

Grateley House School

Grateley House School, Pond Lane, Grateley, Andover, Hampshire SP11 8TA

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Grateley House School is an independent residential special school for students who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Many students have other associated difficulties. Each student has an education, health and care plan and is usually placed at the school by their local authority. At the time of the inspection, there were 27 students on roll and five residential students. Residential students are accommodated in three houses on the school site.

The education provision was not inspected at this inspection.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 July 2023

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: 27 September 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Students are well looked after by a nurturing and skilled staff team. Students' individual communication needs are well understood, and the staff are skilled in ensuring that they are always treated with dignity and respect. Students speak fondly about the care they receive and the positive relationships they have with staff. This is echoed by parents, who speak with great affection about the role of the school and the impact that it has on their children's lives.

Students make progress in the school. This is demonstrated through detailed education, health and care reports, placement plans and termly progress star charts. While it is evident that students are making progress, leaders would benefit from having greater oversight of this to truly understand the progress that students make.

Students' views are considered in a variety of ways. Regular student councils ensure that information from and to the students is shared. This is fed back through house meetings, which means that all students can contribute to the day-to-day running of the school. This has had a positive impact on decision-making in terms of canvasses being displayed on walls, noticeboards being moved in some houses and new equipment being purchased. Alongside this, students are asked to contribute to regular questionnaires and have at least weekly time with key workers to support them with their ongoing needs. This work is shared with families to ensure that they have a good understanding of their children's experiences while they are at the school.

Students have positive experiences on a day-to-day basis and are afforded a wide range of activities on and off site. Students enjoy these opportunities and talk about them with affection.

When there are changes in behaviour, leaders and staff ensure that there are robust responses. Students are supported with the use of clear and student-led social stories that describe social situations to help them understand the possible risks that they may be exposed to. Decisions around students' plans are made by relevant individuals in the school to make sure that representatives from education, care and therapy can contribute. Overall, changes in behaviour are responded to well. However, there has been an occasion where the level of urgency was not maintained. This resulted in one child being less engaged in school.

Students are well prepared for their future. They develop their independence skills in accordance with their individual capabilities. There is also an increased education progress focus that has allowed care staff to give targeted and specific academic support to students.

There is a strong culture of care, acceptance and understanding across the entire school with all staff, no matter what role they are in. This means that all staff have a

good understanding of students' individual needs. This extends beyond staff who primarily have care and education roles and includes administration, therapy and kitchen staff. This culture helps students to feel happy and safe as they are aware that they can talk to anyone about any worries or concerns they have.

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

Safeguarding culture across the school is a strength. Leaders, staff and students all contribute to developing a strong culture of safeguarding where everyone is aware of their responsibilities in keeping students and each other safe.

There are positive reactions to emerging concerns relating to students' behaviour. When behaviour changes and new behaviours are demonstrated, this is responded to well. For instance, there are immediate changes to guidance, and this is shared with all staff and students. This robust response means that students do not go missing and incidents have reduced. Parents confirm that they have also seen staff manage behaviour with professionalism and empathy and are confident in the way that their children's behaviour is managed.

The school safeguarding team, led by a dedicated designated safeguarding lead, has good relationships with external safeguarding professionals. Any concerns, no matter how small, are immediately shared to ensure that there is a thorough response.

When there are concerns regarding students' well-being and mental health, meetings are held that involve care and education staff, the therapy team and senior leaders. This ensures that students' well-being is maintained as a priority. This has allowed leaders to assure themselves of mental health oversight of students, even for those students who struggle to engage in day-to-day education or activities.

Overall, safer recruitment is effective. Detailed interviews are supplemented with thorough recruitment checks to ensure the suitability of new staff. However, an issue raised on a reference was not picked up during the verification process. This was rectified during the inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last inspection, there has been an entire change in leadership. Staff have embraced the changes and fully trust the new leadership team in the school. Staff talk with great affection about how much they trust the new principal and the head of care. They say that this is because these individuals are fully aware of the challenges that are faced when working in residential care.

Leaders have high aspirations for all staff and students in the school. Successes are celebrated by all, and a culture of positive feedback has been created.

When things have not gone to plan and placements have had to end, there is detailed oversight of this by leaders. This is to ensure that lessons are learned, and

leaders are keen to include themselves in that learning too. Complaints are taken seriously and there is a timely and robust response from the leadership team.

New staff to the school have a supportive and rigorous induction plan to ensure that the culture and expectations of the school are understood. Staff receive regular supervision and appraisal to ensure that their performance can be developed and reflected on. This level of support extends to waking night staff. However, the supervision records for the principal would benefit from greater detail to ensure that development and learning are well understood and evaluated.

The new leadership team fully understands the strengths and areas for development of the school. There are clear aims and objectives to further enhance and develop what is already in place. Leaders are confident about changes they wish to make and the staggered and planned increase in admissions to student numbers is testament to this.

Leadership oversight is supplemented by robust standard 3 visits that fully get underneath what is happening in the school. These visits, and the accompanying reports, push and challenge leaders to continue to develop and grow.

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

Recommendations

- School leaders should ensure that recruitment checks are suitably scrutinised.
- School leaders should ensure that supervision records for the principal are as comprehensive as they are for all other staff.
- School leaders should ensure that there is greater oversight of the progress students make.
- School leaders should ensure that staff continue their vigilance in supporting students who struggle to engage in school.

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: SC012450

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Eva Pereira

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector (lead)
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