

# Lindsworth School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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**Inspector** Martha Nethaway

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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**

Lindsworth School is a maintained residential school for secondary aged boys and girls with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and other complex needs. It is located in Kings Norton, in the south of the city of Birmingham. The pupils are referred from across the whole of Birmingham. Lindsworth provides 192 places, including up to 12 residential places. It currently has 184 pupils on roll, 170 boys and 14 girls. The school is a maintained school funded by the local authority. There is one residential unit located on site which currently has six male residential pupils whose ages range from 11 to 14 years. The minority ethnicity of the residential pupils is 50 per cent Dual Heritage and 50 per cent White English. The school's last inspection was in June 2011.

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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/boardingschools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boardingschools).

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	good
Quality of residential provision and care	good
Residential pupils' safety	satisfactory
Leadership and management of the residential provision	satisfactory

## Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. There are good aspects at the school. Residential pupils benefit because the provision is providing good outcomes and good quality care. This is underpinned by effective relationships between staff, parents and carers. Staff show commitment and dedication to their work with residential pupils. The school is aware of the areas that it needs to improve.
- Residential pupils are making good progress in relation to their social development and are acquiring new life skills.
- Residential pupils' progress and development is supported by effective care planning. Diversity and individual needs are recognised in the care of all residential pupils. The school promotes equality of opportunity.
- Residential pupils strongly agree that the activities are fun, varied and interesting.
- Residential pupils' health needs are properly considered. The targeted support from the counselling psychologist is a key strength of the school.
- Another key strength of the school is the strategies in place to detect, prevent and deter bullying events.
- The school has good procedures in place for the safe recruitment of staff.
- The school meets most of the national minimum standards. However there are shortfalls in relation to gaps in the written agreement between the school and any person living in the premises. Also, the representative of the governing body has not visited the residential provision every half term to monitor the conduct of

the school.

## **Outcomes for residential pupils**

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. Residential pupils' social development including social interaction and self-help are given good support. They benefit from an inclusive residential experience that is safe, stable and secure. Residential pupils enjoy a stimulating environment where they learn new skills so that they achieve an appropriate level of independence. One residential pupil commented, 'Since coming here I now make my own bed.' This enables residential pupils to flourish and grow to gain confidence. One staff member commented, 'We now encourage residential pupils to use the washing machine during their stay. They can wash and have their uniform cleaned for the next school day.' The outcome for residential pupils is that they are being well-prepared for acquiring practical, social and life skills.

Residential pupils benefit because they have equality of opportunity with their peers. They are encouraged to identify with a wide range of differing cultural and religious faiths. One residential pupil explained 'Each morning we have school assemblies and we do celebrate pupils' achievements.' Residential pupils enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and each other. One staff member commented, 'We are a very diverse team in respect of age, gender, ethnicity and culture. This offers residential pupils strong role models.' The outcome for residential pupils is that they are forming trust and building up positive relationships.

Residential pupils' personal development, including their self-esteem, independence and confidence is well supported. They benefit from structure and a broad number of opportunities during their residential stay. For example, they enjoy taking part in activities such as, playing football, table tennis, pool, rock climbing and visiting adventure parks. They are enabled to develop specific talents, skills and interests. Equally, it helps residential pupils to keep fit and healthy. One residential pupil commented, 'I love coming here to stay and I do loads of interesting things.' The outcome for residential pupils is that they benefit from a wide range of activities that include the recreational and cultural diversity of the individual and group.

Residential pupils are making good progress with learning how well they respect the rights of others. One residential pupil commented, 'I can see clearly that I have improved my behaviour and thoughtfulness to others. Staff have helped me do this.' The outcome for residential pupils is that they understand the concept of rights and that this comes with a responsibility to themselves and others.

Residential pupils throughout their boarding stays are actively encouraged to share their views, opinions and any worries. Their opinions have made a difference in the different number of activities they take part in. The outcome for residential pupils demonstrates effective communication.

## Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the school's provision for residential pupils is good. The quality of pastoral support for residential pupils, including the impact of induction for new pupils is good. There is a well-embedded partnership between the residential provision and the pupils' family or carers. This is unpinned by the school's agreement which is fully signed up to and endorsed. All residential pupils have clearly identified care mentors. This enables positive and secure attachments to develop and individual needs are met. Staff are a valued resource of the school. They are provided with good day-to-day school management support. One member of staff commented, 'We work very well as a team and our priority is to ensure that all pupils have a safe, fun and positive experience.'

All residential pupils can easily contact their parent or carer. Effective arrangements are in place if specific support is necessary which is clearly agreed and documented. One young person explained, 'I like to phone my family each evening.' The outcome for residential pupils is that contact with their parent or carer is warmly supported.

There are effective links between pastoral and academic staff in supporting the residential pupils' personal and academic development. This is because teaching staff support residential pupils in the evening times with the programme of activities. All staff give focus on giving praise and encouraging comments. This is viewed as a vital part of the residential pupil's experience in terms of intensive care and supervision. The outcomes for residential pupils are that they benefit positively from consistency and continuity of care. This helps increase their self-esteem and experience of success.

Residential pupils benefit from the positive impact of experienced and qualified staff on duty at all times. This means that residential pupils get the correct level of support that they need. One residential pupil commented, 'There is a lot of different staff here. If you have any concerns or worries there is always someone to talk to.'

All residential pupils have in place a simple and straightforward care plan. Staff review and update care plans to reflect residential pupils' progression. One member of staff commented, 'We review the care plans at least annually and also the risk assessments.' The outcome for residential pupils is that this aids and supports the holistic development and learning of each individual.

Primarily, all health matters are the responsibility of the parent or carer. Care planning does take full account of health care needs and resources. Residential pupils are able to get extra support with their mental and emotional health and their emerging sexuality. This is because the school provides a specialist counselling psychologist. The counselling psychologist commented, 'A lot of families have observed that therapy room is cosy and welcoming.' The outcome for residential pupils is that this empowers and liberates them to move forward in their lives.

The quality of the school's catering arrangements is good. All meals are freshly prepared, cooked and nutritious. The school selects food that represents many cultures. Residential pupils are encouraged to learn and understand the benefits of healthy eating. They regularly select from a range of healthy options. One residential pupil commented, 'We always have the salad bar on the menu for each meal.' The outcome for residential pupils is that they are learning a positive attitude towards healthy eating.

The quality of the residential accommodation, premises and facilities is adequate. All residential pupils benefit from having their own individual room which are en suite. They are actively encouraged to personalise their own room with posters and any favourite items from their home. The school is continuing to update and decorate the environment further to enhance the residential provision.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

The school makes satisfactory provision to safeguard the welfare of residential pupils. The school operates effective and safe recruitment procedures. This helps to deter unsuitable staff working with vulnerable pupils. However, the current written agreements between the school and any person living in accommodation in the grounds or in annexes to the school do not include all the relevant details. This is an administrative issue that has no direct impact on residential pupils' welfare.

Residential pupils feel safe and are safe. The school adopts good policies for safeguarding, behaviour management and health and safety. The residential provision's ethos and philosophy is of a supportive and caring environment.

The school has very effective measures to combat bullying including racism, homophobic and cyber-bullying. One residential pupil commented, 'Staff are very good here, they hear, listen and notice things.' The school ensures that they communicate that bullying is not tolerated and have a number of effective strategies in place. For example, the senior management team review and monitor events and incidents through sophisticated electronic records. In addition the 'Anti Bullying' group meetings take place and have devise innovative approaches to tackle bullying, such as the recent 'Box Clever' a six week sporting programme. The outcome for residential pupils is that they experience very few events related to bullying.

Residential pupils benefit from the consistent approach for behavioural management strategies. Staff are excellent at managing and supporting residential pupils to manage conflict through resolution. Residential pupils learn different techniques and communication to adapt and modify inappropriate behaviours. One pupil explained, 'We can earn merits for good behaviour and then over time the school lets us choose our rewards. This week I have got a new pair of trainers.' Another residential pupil commented, 'In the past I got rewards to collect a T-Shirt, football and a mobile phone.' Physical intervention is not used in the residential provision. This is testimony to the success that staff have with helping residential pupils to maintain expected

standards of behaviour. The outcome for residential pupils is that they learn to develop responsibility and successfully sustain good behaviour.

The environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the residential pupils. Health and safety is given a good priority by the school. Staff ensure that the care, safety and security of residential pupils is given top priority. Documented risk assessments are carried individually for each residential pupil. Similarly, all activities are properly assessed and measures taken to promote safety. As a result, this actively promotes the protection of their welfare.

All residential pupils are provided with high levels of staffing and supervision. Their whereabouts are known at all times. There are no occasions where a residential pupil goes missing.

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

The management and organisation of the residential provision is satisfactory. This is due to the lack of visits made by a representative from the governing body. The governing body has yet to appoint another representative to visit the school once every half term. Currently, this is being rectified by senior managers at the school. As a result, this, in part, compromises the school's ability to analyse the quality of the residential provision and identify areas for further improvement.

The school highly values the contribution the residential provision makes to residential pupils' and the life of the school. The partnership working between the parent, carer and residential pupil is viewed as essential to promoting good outcomes. This is underpinned by the high staffing ratios to meet the diverse needs of the residential pupils. One of the senior managers explained, 'The relationship between staff and the residential pupil is the primary basis of care management and individual judgment of the worker is often crucial in determining the outcome of any situation.' The outcome for residential pupils is that residential provision is viewed as an integral part of school life.

The residential provision has a clear statement of purpose policy which is shared with the family, carer and other significant stakeholders. This adequately explains the aims and objectives of the provision. Staff effectively translate into practice a key aim of a safe, stable and secure environment. One residential pupil commented, 'I enjoy my time here and I want to stay for even more nights.'

The residential provision is effective and efficiently managed. The newly appointed head of care is an experienced qualified social worker who leads by example. There is a considered approach to the planning of staff deployment, resources, staff supervision and training. The diversity and individual needs are recognised in planning and caring for residential pupils. They are accorded equality of opportunity.



As a result, staff demonstrates a strong commitment to providing good quality outcomes for residential pupils.

The management team have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for further development. For example, the school has experience significant changes as a result of staff restructuring. The school has a clear plan to now improve and embed further good practice changes. Since the last inspection, the school has improved work related to; anti-bullying; the residential provision being used exclusively by residential pupils; improvements to the home's physical environment and improvements to quality of staff supervision. These changes have improved residential pupils' experiences.

Staff have access to a good range of policies to help them meet the demanding task of residential care. Records are of a good quality and show residential pupils' progress and development. As a consequence, this offers an effective account of decisions and actions made about their care and support.

Residential pupils are consulted. Their views, opinions, and experiences are shared daily through de-briefing meetings. In addition, there is an active school council and a food committee that regularly seek to engage and put forward new ideas and have open and frank discussions. For example, changes have taken place to the school curriculum, the timings of the school day lunches and buying resources for activities. The outcome for residential pupils is that their 'voice' is central to the ethos and experience of the residential provision.

## **National minimum standards**

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.

- There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with children, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors, and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with children. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or convicted of, any offence. (NMS 14.3)
- The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who does not work at, or directly manage, the school, to visit the school once every half term and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the Headteacher (or school equivalent). (NMS

20.1)

**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.**



21/05/2012

Dear residential pupils

### **Inspection of Lindsworth School**

I visited the residential provision recently. I was really pleased to hear and see how much you enjoy staying your residential stays.

You told me that you are very well looked after. Staff are caring and want the best for you. It was really good to see that you take pride in doing things for yourself. I saw you making your own beds, using the washing machine and also setting the table ready for your meals.

You really enjoy the activities and you have a lot of fun with everyone.

There are areas that the school does well and this includes providing you with good outcomes. You are really benefiting from the good quality care, support and guidance.

There are just a couple of areas that the school has to improve. This relates to ensuring that a representative of the governing body visits you every half term. Also that the school completes written agreements for any person living in the premises.

Thank you for letting me spend time with you and for talking to me about what it is like to live at the school.

Yours sincerely,

Martha Nethaway