

# Furrowfield School

1 Furrowfield School, Whitehill Drive, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE10 9RZ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Furrowfield is a day and residential special school for up to 73 children and young people who are aged between 11 and 16 years and who have social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties. There are currently 13 children and young people receiving residential services.

**Inspection dates:** 12 to 14 March 2019

**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:** 7 November 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- The children and young people receive outstanding individualised care that meets their needs. Their views are very much considered, and the quality of the relationships between the staff and the children and young people are exemplary.
- The children and young people have exceeded expectations in their progress and achievements. This is due to the exceptional care and support that they receive.
- The staff team members are committed, caring and nurturing. Their innovative approach reaps positive outcomes that enable the children and young people to flourish.
- The children and young people are safe. Behaviour is managed extremely positively, which has resulted in a significant reduction of physical restraints.
- Relationships with parents, families and professionals are exceptional.
- Leaders and managers are strong, focused and consistent. The positive ethos and focus on improving the children's and young people's progress and development are inspiring.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- To improve the quality of the children's and young people's individual risk assessments.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that the children's and young people's individual risk assessments set out all their known risks and how these will be minimised.

## Inspection judgements

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

Exceptional and individualised care strongly features in all aspects of the support that the staff provide to the children and young people. Outcomes from this inspection leave no doubt that the significant progress made by the children and young people is a direct result of their attendance and boarding at this school. Consequently, all the children and young people have progressed from their starting points, with many of them exceeding all expectations.

Respectful relationships between the staff and the children and young people are instrumental in securing the children's and young people's emotional well-being. The staff have a nurturing, caring approach, which is mirrored by the children and young people. As a result, the children and young people learn how to form trusting bonds. Interactions between the children and young people are equally positive, and meaningful friendships are established.

The children's and young people's health needs, including their emotional and mental health, are met. The school has introduced a children's rights charter that links effectively to the school's focus on operating a nurturing environment. The school has secured a gold award, from UNICEF, because of the outstanding work that it is doing to promote and respect the children and young people and their rights, including the right to access the individualised health and emotional support that they need.

Consultation with the children and young people is substantial. The staff are attentive, and they create a range of opportunities for the children and young people to have open and honest discussions. Leaders and managers understand that key workers are instrumental in engaging the children and young people. Consequently, changes have been made so that the children choose their key worker rather than have a key worker allocated to them.

The children and young people are progressing academically. Statistical data shows that the children's and young people's learning improvements coincide with them moving into the residential provision. School attendance has also significantly improved.

Transitions are managed seamlessly. Comprehensive planning and purposeful consultation are instrumental in enabling the children and young people to cope with what can be a significant life change. For children coming to the school, the induction process is extremely positive. School leavers are equally prepared to move on, with good pathway planning and support to learn independence skills.

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

The children and young people are kept safe during their residential stays. Good levels of observation and supervision reduce risks on a day-to-day basis. All the staff have had child protection training and they know what to do if they suspect a child or young person may be at risk.

Behaviour management is exceptionally positive. The school places a high emphasis on encouraging and rewarding good behaviour, which is reaping outstanding results. The children and young people enthusiastically engage with the school's points system, which had led to a significant reduction in disruptive behaviours in the classroom and in the use of physical restraints.

Environmental health, safety and fire safety are very well organised. This protects the children, young people, staff and visitors. Full employment checks are undertaken to ensure that the children and young people do not have access to unsuitable adults.

A recommendation is raised in this report to improve the quality of the residential risk assessments, to ensure that they fully encompass all known risks. This does not impact on the safety of the children and young people currently having residential stays.

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

The executive headteacher is an inspirational leader who manages an exceptional senior management team. The positive ethos and energy that centre around improving the outcomes for the children and young people are shared by every staff member. Positivity, nurturing and believing that the children and young people can thrive and achieve are embedded throughout the school. This resolute focus and commitment have delivered unprecedented improvement since the last inspection.

Leaders and managers place a high emphasis on valuing the staff. The relationship between the school and residential staff is seamless, which delivers high levels of consistency and continuity. Staff absence is minimal throughout the school, and there has been no staff absence in the residential unit. This dedication from the staff is commendable.

The residential provision is meeting its aims and objectives and is surpassing expectations. The staff are committed to the children, young people and their families. There are numerous examples where the staff go over and above to improve the children's and young people's outcomes. The staff's innovative practice, positive relationships and high levels of empathy are intrinsic to the children's and young people's success and their considerable achievements.

The school's monitoring and oversight are thorough and meaningful. Successes are celebrated, and areas of weakness are identified and promptly addressed. Focused

action planning results in the ongoing development of the school to ensure and maintain extraordinarily high standards of care and education. Multi-agency working is unquestionably a strength, which ensures that the children and young people have access to all the services that they need.

The promotion of children's and young people's equality and diversity is a priority. Leaders, managers and the staff are dynamic advocates for the children and young people. They actively challenge situations where they feel that the children and young people are not receiving the services that they need. Equally, they maintain positive professional relationships with other agencies involved in the children's and young people's care.

## **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:** SC054500

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Mrs Michelle Richards

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Telephone number:** 0191 495 4700

**Email address:** furrowfieldschool@gateshead.gov.uk

## **Inspector**

Debbie White, social care inspector (lead)





The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019