

Fosse Way School

Fosse Way School, Longfellow Road, Radstock BA3 3AL

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This school is part of a multi-academy trust. It provides education for 224 pupils aged from three to 19 years who have education, health and care plans. The school offers weekly residential provision for up to 11 autistic pupils. At the time of the inspection, there were seven children staying in the accommodation.

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

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 January 2025

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 31 October 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Leaders are ambitious, innovative and drive research with the goal of improving the experiences of children who attend the residential provision, the school and in the wider community. They have built on previously outstanding practice and further enhanced it to improve outcomes for children.

Meticulous planning and review helps staff to understand the progress and outcomes for children, in line with their model of a 24-hour curriculum. Parents shared their experiences of the meaningful impact this has on children. Consistent and persistent support from staff means children return home and do tasks they have never done before, or they cope with experiences in different ways. The support from staff has a meaningful and tangible impact on children's lives. They have life-changing experiences and are prepared for the future.

Children enjoy carefully planned evenings, filled with a balance of fun and learning. Staff ensure they maintain structure and routine but introduce activities that will challenge and support children to experience change or ambiguity. Staff ensure that children's views and choices are at the core of what they do. Children are consulted for ideas about activities they want to do. They are offered choices and are constantly given the message that it is okay to change their mind. This approach shows children that it is safe to try, and because they can say no, they feel more comfortable to give it a go. For one child, this is seen in their willingness to try new food. They have moved away from a very restrictive and unhealthy diet to one where they will try new flavours and textures, with very little prompting from staff.

Children benefit from a wide variety of different activities. Some attend a local cricket club and others attend youth clubs. This gives them opportunities to socialise with other children from the wider community. Children attend an explorer scout group that has been started by and hosted at the school. This offers children a wide range of new opportunities and the experience of being part of a larger community. Children have tried archery, created their own mini-golf courses and built shelters. They have met up with another scout group for a joint trip and have helped teach them some signing.

Children feel comfortable with staff, and they enjoy staying in the accommodation. Their personalities come out and shine through. They are confident with staff and are relaxed, showing their playfulness, jokes and games. One parent said their child had never instigated banter with other people before their overnight stays.

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

Staff work closely with families and professionals to provide seamless support. This helps to increase safety and stability at home for the children. Staff understand the whole picture for children, not just how they are at school. Staff strongly advocate for one child to ensure their views are not lost among concerns for their sibling. Another child was struggling at home and had been hurting their family. From the persistent support of residential staff and other professionals in school, the social worker describes 'amazing' progress being made by the child. The change is transformational. The child now no longer hurts their family, and they have more positive relationships and healthy routines at weekends. The social worker is hopeful and optimistic about what can be achieved over the coming months.

Staff have a thorough understanding of the children. They know the areas they might struggle with, and there are clear plans in place to help staff know how to provide them with the right support. This includes a comprehensive understanding of how children communicate. Staff respond to children in clear, predictable ways that help to reduce their anxieties, and so reduce the likelihood of incidents. When incidents do occur, these are short in duration. Managers review them for learning. Staff support children to develop their emotional intelligence using a restorative approach. Through this, they teach children how to be considerate of others and how to overcome friendship issues. As a school, leaders have developed and embedded this relational approach to conflict resolution, and they plan to share their findings with the wider special school community.

Staff support children to be safe and develop their safety through using specialised resources. Staff make time for regular discussions about topics such as safety in the community. One parent spoke about the real and tangible impact this has had on their child, with them able to relate this learning to a situation they found themselves in when at home on a weekend.

Staff identify and share safeguarding concerns appropriately. Concerns about staff practice are also shared, and referrals are made to local safeguarding authorities when necessary. Staff receive regular training and opportunities to discuss and explore safeguarding practice.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

School leaders are ambitious and aspirational for the children. Research underpins practice. Leaders are curious and use their initiative to conduct further research of their own to understand how theories can be applied in practice within the accommodation. As a leadership team, learning and practice from the residential provision and the school is disseminated across the academy trust, to support other schools to better meet the needs of autistic children. The residential lead has provided training about autism to local scout leaders.

Staff are committed and dedicated to delivering the stated aims of the residential provision. They understand their role, delivering purposeful, intentional care and support. Knowledgeable staff provide consistency, continuity and familiarity to

children. They delight in their achievements, such as sitting exams or trying new food. They praise children, but also understand that they might struggle with too much admiration. Between themselves, staff enthusiastically share the news and recognise the remarkable progress children make. Staff communicate and work well as a team. This is supported by the systems and processes in place. Staff maintain clear plans and documents about children, which helps them to provide the right support. Autism-specific strategies are identified and are applied with specificity to each child. Staff receive regular supervision to help them in their role. They find managers approachable and that their ideas are listened to in order to improve the service.

Leaders foster excellent relationships with other professionals. Professionals identify that the residential provision helps to bridge the gap between home and school, and that for some families it is vital to provide children with the opportunity to learn skills for the future. One professional calls it 'full circle work'. Another says that care is holistic, intuitive and child-friendly. They say it makes a real and meaningful difference to the children and their families. They identify the amazing progress that is made. This feedback correlates with the findings of this inspection. For some children, the support they receive from staff means they can continue to live safely at home.

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: SC041476

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Fiona Skinner

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Inspector

Clare Nixon, Social Care Inspector

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