



Inspection Report on

Héronsbridge

Bridgend

Date Inspection Completed

25/10/2023

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About Heronsbridge

Type of care provided	Residential Special School
Registered Provider	Bridgend County Borough Council Adults and Children's Services
Registered places	6
Language of the service	English
Previous Care Inspectorate Wales inspection	15/09/2015
Does this service promote Welsh language and culture?	This service is working towards providing an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and demonstrates a significant effort to promoting the use of the Welsh language and culture.

Summary

Heronsbridge school provides a residential service in two houses which are located in the grounds of the school. Heronsbridge provide a service for up to six children who attend the Centre for Autism. The service operates during term time only, from Monday evening until Friday morning.

Children and their families are provided information about the school, how their needs will be met and are involved in planning their care and support. Children are making positive progress in their development. Children receive individualised care and consistent routines from staff who know them well. Children have opportunities to do things they like. There are a range of facilities available within the school grounds which promote positive well-being.

The service is organised and run effectively with clear lines of accountability and leadership between the Head of Care and the Headteacher. Childrens' families and Local Authority commissioners told us they are happy with the standards of care and support provided to children. Staff told us they feel supported within their role and have suitable training and supervision.

Well-being

Children and their families are provided information about the school, and how the support offered, can help them achieve positive well-being. A children's guide helps children understand their new routine and what to expect. This is written in a format which supports individual communication needs. Most children have limited verbal communication skills, but staff are aware of how best to communicate with them and successfully use a variety of communication aids.

Children are encouraged and supported to make as many decisions as possible every day. Staff know children's likes and dislikes but ensure they are given opportunities to make choices. We saw children make decisions about what they eat and activities they complete. Children and their families are provided information on how to raise any concerns. Their views are sought and encouraged when planning the care and support they receive.

Children are supported to be healthy and happy. Detailed information is included in plans regarding their health needs, and they have good routines. If children become unwell during their stay, they return to their family. There is a robust procedure in place for medication management, which prevents any errors occurring. Some children have a limited diet, which is linked to their specific needs. Staff encourage children to develop confidence to try new foods. Children are offered a variety of home cooked healthy meals, which are enjoyed together. Children receive high levels of structure, routine and predictable care, which helps manage their anxiety. They engage in activities which support their development. A range of facilities are available on the school site, which support children's physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Staff work closely with day staff at the school to ensure children receive consistency in care and detailed handovers are passed on. Regular updates are provided to families during children's stays. Staff treat children and their families with dignity and respect. We saw warm interactions. Children are supported to develop independence skills, which are appropriate for their stage of development.

Children are safeguarded. Staff are trained and understand their responsibilities. Care staff showed us they have safeguarding procedures on their phones, for easy access. Staff respond quickly to risks to children's well-being. Incidents are recorded and reviewed by the well-being team who consider any lessons learnt and if any changes need to be made to reduce risks of repeated incidents. There is a positive behaviour management policy in place which is followed. Incident levels and use of physical intervention is low.

Care and Support

Children's experience of admission and leaving the school is planned and supported, in line with their individual needs. The Head of Care considers information within new referrals, spends time with class teachers and gathers further information from Local Authority commissioners. They consider the impact of new children arriving on current children receiving care and support, prioritising their stability. They meet families, to better understand children's needs and consider how staff can support children to achieve positive outcomes. Transition plans support children during introductions to the service and when leaving. These are reviewed regularly and changed if required, to best support children's needs.

Children receive predictable care and support from skilled staff who know them well. Children's personal plans and risk assessments are detailed, providing staff key information they need to meet their needs. Plans are sent to Local Authority commissioners and the Head of Care attends Local Authority review meetings of children's care and support. Plans are monitored and reviewed every half term, and changes made when required. Children's families are consulted and asked their views. Plans include information about children's family, their likes, dislikes, how they communicate and how staff can support them to achieve positive well-being.

Staff are passionate and proactive, ensuring children are provided a range of opportunities which support their growth and development. This includes consistent routines, so children know what to expect. Children are provided opportunities to do things they enjoy, including activities inside and outside of the school grounds. When risks are posed to children's well-being, appropriate action is taken to reduce these and additional staffing provided when required. Plans consider the least restrictions possible for children and are effective in keeping them safe. Children are making positive progress and risks posed to their well-being have reduced. The consistency between school and residential is working well and is making transitions smooth and short for children. Children are making progress in their education, spending more time in the classroom and their anxiety has reduced.

Children's families told us the care and support provided is excellent and they know who to speak to if they have any concerns. The Head of Care works closely with children's families, sharing their knowledge, expertise and strategies which support children's needs. Local Authority commissioners told us children have progressed developmentally during their time at residential and the support offered has helped keep families together. Children are making positive progress in their communication and self-care skills.

Environment

Children stay in houses, that are clean and support them to achieve their well-being. The two houses are identical in design and are located in the grounds of Heronsbridge School. A number of facilities are available to children, within the school grounds, which they can access during the evenings. This includes a pool, hydro pool, trampolines, an orchard, swings, yard, game pitch and outside gym equipment.

The houses have been decorated neutrally, in line with children's individual needs. Within the entrances, photographs of children completing activities are on display. Staff photographs are also on display, highlighting which staff are working that day. This helps prepare children for who to expect when they finish school. Children have space to relax and enjoy activities. The lounges have adequate seating and a television which is securely sited behind a perspex screen. Some furniture has been secured to floors to ensure the safety of children and staff. The dining rooms have a large table, where meals are enjoyed together. Kitchens have all the equipment required to meet children's needs.

Upstairs, there are two bedrooms in each house for children, and a third staff bedroom/office. An ensuite has been added to the staff bedrooms, which provide additional toilet and washing facilities. This allows children to have complete use of their own bathroom. Children can choose to have a shower or bath. Bedrooms have adequate storage. Furniture is secured to walls, to ensure these do not pose a risk. All children's bedroom doors have a small window with a curtain, which allows staff to look into bedrooms and supervise children. We are told, not all children require this, and these have been used to monitor children's behaviour, when required and from a distance. The use of windows on bedroom doors, impacts children's privacy. We were told the school will review the use of these, considering good practice and whether other action can be taken to reduce risks to children and staff, when monitoring and supporting children's behaviours.

Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risks from fire and other hazards. Visitors have to sign in and out when visiting the school and are made aware of the safeguarding policy and who to contact if they have concerns. Medication is stored safely. Adaptations have been made when required, and risk assessed to ensure the environment is safe, secure for children and protects them from harm. This includes the use of stable doors, to enable children to interact with staff whilst ensuring safety and privacy screens on windows. Staff regularly complete fire drills and discuss fire evacuation procedures during team meetings and supervision.

Leadership and Management

Children are cared for by adequate numbers of staff who are vetted, understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently. Most of the staff team have worked at the school for a long time, which offers children continuity of care. New staff complete a comprehensive induction which includes shadow shifts with the Head of Care. Staff receive supervision every three months, which they feel is adequate. Supervisions cover staff well-being, reflections on practice and discussions regarding continued professional development. Staff are provided a range of training which assists them to understand and meet children's needs. This includes annual safeguarding, trauma informed schools, behaviour management, communication and training linked to specific medical conditions. Staff have further opportunity to reflect on practice during their annual appraisals. Actions are identified and reviewed throughout the year.

There are clear lines of accountability and leadership between the Head of Care and the Headteacher, who are passionate, children receive the best possible care and make good progress. Staff are confident in their roles, are clear on their responsibilities and children's routines. Children are benefitting from the relaxed home environment provided, which lowers their anxiety. Staff told us they feel supported in the role, there is positive team morale, and the job is rewarding. Staff support each other through challenging times and work together to find solutions to keep children safe.

The Head of Care and Headteacher have oversight of the care provided to children and are proactive in addressing any areas, which require improvement. When incidents occur, these are reviewed by the well-being team, which includes input from psychology. Debriefs are completed with staff and analysis of any triggers and lessons learnt. Children's plans and risk assessments are reviewed to ensure they are appropriate and best meet their needs. The Headteacher reviews all incidents involving physical intervention and regularly visits the houses. There was no evidence of monitoring visits being completed, which considers the welfare of children residing at the school. However, the Head of Care has recently developed a checklist which will support Governors during their monitoring visits. We were told these will start shortly.

Summary of Non-Compliance

Status	What each means
New	This non-compliance was identified at this inspection.
Reviewed	Compliance was reviewed at this inspection and was not achieved. The target date for compliance is in the future and will be tested at next inspection.
Not Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was not achieved.
Achieved	Compliance was tested at this inspection and was achieved.

We respond to non-compliance with regulations where poor outcomes for people, and / or risk to people’s well-being are identified by issuing Priority Action Notice (s).

The provider must take immediate steps to address this and make improvements. Where providers fail to take priority action by the target date we may escalate the matter to an Improvement and Enforcement Panel.

Priority Action Notice(s)

Regulation	Summary	Status
N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A

Where we find non-compliance with regulations but no immediate or significant risk for people using the service is identified we highlight these as Areas for Improvement.

We expect the provider to take action to rectify this and we will follow this up at the next inspection. Where the provider has failed to make the necessary improvements we will escalate the matter by issuing a Priority Action Notice.

Area(s) for Improvement

Regulation	Summary	Status
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N/A	No non-compliance of this type was identified at this inspection	N/A
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