

Wells Park School

Lambourne Road, Chigwell, Essex IG7 6NN

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Wells Park School is a residential primary school which is part of The Beckmead Trust. The school caters for children aged between five and 11 with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

There are 55 pupils on roll. There were 39 residential pupils at the time of this inspection. Residential pupils board between Monday and Friday for four nights. The residential accommodation is provided in four integrated houses located on the school site.

The head of boarding has been in post since September 2021 and is working towards a relevant qualification.

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

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 January 2023

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 last inspection: 1 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make substantial and sustained progress from their starting points because of the highly individualised and excellent-quality support from residential staff. The children's quality of life and future opportunities are enhanced as a direct result of their stays at this exceptionally nurturing, stimulating and learning-orientated residential provision.

The staff are experienced, dedicated and skilled. They forge consistently strong relationships with the children. Interactions between the children and staff are extremely positive. They are filled with high regard and genuine compassion. Consequently, children develop the sense of security and stability that they need to make progress and thrive.

Children enjoy a diverse and wide range of meaningful activities. Forward-thinking and enthusiastic staff are committed to furthering children's social experiences. Creative planning introduces the children to a wide range of local activities which help to broaden children's experience of the world around them.

Children flourish and make good progress in their education. The whole staff team uses the token system, which promotes and rewards positive behaviour for learning. Leaders and managers extensively review and analyse children's education, behaviour and achievements. As a result, they can successfully evidence the children's educational, social and emotional development.

Support to parents extends into weekends, evenings and holidays. Staff help parents with medical appointments, completing financial forms and travel arrangements. On occasions, food parcels are sent home with children from the food bank, which is set up on the school site. Staff consistently provide support for children and their families that far exceeds what is expected in their roles.

Children experience well-organised inductions to the residential provision. Introductions are planned between the children, residential staff and families at a pace that is right for the child. Often, the staff will spend time with the children at home and at school. As a result, these introductions are consistently successful.

Staff help children to prepare for the future. Children develop independence and social and skills that dramatically increase their confidence and self-esteem in preparation for leaving the school.

One child's foster parent said, 'I feel like my child has won the lottery coming here. In over 20 years of fostering children, I have never experienced support like this from a school. My child has grown in confidence and self-worth. I have absolutely no doubt that he is completely safe, healthy and happy when he is here.'

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

Children said that they feel safe in the residential provision. They know who to talk to when they are worried. Parents are highly complimentary and positive about the provision. They have confidence in the staff and know that their children are safely supervised and cared for.

Safeguarding children is a high priority in the school and residential provision. Comprehensive, regular and updated safeguarding training ensures that exceptional safeguarding practices are embedded throughout the school. Residential and education staff work together to share concerns about children in their care. Considerable risks to children have been reduced because of the swift, proactive responses from the staff and the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

Staff have an extensive understanding of safeguarding procedures and can identify children who may be in need of help or at risk of harm. Staff show professional curiosity and have an excellent awareness of the importance of recording low-level concerns. On occasion, the DSL has used this collective recording to challenge a perceived lack of multi-agency response to concerns. This resulted in actions to improve the safety of children. Working relationships between the senior leaders in the school and external professionals are strong and effective, resulting in positive outcomes for children.

Outstanding, effective and skilful support from staff enables children to understand how to become safer. Children do not go missing from this school. Parents said that bullying is not an issue. There have been no incidents of harm from exploitation or radicalisation. Risks arising from internet access are primarily managed through children handing in their personal devices when they arrive at school. However, the staff use innovative ways to show the children how to safely access the internet. Creative parent consultation sessions, arranged by education and residential staff, ensure that parents are fully aware of the online risks to children.

Comprehensive risk assessments and distress management plans provide staff with clear guidance on how to support a child in crisis.

Restraints, when used, are reasonable and proportionate. Following any incident of restraint, children's views are recorded and staff are given debriefs. All incidents of restraint are reviewed and discussed by senior leaders to establish trends and triggers. This enables staff to consider and implement strategies to reduce the use of restraint.

Exemplary monitoring and routine checks ensure that the physical environment is in excellent condition.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Highly dynamic, experienced and creative leaders and managers are supported by an equally dynamic staff team. Leaders, managers and staff have extremely high aspirations for the children. The impact of the care on children and their families is profound. The children's lives are enriched because of the time spent with staff.

Leaders and managers have exceptionally positive relationships with parents and professionals, who provided unquestionably glowing feedback about the quality of care, excellent level of communication and positive impact that the school has on children's lives.

An experienced head of care provides exceptionally strong and effective leadership. She is innovative and creative. She is respected by the staff, the children and the wider management team. The head of care is reflective and open to challenge. She has a realistic view of the quality of the provision.

Staff say that they feel valued, listened to and supported. Regular supervisions are of a high quality. Staff's performance is reviewed annually to ensure that professional development is ongoing, current and relevant. Highly effective training equips the staff extremely well to meet children's needs. This training continuously updates their knowledge and skills. The staff implement this knowledge in their daily practice.

External and internal monitoring arrangements are exceptionally rigorous. Leaders and managers make good use of external monitoring visits by an independent visitor. This external monitoring is undertaken to an excellent standard and provides comprehensive and objective scrutiny of the quality of care. Meticulous monitoring supports the head of care to have a full understanding of the strengths of the residential provision and the areas for development. Actions taken in response to this monitoring further enhance the high-quality care that the children receive.

The trust's directors and governors are highly active in the school. They have an excellent understanding of the progress that children are making and whether they are safe.

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: SC018021

Headteacher: Matthew Surman

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Inspector

Rachel Watkinson, Social Care Inspector

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