

# Wilds Lodge School

Wilds Lodge School, Stamford Road, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 8QQ

## Inspection dates

02/02/2016 to 04/02/2016

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Outstanding** **1**

The quality of care and support

Outstanding 1

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding 1

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding 1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is outstanding because

- This school continually strives to improve the service it provides for children and young people to ensure they have the best possible experiences and opportunities. A young person said, 'it's an amazing school'. A parent said: 'A wonderful school. Thank you for making my child happy.' This school creates happy childhood memories for the children and young people who reside there.
- The leadership and management team provide confident, inspiring and empowering leadership. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the residential provision and effectively address any shortfalls.
- The safety of children and young people is at the heart of this school.
- Children and young people make significant progress in their education, emotional health, and independence skills.
- Strong relationships are forged between residential staff and children and young people. This ensures children and young people always have a trusted adult to talk to when they are feeling upset or anxious.
- Children and young people are polite, helpful and respectful. They love boarding at the school and said they would definitely judge the school as outstanding.
- The school works closely with parents to enable children and young people to have a positive home life.
- The residential team work closely with education and therapy staff to provide a holistic package of care and education.
- Some minor shortfalls were identified in record keeping. The senior leadership team immediately started to address these areas.

## **Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools**

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all records detail the event, action taken and any relevant discussions. This particularly refers to incident and accident records and records of verification of references.
- Ensure accident forms are analysed as part of risk management.
- Ensure records of complaints include an outcome.

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was announced on the morning of the start of the inspection. The inspectors visited the residential accommodation, spoke to children and young people and staff, including key staff with responsibility for the residential provision. The inspectors also observed practice in the residential provision and scrutinised school policies and records. The inspectors were able to gather limited information from Parent View as only a few responses had been completed.

## Inspection team

Joanne Vyas	Lead social care inspector
Mary Timms	Social care inspector

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

Wilds Lodge School is an independent residential and day school for boys aged between seven and 18 years with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. It currently provides boarding for 61 boys. The school is surrounded on all sides by farmland. The accommodation is divided into two boarding areas within the main house and an additional two residential sites, which also includes a sports centre and additional outside sports facilities. The boys are divided into groups according to their age and vulnerability.

## Inspection Judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Outstanding**

Staff and managers have an excellent understanding of the children and young people. Children and young people make outstanding progress, particularly their achievements in education, independence skills, and emotional and social development. A parent said: 'My son is in his final year at Wilds Lodge and is going to miss it. It has been wonderful to see him reach his full potential both academically and socially. I cannot thank the school and staff enough.' A young person said: 'I did have anger issues but they've faded away. I've made progress with educational subjects like maths and English. I'm getting A\*s and Bs now.' Young people are well supported with their independence skills, work experience and college. Children and young people learn to follow a more healthy and balanced diet. Furthermore, children with sensory difficulties, linked to autistic spectrum disorder, learn to become more tolerant and less anxious.

The school has robust and effective arrangements for safeguarding children and young people. Children and young people are learning to manage their own behaviour and keep themselves safe. They feel valued, cared for, supported and respected by their peers and staff.

The residential provision is very well organised. Staff are very well trained and supported. High staffing levels enable the staff to spend quality time with children and young people building strong, meaningful relationships. Children and young people are very proud of their school and their achievements such as a national award as an eco-school.

### The quality of care and support

**Outstanding**

Creative and innovative support provides opportunities for children and young people to make outstanding progress in all areas of their lives. For example, Lego Therapy helps to build confidence, self-esteem, leadership and listening skills; work experience such as voluntary work in a charity shop promotes numeracy and social skills, self-esteem and confidence.

Children and young people enjoy boarding at this school. They have strong relationships with staff and each other, which are mutually respectful. A young person said that one of the good things about this school is, 'the support network. I know there is always someone to talk to and rely on'. Another said: 'Staff have a great sense of humour.' Children and young people learn to become resilient and develop a positive self-view.

Boarding accommodation is of a high standard. It is homely and furnished beautifully. It is immaculately clean and maintained throughout. A good range of toys, books, kindles and games, including games consoles, appropriate to the age range within the house group, keep children and young people entertained. Children and young people can now access a 4D sensory room, which they say they thoroughly enjoy. In this room, they enjoy Lego Therapy, saying: 'This has been good for me, learning not to interrupt and

take direction from another boy.' Others enjoy doing the sensory circuit or completing their academic lessons in this room. Children and young people value their environment. A young person said: 'This is a beautiful place to be and amazing atmosphere.'

Children and young people experience and enjoy a wide range of activities such as free time in the local town, ghost hunts, swimming and shopping. A parent said: 'The school is a well maintained friendly environment which offers lots of opportunity for the students to try new activities.' A young person said that they could ask to do whatever they liked and if they have the staff and it is not too expensive, then they would do it. He was looking forward to a trip to Nottingham next week. Others are going on a camp in Barcelona in the summer. They also enjoy team sports such as football and play as a school against other local schools.

Children and young people have a strong sense of being listened to. They make choices and decisions about their care, activities, food and the running of the school. For example, there is a strong focus on providing an eco-friendly school that children and young people have embraced and are fully involved with. They are proud to have achieved a national award for their efforts.

The physical and emotional health of children and young people is highly promoted. There is a clear therapeutic ethos, and qualified therapists support emotional health. Furthermore, a registered nurse is available to the children and young people to ensure their good physical health. Partnership working is exceptionally effective and ensures children and young people receive the care and support they need. Staff have strong links with external professionals such as child mental health services, the youth offending service and social workers.

Meals are healthy and nutritious. Mealtimes are a valued part of the day providing a nurturing and social experience. They are relaxed occasions but well ordered. Children and young people have choices of food including vegetarian options. Specialist dietary needs are well supported. A young person said: 'Food is amazing. We can have alternatives if we don't like the food. They help boys who struggle with their food to try to get them to try different things.' Exceptionally, the cook will take time to talk to individual children and young people about their food preferences and anxieties around food. This has enabled them to progress from very narrow choices of food to a broader range, ensuring a more balanced and healthy diet.

The school helps to promote the equality and diversity agenda. It raises the awareness of children and young people about discrimination and personal safety. There is a good approach to equal opportunity. This helps to ensure children and young people do not experience discrimination.

Good progress has been made with regards to planning documentation since the last inspection. Plans are now detailed and provide good information to staff, including equality and diversity issues. Children and young people are consistently and centrally involved in the planning and review of their care.

Safeguarding is at the heart of this school. Children and young people say they feel safe and secure. The designated safeguarding lead demonstrates a very good understanding of current safeguarding issues such as sexual exploitation, radicalisation and internet safety. Safeguarding concerns are recognised and referred on appropriately. Staff also have excellent safeguarding knowledge. For example, they fully understand the risks associated with the internet and are working to educate children and young people, as well as their parents, in this regard. Children and young people do not report bullying as an issue.

Children and young people can identify a trusted adult who they feel they can talk to about any concerns they have. Staff say relationships are the key to providing good support for children and young people. Subsequently, children and young people are respectful towards staff and visitors. Positive behaviour is promoted and incidents are well managed. There is a low incidence of physical intervention. Statistical information about physical intervention informs senior managers and strengthens individual care. Children and young people have a good understanding of the rules and the consequences should they choose not to follow the rules.

Effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensure unsuitable adults do not work with children and young people.

Health and safety is well-managed leading to a safe living environment. Risks are identified and reflected clearly into risk reduction strategies thus promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. However, a more structured analysis of accident reports could improve the management of risk and help to reduce the number of accidents.

### **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

### **Outstanding**

Leaders and managers are inspirational, passionate, confident and ambitious. They have high expectations of children and young people as well as their staff. Experienced and qualified team leaders and managers are accessible, lead by example, and generate creative ideas. The school strives for continual improvement. The personal and financial investment is evident throughout the school.

The school supports a learning environment for its staff, supporting them to continue with their professional development by completing higher education in their specialist fields such as autism or management. Staff also receive high quality training and support specific to their role and the needs of the children and young people.

All departments of the school work closely together in a highly effective and collaborative manner to ensure the highest quality service for children and young people.

The leadership team has a good system in place for monitoring activities within the residential provision. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the residential provision and effectively address any shortfalls. Leaders and managers deal with complaints quickly and effectively. A new independent visitor is being gradually introduced to her role and is starting to provide good challenge. However, some records, such as incident and complaint records, are not always clear about what has happened

or what action has been taken. Furthermore, employment records do not clearly detail discussions with referees as part of the recruitment process. The leadership team responded quickly to the identified shortfalls and have already implemented improved systems.



## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

**Unique reference number**

**Social care unique reference number**

SC069231

**DfE registration number**

134938

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.

**Type of school**

Residential Special School

**Number of boarders on roll**

61

**Gender of boarders**

Boys

**Age range of boarders**

5 to18

**Headteacher**

Robin Lee

**Date of previous boarding inspection**

17/03/2015

**Telephone number**

01780 767254

**Email address**

office@wildslodgeschool.co.uk

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