

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 220 learners between three and 19 years of age.

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 multiple learning difficulties.

The head of care has an appropriate qualification and has been in post since the residential provision was registered in May 2021.

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

This is the first inspection of the residential provision. The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 8 and 10 March 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.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children benefit from and enjoy attending the residential provision at this school. The purpose of children's stay at the residential provision is to increase their levels of independence and prepare them for life beyond the school. The care and support that they receive results in children making progress with their independence, social skills and behaviour. The staff and managers challenge any perception that the children cannot achieve because of their special educational needs or health diagnoses.

The staff's and managers' good communication and links with the day school staff reduce barriers to children's learning. This leads to day staff and residential staff working together to help children achieve their education, health and care plan objectives.

Staff and managers ensure that individual support strategies are in place for children. The plans include clear, meaningful targets for children that are agreed in discussion with families. Staff follow the strategies with skill and understanding to help children achieve their targets. Progress is different for each child, with examples including children becoming able to sleep in their own rooms and improving their social interactions.

Staff and managers work in partnership with the wider network of professionals. Feedback from professionals is excellent. Leaders and managers work positively with mental health services. One mental health professional said, 'They are my favourite school. They are one of the schools with the greatest openness to thinking about the way that mental health affects their children.'

Staff and managers work alongside speech and language therapists to ensure that alternative communication aids are used skilfully and purposefully. As a result, children make excellent progress in their self-expression and communication skills. An example is children progressing from eye pointing to use of an electronic switch system to make choices.

Families feel involved and emboldened by the support that their children and, by extension, they themselves receive. Staff and managers are considerate of and empathetic about the lived experiences of children's families. Strong relationships form because of this approach.

Families say that children enjoy their time in the residential provision. Children develop social skills through playing games and interacting with peers. Families highlight improvements in these areas.

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

Children appear comfortable and secure in the company of staff. Staff understand the increased risk of disabled children being abused. Staff are alert to changes in children's behaviour and understand the need to be inquisitive about the cause of these changes.

There have been no safeguarding concerns at the residential provision. Staff understood how to raise concerns. They are alert to some of the low-level behaviours of children that should provoke curiosity and be shared with safeguarding leads.

Managers ensure that risk assessments are regularly updated and cover a wide range of areas, including children's health needs. Overall, risk assessments are of good quality with suitable, well-thought-out controls. Managers addressed some gaps in some risk assessments during the inspection.

Weekly safeguarding meetings take place. These are opportunities for safeguarding leads to discuss children, explore issues and challenge one another. These meetings have the potential to improve practice and ensure that effective actions take place in response to concerns.

Managers ensure that safe recruitment takes place. When there are gaps in employment histories, these are followed up. When referees raise issues, further work takes place to better understand these.

Managers have ensured that all staff have had fire safety training. Personal emergency evacuation plans are in place for children. Fire drills take place, firefighting equipment is serviced and alarms are tested. However, no fire risk assessment had been completed due to managers confusing a fire strategy document. As a result, it was unclear if the risk of fire has been adequately mitigated.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The head of care is knowledgeable, qualified and well respected. She is a member of the senior management team, and her views and opinions are taken seriously. She is supported by an equally well-respected deputy who is the residential education facilitator and a qualified and experienced teacher.

The management team has high expectations for staff and children. Managers continue to reflect on and evaluate the residential model and are increasingly ambitious about what it can achieve. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are actively involved in the development, evaluation and planning of the residential provision. They have an excellent understanding of the aims of the provision.

The staff team consists of a mix of people with educational and social care backgrounds. This mix works well to support the provision to achieve the aims in the statement of purpose.

Leaders and managers have a strong understanding of the individual needs of the children. They have a good understanding of the plans in place and the intended outcomes for children. They are enthusiastic about the achievements that have been made and monitor the effectiveness of approaches through a range of multi-disciplinary forums. As a result, they have a strong understanding of the progress and experiences of children.

Leaders and managers actively seek feedback. A range of data is used to good effect. A formal moderation panel meets regularly to consider the quality and success of the provision. However, management monitoring has not been as effective as it should have been. Consequently, some issues picked up at this inspection have been missed.

There have been no complaints raised about the residential provision. Broader concerns raised by families are dealt with openly, sensitively and reflectively. As a result, concerns that could have led to children leaving the school or relationships with families breaking down have instead led to positive outcomes for children and their families, while also enabling the school to learn and develop.

The staff receive regular supervision and feel well supported by the management team. The staff have access to, and complete, a wide range of training courses to equip them for their roles. However, the designated safeguarding training for three designated safeguarding staff was out of date. Although training is now completed, the staff have gone beyond the statutory timescale of training every two years.

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 standards for residential special schools:

- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In particular, ensure that a fire risk assessment is completed by a competent person and the findings acted on. (NMS 7.1)
- Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up to date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school. In particular, in relation to designated safeguarding staff receiving training in the time frame stipulated in statutory guidance. (NMS 19.1)

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that internal and external management monitoring are effective and contribute to improvements.

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/teacher in charge: Mrs Elizabeth Cornish

Type of school: Residential Special School

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Inspectors

Ashley Hinson, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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