Ofsted
raising standards
improving lives

Meath School

Brox Road, Ottershaw, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 0LF

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This school is a non-maintained special primary school. It provides an integrated approach, including education, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and residential care.

It currently provides 74 places to children aged 4 to 11 years, whose primary needs arise from severe and complex speech, language and communication difficulties. The school offers residential services and an extended school-day programme. Up to 15 children can stay overnight for 'sleepovers' at any one time. Children stay between one and four nights a week, as agreed with their parents.

The school is owned and managed by the children's communication charity Speech and Language UK. The residential accommodation is on the first floor of the main school building.

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

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 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	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: 28 January 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are thriving and flourishing in the residential provision and feel a sense of belonging. Children said they like everything about staying at the school and especially enjoy the food. Children make excellent progress. Staff have supported them to develop positive boundaries, sleep routines, and strategies to manage their emotions. They have also helped children overcome barriers to learning, improvements in behaviour, and enhance self-care skills.

Children advance their communication skills significantly. Staff support them to use a range of communication methods so they can engage with staff and their peers. All staff use sign language and teach this to children. This holistic approach to communication helps children to express themselves and build friendships with each other. Children's views are strongly represented, with frequent opportunities to provide feedback. This has increased their confidence and enabled inclusion across the school.

Staff build warm, caring and trusting relationships with children, who enjoy spending time with them. Staff give positive encouragement, so children feel relaxed and comfortable in their presence. Staff overcome barriers in communication, by being attuned to children's feelings and recognising their emotions, so that children receive an excellent standard of care.

A multi-disciplinary team provide children with an extensive level of support, which is both individualised and needs led. Staff regularly share information to ensure that both teaching and residential staff are up to date and included in all aspects of children's experiences. This ensures that staff swiftly identify support needs. Evening activities are skilfully planned to ensure they contribute to children's development. Occupational therapists design activities to support development of motor skills. Other activities such as role play help children to build their social skills. Staff identify opportunities to help children develop independence skills

Children benefit from a robust induction programme, which helps ensure they settle well. Children feel ready for staying because staff help them prepare. Plans made in advance ensures there are smooth transitions and social stories and visuals support children to understand. This helps alleviate anxiety and so children feel welcome. Children describe their residential stays as having 'sleep overs' with their friends, which are exciting and fun.

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

A very experienced safeguarding team work collaboratively to support children and keep them safe. Staff co-ordinate care with parents and professionals in a timely

manner, so there is an immediate focus on concerns. Leaders and managers have excellent oversight, and all involved staff work together to minimise any escalation.

Behaviour incidents are infrequent because of a clear and effective ethos. Staff use a clear model that focuses on preventative and de-escalation techniques. This supports children with their emotions and reduces their need for additional support. Staff regularly praise children and recognise good behaviour with rewards and positive encouragement. There has been no use of restraint or any significant behaviour incidents. Strong relationships with staff help children feel safe and supported in times of crisis. Staff give children the tools and coping strategies to help them manage their emotions in a safe space.

Staff encourage children to respect and encourage their peers. Relationships between children are kind and supportive, and they share a sense of achievement and praise each other. This gives children strong values and helps them develop positive self-esteem and confidence.

Leaders and managers address concerns about staff practice in a robust and timely manner, so there is effective management oversight. They adhere to internal and external protocols and seek professional advice in the best interests of children, so investigations are comprehensive and thorough.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The principal creates an inspirational culture and ensures staff provide children with exceptional experiences. She has developed a whole school approach to independence, so children are fully prepared for their future. She has in-depth oversight of the residential provision and has built positive relationships with children.

A highly dedicated residential manager ensures that children have a 'home from home' experience. She goes over and above to support staff to use a child led approach, listening and responding to children's needs, and providing them a safe, nurturing, and predictable environment.

Residential staff said that the manager is approachable and supportive. Staff receive comprehensive training, so they are confident to meet children's needs. Residential and teaching staff work cohesively so children receive purposeful and consistent care. Staff use a range of interventions to support children and are committed to their learning.

Staff talk enthusiastically about the progress that children have made. They said that they are intrinsic in all decision making and that support is adapted to each child. The benefit of a small setting, together with the commitment of staff, has enabled staff to fully understand children and their communication and learning needs. Furthermore, staff have completed research projects, which has improved their knowledge and upskilled them, so they have the resources to support children.

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for the school and strive to make continuous improvements for children. There is strong governance across the school, and a leadership team who continue to raise standards. They welcome advice and guidance from the independent visitor, which is highly valued, and they respond well to any recommendations.

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 Care Standards Act 2000 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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC013925

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Majella Delaney

Type of school: Residential Special School

Telephone number: 01932 872302

Email address: majella.delaney@meathschool.org.uk

Inspector

Emma Fryer, Social Care Inspector

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 looked after children, 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.

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 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.

This publication is available at http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/.

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
W: http://www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2026