. Positive and trusting relationships between staff and children are key to reducing anxiety.

The site is physically safe and secure. Staff ensure that visitors are closely monitored, signed in and chaperoned. Maintenance is of a high standard and minor repairs are completed quickly. Therefore, the residential accommodation is free from hazards and children are physically safe. The site manager takes pride in his role and the home. As a result, he ensures that the premises and grounds are well maintained, with good risk awareness and risk management.

Safer recruitment processes are effectively followed. Thorough records detail all necessary information on new and existing staff. This ensures that children are cared for by adults who have been appropriately vetted.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A highly skilled and experienced head of care effectively manages the residential service. She is a strong and enthusiastic leader who focuses on meeting children's individual needs, supporting their progress and providing them with an enjoyable residential stay.

The head of care is part of the senior leadership team and is supported and supervised by the school head. All the staff demonstrate their commitment and have high aspirations for each of the children in their care.

All staff receive reflective supervision. These sessions provide them with the opportunity to reflect on their relationships with the children and their own personal development. Staff are appraised annually and attend weekly team meetings. Staff receive a wide range of training including essential skills such as safeguarding, as well as more specific courses such as managing epilepsy and epi pen training. The staff spoke positively about the head of care, whom they feel is approachable, supportive and open to any ideas which may improve the quality of care for the children.

There is good monitoring oversight of the residential provision which includes self-evaluation, quality assurance visits from the local authority, peer reviews, governors' reports and consultation with stakeholders. However, the independent person has only reported on the residential provision once in a 12-month period. This limits the independent oversight of the provision.

Staff work in partnership with parents and external professionals. This means that children receive a well-organised package of care and education. Parents are very

positive about the care that their children receive. They say that the residential provision provides huge benefits for their children.

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 standard(s) for residential special schools:

- The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who is independent of the management of the school, to visit the school six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the head teacher (or school equivalent). (National minimum standards 20.1)

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: SC038727

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Miss Sarah Latham

Type of school: Residential Special School

Telephone number: 01538 306214

Email address: headteacher@hortonlodge.staffs.sch.uk

Inspectors

Dave Carrigan, social care inspector (lead)

Michelle Moss, social care regulatory inspection manager



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