

# Frewen College

Frewen Educational Trust Ltd, Frewen College, Brickwall, Rye Road, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6NL

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this residential special school**

Frewen College is an independent day and residential special school for students aged between seven and 19 years. The school provides specialist education for students with dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, sensory integration or speech and communication difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, there were 136 students on roll, including 26 residential students. Boys live in the main school building and girls live in a separate house in the school grounds.

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

### **Inspection dates: 26 to 28 September 2023**

**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 last inspection:** 31 January 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

Students are well cared for by enthusiastic and committed staff. Students maintain positive interactions with those around them because relationships are built on trust and mutual respect. As a result, many students have secure friendships and are confident communicating with staff and other adults.

Students told inspectors that they like their accommodation and there is distinction between school and where they live. This provides stability and many students describe living in this environment as being part of a big family.

Students are proud of the school's history and surroundings. Staff support students to personalise their residential accommodation. This provides students with a sense of belonging and individuality.

Dedicated senior leaders and staff work diligently to ensure the vast historic environment is maintained. However, the inspectors identified improvements needed in the accommodation to ensure there is a homely feel. For example, some small areas where maintenance work had been completed needed repainting.

There are plenty of opportunities for students to engage in outdoor activities and sport. The recent investment in a new basketball court has been welcomed enthusiastically by students. Students enjoy the opportunity to develop friendships and share experiences.

Conscientious staff support students to increase their independence and social skills. However, students are not always consulted before decisions are made by staff. For example, students had to move to different bedrooms at very short notice, without being consulted. This affected some students' emotional well-being. Nonetheless, the inspectors found numerous other examples of students' wishes and feelings being considered.

Students of all ages make up the school council. Students said they have opportunities to express their views and opinions. Although some communication could be better between education and boarding, students generally felt that the school council had a voice and was heard by senior leaders. This related in particular to the improvements made to the showers and furniture in the accommodation.

Attentive and empathic staff maintain good oversight of all students' health and well-being. A purpose-built health department is managed by a named professional. Student records are meticulously maintained to a high standard. All staff are aware of students' health needs, including allergies and forthcoming routine appointments. As a result, all students have received the necessary specialist support.

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

Students said they feel safe living at the school. Staff are always aware of students' whereabouts. Careful planning and clear expectations of students enable some to take age-appropriate risks, for example, travelling a long distance independently. However, this approach is not consistently applied, which prevents increased independence for some older students.

Overall, the safeguarding of students is good. Efficient staff work proactively in collaboration with relevant agencies. However, on one occasion, staff did not follow their statutory duties. A delay in reporting a disclosure by a student prevented swift action being taken to ensure the necessary processes were followed and that appropriate support was in place for the child.

Senior leaders implement clear and appropriate boundaries in relation to electronic devices, including mobile phones. Staff educate students about related risks and how to stay safe online. As a result, all students have age-appropriate access to devices, which are monitored to ensure their safety and well-being.

Positive behaviour is promoted, with staff acting as excellent role models, helping students to develop their self-control and responsibility. Physical intervention to manage any behaviour is extremely rare. On the one occasion staff held a child, this was appropriately managed by trained and knowledgeable staff. All information was recorded well and shared with the required professionals. The student's views and feelings were noted clearly, using their own words.

When new staff join the school accommodation team, they are subject to suitable checks and rigorous safer recruitment processes, including overseas checks. When staff families live or stay at the school, appropriate suitability checks are completed before their stay. This ensures that students are cared for by appropriate adults.

All areas of the accommodation and immediate surroundings were seen by inspectors. Health and safety standards are well maintained. The safety and well-being of students are a priority for all staff. Consequently, maintenance issues and hazards are addressed quickly. Therefore, students live in a safe and secure environment.

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

All boarding staff told inspectors that they feel incredibly supported and able to share their ideas and views with senior leaders. The new head of boarding and vice-principal have settled extremely well into their respective roles. As a result, the students continue to receive a high standard of care.

The leadership team meets regularly. This is an opportunity to learn and reflect on practice and feedback from outside professionals and significant others such as

relatives of students. Complaints are managed in a timely way. Detailed recording and clear outcomes of complaints provide confidence that the school learns from mistakes.

The governing body includes a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills. There is good oversight by the safeguarding and boarding governor. Discussions with students and staff ensure the governing body can fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

The leadership team is new, and their ideas will take time to embed, however, they are committed to their work and bring skills and ideas, together with a wealth of experience and knowledge. For example, new systems are needed to identify the training needs of staff. Monitoring in all areas needs to be strengthened to ensure the school is meeting all actions identified in its own improvement and development plan. There is on occasion a lack of cohesive informed and collective oversight by the senior leadership team. As a result, information is recorded in numerous different places. This leads to difficulty in collating information comprehensively and effectively.

The independent visitor offers some level of additional scrutiny. However, their reports are not analytical and do not offer thorough oversight of previously set during each visit. As a result, there is drift in completing some actions and is it not always clear if actions are carried out at all. Likewise, the use of out-of-date legislation has not been identified and rectified by the senior leadership team.

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

### **Points for improvement**

- School leaders should ensure that effective monitoring and quality assurance systems are in place. These should encompass the overlap of the education and residential provisions.
- School leaders should ensure that the leadership team understands its role and responsibilities within statutory frameworks and legislation. For example, when children disclose possible abuse, this should be reported to relevant agencies quickly.
- School leaders and senior staff should enable children to take age-appropriate risks.
- School leaders should ensure that all staff, and the independent person, are familiar with updates to legislation and practice and are following the current version.

### **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:** SC049345

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Nick Goodman

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector

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