

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 and co-occurring specific learning difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, there were 126 students on roll and 23 were boarding overnight.

The school has capacity for 37 boarders across two boarding houses. Boarding places are offered via full-time placements, weekly boarding and flexi-boarding. 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: 18 to 20 March 2025

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 previous inspection: 26 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Students warmly support and encourage each other within the boarding provision. They celebrate each other's achievements and friendships blossom.

Students' plans are individualised and detail how the individual student's needs will be met. Boarding staff contribute to the formation of these plans. The students receive good support with their learning and their attendance is higher than the school overall average.

Students speak enthusiastically about their boarding experience. One student said, '[The school] is a family away from home – a family that helps... the boarding staff make it feel safe,' and 'I love being here.' Another student said, 'I like the people here, the education and the outdoors.'

Students value the regular key-worker meetings with boarding staff. Within these meetings, staff encourage, support and motivate the students to achieve their best. The students can also speak about their feelings and plan their term together with the staff, who know them well.

Students reflect that they have grown in confidence since boarding and have become more independent. The students learn useful life skills. Staff work together with the students to support them to take age-appropriate risks.

Records capture the student's experiences during their boarding time. The students are part of the local community through taking part in local events and visiting nearby attractions. The student's talents are actively encouraged, including music.

Students have effective access to healthcare and dentistry as needed. Matron has a good oversight of medications, deals with minor ailments and monitors the students' emotional health. Matron advocates well to get prompt treatment and assessment when required.

Systems in place to support the students moving into the boarding provision are good. One student spoke about how the other students and staff made them feel extremely welcome when they first started boarding. The students are equally supported when it is their time to move on from the school. Staff share relevant information with any new education establishment, and the students receive individualised support to prepare for their move.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Relevant information is shared with external parties as required in a timely way. The school welcomes feedback and scrutiny from

independent parties and uses the feedback to further develop the safety of the students.

Risks are clearly identified, understood by staff and effectively managed. Strategies in place to support the students are individualised and link with local partner agencies when required. These strategies are kept under regular review, which ensures they remain relevant and effective.

Students live in an environment where the boarding ethos around 'Respect, Responsibility, Relationships and Resilience' is strong. The students feel safe when boarding. The students learn from each other's differing heritages and diversity is celebrated.

Expectations around behaviour are clear. One parent said, 'Boundaries are clearly defined, and my child knows the expectations and where he stands.' Staff receive training in behaviour management. This is used skilfully to supervise the students' behaviour, and they successfully de-escalate any situations that may arise.

Students live in a safe environment. They personalise their own areas within bedrooms and enjoy access to the school facilities after hours. The students report that the temperature fluctuates on occasions in their bedrooms, and some students felt cold at times. In the period immediately preceding the inspection, there had been an issue with the boiler that feeds the central heating and action has been taken to address this. However, some children in the boys' section of the residential provision reported that, on occasion, their rooms felt cold.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in the headmaster at the school. The head of boarding has remained consistent. The members of the new senior leadership team value boarding and are ambitious for all the students' futures. Staff keep their knowledge up to date through regular training in topics such as children's mental health, and safeguarding children.

Staff feel supported by the head of boarding and senior leadership team. Supervision is provided via an external counsellor and is not recorded. As a result, the content and focus of the supervision are not available for senior leaders to consider in terms of helping good practice thrive. The appraisal system is robust, and clear objectives are set and reviewed regularly. Good systems are in place to support new boarding staff members to understand their roles and responsibilities.

Staff were overwhelmingly positive about working within the boarding provision. The close-knit team works hard to ensure that every student has a positive experience every day. The boarding staff team provides sufficient staff to ensure that, overall, the students are supported well. At weekends, staffing is reduced to reflect the reduced numbers of children who use the residential provision at weekends. However, this impacts on choices of activity for some students and decreases

opportunities for staff to support the students with progressing their independence plans.

The senior leadership team has clearly identified the school's strengths and development areas, and boarding remains a strong focus. The student's views are at the heart of the school. The established boarding council continues to offer boarding students a voice. Through this forum, students have influenced decisions in areas such as activities and around the food on offer. Overall, the students feel listened to.

Since the previous inspection, there have been irregular visits by an independent person. Although this was due to extraordinary circumstances, it has meant that the boarding provision has not had consistent external oversight. There is no clear contingency plan in place for circumstances when the independent visitor is unable to visit.

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

Points for improvement

- School leaders to ensure that heating across all the boarding accommodation is consistent and is monitored for its effectiveness.
- School leaders should ensure that supervision captures discussions around students' experiences, needs, plans and feedback, and is recorded.
- School leaders should consider staffing arrangements to allow for a wider range of activities at weekends.
- School leaders should ensure that there is a contingency plan in place if the independent visitor is unable to visit.

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

Headmaster in charge: Mark Loveday

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01797 252 494

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Inspectors

Anna Williams, Social Care Inspector

Lee Kirwin, Social Care Inspector

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