

Glenwood School

Rushbottom Lane, New Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex SS7 4LW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Glenwood School is a community special school maintained by the local authority. It caters for 223 learners aged between three and 19 years.

The residential accommodation is provided in a purpose-built building on the main school site. The school, which is based in Essex, is a co-educational school for learners with severe or profound and/or multiple learning difficulties.

The head of care has an appropriate qualification and has been in post since 5 January 2023.

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

At the time of the inspection, there were seven children boarding at the school.

Inspection dates: 17 to 19 January 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: 8 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is a good residential provision with some significant strengths. The staff provide highly individualised care and support that result in children making excellent progress with their independence, functional communication skills and behaviour. Staff's work with children and parents has enhanced children's future life opportunities and quality of life. Children have very positive experiences in residence at the school.

The relationships between staff and children are strong. The dedicated staff act as positive role models. They treat children with dignity and high mutual regard. Time in residence provides children with a safe space to learn and grow. Families unanimously spoke about the positive difference that staff's support has made to children's well-being at home. This includes children achieving improved sleeping routines, having increased confidence to share social spaces, the broadening of children's food preferences, and improvements in children managing their emotions.

Staff and managers implement highly individualised support strategies for children. Children work towards meaningful and well-devised targets that help them to gain independence. Staff help the children to develop these skills using precise and tailored prompting techniques throughout daily activities and self-care routines. Staff celebrate children's achievements and ensure that the growth of new skills is matched to children's developmental stages. This personalised support is an area of strength in residence and ensures that children make exceptional progress in this area.

Managers and staff undertake careful planning in respect of which children stay in residence together. Detailed and individualised assessments link to extremely well-planned introductions for children. As a result, children enjoy a warm welcome and quickly settle into structured routines.

School leaders, staff and managers work in excellent partnership with the wider network of professionals, including occupational therapists, nurses and social workers. Feedback from professionals is consistently positive about the success of this joined-up working and how it meets children's complex needs.

The school promotes a bespoke curriculum across a 24-hour period for each child who stays in residence. Consequently, residential staff work very closely with teachers and school staff to help to ensure that children can continue their learning and development during their stays.

Staff skilfully work alongside speech and language therapists to ensure that alternative communication aids are used purposefully and to good effect. As a result, children make notable progress in their self-expression and aptitude to make informed choices. A point for improvement is for staff to establish a more effective

system to capture children's views about their direct experience in residence. This could identify learning and inform future developments of the provision.

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

Families have complete trust and confidence that the staff advocate for their children's best interests, safety and well-being. Staff understand children's individual needs well and provide consistent routines that help children to feel secure. This is an important factor for children who rely on rigid routines and clear expectations to help them to feel safe.

Staff have effective procedures to record, monitor and escalate safeguarding concerns. Staff are alert to and have a good knowledge of the lower-level and wider contextual issues that children with additional vulnerabilities may face. Designated safeguarding leads are appropriately trained. Weekly safeguarding meetings take place. Although no direct safeguarding concerns have arisen in residence, there are appropriate systems to identify, pre-empt and act on any such concerns.

A whole-school approach to behaviour management means that children receive consistent emotional and behavioural support. Staff use well-devised and proactive behaviour management strategies to reduce situations that can increase children's anxiety. The staff have a good awareness of potential triggers and are confident and skilled in de-escalation interventions.

There has been one instance of physical restraint since the last inspection. This was necessary and proportionate. Managers have systems to monitor and identify learning through these incidents.

Managers have provided additional training to staff to increase their knowledge of domestic and child-on-child abuse in line with new statutory guidance. This ensures that staff are well informed to respond to risks.

Managers ensure that children's risk assessments are regularly updated and cover a wide range of areas, including children's health needs, online safety, and rights to privacy. A delay in reviewing the environmental risk assessment was addressed by managers during the inspection. This is now better served to identify and monitor additional risks in the grounds.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

A new and qualified head of care is in post. Their role is complemented by an experienced and well-respected residential education manager. The managers have high expectations for staff and children, and lead by example. Managers are highly considerate and empathetic about the lived experiences of children and their families. Consequently, families feel involved in and inspired by the support that children receive, and widely recognise children's progress.

Staff receive regular and reflective supervision, which they say supports them to develop their practice. Detailed, child-focused staff meetings are well attended and are used to review care practice issues and the safeguarding culture in residence. Training programmes do well to equip staff with the skills to meet the individual needs of children. This ensures consistent, well-planned support for children.

School leaders and managers actively seek constructive scrutiny and make improvements. A formal moderation panel meets regularly to consider the quality of the provision and children's successes. The headteacher has recently improved the systems for staff appraisals to better capture staff development opportunities. A new independent visitor has provided in-depth monitoring, which strengthens quality assurance systems further.

School leaders are fully engaged and committed to driving the model and aims of the provision. Further work is being undertaken to explore the links between the curriculum and children's social aspirations, particularly in relation to the impact of community-based activities during children's time in residence. This development is at an early stage.

The purpose-built accommodation is spacious and generally well appointed to meet children's needs. Children can personalise their bedrooms, and individual spaces meet children's sensory preferences well. However, garden areas and walkways are sparse and would benefit from increased resources. Leaders and managers have not ensured the prompt repair of some damaged walls. Leaders and managers recognise that these areas need attention.

Two unmet standards and one point for improvement raised at the last inspection have been met.

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

Points for improvement

- School leaders should ensure that any damage to the environment is promptly repaired and that outside areas are more effectively resourced to meet children's interests.
- School leaders should ensure that consultation with children is systematically recorded to better reflect their views about the residential provision.
- School leaders should ensure that the development objectives in relation to the planning and monitoring of children's social aspirations during their time in residence are implemented.

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: 2644080

Headteacher: Elizabeth Cornish

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

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