

Shenstone Lodge School

Shenstone Lodge School, Birmingham Road, Shenstone Wood End, Lichfield,
Staffordshire WS14 0LB

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Shenstone Lodge School is a split site, maintained residential special school catering for young people who experience severe emotional and/or mental health difficulties. Across the sites there are 73 pupils on roll. The residential provision is situated on the Shenstone Lodge site, which offers education for pupils aged six to 13. Currently, there are 39 pupils on the site, of whom 15 are residential pupils.

Inspection dates: 12 to 14 March 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 28 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- Leadership and management arrangements are exceptional. The accomplished and tenacious leadership team has ensured that the school residential service has sustained improvement.
- Young people make excellent progress in all areas of their development.
- Innovative practice in relation to education and well-being has a significant impact on young people's progress.
- Young people have excellent relationships with staff.
- The staff team's approach to behaviour management and developing young people's emotional resilience is exceptional.
- Residential staff use research-based practice to help them to improve the care provided to young people.
- Planning for residential care is exceptional and plays an essential role in ensuring that young people reach their full potential.
- Residential staff have extensive knowledge, skills and experience. Staff nurture and care for young people in a way that enables every young person to thrive.
- The multi-disciplinary team provides a level of expertise that promotes progress and development.
- Partnership work with families is excellent. Parents are unanimous in their praise for the school.
- Safeguarding young people is of paramount importance. There have been minimal safeguarding incidents, a reduction in physical interventions and no incidents of young people going missing from the residential service. This is testament to the vigilance and care of the staff team.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Throughout their time at the residential provision, young people consistently excel in all areas of their development. Young people's health, learning and emotional and social well-being all improve. These improvements are sustained over the time that young people attend the school.

This residential provision has a profound and enduring impact on young people and their families. One grandparent said: 'I have a different grandson. He is no longer violent, and residence is wonderful.'

Excellent pre-admission planning underpins the success of new residential placements. The school has a multi-disciplinary team that shapes care plans to meet individual needs. Excellent planning supports young people to make accelerated progress. For example, as a direct result of one young person attending the residential service he has made remarkable progress in the development of his speech. This means that his peers now understand the young person. This has led to an increase in confidence and a reduction in physical interventions.

Monitoring processes are effective and ensure that the progress of young people is regularly assessed. Regular reviews of young people's progress are person-centred. This enables young people to be involved in, and central to, their care planning.

Meaningful key-working sessions, day-to-day discussions and young people's meetings help young people to explore their behaviours, emotions and the tensions that can arise from group living. The views of young people are valued and are central to the operation of residential provision. The head of care and residential staff are excellent advocates. Young people have an independent listener who visits them, as well as quality assurance visits from independent professionals. Staff celebrate achievements, no matter how small, and highlight these with young people on a daily basis.

Young people make positive relationships with staff and this help them to become more confident. As young people's self-esteem develops, they make good friends at the residential provision and in their local communities, through attending groups such as Brownies. One young person now enjoys spending time with friends in the community. This is a significant achievement for the young person who previously found making and maintaining friendships particularly hard.

Staff are excellent at identifying young people who require extra support or interventions to prevent concerns escalating. The need for additional resources is identified early, leading to timely referrals to specialist services to support young

people with their emotional and psychological health.

All young people enjoy a school environment that values them as individuals. School attendance and attainment significantly improve as a direct result of young people attending the residential provision. Effective processes are in place to establish a baseline measure and track progress. Evidence demonstrates that all young people accessing the residential service exceed their educational targets in English and mathematics.

Young people take part in a wide range of stimulating activities. The residential care staff support them to take part in community projects, sporting and recreational activities, trips and social occasions.

Young people recently engaged in a health ambassador project. This supported young people to develop aspirations and goals through effective role modelling. One young person completed a piece of work highlighting the risks relating to e-safety. To enhance their self-esteem, they were then supported to present their findings to a large group of young people and professionals.

A core activity of the residential service is to prepare young people for independence and transition. All residential young people participate in a development programme that enables them to develop practical skills in a range of tasks. This means that they are equipped with life skills essential to independent living.

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

Safeguarding incidents since the last inspection have been managed extremely well. Staff understand risk and carefully develop and implement strategies to minimise any potential risk. Safeguarding practice is assessed through rigorous internal monitoring, and is assessed by specialist external consultants. This ensures that there are high safeguarding standards throughout the school.

The management team has a designated and deputy safeguarding lead. They have the key responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns. Safeguarding knowledge is kept up to date through training, which includes awareness of radicalisation, self-harm, bullying, sexual exploitation and internet safety. This enables staff to respond to the needs of young people.

Designated safeguarding leads have effective links with designated officers for the local authority. Strong governance ensures that safeguarding practice is monitored, reviewed and updated. The designated safeguarding lead reviews safeguarding incidents and outcomes. This analysis ensures that trends and patterns of behaviour are identified and investigated.

Residential staff monitor young people's welfare and have excellent knowledge about individual needs. This means that they are well positioned to identify any changes in

young people's behaviour, which could indicate potential concerns.

Behaviour management is exceptional. Since the last inspection, the staff have followed a research-led model on behaviour management. This model supports young people to reflect on their own behaviours, developing resilience and helps to inform them to make safer choices as they progress. Consequently, young people now identify their own early indicators of anxiety. As a direct impact of this model, there has been a significant reduction in the use of physical intervention. Young people report that they feel very safe and that staff help them to resolve areas of difficulties between other young people.

Excellent inter-agency working optimises young people's safety. Safeguarding agencies greatly value the proactivity of the staff as they welcome and embrace partnership working. This approach has excellent impact because young people are also encouraged to build their own relationships with the agencies. Young people have absorbed their direct work with the police and sexual health agencies in their awareness of personal safety issues. Young people become less reliant on staff to keep them safe because they develop their own positive strategies to make safer choices and associations.

The health and safety arrangements benefit from careful scrutiny. A thorough audit of health and safety arrangements ensures that fire safety and health and safety are fully compliant with the relevant regulations. The business manager keeps excellent records and produces clear reports. All health and safety policies are ratified and signed off by the senior leadership team. This ensures that leaders have good oversight of the safety arrangements for the school.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The senior leadership team has a clear vision and a defined sense of purpose. Senior leaders are inspirational and lead by example. The head of care is a highly respected and accomplished professional. A strongly motivated staff team complements her strategic approach. Together they consistently provide a high level of care and continuity in relationships for the young people. They all have high aspirations for the life chances of the young people they care for.

Securing the feedback of stakeholders to improve the quality of care is one of the priorities for the head of care. The views of placing social workers, school leaders and the young people are regularly canvassed. Since the last inspection, 'learning walks' and a national minimum standard audit tool have been introduced. This provides a clear baseline for continuous improvement.

When plans are not working, leaders are quick and decisive in their challenge. They often take the lead in arranging professionals' meetings to decide the best way forward for young people. This prevents drift and maintains good-quality decision-making and change interventions.

There has been an excellent response to the recommendations made at the last inspection. Improved scrutiny within recruitment records now addresses the previous

shortfall in gaps in staff employment histories. Effective monitoring around physical intervention and subsequent debriefs strengthen behaviour management processes. Clear systems now provide appropriate oversight of all members of staff's qualifications.

Leaders and managers have an exceptional understanding of the holistic needs of young people. This is because they have extensive knowledge, experience and skills in working with young people in this setting. They know each young person personally and are committed to making sure that each young person reaches their individual potential. Parents are unanimous in confirming this. One parent said, 'The staff do a fantastic job. They cover all bases. It's a lovely atmosphere.'

Leaders and managers provide clear evidence of the progress and plans for each young person. Meticulous internal and external quality assurance provides detailed analysis of the care provision. This means that leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the residential service's strengths and weaknesses. Firm plans are in place to ensure that decisive and effective action is taken to drive continual improvement.

The operation of the residential provision is consistent with the aims set out in the statement of boarding principles. Additionally, revised policies and procedures demonstrate compliance with current legislation and guidance.

All national minimum standards are met and there are no recommendations for improvement identified as a result of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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

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Headteacher: Mr Neil Toplass

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Inspectors

Lisa Walsh, social care inspector (lead)
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