

Wilds Lodge School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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Inspector	Andrew Hewston

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{1,2}

Information about the school

Wilds Lodge School is an independent residential and day school for boys aged between seven and 16 years with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It currently provides boarding for 60 boys.

The school is surrounded on all sides by farmland. The accommodation is divided into three areas within the main house and an additional residential area which also includes a sports centre and additional outside sports area. The boys are divided into groups according to their age and vulnerability.

The school was last inspected in September 2011.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for residential pupils	outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	outstanding
Residential pupils' safety	outstanding
Leadership and management of the residential provision	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- Young people thoroughly enjoy being in residence and make exceptional progress in their ability to control their own behaviours through staff guidance and support.
- All young people's safety is paramount at all times, including full health and safety checks, effective and well-known safeguarding procedures and thorough recruitment procedures.
- The accommodation provided is of an exceptionally high quality and appreciated by the young people.
- Young people are cared for by a skilled and enthusiastic staff team that are fully aware of the needs of the young people and respond to these swiftly.
- Improvements made by the young people while in residence have a significant impact on their lives and those of their families.
- Young people enjoy an excellent range of activities both on the school site and externally.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for young people are outstanding. Young people are able to discuss how their behaviour has improved significantly through being in residence. This has developed through excellent guidance from a dedicated staff team who present as caring role models. Relationships between young people and staff is of an exceptionally high quality. A young person stated that, 'there is always staff here to

talk to if you need to and they always listen to you and take you seriously.'

Young people develop in their confidence and self-esteem due to a multidisciplinary staff team that consistently support their improvement and challenge negative aspects of their behaviour. Young people's time in residence is enhanced by effective care plans that they are involved with writing. Monitoring of these ensures that all staff work consistently.

Young people thoroughly enjoy being in residence, stating that, 'the activities are awesome and you get to play with your mates loads'. A wide range of activities are provided both onsite and externally, with young people being able to discuss residential trips and holidays that they have been involved with. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle within the school through activities, high quality food and robust medication administration ensures that young people's good health is developed in residence.

The ability of young people to develop their independence skills has increased since the last inspection. Young people are now involved with accreditations relating to their self-help skills and care staff are involved in these assessments within residence.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the provision is outstanding due to all young people being fully supported throughout their time in residence. A parent stated, 'the school have been there for my son from before day one, always working with him and giving us loads of information about how he is getting on'. Induction arrangements are strong and a wealth of information is received from parents and previous placements to help support him in residence. The residential experience is a key aspect to coming to the school. This is achieved through a strong and well organised multidisciplinary team of residential, educational, vocational and health professionals working well together. Young people are able to keep in touch with their families through effective contact arrangements, with calls being able to be made in the office areas or in private if young people prefer.

Young people form excellent relationships with staff who are knowledgeable about the young people's needs, likes and dislikes. This information comes from care planning that is highly individualised and regularly updated. A new 'care tracker' document helps to analyse previous and current assessments of young people and shows their development while they have been in residence. Residential staff are consistently observed taking real consideration with regard to caring and nurturing young people appropriately and with professionalism. Young people are able to discuss their own developments within residence, from areas including their ability to now shake hands with staff to dramatic reductions in being restrained.

Activities for young people are well organised and enthusiastically led by residential

staff. A well thought out St Patricks day celebration was enjoyed by all involved during the inspection. All residential areas are very well resourced for activities and young people have access to a state of the art sports hall on the school site. Staff promote activities within the local community. The strong emphasis on activities promotes individuals self-esteem as they are able to attempt new experiences as well as developing an awareness of being part of a team.

Arrangements that promote the health of young people are thorough and supported by a full time school nurse and knowledgeable, trained residential staff. Medication records are consistently completed and necessary health information is shared with the residential teams. Young people that are ill are cared for well. All young people have thorough health plans and the school supports the promotion of projects that develops healthy living such as smoking cessation courses. Meals are important sociable occasions within residence and there is an excellent level of thought gone in to meeting individuals' dietary needs as well as their likes, as well as challenging their dislikes.

The accommodation provided is of an extremely high quality. A parent stated that, 'residence is so well looked after and well decorated my son feels valued and is proud of being able to go to such a wonderful school'. All residential areas are comfortable, homely and clean, with one young person saying that, 'because residence is looked after, you feel special and cared for as well.'

Residential pupils' safety

The safety of young people is outstanding due effective policies and procedures that are well known by staff and fully support young people's protection. All staff complete training in safeguarding and this is regularly updated. All staff are aware of how to respond to safeguarding concerns and appropriate links are in place with local safeguarding professionals. Robust and well recorded recruitment practices show that all necessary checks are completed to support the safety of young people. All staff involved with staff employment have completed safer recruitment training.

Behaviour management strategies are consistent across the school and residential areas. Incidents of restraint are rare and completed as a last resort following a range of diffusion techniques being employed. Records relating to restraint are fully completed and an effective system is in place to allow trends in restraint to be examined and responded to where necessary. Observations show that staff are fully responsive to negative behaviours and challenge these at the earliest opportunity. Young people report that their behaviour has improved while being in residence. Parents also report that, 'he is so much calmer now, this is due to the staff and therapists teaching him how to react properly if he gets angry.'

Policies relating to bullying are in place and young people are aware of the schools expectations regarding the need to treat all of their peers with respect.

Health and safety checks across the school site are completed regularly and support the safety of both staff and young people. Risk assessments relating to individual young people, areas around the school site and activities show that there is a strong awareness of where possible risks occur and how these are to be responded to. Residence is well maintained and a staff member is now trained in portable appliance testing to support young people being able to use their own electrical items.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

The management of the residential provision is outstanding due to the strong and valued leadership structure. The management team have a clear awareness of the need to ensure that the highest level of care is given to the young people. The staff team are highly motivated and have an excellent range of skills and experience to support the young people. Staff state that the school's ability to support them with a wide range of training allows them to develop and care for the young people that is of the highest quality.

The level of staffing within residence is high, to allow for differing activities and more individualised levels of care to be provided. Staff turnover is low. Staff state that they are extremely well supported through supervisions and appraisals as well as informally. Residential staff meetings are held regularly and minutes show that staff are fully involved with decisions being made relating to residence.

Young people are listened to. Staff support keyworker meetings being held and recorded. Young people's views are consistently sought through both formal structures such as reviews and daily meetings, to informal discussions at mealtimes. Young people's concerns or requests are swiftly acted upon, showing that these are valued by the staff team. Parents report that communication between school and home is excellent. It is completed regularly and this helps to promote improvements with relation to behaviours due to consistent practice being shared.

An action plan with regard to areas of practice that needed development from the last inspection is in place and all areas have been thoroughly responded to. Placement plans are now fully dated and the development of independence skills for young people has become improved significantly. The management team monitor care systems on a regular basis, including assessments of young people's files to ensure that records are kept up to date and that plans are fully responsive to young people's needs. Monitoring visits by the independent visitor are recorded and points raised are responded to, to promote constant improvements.

National minimum standards

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What should the school do to improve further?

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21/03/2013

Inspection of Wilds Lodge School

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Hewston