

# Loxley Hall

Inspection report for residential special school

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

Loxley Hall School is a residential/day special school providing education for pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The school is situated in a rural setting a few miles outside the town of Uttoxeter. The main building is a large, two storey country house. Rooms on the ground floor are used as offices, a main kitchen with a dining hall off and communal rooms for all pupils. The residential provision is located on the second floor and consists of two mini-kitchens, dining areas and a sitting room. There is also a private meeting room, bedrooms, shower and bathing facilities. The young people have access to the unit's kitchens and the domestic style laundry as part of their life skills training. The School caters for boys only between the ages of 11 to 16 years. The residential provision operates Monday to Friday each week during term time. The school offers a 'Residential two' status. This is a flexible boarding arrangement with young people being able to stay a maximum of two nights a week. The maximum numbers of boarders currently staying at anytime is in the region of five. The school also offers a 'Residential one' status where young people stay in school until approximately 8pm, having the evening meal and taking part in activities. There are 16 young people who currently access the residential provision.

### Summary

This was an announced full inspection undertaken by one Ofsted inspector. The inspection looked at the key Residential Special School National Minimum Standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcome groups. All outcome areas were inspected with the exception of Economic Wellbeing. This is a good service. At this inspection Being Healthy, Staying Safe and Organisation are judged as good with Enjoying & Achieving and Positive Contribution being judged as outstanding. Three recommendations have been raised in relation to Being Healthy, Staying Safe and Organisation. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the excellent relationships that exist between staff and young people. Staff know about young people's health needs and have the skills to manage the administration of medication and first aid. However, close links with specialist services are not always in place which could potentially impact on young people's wellbeing. Young people are robustly protected by excellent incident reporting and the risk assessment process. This system is further enhanced by care plans that contain good behavioural guidelines and clearly outline management strategies. A minor weakness is that the recording of physical intervention doesn't overtly detail the nature of the hold used to robustly safeguard staff and young people. Young people enjoy being at school and benefit from clear, professional, effective and imaginative management and a staff team who are skilled, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Young people say 'staff are cool man' and 'I like being in the unit, I feel safe and it's fun most of the time'.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the Head Teacher was asked to ensure all criminal records bureau checks (CRB) are in place prior to staff beginning employment. He was also asked to make sure that all staff undertake training in complaints and improve the privacy arrangements in the bathrooms and toilets. All CRB checks are now undertaken before any staff member is deployed and all staff have received training on receiving and dealing with complaints. This helps to safeguard

young people's welfare because all adults working at the school are appropriate to do so and staff are fully knowledgeable about how to appropriately respond to, record and process complaints. The school is undergoing major refurbishment of both the bathrooms and toileting facilities. There is now a dedicated bath/shower room and a separate toilet/washroom. The separation of the two areas and how the showers are now situated has massively improved privacy for the boys staying in residence.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Young people live in a healthy environment. Their health and intimate care needs are identified and well promoted. Case records contain a wide range of information relating to the personal care needs and wellbeing of young people. The information is coherent and concise which provides a clear picture of how staff support them. As a result, young people receive care that actively promotes their welfare. They feel secure and confidently go to staff if they have any concerns or problems. One young person expressed that 'I feel well cared for'. The school takes proactive measures to promote young people's health, personal care, hygiene, sex education and their awareness of the dangers of different situations, including exposure to drugs. Consequently, young people begin to develop good knowledge about why routines that safeguard their good health are important. The school works well with other professionals making appropriate referrals to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in young people's home locality. Although some young people will not engage with these professionals or turn up for appointments and as a result, this specialist input is withdrawn potentially leaving young people without the valuable help and support needed to enable them to positively thrive in society. Young people's health and welfare is safeguarded because staff implement the good written policy and procedures. Young people's wellbeing is further promoted as staff receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication. The procedure for accident reporting is clearly understood and staff have current first aid certificates, so helping any minor incidents to be dealt with successfully. The accident books are extremely well-maintained and enhanced by a detailed monthly audit. This effective and excellent monitoring system informs risk assessments and reduces the likelihood of recurring accidents, so helping to keep young people safe.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected and the school has clear guidance on how to support them during personal and intimate care. Their welfare is promoted because they are clear about how to make a complaint. Young people say they are very confident that their concerns are addressed and that they know about the complaints procedure. 'We can talk to anyone if we are unhappy, most of us go to our keyworker if we need help'. Young people's welfare is protected because staff receive ongoing training in child protection and demonstrate a good knowledge of policies and procedures. The school takes positive steps to ensure that young people who are absent without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance. There has been only one occasion in the last 12 months where a young person left the school without permission. The policy was followed and the individual was returned to school quickly and safely. Demonstrating that staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Staff are proactive in their approach when dealing with incidents of bullying and continually explore new ways to discuss this issue with young people. All young people have a detailed risk assessment which

identifies the potential to bully or to be bullied, so helping them to keep safe. Staff have a good understanding of the behavioural needs of young people ensuring observations are recorded should there be any issues of concern. They go to great efforts to encourage young people to think about the difference between right and wrong. Measures of support, control and consequences are based on establishing positive relationships and are designed to help young people. However, the records that are in place do not contain appropriate detail of the method of restraint used to effectively safeguard staff and young people. Young people say they know what is expected from them and are given every opportunity to become involved and motivated in setting and implementing the rules that govern their own behaviour. This consistent application of boundaries helps young people to develop a sense of trust and security whilst enabling them to understand how they can contribute to the operation of the school. One young person stated that 'punishments are fair really, staff give us lots of prompts to help us to turn things around. So if we end up losing out on an activity it's only our own fault'. Young people's health and safety is well protected because the school has good risk assessments for all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds, which are implemented successfully in practice. The school has thorough monitoring systems in place which ensures the ongoing safety of the young people and staff. A full fire risk assessment is in place with weekly recorded monitoring of fire alarm bells, fire points and emergency lighting taking place. Regular fire drills are taking place enabling young people to learn how to safely evacuate the building. The school operates a robust staff vetting procedure and staff demonstrate proactive awareness of the need to safeguard young people.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are happy in the setting's caring environment and they have very positive relationships with staff. Life skills and independence are key principles of the school and are superbly promoted through the 24 hour curriculum. As a result, young people are making excellent progress. Effective communication between classroom staff and residential staff promotes consistency for young people. The school nurtures them to develop skills that will serve them well as citizens in the future. One outside professional who visits the school regularly states 'programmes are tailored to meet individual needs, the staff will often go above and beyond the call of duty to enable the young people to get the most out of their educational opportunities'. Staff actively support young people. They use an approach to discipline that teaches self-responsibility by being personal and caring. Staff vigorously encourage pupils to evaluate their own inappropriate behaviour and formulate simple alternatives wherever possible. Young people are well-motivated, and enjoy their schooling, as seen in the good level of attendance. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Young people praise what the school does for them. They say how much they like the staff, the wide range of subjects they are taught and the activities they can take part in. One young person commented that 'I like the staff, all of them. They really try to help me.' Young people are actively encouraged to take part in leisure activities both inside the school and in the local and wider community. Staff share their own interests and enthusiastically encourage young people to try new activities. They are able to provide excellent care to young people and meet individual needs with the deep knowledge and understanding they have of them. Young people have a keyworker who gives individual support. Consequently, young people are settled in the staffs' care, moving freely and confidently in the cheerful environment.

## Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are developing awareness of others as they share and take turns. They are learning to take responsibility as they help to tidy up at the end of meal times. Young people are extremely well consulted about life at Loxley. Their views and preferences are sought, including menu content, furnishings and activities. 'We do get listened too and staff encourage us to talk about anything that is worrying us'. Parents equally feel that their children are well consulted 'the school provides a variety of activities. Boys are given choice and their opinions are always asked'. Young people are supported by clear and concise care plans which reflect their individual needs and wishes. The care plans include comprehensive risk assessments ensuring the young person is able to maintain their levels of autonomy in a safe manner. All care plans are regularly reviewed to make sure the ever changing needs of individuals is reflected. Young people are encouraged to try things themselves, supported effectively, but so they become as independent as possible. Staff challenge the young people through lively debates and encourage them in every way, continually developing their thinking, language and communication skills. Their success is celebrated, raising their confidence and self-esteem. Young people are supported to have appropriate contact with friends and family. The school understands the value and importance of communication and contact with parents. Significant time is taken to build relationships and share information with families, social workers and external agencies. This excellent working partnership promotes young people's welfare as they get consistent messages from both home and school. Young people begin to learn about the wider world through sharing significant experiences, for example at mealtimes they sit with their friends and staff to happily chat about what they did at the weekend. These informal social events are used positively by staff to increase young people's understanding and ability to appreciate each others' similarities and differences and to value the diversity of the wider world.

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

Young people are admirably served by the provision as identified by its Statement of Purpose as teamwork amongst staff is strong. Young people are making good progress because systems are in place to monitor the service and daily lives of young people. The organisation has established a pattern of management monitoring and reporting procedures, which is effectively implemented by the head of care and the senior care team. The monitoring processes promote good quality and robustly ensure that minor shortfalls in practice are quickly resolved, thus continually improving practice. The school's staffing policy ensures that the level of staffing is adequate to meet every young person's needs. Staff are well trained and supported and benefit from regular formal supervision, appraisals and staff meetings. There is a good training programme to ensure that staff are continually updated. Most staff have completed, or are undertaking National Vocational Qualifications. Young people benefit greatly from this positive approach as they are cared for by highly motivated, suitable and knowledgeable staff. Staff are undergoing a job evaluation which is being undertaken by the local authority. This process has caused anxiety and distress to staff who are feeling 'devalued and demoralised by the process'. Job descriptions are in place. However, they do not currently reflect every role and this has the potential to rock the stability of a very efficiently run school. It may also detract

from the current good atmosphere and the purposeful and imaginative direction with which the school is travelling. Relationships between young people and staff are excellent. Young people appreciate the support that staff give and the staff team are professional and committed to ensuring that young people receive the best care possible. The head of care is suitably qualified and experienced for the role and provides effective leadership for the staff group. The senior management team comprises of the head teacher, deputy head, head of care and two assistant head teachers who clearly work well together. They are supported well by the governors who share a positive, spirited and practical vision for the young people. Consequently, the future is bright and fruitful for the young people attending Loxley.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that there are effective arrangements to secure specialist services, for example CAMHS (NMS 14.10)
- develop the physical intervention recording to detail the nature of the hold used (NMS 10.14)
- ensure all staff have received written job descriptions and person specifications related to the school's current Statement of Purpose which clearly state the duties currently expected of them (NMS 30.9).



## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for residential special school

#### Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted (NMS 14)
- children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs (NMS 15)

**Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.**

#### Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled (NMS 3)
- children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration (NMS 4)
- the welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse (NMS 5)
- children are protected from bullying (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (NMS 7)
- children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return (NMS 8)
- children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour (NMS 10)
- children live in schools that provide physical safety and security (NMS 26)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

**Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school (NMS 12)
- children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

**Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run; no child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views (NMS 2)
- children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect (NMS 9)
- children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes (NMS 11)

- children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school (NMS 17)
- in accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while at school (NMS 20)

**Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.**

### **Achieving economic well-being**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money (NMS 16)
- children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- children live in well designed and pleasant premises, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use (NMS 24)
- children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity (NMS 25)

**Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.**

### **Organisation**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils (NMS 1)
- children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of the staff and child groups of the school (NMS 19)
- children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently (NMS 28)
- children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs (NMS 29)
- children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare (NMS 30)
- children receive the care and services they need from competent staff (NMS 31)
- children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools (NMS 32)
- the governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school (NMS 33)

**Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**