

# Wilds Lodge School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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<b>Inspection dates</b>	28/09/2011 to 28/09/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	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.<sup>1,2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Wilds Lodge School is an independent residential and day school for boys aged between eight and 16 years with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It currently provides boarding for 49 boys.

The school is set in 16 acres of woods, ponds, formal gardens and paddocks. It is surrounded on all sides by farmland. The town of Stamford is three miles away and Corby is approximately 20 minutes drive.

The accommodation is divided into three areas within the main house and an additional residential area approximately a mile from the school 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's boarding provision sets out to offer a 24-hour curriculum. It provides a safe, structured environment away from the distractions of difficulties that may exist within the family and the community.

The school was last inspected in July 2010.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
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.

- The school strongly promotes differing aspects of care, including therapeutic input, the environment, placement planning and activities that positively affect the lives of the young people.
- Professional relationships between all staff and young people help to develop young people's self esteem and confidence. Young people are able to highlight their own development.
- Care systems are strong with an appropriate emphasis on case management and recording systems to ensure up to date records.
- Staff show a strong commitment to equality and diversity through ensuring individual needs are met and planning is highly personalised.
- The safety of young people is given a high priority with regular checks completed on all health and safety areas and staff being aware of how to respond to safeguarding concerns.
- The school has a strong management team that develops all staffs involvement in decision making processes.
- All national minimum standards are met.

## **Outcomes for residential pupils**

Relationships within the residential provision are of a high quality. Young people state that 'staff here really care about you, it's not just a job'. Young people are proud of the provision and how they have developed while being at the school compared to previous places that they have been involved with. Progress of individuals is shown through the care planning systems and individualised targets identify how staff have responded to young people's needs effectively.

Young people are able to discuss residence as a positive experience and how they enjoy coming to school each week. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle impacts on all areas of the school and activities include a wide range of experiences that young people are involved with. Whole school activities promote a feeling of self worth and reach out into the wider community. Young people are enthusiastic with describing activities such as a recent music festival, when other schools were involved enjoying experiences with those at Wilds Lodge.

The school promotes the ability of young people to be fully involved in the running of the residential areas, including consultations about meals, activities and a school council.

Young people state that they are supported by both staff within the residential areas and the pastoral team that are available throughout the school day. Young people state that they feel safe within the residential areas and there are no issues relating to safety or possessions being taken by others. Staff ensure that equality and diversity is promoted at all times and the individuality of young people is celebrated.

## **Quality of residential provision and care**

The residential provision is an area of excellence within the school and there are no weaknesses within the standards that have a direct impact on the care of the young people. The school's statement of principles and practice are included within information about the school and ensure that all those involved are aware of how young people are looked after.

Young people are able to talk about a range of staff that they can talk to if they are unhappy although information regarding the Children's Rights Director is not available. Arrangements for admissions to the school are strong and young people are able to discuss how they have roles to support young people new to the school, so developing their leadership skills. One young person stated that 'I am a role model to some of the new children, and that helps me feel grown up'.

Young people are able to develop independence skills, including cooking meals, laundry skill and budgeting and there are a range of ways that young people are developing life skills through external college placements or work experiences. Independence training could be developed more within the residential provision. Contact with carers / families is promoted during their time at the school and arrangements are clear within placement plans ensuring that young people have regular time to talk.

The promotion of a healthy lifestyle is central to the care of young people and has developed further from the last inspection with a new school nurse. Robust health planning is developed from information gained on young people's admission, information from the school nurse, and effective links with health professionals external to the school. The school nurse is a valuable addition to the staff team and positively thought of although there needs to be clarity relating to the level of confidential information that she receives. Therapeutic inputs into the school are excellently planned for and are integral to the care provided. Positive therapeutic practices are shared throughout the care and educational settings.

Arrangements for the administration of medication are strong and staff are supported by the school nurse. Nutritional menus are developed through consultation with young people and also respond to differing diets and cultural needs. Fruit is available at all times within the residential areas and fruit bowls are refreshed daily.

The accommodation is of an extremely high standard and very well looked after. Young people are enthusiastic when showing both their rooms and communal areas, pointing out areas that they can personalise and facilities that are available. There is a huge range of facilities across both residential areas to support differing activities, one young person stated that 'there is always something to do to keep you busy'. Young people are fully involved with activities both within the school and externally for personal development and fulfilment.

Fully completed placement plans link to educational statements and are updated on a regular basis by the young person's key worker to respond to ongoing issues, some more recent placement plans require dating. These also relate to care plans which highlight specific targets to respond to young people's behavioural and educational needs.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

The safety of young people is paramount within all areas of the residential provision. Recruitment procedures ensure that staff are fully checked prior to working and training is provided so that all staff are aware of the policy relating to safeguarding. Behaviour management systems promote positive behaviours and staff are trained in the use of restraint although this is rarely used. Recording systems relating to behaviour management are robust and show that young people are fully supported following any such incident.

Young people are able to discuss differing reward structures that are used across the provision and are enthusiastic with explaining the rewards that they have achieved. Incidents of bullying are rare and young people display strong support towards other young people that may have a problem. Daily meetings ensure that young people are aware of expectations relating to their behaviour and these are discussed in a proactive way.

Risk assessments are fully completed in a range of areas to support the safety of staff and young people. These are highly individualised and respond to specific issues relating to young people. Thorough and regular health and safety checks, including fire testing and drills are also completed.

## **Leadership and management of the residential provision**

The school has a strong leadership team. All staff are involved in differing forums that develop practice within the residential environment. The home areas are well staffed with education and residential staff offering a continuity of care and communication between differing areas of the school being of a high quality.

All staff state that they feel well supported by the school through both formal and informal supervision. Appraisals highlight areas of self development that staff wish to be involved with and there is a strong commitment towards training, with some staff completing degrees and additional qualifications to further support the young people. Staff show a high commitment to the school. Staff turnover is very low.

Staff respond effectively to any discrimination and effective practice is in place to support young people's cultural needs. A complaints procedure and record book are available but this has not been necessary since the last inspection. Young people's views are gathered through a range of forums including daily meetings, key working sessions, school council meetings and menu developments.

The residential provision is monitored on a half termly basis by independent visitors and reports completed. Managerial monitoring systems are in place to examine the residential records. Communication between the school and home is good and parental feedback relating to the school is very positive.

The school has fully responded to recommendations made at the previous inspections.

## **National minimum standards**

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

## **What should the school do to improve further?**

- ensure that information regarding the Children's Rights Director is available for young people.
- ensure that placement plans are dated to show how young people have developed at the school.
- ensure that evidence regarding how young people develop their independence skills is recorded.
- ensure there is a clarity regarding the confidentiality of information that the school nurse receives.

**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.**



28/09/2011

To all resident young people

### **Inspection of Wilds Lodge School**

As you will know, Ofsted recently inspected the residential provision in your school. I visited the residential areas and spoke to many of you and the staff who look after you during the time that you are not in school. Most of you also filled in a questionnaire, as did your parents or carers, and this was very helpful to me. It was good to see that almost everyone really enjoys being at the school and your carers or families think that the school is a good place for you to stay as well.

The areas that you live in are really nice and both staff and young people look after these very well. It is great that you are all involved in a huge range of activities, both in the residential areas and outside the school. Everyone that I spoke to was able to talk about different staff that they would talk to if they had a problem although you also need to be aware that there is someone in Ofsted that also listens to young people if they have a concern.

Staff look after you very well. You stated that you feel safe in school and there are a lot of checks of staff before they are allowed to work there. It is good that you all develop while at the school and learn different skills that will support you in your adult lives. Some of these development need to be better recorded though.

The new school nurse helps staff to make sure you are healthy and the meals that you have are nutritious and tasty. All the staff work together well to make sure that you are cared for properly. Staff meet together to make sure that you are getting the best care that you can have and they record plans to show how you can be supported. Some of these plans need to show when they have been written. All of the staff are well trained and are experienced with working with young people.

I enjoyed meeting you and wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Hewston