

Wells Park School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115450
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	379075
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2012
Lead inspector	Jeffery Plumb

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection of residential provision 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	Special
School category	Residential special
Age range of pupils	4–12
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Kaye
Headteacher	Sue Wraw
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2008
School address	School Lane Lambourne Road Chigwell IG7 6NN
Telephone number	020 85026442
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Residential provision	Wells Park School
Social care unique reference number	SC018021
Social care inspector	Karen Malcolm

Age group	4–12
Inspection date(s)	21–22 June 2012
Inspection number	379075



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Introduction

Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb

Additional Inspector

Karen Malcolm

Social Care Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in eight lessons taught by four teachers. Seven were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also examined three case studies of pupils to determine the quality of provision made for them and its impact. Inspectors met formally and informally with pupils. They joined them for supper and breakfast in two of their residential houses. The social care inspector joined them for an evening 'bike' ride and met with a few parents and carers. Inspectors attended an assembly. Meetings were held with teaching and residential welfare staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a number of documents, including progress and attainment data, the 'safe handling' log, safeguarding policies and risk assessments, equality and diversity policies, attendance figures and the school improvement plan. Inspectors took account of the responses of the on-line questionnaire Parent Review survey in planning the inspection. They also took account of 14 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as the 33 completed by pupils and 33 completed by staff.

Information about the school

This school currently has 39 boys from Year 2 through to Year 6 with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties attending. The school can provide for girls if two are ready for admission at the same time. Most pupils join the school at various points throughout Key Stage 2, with a few arriving as late as Year 5. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A few have additional needs including learning difficulties and complex medical needs. The school has residential facilities. Thirty-six boys reside full-time during the week and return to their homes at the weekend. A very few boys reside on a part-time basis and a few are day only pupils. A few boys are dual-registered and receive their education solely in a mainstream school. Most pupils come from Essex, but a few come from Norfolk, Thurrock, Havering and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils are White British. A very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none are at an early stage of learning English.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. The overall effectiveness of the residential experience is also outstanding. Parents and carers are delighted with what this school achieves for their children. Their views are typified by the parent who said, 'For the first time in [his] life my son enjoys going to school and accesses an education tailored to his needs. He is a happy and confident child because his self-esteem and behaviour has improved so much since being here.'
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding both academically and in their personal development. From low starting points on entry all pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding. Challenging activities are tailored to pupils' specific learning needs and the objectives identified in their statements. Teachers are highly skilled in improving pupils' behaviour and self-confidence. Relationships are excellent and so pupils take safe risks with their learning and surprise themselves by what they achieve.
- Pupils enter the school with a history of poor behaviour. Most gain confidence, believe that they can succeed and behave exceptionally well. They feel safe and valued. They are adept at assessing risks and adopting safe practices. Their attendance is above average.
- Effective and motivational leadership within the school and the residential accommodation significantly enhances pupils' learning and personal development. Monitoring by the headteacher is rigorous and incisive. It leads to decisive action to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement. Management of performance is exceptionally effective in providing targeted professional development to equip teachers to improve their teaching. Very effective management systems are implemented in the residential provision, but these are not always followed up with the required paperwork. There is no documented plan of staff training needs in relation to medication. Unannounced

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visits are compliant with regulations; visitors talk with pupils and staff; but these visits are not written down in the detail required. Pupils are asked how they feel about the occasions when they needed to be 'handled safely,' but then their views are not written down consistently.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The school must ensure it improves its recording procedures and the quality of documented plans in the residential houses by December 2012 by:
 - ensuring a documented plan is in place which shows a clear overview of all staff individual training and development needs, especially relating to medication and first aid updates
 - ensuring that the views and comments of all pupils and members of staff, if they so wish, are recorded, following a visit by the independent visitor
 - ensuring that pupils not only express their views about the use of 'safe hold' when it is implemented to keep them safe within the school and houses, but that in addition the views which they express are always written down meticulously and consistently

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Outstanding achievement is confirmed by pupils and the views of most parents and carers are summed up in a comment from one parent, 'My child is able to thrive and develop his full potential because the school fully meets his needs.' Pupils arrive having had gaps in their schooling, in some instances having not attended school regularly for two years. Because of these gaps their attainment on entry is extremely low for their age. Once settled they make rapid progress. Pupils make consistently good or better gains in their learning, in both English and mathematics, but attainment overall remains below the national average, although some reach national standards in some subjects. Year 2 pupils also achieve exceptionally well. A few dual-registered pupils are fully included in mainstream schools and achieve as well as their peers. Pupils' achievement in personal development skills is exceptional.

Pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Tailored and highly individualised support, based on letter recognition and correct sounds work, successfully improves pupils' reading competence. Pupils enjoy reading books with residential staff in the evenings and this contributes to their rapid progress. The highest achieving Year 6 pupils develop inference and deduction skills and so attain at the nationally expected level. The outdoor environment is used to fire pupils' imagination and this contributes to significant improvements in their creative writing.

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The use of electronic books aimed at encouraging pupils, who have failed previously in recording their poetic ideas verbally, also accelerates their writing performance because they are so keen to write their poems down using this technology. Progress in mathematical problem-solving skills is rapid. Gaps in multiplication facts are successfully closed for almost all pupils and the highest achieving pupils use mathematical language, such as partitioning and inverse, confidently when carrying out their mathematical operations successfully. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are exceptionally well-developed across the curriculum. Through a project focusing on the construction of an igloo, pupils' estimated, measured, explored shapes and engaged in interesting discussion about purposely re-cycling waste materials. Progress in science, information and communication technology and design and technology is outstanding.

Learning and performance in lessons is outstanding. For example, in a literacy lesson, there was outstanding learning and pupils made rapid progress in their creative writing. Engaging in role play, taking turns dressing up as 'Peter Pan' and expressing exaggerated movements as they danced around the classroom, they built up a bank of descriptive words as they assessed their performances. Then they used these descriptive words to describe characters in their own creative stories.

Quality of teaching

Based on high expectations and excellent relationships teaching is challenging and relevant. Exceptionally well-planned activities are based on the effective use of assessment information to successfully meet pupils specific' learning needs. Very effective questioning, based on secure subject knowledge, is used to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. In a mathematics lesson the teacher modelled how to solve a problem using the inverse of multiplication technique. The pupils watched carefully. Then they were set problems to solve using this technique. They excelled with their learning. Teaching is delivered at a very brisk pace; behaviour is managed skilfully and teaching assistants target support for those pupils with additional needs exceptionally well. The teaching of literacy and numeracy pervades all lessons. For example in a science lesson pupils applied their numeracy skills. Marking is excellent and pupils respond eagerly to the guidance that they are given and know what must be improved. Parents and carers are delighted with the teaching their children receive. Pupils' views are typified by the pupil who said, 'Our teaching is amazing. Our work is hard, but fun.'

An innovative enquiry-based curriculum and excellent resources contribute to the outstanding teaching in project based activities. Project work enable pupils to develop the skills required to work in teams effectively; learn to take turns and develop important life skills such as sewing, cooking healthy foods and gardening. Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Pupils' curiosity is evoked as they explore and learn outdoors. Their awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity is heightened as they learn to speak French and gain an understanding of different faiths in religious education.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy their learning because it is fun. They talk with pride about the fact that their spelling has improved since being in this school. They are excited about their skills based project work. Parents and carers say that this is a 'fantastic school' because their children's behaviour has improved so much since being here. Behaviour is outstanding because pupils have learnt to manage their anger and have begun to believe that they can succeed. The school is calm and pupils treat each other with dignity and respect. Breakfast time, on a Friday morning, in the houses is a happy and relaxed family occasion.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding of different types of bullying is exceptional. They know that bullying is wrong and say that it does not occur in their school, but that very occasionally verbal arguments spill over into fights. These incidents are dealt with swiftly. Pupils apologise to each other and are soon friends again. Overwhelmingly, parents and carers say that their children are safe. Pupils feel safe too. They all have an adult who they trust and with whom they can talk through anything that troubles them. They know that they must not speak with strangers when using computers and understand the health risks associated with the misuse of alcohol and smoking. They say, 'We must not get caught up in a gang because it will lead us into stealing and knife crime.'

Leadership and management

The headteacher and the head of care work in an exceptionally effective partnership to raise pupils' achievement and promote their personal development. Parents and carers are very well supported in helping their children to learn when they are at home. Governance is highly effective in supporting and challenging school leaders. Although the leadership of the residential provision results in outstanding outcomes for the pupils there is a little slippage in the recording of the high quality practice.

Self-evaluation is thorough. Analysis of performance continually informs planning for improvement. For example, a recent audit of the performance of pupils with additional needs in reading has led to changes, which have significantly improved their reading performance. A recent trial of working outdoors has been evaluated to assess its impact on improving pupils' writing. The findings have led to the decision to develop a formal outdoors component to the curriculum. Monitoring of teaching and targeted professional development continually improve the quality of teaching. Rigorous feedback to teachers is acted upon speedily, leading to improved behaviour management and even better subject knowledge. The capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

An innovative and creative curriculum is provided. Personal, social, health and citizenship education addresses issues of disability awareness and promotes positive images of a range of cultures and beliefs. Equality of opportunity for all lies at the

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heart of this successful school. There is a commitment that every pupil will succeed. This vision is translated into practice. Never complacent, the school ceaselessly reviews the curriculum so as to tailor it to better meet the needs of each individual. The curriculum makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils reflected and thought critically as they constructed an igloo out of recycled materials and through the teaching component of assemblies began to think about the fact that life is not always fair. Management systems to ensure pupils are safe and secure are robust. Child protection procedures meet requirements and risk assessments are very thorough and detailed.

Residential provision

The residential provision makes a strong contribution to improving pupils' personal development and achievement. It is organised and managed very effectively and there is a passion for continuous improvement. Pupils have a wide range of leisure pursuits which engage and educate them extremely well. They are enabled to acquire new skills, through worthwhile experiences, and as a result develop their knowledge, understanding and interests. Pupils benefit from residential accommodation that is very well furnished and maintained thus providing a homely environment. Pupils refer to their houses as 'home from home'. Staff provide excellent opportunities for pupils to explore the wider community, form friendships and develop social skills through carefully planned activities. Pupils benefit from staff focusing strongly on their individual health needs and promoting their well-being very effectively.

Pupils benefit from a stable, committed and experienced senior leadership team. The multi-disciplinary approach to care, welfare and support promotes the best outcomes for each pupil. Their needs are exceptionally well met. Pupils are able to contribute to improving school life through the school council. The strong emphasis on choice, and the comprehensive participation strategy, where they contribute to activities such as recycling, gives pupils a sense of purpose in their daily lives. Pupils really like all the activities that they were able to engage in, especially the 'BMX bike rides'. There is exceptionally high staff retention and this results in pupils having a continuity of care and welfare support.

Pupils thrive within an environment which successfully promotes their well-being and gives them stability and happiness. They make excellent progress from their original starting point. There is strong practice in safeguarding and procedures are known by all staff and pupils. Recruitment and staff vetting procedures are robust. Physical intervention is used only in exceptional circumstances, and sanctions are rarely used. Pupils receive an abundance of praise and encouragement. However, records maintained following a physical intervention do not consistently reflect pupils' comments.

The overwhelming views from questionnaires were that the school is 'fantastic'.

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Parents and carers give inspirational examples of how the residential provision helps their children. The senior management team are fully aware of where improvements need to be made. These relate to having a clearly documented staff development and training needs plan, and evidencing pupils’ and staff views/comments following a visit from the independent visitor.

National minimum standards

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

These are the grades for the residential provision

Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	1
Outcomes for residential pupils	1
Quality of residential provision and care	1
Residential pupils’ safety	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	1

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



25 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wells Park School, Chigwell IG7 6NN

Thank you so much for welcoming inspectors as guests to your school. We greatly enjoyed the time we spent with you. It was fun and exciting to go 'biking' with you and we found breakfast time on Friday, in your houses, to be a relaxed and family time. Your school is outstanding and the residential experience is outstanding too.

- You make outstanding progress with your reading, writing and mathematics. You are keen to learn and succeed.
- Your teaching is challenging, relevant and inspires you to learn. Interesting activities are planned, which meet your needs exceptionally well and speed up your learning.
- You enjoy your learning. Your project work is exciting and fun. It helps you develop important skills such as working together in teams. Your attitude to learning is very positive both within school and in your houses. You feel safe and are safe. You look after each other well. Most of the time you are very considerate of each other and children less fortunate than yourselves. We are delighted that you raise funds for children at a local children's hospice. You manage your feelings of anger very well now and overall your behaviour is outstanding.
- All of the outstanding aspects of your school and houses are because they are so well led and managed. All adults are committed to helping you develop your full potential.
- We have asked your head of care to make just a few things better for. We have asked her to ask the visitors to your houses to always write down, if you wish, what you say to them. We have also asked her to improve her recording and paperwork so as to plan to make your houses an even better place to live.

Please all help your school and houses to continue to be outstanding by always doing your very best at all times.

Yours sincerely

Jeffery Plumb
Lead inspector

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