

Dawn House Residential School

Dawn House School, Helmsley Road, Rainworth, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG21 0DQ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Dawn House School is a non-maintained residential special school. It is one of two schools run by the national charity Speech and Language UK. All children have difficulties with speech, language and communication.

The residential service operates Monday to Thursday in term time. There are 102 children on the school roll, of whom six use the overnight residential provision at any one time. The residential provision also operates an extended after-school provision for children.

The residential accommodation is located on the school site. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision on the site.

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 November 2024

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 last inspection: 27 June 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children enjoy their stays in the residential provision and speak positively about staff. Staff and the children share moments of humour and laughter in their conversations, highlighting the strong and positive relationships between them.

There are clear targets for children's attainment, that are linked to educational outcomes. Staff and parents work closely to support children to achieve their goals. Parents spoke of how their children have made significant progress because of staff support. In one example, a child has become increasingly independent. They have used their newly developed skills in the family home which has enabled them to become more independent in preparation for adulthood.

Children have been supported to develop their social skills, including understanding turn-taking and being able to compromise and share. Staff also support children when issues arise between friends, to resolve these in a positive manner. This helps to develop the children's emotional resilience and build confidence in social interactions.

Staff have extensive knowledge of children's communication needs and tailor their support to each individual child. For example, all staff are trained in Makaton. By strengthening communication systems used across school and residential, this allows the children to be better supported to express their wishes and views. Social stories are also used, and these assist the children to understand significant events.

Children spoke very positively about their time in the residential provision. One child described it as 'brilliant'. Children participate in a variety of activities that support their learning in diverse ways. Children have been engaged in projects from start to finish, and this is important for the children to learn and develop a sense of accomplishment.

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

Safeguarding is a priority in the school and residential provision. Staff receive refresher training at least annually. Risk assessments are completed for each child based on their individual needs, however, some of the details do not match what is recorded in other documents. That means that in these cases, staff are not equipped with all essential information about the children.

There are few incidents of challenging behaviour from children. When incidents do occur, children are helped by staff to de-escalate behaviours and become calmer. Staff nurture children and show they care through their responses when children are upset or angry. Staff know the children well, and clear routines and structure have been embedded, enabling children to feel safe, which minimises incidents.

Educating children to understand and manage their own safety is a shared responsibility for all staff. There is an ongoing conversation with the children about potential risks. Staff are proactive in identifying risks and act if any risks arise. The focus is very much on the children learning how to keep themselves safe.

Any complaints and allegations are escalated and investigated properly. Managers ensure that the necessary information is shared with all parties involved in the children's care. Safeguarding protocols are consistently followed.

Children's medication is administered by staff who have undertaken the relevant training. A health professional checks staff competency, as a further layer of security. The manager has taken effective action to improve systems and additional training following medication errors in the past. There are additional protocols to guide staff with emergency treatment for more complex health needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There have been some changes in the residential management team since the last inspection. A residential service manager and a deputy manager have been recruited. Managers have spent time becoming familiar with the processes and procedures. They have now begun to make changes to the relevant documentation and develop the team with a view to improving outcomes for children.

The staff are extremely dedicated to the children. Most staff have worked in residential for several years. This has allowed the team to form strong and supportive relationships with each other as well as with the children.

The residential and education staff work in partnership across both settings, with the aim of delivering good-quality and consistent care to children. Objectives set in school are closely linked to residential targets. This collaborative approach supports children to thrive and progress in education, alongside increasing and enhancing their social skills when they stay in residential.

There is an established process in place for families to request time for their child in the residential provision. The manager seeks to match children's needs and interests to support the development of friendships and peer relationships. When children's stays in residential are agreed, the manager carries out child-centred placement planning that leads to weekly overnight stays for the child. Parents recognise the benefits of this provision, not only for their child but how it positively impacts on the whole family.

Managers have ensured that staff have regular and effective supervision, and team meetings take place regularly. This means that staff can share concerns with a manager and receive the guidance they need for their ongoing development.

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

Point for improvement

- School leaders should ensure that the information recorded across each child's documents is consistent.

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: SC008761

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Jennifer McConnell

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01623 795361

Email address: J.McConnell@dawnhouse-ican.notts.sch.uk

Inspectors

Lizette Watts, Social Care Inspector

Zoey Lee, Social Care Inspector

Linda Mason, Social Care Inspector

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