

Loxley Hall

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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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.^{1,2}

Information about the school

Loxley Hall School is a Staffordshire Local Authority school offering day and residential places to boys with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties aged 11 to 16 years. There are 70 pupils on roll, 19 of whom access the residential provision for overnight stays.

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 where classrooms, offices, a main kitchen, a dining hall are situated. There are two residential houses on the school site which can provide overnight stays for up to nine boys at any one time.

The residential provision was last inspected in June 2011.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Inspection judgements

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Overall effectiveness | outstanding |
| 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 overall effectiveness of the residential provision is outstanding. Residential pupils benefit tremendously from staying for regular short breaks where they are able to develop their social and emotional skills in a caring and nurturing environment.
- Equality and diversity is well promoted throughout the residential provision. Pupils receive care, education and support based on their individual needs. Furthermore, the culture of the whole school is based on mutual respect, accepting difference, sharing and helping each other.
- Excellent relationships exist between residential pupils and staff which helps pupils make considerable progress in their social, emotional and educational development.
- Residential pupils undoubtedly enjoy their time in residence and have a lot of fun at the same time as learning new skills. The provision of a wide range of leisure, social and educational activities which they really appreciate, help to increase pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- Safeguarding is at the forefront of practice within the whole school. Consequently, residential pupils feel safe. They are able to thrive in a supportive environment where they are able to take assessed risks in preparation for their next stages in life. Pupils are further protected by the excellent management of health and safety in the school and the robust and effective recruitment of staff.
- The management of pupils' behaviour is excellent and pupils make very good progress in changing poor behaviours and developing socially acceptable behaviours. This helps pupils remain with their families and carers and become

more accepted members of the wider community.

- Excellent partnerships exist between staff and parents and carers which can be attributed to the unquestionable commitment of the staff team to pupils and their families. Comments from parents and carers reflect their gratitude for the support their child and they, as families, receive from the school.
- Staff across all disciplines within the school are totally committed to working together creating a seamless and innovative service which helps pupils develop and make real progress during their time in school and the residential provision.
- Leadership and management of the residential provision is excellent. Pupils benefit from immense care and support from a truly devoted and highly skilled staff team. Staff work tirelessly to improve the lives of pupils and to prepare them for adulthood as much as possible.
- The school's quality assurance and monitoring systems are robust and innovative and form an integral part of future developments within the whole school. They ensure that pupils are safe, that they receive the care, education and support they need and reach their potential as much as possible.
- All national minimum standards are met.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding.

Residential pupils benefit greatly from their experiences in the residential setting and really enjoy their time in residence. Feedback from residential pupils about their experiences is overwhelmingly positive and reflects a real sense of appreciation of the wide ranging experiences they are provided with. Comments received from residential pupils include: 'It is awesome' (referring to the residential provision); 'I love residence. I would like to stay more'. Comments received from parents and carers are also very positive about the care, education and support their children get and they really appreciate the support they receive as families. One parent commented that 'I think the boarding is fantastic.' Furthermore, comments received from parents who complete school surveys at their child's annual review are extremely positive. These include: '(my son) is doing amazing at Loxley he has come on in leaps and bounds'; 'I am happy with all aspects and staff do not need to improve anything. Thank you'.

Residential pupils benefit from an environment where staff have high hopes and aspirations for all pupils to reach their full potential. Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities and experiences which are based on individual's assessed needs and risks which ensure pupils can develop in a safe environment. This helps to increase pupils' confidence and self-esteem and become active members of society.

Residential pupils make very good progress in changing their behaviours while at the

same time having lots of fun. Consequently, they are able to become accepted members of the wider community, improve relationships with their families and carers and, in some cases, transfer back into mainstream schools. Support and intervention from staff at the school have in some cases prevented family breakdowns and children being admitted into the care of the local authority.

Empowerment of all pupils is an integral part of the school and there are a range of systems within the school and residential provision which promote self-advocacy. Since the last inspection the residential steering group has developed and residential pupils are taking a real part in the day-to-day running and development of the residential provision. Residential pupils, who are part of this group, grow in confidence and social skills. They develop an increasing ability in representing the views of others and acquire communication and negotiating skills which helps prepare them for adulthood.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the residential provision and care is outstanding.

The admissions and induction process for residential pupils is very good and takes into account their individual needs. Staff work very closely with parents, carers and other relevant professionals to obtain relevant information prior to admission. Care plans and associated records are of a good standard and are reviewed regularly. Residential pupils have clear individual targets to work towards which helps increase their social and developmental skills.

Pupils are very well supported during their transition period which helps them prepare for adulthood. The commitment and dedication of the school's transition's manager has had a significant impact on the lives of pupils during the process of transition. She has challenged barriers faced by pupils and advocated strongly on their behalf. Consequently, pupils have been able to access and retain placements in colleges and training which has improved their life opportunities. The numbers of school leavers not in education, employment and training has continued to reduce significantly since the appointment of the transitions manager in 2008/2009.

Parents and carers retain overall responsibility for their child's health needs. However, staff are totally committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle and goes way beyond what is expected of them in ensuring the health needs of pupils are met. This is achieved educating of pupils about healthy living, the provision of a healthy diet and regular exercise and working collaboratively with parents, carers and other specialist professionals such as child and adolescent mental health services.

Since the last inspection the school has further developed the 'Health Related Fitness and Lifestyles' programme which not only teaches residential pupils about healthy lifestyles but also monitors their physical and emotional well-being. This programme also provides a forum for discussing and addressing personal issues on an individual

basis. This helps to build the self-esteem of residential pupils. As a result of this particular programme, pupils eat healthier, take regular exercise and some have lost weight.

Staff advocate on behalf of pupils and, in some instances, their families, to ensure pupils can access the appropriate medical services. Since the last inspection the facilities manager has extended his role by attending medical reviews with pupils and their families, acting as an important support and advocate to ensure pupils get appropriate advice and treatment. This is much appreciated by parents and carers. Pupils' health needs are met and further protected by the safe and effective implementation of medication procedures.

Since the last inspection a senior family support worker has been employed whose role is to provide both practical and emotional support to pupils and their families, act as an independent advocate, as well as working in partnership with the school. Pupils and families have benefited greatly from the practical and emotional support, advice and guidance given by the senior family support worker.

A second residential house has opened since the last inspection which gives more scope to ensure the needs of the groups staying in the houses are compatible. As a result, the behaviour of residential pupils has improved. Both houses are decorated to a very high standard and the environment is appreciated and respected by residential pupils. Residential pupils are able to learn and acquire daily living skills in preparation for adulthood. They take an active part in shopping, cooking and keeping the house clean and tidy.

Staff are extremely dedicated and resourceful in providing pupils with every opportunity possible to enjoy a wide range of activities and have different experiences. Residential pupils really enjoy the activities and daily living opportunities which many of them would not normally have access to. They learn and develop social skills including how to relate socially to others around them, how to share with others and how to develop positive and respectful relationships. The range of activities also helps pupils develop self-care and social skills.

Residential pupils' safety

The arrangements for ensuring residential pupils' welfare and safety are outstanding. Safeguarding is at the forefront of practice while at the same time enabling pupils to develop skills and take risks in a safe and nurturing environment in preparation for adulthood. All residential pupils say they feel safe and are well looked after. Parents and carers confirm that the school keeps their child safe. This can be attributed to the highly skilled and motivated staff team who fully understand their responsibilities in safeguarding pupils while at the same time providing them with every opportunity possible to grow and develop.

The management of behaviour is excellent where pupils make real progress during

their time at the school. This is due to the highly skilled staff team who are able to form positive and respectful relationships with pupils, the provision of the nurture emotional support units and the commitment of the senior leadership team in monitoring practices and systems which help to inform future developments.

Physical intervention is very rarely used in the residential unit which is testament to the skills of the staff team and the positive relationships they have built with students. The use of physical interventions during the school day has continued to reduce substantially. Pupils are very proud of the progress they make in changing their poor behaviours which increases their confidence. Parents and carers recognise the progress their children make and really appreciate the work of the school.

The commitment to deal with any incidences of bullying at the school is seen as top priority. Respect for each other is embedded in the day- to-day culture of the school and this helps pupils to learn about how their unacceptable behaviours impact on others and about accepting difference. There is a designated staff member who oversees the implementation of the anti-bullying policy and monitors all incidents. Policies have been reviewed since the last inspection to further promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory behaviour. Pupils have taken part in activities and exercises which are meaningful to them which increases their understanding of difference and promotes acceptance of others. This has also resulted in a reduction in the number of incidents of bullying.

The excellent management of health and safety which includes robust monitoring systems within the whole school ensures pupils and staff are protected from the risk of harm and injury. There is a designated staff member to oversee the management of health and safety. However, shared ownership by the whole school team for this area, prevails which helps to provide a safe and secure environment for pupils and staff.

Pupils are protected by robust and effective recruitment practices and the vetting of visitors which well exceed the minimum requirements set out in legislation. Furthermore, residential pupils are supported to be involved in the recruitment of staff which empowers them and helps them feel valued.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. The senior leadership team is inspirational and dynamic, providing clear direction and support to all staff. This is a school where 'standing still' is not an option and there is an outstanding commitment to 'raising the bar' in terms of improving the quality of services provided to pupils and their families.

All staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities although shared ownership is unmistakably part of the culture in the school. Staff feel valued by the senior leadership team and are actively encouraged to take an active part in developing

services and systems within the school. As a result, pupils receive a very high standard of care, education and support which are highly personalised and take into account their communication and language needs.

The residential provision has its own Statement of Purpose which informs parents, carers, pupils and other professionals about the services provided and the aims and objectives of the unit. It accurately reflects practice within the houses.

There is an unquestionable commitment to continual improvement and development. This is evident by the excellent work undertaken by the head of care and headteacher. They have produced a self-evaluation form against the new national minimum standards and the new Ofsted inspection framework. Based on their analysis further developments and improvements have been planned.

This desire for continual improvement is further complemented by a range of effective quality assurance systems which help to keep pupils safe, ensure their needs are met improves their life chances.

National minimum standards

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

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.



29/05/2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Loxley Hall

I really enjoyed visiting your school recently and spending time with you. You were very polite and made me feel very welcome. I thank you for letting me join in your activities and have meals with you.

You told me how much you enjoy staying in the residential houses and that you feel safe. Staff help you learn about different dangers and how to keep yourselves safe. You have excellent relationships with staff who really help you learn to respect, share and care for each other. Staff look after you very well and you are able to talk to them if you are worried about anything which helps to keep you safe.

You make very good progress in improving your behaviour and staff give you a lot of praise for good behaviour and the achievements you make. Your behaviour is particularly good in the residential houses. You are very proud of the progress you make during your time at the school and in the residential houses.

You are encouraged to live healthy lifestyles by eating healthily and taking lots of exercise. You are able to learn lots of new skills such as cooking and learning how to do your laundry. This helps you prepare for adulthood and build up your confidence. You also have lots of opportunities to do different activities which you really enjoy. You say that you feel listened to and staff feel it is very important that your views and suggestions are listened to and, acted upon where possible. There are lots of opportunities to make your views known such as the residential steering group and residential meetings as well as having representatives from the residential houses on the School Council.

The residential houses are decorated to a very good standard and have nice furniture. You look after the houses well which is why the houses look so homely, clean and comfortable.

This is an outstanding school and you are very happy with the care and support you receive.

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

Yours sincerely,

Katarina Djordjevic

