

# The Marchant-Holliday School

Marchant-Holliday School, North Cheriton, Templecombe, Somerset BA8 0AH  
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

The school is an independent residential special school located in rural Somerset. The school is a registered charity that provides education and residential provision for boys aged between five and 13 years who have behavioural and/or emotional and/or social needs. The school provides a residential service for up to 32 boys during term time.

**Inspection dates:** 29 to 31 January 2019

**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 previous inspection:** 27 February 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Children and staff build positive and secure relationships with one another.
- Children make good progress to meet targets set out in their education and healthcare plans.
- The residential provision enhances children's day-to-day experiences. Children make good progress socially and emotionally.
- Highly effective strategies, alongside the strength of relationships between staff and children, promote positive behaviour well.
- Leaders and managers have high aspirations for children. Leaders' and managers' presence in the school and their accessibility to staff and children enables them to understand the strengths and weaknesses well.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Some doors in the residential accommodation are locked during school hours. Two of these doors are identified as fire exits on the fire risk assessment.
- Leaders and managers do not consistently document the action they take to improve outcomes for children following a restraint.
- On two occasions, new members of staff started working at the residential provision without leaders and managers being in receipt of two references. Recruitment records do not show how leaders and managers decided that this approach was suitable.
- Child protection records do not always provide a detailed description of actions taken and outcomes in a well-organised manner.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Review the use of locks on two doors, in liaison with health and safety professionals, to ensure the safety of children, staff and visitors in the event of a fire.
- Improve monitoring of restraint records to ensure that they consistently show actions taken to improve outcomes for children, as appropriate.
- Improve recruitment records to ensure that they evidence how leaders and managers consider the suitability of candidates, paying particular attention to the receipt of references.
- Improve the quality of child protection records to ensure that they provide every child with an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

Children receive good-quality individualised care because staff have a good understanding about how best to meet children's needs. Relationships between children and staff are strong and positive. Children benefit from staying in the residential provision and quickly make progress.

A wide variety of clubs and activities enhance children's residential experience. As children gain confidence, they start to integrate well into clubs in the local community. These experiences support children to develop good social skills and positive relationships with their peers.

The progress children make enables them to move on positively to other schools/residential provisions. Good joint-working with children, families and new schools/carers supports children sensitively and effectively. The strength of relationships between children and staff is integral to this success.

Staff build strong, supportive relationships with children's families. Communication is good, and staff share information effectively to promote consistent care and boundaries. Children are in regular contact with their families during their stay. Families speak highly of the school, and the positive impact the residential provision has on their children's progress.

Children's health needs are met well. Children benefit from having a school nurse available to them who coordinates individual healthcare plans and medication arrangements effectively. Good systems ensure the safe storage and administration of medication.

Leaders and managers continue to improve the quality of the accommodation, as necessary. Children benefit from having their own bedrooms, which are personalised.

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

Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve safeguarding practice in response to the findings at the previous inspection. Staff follow the child protection procedure effectively. The safeguarding team refers concerns to safeguarding agencies as required. Good joint-working with external professionals promotes children's welfare. Child protection records do not always clearly evidence this positive practice well.

Individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans provide staff with useful information about how to support positive behaviour. Strategies based on trust and respect are highly effective. For example, most children devise their own strategies such as having space, going for a walk and finding a trusted member of staff to talk to.

Restraint rarely occurs, and when it does, minimal force is used. Leaders and

managers have good oversight of behavioural incidents, and they understand trends and patterns well. However, individual restraint records do not show how leaders and managers consistently show the action taken to improve outcomes for children following incidents.

Token and reward systems are also highly effective at supporting children to develop positive behaviour. Children enjoy spending their tokens in the weekly 'token shop', which is stocked with a variety of their favourite items such as remote-control cars and stickers.

Leaders and managers follow safer recruitment processes. However, on two occasions, staff commenced their post before second references were received. Recruitment records do not show how leaders and managers considered the suitability of this arrangement.

During the school day, some doors in the residential accommodation are locked with a key. Two of these doors are identified on the fire risk assessment as fire exits. While external health and safety audits have been completed, this shortfall is not identified. Leaders and managers made plans during the inspection to address this.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for children. The senior leadership team is extremely accessible throughout the school and residential provision to support both children and staff. This visibility enables leaders and managers to build positive relationships with children and to understand their needs.

The senior leadership team understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school accurately. An effective improvement plan addresses the weaknesses they have identified. Governors provide good scrutiny across the school and residential provision. In particular, governors spend time with children to gather their views on their care and educational experiences.

Children have many opportunities to express their views. Individual one-to-one discussions with their designated member of staff occur frequently. Children invite the senior leadership team to some student council meetings. Leaders and managers make changes in consultation with children.

Leaders and managers create a good supportive environment for staff. Supervision is regular and facilitates reflection and learning. Annual appraisals set developmental targets. Staff who do not have the required qualification are making good progress to achieve it.

## **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**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC033089

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Mr D Kitts

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Telephone number:** 01963 33234

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## **Inspector**

Nicola Lownds, social care inspector (lead)





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