

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 22 students on roll and seven residential students. Residential students are accommodated in three houses on the school site.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school. The inspection was part of an aligned inspection with His Majesty's Education Inspectors.

Inspection dates: 27 to 29 September 2022

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: 1 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

There has been a significant change in the school population, for both staff and children. This includes an increase in staff sufficiency and a decrease in the number of children who attend the school. As a result, children experience a wider variety of activities and enriching experiences. Children now have clear and individualised daily plans where clubs, activities and outings are organised, risk assessed and thoroughly enjoyed.

Children enjoy a broad range of activities, ranging from attending youth clubs, going to the gym, engaging in sea cadets, committing to football clubs and taking part in day trips out to places such as London. Some children choose to remain at the school at weekends to engage in activities and develop peer relationships.

Children and staff commented on how much better the school had become. Staff know that they can commit to planning events and activities with children, who trust and believe that they are going to happen.

Parents confirmed that the school is continuing to improve. One parent described the school as 'an atmosphere of transparency and it feels more of a family working together'. Another parent stated, 'Since the new head joined, the school has been revitalised. Staff are motivated, retention has improved, as have student behaviours, and communication has vastly improved.'

Children make good educational progress throughout the curriculum, and this is supported by a 24-hour curriculum in the houses. Staff understand the individual, social, emotional and academic needs of children well. Children's plans reflect the individual targets that they are working towards.

Children's views are gained in a variety of ways. This includes regular student council meetings, where representatives gain views of housemates before the meeting, which can influence changes to the houses and wider school, such as playground equipment being purchased and exploring plans for days out. Children talk with confidence about this and are clear that their views are heard and respected.

Children always have someone available to talk to. This is through weekly focused one-to-one sessions, which are supplemented by ad-hoc sessions and wider group/house meetings.

Arrangements for children moving in to and out of the school are well managed. Leaders and staff talk confidently about the admissions process. This is despite no new children moving in to the houses since the last inspection. For a child who left the school, extensive planning was undertaken where their well-being was at the centre of all decision-making. When children have moved on, they have spoken

positively about their experiences at the school. One child spoke about how they feel that the school has helped them to be the adult they are growing into.

Children are well prepared for their future, with relevant life skills being taught to help prepare them for adult life.

Children have voiced frustration about the small number of children across the school, but understand why this is the case. Staff are working hard to overcome this by providing opportunities for external socialising and making friends.

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

Staff understand safeguarding procedures and know who they should report concerns to, should they arise. Multi-agency high-priority group meetings, which involve key staff from across the school, ensure that agreed strategies to reduce risk are proactive and not reactive. Children's emerging risks are well understood, and with the increased leadership oversight and greater staffing capacity, these risks are responded to well.

Guidance for staff on managing risk and unwanted behaviour is clear and well recorded. The guidance is updated following any changes to behaviour and incidents.

There is good support for children who have engaged in self-harming behaviours. Staff react promptly to early signs of this behaviour and include clear clinical responses from a team around the child. When there is a need for additional support from external agencies, there is effective communication between staff and mental health professionals. This ensures that children receive appropriate and timely support when required.

Allegations are well managed. Records are generally clear and are shared with external safeguarding professionals when needed. Leaders ensure that the advice provided in response is followed, and this contributes to the safety of children and staff. However, records relating to one incident were limited in terms of what advice had been shared and followed. This lack of detail limits the ability of leaders to accurately monitor and review the improvements made.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders have high aspirations for all children. Historically, these aspirations have not been fulfilled due to staff shortages. However, due to the significant improvement in this area, these aspirations are now starting to be achieved. Leaders are hugely ambitious about what they, staff and, most importantly, children can achieve.

There is strong management oversight of the school. Workforce development plans, self-evaluation and quality improvement plans demonstrate scrutiny, developmental thinking and planning. Any gaps are quickly identified and there are clear strategies

to respond to and rectify weaknesses. This, combined with detailed independent visitor reports, provides genuine oversight to children's experiences.

Staff benefit from regular reflective supervision. This provides staff with the opportunity to reflect on work-based challenges that they may be facing, along with clear guidance and direction on their practice and professional development. Staff are confident in the support that they receive and the responsiveness of leaders. This has been reflected in the recent staff survey. For example, staff report that they are happy in their work and recognise the positive impact that this has on children.

Leaders challenge external professionals effectively when there is a lack of focus on a child's individual needs. The safety of children remains paramount for leaders, and this is reflected in how and why they have challenged decisions about children's individual care plans.

The school has gone through significant change in recent years regarding the number of children living in the houses. There is collective anxiety throughout the school about any potential increase in the number of children who attend. This is shared by most staff. Leaders are clear that any increase in the number of children accessing the school will happen in a planned and child-centred way. The safety of children and staff will be paramount to any decision-making. Senior leaders within the organisation share this view.

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

Recommendations

- Ensure that staff have clear written guidance to follow when safeguarding concerns arise. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', page 20, 13.1)

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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: Mr Daniel Tresman

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Inspectors

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector (lead)
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