

# Holbrook School for Autism

Holbrook Centre for Autism, Port Way, Holbrook, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 0TE  
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

The Holbrook School for Autism is a specialist school for children and young people who have autism and learning disabilities. The pupils' ages range from four to 19. It was a Derbyshire County Council local authority maintained residential special school until July 2018. The school now has academy status. It is in a rural suburb of Derby.

The residential service operates from Monday to Thursday in term time. Seven pupils can reside at any one time. Each pupil usually stays for one night per week.

**Inspection dates:** 9 to 11 January 2019

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
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:** 16 January 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- The newly established management team has provided excellent leadership through a period of organisational change.
- Residential staff continually search for new ways to improve care provision. This means that children enjoy the very best standards of care.
- Education and residential staff work effectively with a range of professionals. This ensures that children benefit from tailored care which meets children's unique, complex needs.
- Children make excellent progress with their education, recreational and social development. This is because of the residential experience.
- Safeguarding is a priority for all staff. This means that children are safe. There have been no safeguarding incidents.
- Managers are innovative. They lead new initiatives which bring enormous benefit to children and their families.
- Internal and external monitoring is meticulous. This scrutiny ensures that the residential provision is monitored, reviewed and quality assured.

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

## Inspection judgements

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

The children, who have complex needs, make excellent and sustained progress. This is because of the positive effect of their residential stays. Staff ensure that residential planning is expertly tailored to each child's needs and their targets. This means that progress is measured according to the child. One parent said: 'Holbrook is an amazing school that caters for all levels of ability. My son's needs are very high, and he has made so much progress since he started.'

The residential team has high aspirations for children. The whole school approach means that the residential and education team have a clear focus on individual needs and targets. Effective communication between staff enables enhanced learning through the positive experiences and opportunities in the residential provision.

The experience of residential care enriches children's experiences and progress. Children enjoy residential care. They say that they 'love it' and 'want more time'. They are provided with opportunities that they might otherwise not have. Activities are tailored to the group and to individual interests. Children take part in the Duke of Edinburgh awards, community engagement and a range of indoor and outdoor activities.

Healthcare is of paramount importance. Medication and healthcare practice is excellent. Children benefit from occupational and speech and language therapy. Mental health and emotional well-being is a priority. Staff ensure that they provide meticulous care to support individual needs.

Residential stays are of enormous benefit for children and their families. Relationships with families are strong. One parent said that communication is 'flawless'. Staff are effective in reassuring children and their parents, alleviating anxieties and giving families the confidence to care for their children. The pastoral and safeguarding manager said: 'We want to get the best outcomes for children and the family as a whole.'

Teaching children independence skills is a strength of this provision. Children take part in a development programme leading to accredited awards. This means that they learn practical self-care and life skills. As a result, children develop confidence in their own abilities.

The residential provision has won school of the year for the past two years with a national school awards scheme. This scheme recognises schools that demonstrate excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. The work of the residential team means that children benefit from improved health and well-being because of more active lifestyles.

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

Safeguarding children is a strength of this school. There have been no safeguarding concerns since the last inspection.

The school and residential provision has an innovative pastoral and safeguarding manager. She drives forward initiatives to ensure that safeguarding is a key priority. She has started an early help programme to prevent the need for safeguarding intervention. She has energy, drive and passion. This, combined with her extensive knowledge, means that safeguarding is at the heart of the school.

Safeguarding arrangements are extremely robust. Well-trained staff understand and implement an extensive range of safeguarding policies and procedures. They are aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding children and know how to respond and report concerns. This means that children are kept safe.

Educating children to understand and manage their own safety is exceptional. The programme of safeguarding education is ongoing and extensive. This means that all children benefit from a meaningful safeguarding education.

From an early age, all children are provided with a choice of care regarding intimate and personal care. The school has an ethos of enabling children to become more independent. This means that children have more control to protect themselves from potential harm.

Designated safeguarding officers and managers confirm that there are no concerns about safeguarding practice. Allegations are reported in line with procedures. Staff attend training and school safeguarding forums.

Families and children confirm that they feel safe on residential visits. Governors and independent visitors routinely visit the residential provision and confirm that there is robust safeguarding practice.

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

In September 2018, the school saw significant changes in leadership and management. The headteacher is now the chief executive officer of the school's academy trust. There is a new acting headteacher. The former head of care remains in the school as the pastoral and safeguarding officer. The new head of care is a well-established senior residential care worker. This means that the school continues to be managed by a team that knows the school, pupils and parents very well.

The newly restructured management team has ensured the continuation of excellent standards of care. The management team evaluates the effectiveness of the provision, and has clear insight regarding the operation of the school and residence. Staff are aspirational and have high expectations of themselves and their team.

The residential provision continues to operate exceptionally well. This is because the cohesive and well-established residential staff team continues to deliver excellent

standards of care and support. Staff are not complacent about their role, but are ambitious to continue to improve care provision and achieve the best outcomes for all children.

Internal and external monitoring is excellent. The independent visitor, governors and senior personnel from the organisation critically analyse service provision. Additional audits are commissioned and undertaken by experienced professionals. Internal monitoring provides detailed analysis of care quality. These combined processes ensure continuous service development, which mean the provider continues to deliver outstanding care and support to all children.

## **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:** SC058960

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Laura Russell

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

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## **Inspectors:**

Amanda Ellis, social care regulatory inspector (lead)  
Davinia Lawton, social care regulatory inspector (team)



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