

Woodeaton Manor School

Woodeaton Manor School, Woodeaton, OXFORD, OX3 9TS

Inspection dates	06/02/2013 to 08/02/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- The leadership of the school is dynamic, innovative and child-focused. The desire and commitment to achieve excellence is evident within all departments of the school and in the residential setting. Residential staff play a critical role in helping the school achieve its aims. Residential pupils benefit greatly through diverse developments in the school's practice.
- Residential pupils have strong sense of security and stability as a result of being cared for by a committed, permanent, stable and nurturing staff team. All staff enjoy working here and acknowledgement was received from the local authority in December 2012 'for the excellent performance of the school in the work-life enhancement scheme.'
- The safety of pupils is given the highest priority. All staff are trained in safe working practices and implement these in practice. Behaviour is extremely well managed and there are no incidents of pupils being absent without authority. Bullying is not reported to be an issue.
- Residential pupils make excellent progress in all aspects of their development. Most have previously been excluded from successive educational placements and the school successfully reverses this trend. Attendance levels are extremely high and all students make good academic progress with some making exceptional academic progress. Professionals associated with the school say, 'We see children who have been isolated and have failed in other settings that now have a peer group and are thriving.'
- Residential boarders are consistently positive about their residential experience and say, 'The school understood me when no-one else did. They have helped me so much. I wouldn't have achieved what I have if I hadn't come here.' Residential pupils thrive and become confident in social situations by taking part, alongside other pupils, in the new and exciting and aspirational opportunities presented.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

The inspection of the residential provision took place with four hours of notice given to the school. The inspection activities included meetings with: pupils, some of the residential care staff, the headteacher, teaching staff, ancillary staff and other professionals associated with the school, including the educational psychologist and mental health specialist. The inspection also included a tour of the premises and observations of meal-times, activities and residential routines. Information was gathered from the school's records, policies and self-evaluation.

Inspection team

Barbara Davies

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Woodeaton Manor is located within the rural community of Woodeaton in Oxfordshire. It is registered as a residential special school and provides education for 58 children and young people who are aged between 7 and 18 years. While the school admits pupils who may be assessed as having behavioural, emotional and social disorders (BESD), it particularly focuses on children with emotional and social difficulties. The vast majority of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders.

Woodeaton Manor provides flexible boarding arrangements for up to four nights a week for up to 12 pupils. A team of residential staff takes responsibility for these pupils after the school day until the following morning.

The last inspection of the residential provision took place on 13 January 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- consolidate all information relating to staff recruitment checks, such as, the record of interview and gaps in employment history, into staff files.
- provide written information to children about boarding in a user-friendly guide.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils in this school are outstanding.

Residential pupils thrive personally, socially and academically as a result of being part of a highly inclusive school and residential community. They develop confidence and a sense of their own worth by participating in a range of challenging and stimulating recreational and educational opportunities. Residential and school staff have high aspirations for all pupils and their enthusiasm generates itself to residential pupils who are willing participants in any activities organised. Pupils respond to the 'can do' approach of staff and as a result acquire important life skills, such as making successful applications for funding to external organisations. This represents tremendous personal growth and development from their starting points on admission to the school.

Residential pupils have also made outstanding progress in overcoming learning and social difficulties largely as a result of the specialist knowledge and training that staff have of children who are on the autistic spectrum. Behaviour is greatly improved when compared to previous educational placements. Residential pupils engage in their education and achieve.

Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy the experience of boarding one night a week and value the contribution this makes to their lives, such as being able to socialise with their friends and take part in community-based activities. The health of young people improves as a result of the excellent oversight given to their emotional, physical and mental health needs alongside the provision of a healthy and nutritious diet and the many opportunities for physical exercise. Residential pupils say they are well cared for and that staff are 'very kind' when they are ill.

Residential pupils are very well-informed about issues such as bullying, cyber bullying and the risks presented by smoking and substance misuse. They develop a strong sense of personal safety in relation to these issues as a result of the formal education they receive and the informal advice given by staff. A strong sense of right and wrong is instilled in pupils and staff encourage an environment in which they behave respectfully and supportively to each other.

Early and thorough planning prepares young people extremely well for their move into further education or adult services and enables placement and funding issues to be addressed in a timely manner. Anxieties of young people during the transition period are minimised by sensitive handling, reassurance and keeping them well-informed of developments.

Residential pupils develop life skills and economic well-being through their involvement in practical tasks, such as the purchase of new vehicles and computers for the school and also by preparing and selling produce each month at a local farmers' market. They develop empathy and a social conscience through organising successful fund-raising events and supporting a different charity each month.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of residential provision and care is outstanding.

The health needs of residential pupils are met well as a result of the comprehensive information obtained as pupils are admitted to the school. Special arrangements are made for young people who have specific health needs, such as allergies. Arrangements for the recording and administration of medication are well-organised and safe.

Arrangements for attending to the mental health needs of young people have improved with the appointment of a mental health specialist. Although a relatively new development, benefits for residential pupils are already evident with earlier recognition of symptoms and a more co-ordinated multi-agency response to these. Arrangements for the review of medication are better formalised and parents are more involved are committed to the process now that meetings increasingly take place at the school.

A child-centred approach permeates throughout the school's practice. Residential staff and academic staff work closely and successfully in supporting residential pupils to overcome personal difficulties and achieve a sense of their own worth. During the inspection, residential pupils reflected on the progress they have made through being in the residential setting. One commented: 'I was really quite violent before staying in the residence. The staff have helped me develop strategies for coping and now I get on much better with people and don't get so agitated.'

All staff celebrate the contribution that each pupil makes to the school. Circle time takes place twice daily and provides an excellent formal opportunity for individual successes to be recognised and celebrated. Staff also use spontaneous opportunities to praise pupils, for instance, overcoming the anxiety caused by the fire alarm during a fire drill. Through the recognition and appreciation shown by staff, residential pupils develop confidence in their abilities and obtain a sense of achievement.

The school's commitment to excellence is evident in the exceptionally high standard of boarding accommodation and facilities provided. All areas of the residential provision are decorated and furnished to a high specification. The environment is well-maintained and safe due to an on-going programme of refurbishment and regular safety checks. Residential pupils are able to personalise their bedrooms but, due to the limited time they spend in residence, often choose not to. Residential staff, however, make sure that bedrooms provide a comforting space. Residential pupils like and respect the boarding house. They say, 'It is ace, there's lots to do and we like spending time with our friends.'

Excellent provision is made for attending to the leisure needs of young people with resources being continually improved. For instance, since the last inspection in March 2012, new televisions and computers have been purchased for the residential provision and a new adventure playground built for the whole school. Residential staff contribute an important role in supporting the extensive and challenging opportunities that the school provides to its pupils, such as residential activity holidays. These provide excellent opportunities for personal development and fulfilment, particularly as residential pupils have been instrumental and successful in applying for funding.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The residential pupils' safety is outstanding.

A strong culture of safety is firmly embedded within the school's practice. The school's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are well-established and consistently implemented in practice. The safety and welfare of residential pupils is of paramount importance and staff are alert and responsive to possible concerns. Several senior staff within the school, including the head of care, have completed formal safeguarding training. All other staff are trained at a level appropriate to their role. They know the procedures for reporting child protection concerns as a result of the regular briefings provided.

Residential pupils report feeling 'very safe' in both the residential and school settings and all have a range of staff with whom they say they can share personal concerns. Parents also have

confidence in the ability of the school to keep their children safe. One parent commented, 'It was so lovely for us to know that our child was in such safe hands and from the first time ever we were able to relax while we were away. So from all of us a massive thank you.'

Staff recruitment procedures are thorough and robust in assessing the suitability of candidates to work with children. Although having been obtained, some information, such as the record of interview and gaps in employment history, were not on staff files. This has little impact on the safety of young people as these people do not work directly with children and the information has been assessed and is retained elsewhere. Looking to improve on previous practice, the school has recently involved children in interviewing new staff. This results in high levels of satisfaction with the appointments made and expands the skills of pupils.

Staff are proactive, skilful, confident and competent in managing the behaviour of residential pupils. They consistently use positive reinforcement and praise in recognition of good behaviour. Residential pupils respond positively to these techniques with few incidents of any nature within the residential setting and no incidents of physical restraint for some years. The use of physical restraint within the school setting is also rare. Sanctions are used sparingly and proportionately.

Staff work consistently to the school's anti-bullying policy. A robust response and early intervention by staff prevents most incidents between young people from escalating. Residential pupils report that bullying is not an issue in either the residential or school setting. They say, 'Staff are always supervising. They quickly become aware of disagreements and step in to sort things out. There is nowhere that you can go where you wouldn't be seen. They also sometimes deal with things that happen outside of school, such as, on social networking sites.'

A safe and secure environment is provided. Recent audits of the school's practice undertaken by external agencies, such as environmental health, the fire service and the local authority, all provide testament to the competent and diligent manner in which the school discharges its health and safety responsibilities.

Regular and exhaustive checks are completed on the electrical, gas and fire safety equipment to ensure they remain in good working order and are safe. Regular fire drills familiarise residential pupils with escape routes and the action to take in the event of a fire. The anxieties that fire drills arouse in residential pupils are managed sensitively and well by staff.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the school is outstanding.

The residential provision is highly valued for the support it provides to parents and carers and for the role it plays in supporting the work of the school. Residential staff remain enthusiastic, committed and highly motivated in their role because of the continual development of the service and also as a result of the professional support and guidance they receive from the headteacher, educational psychologist and mental health specialist. This enables them to meet the emotional and behavioural needs of residential pupils well.

The school and the residential setting feed off their own success and the desire for continual improvement is relentless. Improvements made following the previous inspection have been consolidated into practice and further initiatives have been implemented. The school's action plans provide challenging, but achievable targets, which historically have been met in a timely fashion and to the benefit of residential pupils. A young person wrote to the school saying, 'I want to say thanks because 2012 has been an amazing year at Woodeaton.'

The school has an accurate and insightful evaluation of its performance. Based on a range of

analytical data, the school is able to demonstrate that outcomes for residential pupils greatly improve in a number of areas, such as academic progress and a reduction in behavioural incidents. Professionals associated with the school who have known residential pupils prior to their admission to the school, say that that the change in their behaviour through attending the school is 'no less than miraculous.'

The school is aware of the diverse nature and needs of the residential pupils. An equally diverse range of support, activities and educational opportunities ensures that residential pupils have the opportunity to achieve to their potential and achieve the same milestones as their peers.

The views and opinions of residential pupils are actively sought and they are involved in making key decisions within the school and in the residential setting. For example, how funds raised by a parent are to be spent. As a result residential pupils make a big emotional investment in the school and are extremely loyal to the residential setting and the staff.

Young people know how to raise concerns and are well informed about the residential setting through welcome letters and information displayed on notice-boards. This however is not published in a booklet and key information could be lost. The school's policies and procedures are comprehensive and guide staff in their role.

All residential staff are fully trained and experienced for the role they perform. An programme of internal core training supplemented by external training in key matters, such as safeguarding and safer recruitment, ensures their knowledge and skills remain current and relevant to the young people with whom they are working. The involvement of residential pupils in some of the training events, such as fire safety, cements relationships between staff and pupils and equips residential pupils with the knowledge of how to protect themselves in the event of a fire.

There is excellent communication between school staff and parents with form tutors providing weekly feedback. The advice and support that parents and carers receive from the multi-disciplinary team of professionals within the school, enables the progress that their children make within the residential and school setting to be replicated at home.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	123329
Social care unique reference number	SC013056
DfE registration number	931/7002

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	12
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to 18
Headteacher	Mrs A Pearce
Date of previous boarding inspection	14/03/2012
Telephone number	01865 558722
Email address	office.7002@woodeaton.oxon.sch.uk

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