

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 7 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 107 students on roll, 14 of whom were boarding overnight. The school has capacity for 37 boarders across 2 boarding houses.

Boarding places are offered through 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: 3 to 5 March 2026

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: 18 March 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Students are happy and engaged and benefit from the structures and routines that support them to continue to make good progress. They have positive aspirations for their futures and are becoming more independent and confident in their daily lives.

The student voice is integral to the school and student views are sought in a variety of ways, such as through discussions with staff, suggestion boxes and the boarding council. Students value how well their voices are heard and know they can raise any concerns. Their views have had a positive impact, for example on changes to menus and updates to the boarding environment.

Students enjoy a range of activities, both in boarding and in the local community, including ice skating, paddle boarding, laser tag, shopping and going to watch plays, as well as using the school grounds to play outside. Leaders have recognised the need for balance between educational expectations, developing independence skills and recreation time in the evening. All students have allocated time to complete education activities and they have a range of support from specialist teachers and equipment. Through this support, students have seen an increase in predicted grades. Students also have a higher attendance rate than their non-boarding peers.

Students are supported to develop their independence through a bespoke plan, based on the 'wheel of independence'. This has been created by the school to consider the students' specific needs. Students are set clear and achievable targets and are supported to develop the skills they will need when they leave the school and move on to the next stage of life.

The health needs of students are well understood and managed effectively by staff. Students are supported to manage their own medication when appropriate. When needed, staff work with families and external health professionals, such as doctors and mental health services, to ensure that students get the relevant support. Leaders have identified further opportunities to support good mental health, and they are planning to provide additional resources for students, including appointing an internal mental health practitioner.

Planning for students who come to board at the school is good. Leaders take account of a wide range of information and work in close consultation with families to ensure that boarding is the right option for the student. A thorough assessment and evaluation phase helps leaders to ensure that needs are well understood and that the student can be supported well. For one student who has found boarding difficult, leaders have worked with them and their family to understand the reasons and to offer flexible and child-centred solutions to help them rejoin boarding.

Parents speak highly of the care, support and opportunities that their children have at the school. They feel well informed about their child's experiences and are

reassured by the regular communication that they receive. One parent stated that their child had 'loved it since day one' and that 'he calls it his second home'.

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

Staff are aware of their responsibilities when it comes to safeguarding and there is a healthy safeguarding culture in the boarding provision. This is underpinned by excellent oversight and support for staff from the head of care and the senior leadership team, which includes an experienced designated safeguarding lead.

Incidents are rare. There are effective systems in place to report concerns and a team of well-trained and knowledgeable safeguarding leads who understand how to respond to and escalate concerns if necessary. The safeguarding team meets weekly to ensure there is ongoing review of any emerging concerns. Safeguarding leads work well in partnership with external safeguarding agencies, communicating any concerns immediately.

Leaders have effective oversight of all aspects of health and safety. They acknowledge the challenges associated with the character and charm of the setting, while complying with statutory responsibilities. There are clear action plans targeting areas for continued investment and development, while appropriately maintaining facilities that benefit students. As a result, the boarding facilities are suitable for the needs of students and offer areas for students to relax and enjoy each other's company.

The recruitment of staff entails a thorough vetting process, to reduce the risk of employing unsuitable people. All checks are reviewed by the headteacher and there are regular spot checks on recruitment information by the designated safeguarding lead and the safeguarding governor.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Boarding is led by an experienced and dedicated head of boarding, who is supported by the wider senior leadership team. Since the last inspection, the school leadership team has undergone a restructuring process. Leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that there is no impact of this on students' day-to-day experiences.

Leaders have used detailed monitoring systems to identify any areas for development in the boarding provision. They have used this information to develop realistic and achievable targets that are regularly reviewed. The focus of this development is to make sure that boarding is a successful and growing part of the school.

Staff speak positively about working as part of the boarding team. They feel well supported by leaders to deliver good care to students. They take pride in the achievements of students and speak warmly of the relationships that they have with them.

Leaders have developed staff support by improving the appraisal system and adding more opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice throughout the year. There has also been a focus on the frequency of supervision, which staff see as a welcome addition and a good opportunity for them to talk about their experiences and the needs of students. However, actions that are set are not routinely reviewed, which does not give staff the opportunity to see the outcome of any issues they have raised.

Boarding is regularly discussed in governors' meetings and designated governors assure themselves of the quality of support for students. Additionally, the independent visitor produces useful reports and feedback on the quality of support provided to boarders.

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

Point for improvement

- School leaders should ensure that supervision includes a review of actions and discussions from the previous meeting, to confirm that tasks have been completed.

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: Mark Loveday

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01797 252494

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Inspectors

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

Jay Shekleton, Social Care Inspector

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