Elemore Hall School

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

The inspectors inspected the social care provision at this school.

Elemore Hall School is a maintained residential special school for pupils who may experience social and emotional difficulties and may have mental health difficulties. The school operates across three sites. There are two sites for children aged 11 to 16 years old, both of which have a residential provision. The third site offers an alternative educational provision.

There is one headteacher across all three sites, who is supported by his senior leadership team. There are 206 pupils on roll. Accommodation is provided for up to 27 boys and girls at the Elemore Hall site and for up to 20 girls and boys at the Windlestone site.

The school provides flexible stays for pupils, from one to four nights per week. Accommodation is provided close to the main school buildings. Both sites have large outdoor spaces and one site has a farm that children can access. Each site has a head of care, and both individuals have suitable skills, experience and qualifications for their role.

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 September 2025

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	good

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: 21 May 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are very happy during their residential stays and have warm and trusting relationships with dedicated staff. The excellent quality of care that children receive is having an impact on the lives of each child. Children are well supported to develop their identities and personalities, achieve familiar and stable routines and plan positively for their futures. Consequently, children are making significant social, personal and academic progress.

Children say they love staying at the residential provision. They thoroughly enjoy spending time with staff doing activities such as ice skating, canoeing, and visiting attractions in the local area such as adventure parks. Children experience special events for example, they recently enjoyed a tea party with the school, in addition the children enjoyed a summer holiday. For some, these experiences are the first of their lives. Parents and other family members recognise the positive impact these opportunities have on their children.

The residential provision is an integral part of the school. The staffing structures differ across the two sites. However, the same hybrid model of staff supporting children in school and residential provides children with continuity of care, stability and tailored support from people who know them very well. Moves to and from school in the morning and evening are seamless because of the highly professional working relationships throughout.

The views of children are highly valued and are central to the operation of the residential provision. The head of care and residential staff are excellent advocates for children. Staff celebrate achievements, no matter how small, and highlight these with children daily. Consequently, children develop increased confidence and self-esteem. One child said, 'It's mint, I'm doing things I never could have imagined. I have made friends, because here I can just be myself.'

Children are helped by staff to develop their own hobbies and interests. This includes one child pursuing their talent in playing chess and gaining a national ranking. Access to a drama group through the residential provision, developed one child's confidence so much that they now attend a drama club outside of school. One parent said, 'It's amazing, their confidence has skyrocketed, [name of child] is doing things I could have only dreamed.'

Children are assigned a personal tutor at the point of admission to the residential provision. This relationship often lasts from the very start of the child's time to the point of departure. The tutor also forms a vital link between families and the school. The strength of relationships between families, children and staff is the cornerstone of the success of the school's approach. One parent said, 'I cannot fault them, they have gone way above and beyond for [name of child] but for the family as a whole.'

Children greatly benefit from a tailored learning experience that extends beyond the classroom and into the residential environment. Children make exceptional progress against their targets because carers recognise opportunities for learning, as well as creating them. One child said, 'I've fell back in love with school, the staff here don't give up on me.'

Children are prepared for their future by developing independence skills individual to their needs. The incremental approach to learning helps them to progress at their own pace as they develop trust and confidence in themselves. Children learn to cook, carry out personal care tasks and establish hygiene routines. Furthermore, staff arrange and facilitate visits for children to local shops and warehouses, as well as trips to local emergency services.

Staff supported one child to regularly attend cadets and arranged a trip to the RAF base. Tailored visits are arranged to local colleges matched to children's interests. Because of this exposure, several children have developed aspirations for their future, including plans to pursue further education at college studying e-sports and agriculture. One child has secured an interview for the army.

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

Safeguarding children is a high priority in the residential provision. Staff understand their responsibilities for protecting children. They promptly pass on their concerns to experienced designated safeguarding officers, who take appropriate action. Referrals to external safeguarding agencies are made as appropriate. Successful partnership working between the school's safeguarding team, external safeguarding agencies and families ensures that all children are protected.

Children are supported to learn about a wide range of topics linked to promoting their safety and understanding of the world. For example, they learn about staying safe online and the associated risks like misinformation and conspiracy theories as well as wider issues such as the latest topics in social media. The ever-changing world outside is brought into the school in this way. Staff work very sensitively with children to help them understand the impact this may have on them and the impact that they can have on the world.

The staff know the children extremely well, and they use highly effective strategies to help children when they may be upset. Their calm, patient approach means that children trust them and feel comfortable and safe in their company. There have been no incidents of restraint since the last inspection. There have also been no complaints, either internally or externally. Parents say that they are incredibly happy with the quality and consistency of care provided to their children.

Children are respectful of one another and are keen to help each other. This reflects the positive and non-threatening culture which has been created by the leaders and

staff. When children fall out, staff help children to quickly repair and restore relationships. Staff focus on ensuring that children have fun and shared experiences that enrich their friendships. They create a family style environment in which difference is accepted and the children's relationships flourish.

Staff are creative in their approach to supporting children to overcome their biggest worries and fears. For instance, staff used desensitisation strategies alongside sensory regulation toys to help one child conquer their fear of water. Through patient, sustained and imaginative support the child overcame their fear. They are now able to wash their own hair and enjoy their bath time. This progress is life changing for children. One parent said, 'Staff encourage my child out of their comfort zone, which means they are becoming more independent and less scared to try new things. Staff really help me to help my child.'

Children have access to services on site to improve their emotional well-being, including the dedicated mental health and wellbeing lead who works regularly in the residential provision. Children benefit immensely from having the time and space to explore their feelings and emotions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The two heads of care work extremely well together. Their energy and enthusiasm positively influence staff, who are equally motivated and committed to achieving positive outcomes for the children. This underpins the residential provision sustained delivery of high-quality care that builds on children's achievements and progress made in school.

Experienced, dedicated staff provide excellent care to children. They are creative, reflective and thinking all the time about ways to improve children's experiences and the progress that they make. Staff praise the support from managers and hold residential leaders in high regard.

Staff confidently use the school's recording system for reporting and monitoring the day-to-day experiences for children. However, the records completed do not always support leaders to demonstrate to someone less familiar how concerns are followed through after a reported incident. However, there is no impact on children.

All staff have the required qualifications, and they undertake a range of training and development to enhance their knowledge and skills. They share a common aim of providing an excellent residential experience for children, to enhance their life skills, experiences and learning. Staff receive regular supervision, and their care practice is subject to regular review by the heads of care. The support to the heads of care is less structured and they do not receive formal documented supervision sessions. This has not impacted on their roles and duties being completed to a very high standard. The head teacher put a plan in place to address this immediately.

Monitoring of the residential provision by the board is effective. The residential setting is a regular agenda item at the board meetings. In addition, members from the board regularly visit the provision, sometimes unannounced. This ensures that the children's experiences and the quality of provision are systematically kept under review.

Since the last inspection, there have been changes in the senior leadership team, including a new headteacher. Financial investment has been made in the residential provision. There have been updates to children's bedrooms and the furniture throughout the residential sites. New recording systems have been introduced and are in their infancy. However, the staff were enthusiastic about the change. One member of staff said, 'It's a digital revolution.'

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

Points for improvement

- The integrated safeguarding recording system should allow the school's governing body, trustees and/or proprietor monitor the effectiveness of the leadership, management, and delivery of the residential and welfare provision in the school and take appropriate action where necessary. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', page 30, paragraph 2.1)

- School leaders should ensure that the head of care receives at least termly supervision and a formal annual appraisal of their performance. Systems should ensure that there is documented evidence of the support provided. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', page 8, paragraph 26.6)

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: SC040508

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Michael Hunter

Type of school: Residential Special School

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Inspectors

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