

# Sheiling School

Horton Road, Ashley, Ringwood, Dorset BH24 2EB

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

This residential special school for students aged 5 to 19 is run according to principles inspired by Rudolf Steiner. The school has 43 students, with residential accommodation for up to 9 students with a learning disability. At the time of this inspection 8 students were staying in the accommodation. All 8 students were seen and spoken to.

The inspector only inspected the residential provision at this school.

### Inspection dates: 20 to 22 January 2026

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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:** 4 December 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Students continue to make exceptional progress because of the aspirational environment leaders and managers foster. A stable team of skilled and knowledgeable staff has continued to provide high-quality, consistent care for the students. They provide students with strong levels of nurturing support so the students can flourish and reach their full potential.

Students enjoy their residential experience and staff provide them with creative and varied opportunities, for example, staff organise lively social events in the hall, students are supported to bake and help to prepare food. One student spoke about their mealtime jobs, which creates a sense of community and collaboration. Students have access to a range of activities and enjoy going bowling, swimming and exploring new places. Students make friends and enjoy spending time with others.

Students make remarkable progress. Staff understand students well and use their positive relationships to identify how to best support them. Students develop their communication and language skills, their personal care skills and increase the variety of different foods they eat. Students develop their independence and confidence, so they are more confident in meeting their own needs for personal care. There are strong links between residential and school with an emphasis on a 24-hour curriculum, which provides a seamless approach for the students.

Students settle well when they move into the accommodation. Detailed assessments are supported by overnight visits. This ensures that students settle well with staff who know how to meet their needs. At the end of their time at the school, students receive well-planned, timely support to prepare for their transition towards college. This strong level of support means that students take confident steps towards adulthood.

The staff have created a warm and homely environment for students to spend quality time in. Staff provide nutritious, well-planned meals for students. Students benefit from a range of facilities on the school site, including the swimming pool, gym and play areas. There are woodlands to explore and deer roaming the grounds; this ensures there is a relaxed, calm environment for students to spend time in.

There are robust working relationships between staff, families and other professionals. Social workers are positive about the progress students make. One parent commented that the school is 'amazing' and that their child 'thrives'. The parent described the school's impact as being life changing. They said the school is 'a true jewel'.

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

A consistent, stable staff team has continued to care for the students since the last inspection. The staff are highly skilled and knowledgeable; they have a good understanding of students' needs and how to support them effectively. As such, students respond well to the routines and boundaries that staff put in place. Physical intervention is used as a last resort and there is a reduction in its use. Leaders support staff to critically reflect following incidents, ensuring they continuously review students' needs and how to best provide support.

Staff remain vigilant to unexplained bruising to students. Staff take appropriate action when bruises are identified, including informing parents and social workers. On one occasion, a bruise was not reported correctly by school staff which led to a delay of several hours for the subsequent investigation.

Leaders provide varied training around best practice for medication administration. There are robust systems in place to track and administer medication. Thorough review of administration records means that leaders identify recording errors. One child's medication was missed; however this did not have a negative impact on the child.

Leaders take robust action when concerns about staff practice are identified. When appropriate, they support staff with re-training, reflection and learning to improve practice and to maintain high standards to care for children. Leaders foster an open culture, which means staff inform leaders when practice falls below expected standards.

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

Strong and consistent leadership creates a culture of growth and learning. Leaders continue to review and develop staff practice. They inspire staff and create an environment which allows the residential provision to continue to develop. Leaders and managers implement effective plans so the service can continue to improve.

Leaders provide high quality, reflective support and supervision for staff. Staff spoke highly of their managers and said they feel valued and well supported. They enjoy working in the residential spaces and being able to support the students. Leaders have taken steps to embed highly effective staff training and development, improving the quality of care further. This includes innovative strategies to encourage staff understanding of therapeutic approaches.

Leaders have excellent oversight of the care provided to students and track and monitor the progress they make. Leaders understand what is working well, as well as the areas for development. Managers strongly advocate for the students, to make improvements to their care. This strong practice results in sustained improvement in the students' lives.

The leadership team continues to collaborate effectively with family members, social workers and other professionals. There is regular contact with families that ensures that students' needs continue to be met. Parental feedback indicates that there are regular conversations about students' wellbeing, behaviour and their progress. Parents say that staff are always approachable if they need to discuss anything.

## **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:** 2671699

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Corine van Barneveld

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Sarah Sheffield, Social Care Inspector

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