

Hailey Hall School

Hailey Hall Academy, Hailey Lane, Hertford SG13 7PB

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Hailey Hall School is a residential and day special school for boys aged 11 to 16 who have learning, social, emotional, behavioural and mental health difficulties. The school is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Hoddesdon. The school is a convertor academy. The residential provision can accommodate a maximum of 33 children. At the time of the inspection, only seven children were boarding, from Monday to Wednesday, during term-time only.

The head of care has been in post since 2009. He has the necessary experience and qualifications for this role.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

We last visited this setting on 12 October 2020 to carry out a monitoring visit. The report is published on the Ofsted website.

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

Inspection dates: 29 November to 1 December 2021

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: 18 June 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The school is currently reviewing the future viability of the residential provision. Although there is some impact on the children, staff are sensitive to the concerns of children who are still boarding and openly discuss with them the impact of the residential provision closing.

The residential provision gives children a home-from-home experience. The children said that staying at the school is like being in a family, and they enjoy spending time with each other. The children spoke with pride about the residential provision and the staff who work with them. Residence is seen as an important and integral part of the school. Effective partnership working between school staff and residential staff ensures that the children have good-quality support and care which enable them to progress socially, emotionally and educationally.

The children are well supported by staff who know them well. However, a reduction in the number of children using the residential provision has had an impact on the number of staff required and therefore the range of activities available. Children said that they enjoy activities, but the fewer number of children means that they do not have the same choices available to them.

In the past, the school has been involved with the Rotary Club to support activities such as Christmas lunch with the elderly. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, community-based activities have not taken place.

Staff support the children to develop independent living skills. Through house meetings and speaking to the independent visitor, children asked if they could add to the range of independence tasks. The tasks now include budgeting, shopping and cooking and more domestic tasks. This further increases the opportunities for children to develop these skills and helps children to see that staff act on their views and requests.

The staff recognise and support children's mental health needs. A local mental health team is now based at the school and children have been able to access their services. A member of staff said that the service is invaluable as the school does not need to go through a referral process for children to have a drop-in session, and the team offers instant advice and strategies for staff to use. Staff can make referrals for more in-depth intervention as needed.

Parents spoken with said that communication between the head of care, the headteacher and the staff is effective. Parents are kept up to date and fully involved in decisions made in the school and the residential provision.

Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements in school and in the residential provision. Staff send positive postcards to children's homes and award nomination points to children for going above and beyond expectations. Boarder of the week is awarded for helping staff and being polite. There is a healthy competition between the children for the boarder of the week award.

Mealtimes are an important part of the residential routine. They are relaxed and sociable occasions at which staff and children eat together. Meals are healthy. The children said that the new chef is amazing, and that children choose the evening menu.

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

Safeguarding procedures at the school have improved since the last inspection. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has developed her role since the last inspection. She works closely with the local authority designated officer and DSLs from other residential special schools to share good practice and training. There is clear evidence that she confidently raises issues with external professionals if she feels that actions, proposed actions or services are not put in place to support children and families.

Children said that they feel safe at the school and that there are education staff and residential staff they can talk to if they are worried or upset. Information reminding children how to complain is readily available to them.

Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding and responding to and reporting concerns to the DSL. All staff have completed appropriate training. Regular safeguarding discussions are held between residential staff. This information sharing helps to safeguard the children.

The management of difficult behaviour has improved since the last full inspection. The lead behaviour staff have implemented new strategies for staff to follow and have trained staff in new behaviour management methods. This has led to a decrease across the school of unwanted behaviours and the need for physical restraint.

The children know and understand the staff's expectations of their behaviour. Staff appropriately challenge unwanted behaviours, following children's care plans. During the inspection, children were observed interacting well with each other.

Children enjoy staying in a safe and well-maintained environment. Any damage in the school or residential provision is quickly rectified. Health and safety matters are taken seriously at the school.

Leaders and managers ensure that there is an effective safe recruitment process. Staff cannot begin to work at the school until all checks are completed and verified.

This helps to ensure that unsuitable people are not employed to work with the children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the last full inspection, there has been a significant change in the senior leadership team. The headteacher now holds the permanent position. The designated safeguarding lead and the special educational needs coordinator, who were both new to the roles at the last full inspection, have embedded new practices across the school which have provided better support for children to achieve.

School and residential staff hold the headteacher in high regard. Staff spoke about the positive impact that the headteacher has had on the school, and said that they feel involved and valued as members of staff.

The senior leadership team is committed to the children's welfare and helping them to make progress. Leaders and managers encourage an ethos of aspiration, pride, and a sense of achievement throughout the school. All senior members of staff know and understand the children's individual needs and personalities.

There has been a change of trustees at the school. The chair is currently looking to recruit new trustees to support the monitoring and development of the school. He has good insight into the development of the school and works closely with the headteacher to achieve this.

Consultation with children has improved. Daily meetings encourage the children to be involved in the running of the residential provision. Children speak to the independent person in private and the children's wishes and feelings are fed back to the head of care and headteacher. Children said that they feel listened to and that staff implement children's ideas. The school council is also an effective way of children being able to present their views.

The staff receive effective training, including specific training to meet children's individual health needs. Regular supervision supports staff to work effectively with the children and helps them to understand children's individual needs.

Parents said that residential experience has supported their children to progress socially and educationally, and that children have been helped to improve their behaviours.

The headteacher has met the three points of improvement made at the last inspection.

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: SC056397

Headteacher: Paul Delamaine

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector

Trish Palmer, Social Care Inspector

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