

Southview School

Southview School, Conrad Road, Witham, Essex, CM8 2TA

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Southview school is a day and residential special school in Witham that caters for pupils with complex physical and neurological disabilities. The school is a member of the Hope Learning Trust. The residential accommodation is in a purpose-built building in the school grounds.

The school has 10 residential places. Pupils can stay for up to four nights a week. At the time of the inspection, there were 96 pupils on roll, of which four were accessing the residential provision.

The residential lead has been in post since September 2023 and has a relevant qualification.

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

Inspection dates: 5 to 7 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 outstanding

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: not previously inspected

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The residential provision opened in January 2024. At the time of the inspection, four children were staying in residence. The inspector spoke to all of the children. Children enjoy their stays, they make friends and can increase their skills in a safe space. They can try new activities and love spending time with the staff.

Children experience well-organised introductions to their stays. Detailed assessments ensure clear and personalised goals are identified for each child. Thorough planning between the child, their family, school staff and residential staff mean that children are introduced at a pace that is right for them. Consequently, children feel welcome and quickly settle into established routines.

Staff provide short-term support which is highly individualised and in accordance with a tailored curriculum for each child. Children make good and sometimes considerable progress in developing their independence, self-care, social and emotional management skills. Staff confidently support children with approaches that are matched to children's developmental stages. Parents highlight that this work has made a meaningful difference to children's home life. Parents said that their previous expectations in relation to what could be achieved in residence has been exceeded.

School leaders and managers have considered children's views in relation to their time in residence well. This has included changing areas of targeted work planned for a child when their preferences changed. Staff use alternative communication strategies skilfully for children who need additional support to express themselves. An independent person visits regularly, and children value this further resource.

Staff regularly review detailed placement plans and ensure children's residential and education objectives are unified. Children's health, daily routines and preferences are well known and considered. There are excellent links with the education staff which reduce any barriers to children's learning.

Children are provided with a good range of activities that support their interests and enjoyment. All children enjoy using the on-site hydro pool. All children regularly attend the local library. Some children are supported to take part in training how to use public transport. Activities such as trips to the cinema, bowling and shopping widen children's experiences.

Some children experience high anxiety around social activities and accessing the community. Staff have been instrumental in supporting children's social confidence to enable them to overcome these anxieties.

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

Children feel safe, secure and relaxed in residence. Children enjoy positive relationships with one another. Parents have strong assurances that the staff support their children's safety and well-being at the school.

Staff understand children's additional learning needs and vulnerabilities. School leaders and managers ensure that good-quality and up-to-date risk assessments are in place. This provides effective guidance to staff and ensures that they are well informed to respond to risks.

School leaders have provided thorough training for staff in line with new statutory guidance. Designated safeguarding leads are appropriately trained. School leaders ensure that regular safeguarding meetings take place to review and prioritise any emerging concerns in the wider school. There have been no direct child protection concerns in residence.

Children are helped to understand the risks associated with gaming and social media. School leaders and managers ensure that internet risks are carefully monitored through information technology filters. There are appropriate technology agreements completed with children that effectively assist in managing any risks they may face online.

Children take pride in their experience in residence. They have strong relationships with staff. Children said that bullying is not an issue. Staff have a good awareness of potential triggers and are confident in de-escalation. This includes responses to children when they are expressing indications of self-harm or low mood. There are very few behavioural concerns in residence and no incidents where physical interventions have been necessary.

Staff have suitable procedures to record and escalate any safeguarding concerns. In most instances, any emerging concerns have been actioned promptly by the designated safeguarding leads. However, one child shared concerns about a child in school and the support to resolve this issue is unclear. There are other gaps in the used recording system that have made it difficult to verify some of the actions taken by staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

A qualified and well-respected residential lead manages the staff team confidently and provides children with high-quality support. The residential lead is supported well by experienced school leaders. Together, school leaders and managers provide excellent leadership that has enabled a positive culture of achievement and progress for children in a short timeframe.

School leaders and managers are energised and knowledgeable. They have very high expectations of the service and strong aspirations for children. They are completely

focused in improving the future life outcomes for the children. Meticulous planning, development and evaluation supports a highly effective service for children since residence has opened.

School leaders and managers have compiled a detailed development plan to strengthen the residential experience for children. This includes the opening of a business and conference centre on the school site. This will provide further opportunities for children in residence to explore work experience and develop their social skills.

School leaders and managers actively seek and review feedback. An external panel of professionals has recently been commissioned to scrutinise the quality of the provision and staff practice. An independent visitor provides regular and thorough external monitoring visits. The residential governor makes a positive contribution to quality-assurance systems and regularly spends time with children during visits.

The residential lead and staff have tremendous relationships with parents and professionals. They all provided strong feedback about the quality of care, high levels of communication and the positive impact that residence has on children's lives.

There are established arrangements for sharing information and for reflection, feedback and learning with staff. Staff receive high-quality supervision sessions and regularly attend well-planned team meetings. New staff have very effective inductions to help them begin to work with the children. Bespoke training equips staff with the skills to meet the individual needs of children.

School leaders and managers ensure that there is a seamless approach to children's education and care. There is strong collaboration between education and residential staff. Residential staff are deployed in school as part of a child's introduction to ensure a consistent approach to children's learning is realised. Equally, education staff spend time with children in residence to further support children's objectives and achievements.

School leaders and managers recognise that residence is highly sought after and are keen to extend the residential offer further. This will include support for children who have complex difficulties and health conditions and have rarely stayed away from home or spend time with other children outside of school.

There has been one complaint made by a child since the provision opened. This was responded to promptly and sensitively.

There are no unmet national minimum standards.

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

Point for improvement

- School leaders should ensure that records relating to issues raised by children are complete and provide clarity on the actions taken.

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: 2780471

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mr Julian Cochrane

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Inspector

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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