

West Kirby Residential School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

Unique reference number for social care	SC018958
Unique reference number for education	105137
Inspection dates	01/10/2012 to 03/10/2012
Inspector	Chris Scully

School address	West Kirby Residential School, 107-119 Meols Drive, West Kirby, WIRRAL, Merseyside, CH48 5DH
Telephone number	0151 632 3201
Email	garethwilliams@wkrs.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr G W Williams

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk



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

West Kirby Residential School is a non maintained special educational needs college for young people with complex and significant emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. Many young people also have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are currently 93 pupils on roll aged from 5 years to over 16 years; of these 79 are boys and 14 are girls. The school currently is providing residential places for up to 18 young people during weekdays in term time. This consists of 15 boys and four girls. There is a variety of boarding arrangements available depending on the needs of the child, ranging from one to four nights each week. The school provides residential accommodation on the main site and in two houses in the local area. The residential provision was last inspected on the 27 September 2011.

The location of the school and the houses enables young people to access facilities in the community easily. They are close to bus stops, a train station, leisure centres, swimming pools, youth clubs, shops, the beach, parks and other schools.

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 school is outstanding. There are considerable strengths within the quality of the provision offered to residential pupils. The school creates a vibrant atmosphere where parents and staff work in partnership. This ensures residential pupils are safe, lead healthy lifestyles, enjoy learning, achieve and are prepared for adult life. Staff are very proud of residential pupils individual achievements and see them in a very positive light. Residential pupils are very much seen as individuals with differing needs, tastes and interests.
- Residential pupils receive exceptional care and support delivered by a highly skilled, passionate and dedicated team of staff who want the very best for them. This means young people are at the very heart of everything staff and the school does. Staff's innate understanding of residential pupils' needs enables them to provide high quality care, tailored to their specific needs.
- The school continues to be an example of the best residential care provision. Equality and diversity are an intrinsic part of the school. Consequently, residential pupils feel empowered, because they have a very strong voice within the school community.
- The seamless 24-hour curriculum enables residential pupils to benefit from extended services and activities which are personalised to their specific needs and interests. Every day residential pupils have the opportunities to take part in activities which truly engage their interests and inspire them to try new things.
- The safety and well-being of all residential pupils is of supreme importance to the school and staff. Staff are extremely vigilant and take swift, effective action should they have any concerns about a residential pupil's health, safety or well-

being. Staff are skilled at enabling residential pupils to consider their own safety both in school and when in the community and how to keep themselves safe.

- There is excellent interagency working taking place which means the holistic needs of residential pupils are being fully recognised and comprehensively met.
- The success of the residential provision emanates from the leadership. The principal and head of care share a very clear vision for the residential facility. Resulting in a clear agenda for improvement and continually looking at ways to further enhance the outcomes for residential pupils. Staff are very well supported and have a clear understanding of their role. Staff say they are 'proud to work here.'
- The national minimum standards are met with no weaknesses identified which have a direct impact upon the outcomes for residential pupils. This is one area for improvement. This relates to ensuring all records contain the most up-to-date information about the residential pupils.

Outcomes for residential pupils

The outcomes for the residential provision are outstanding. Residential pupils enjoy exceptionally positive relationships with staff. They regularly engage in friendly banter with staff and clearly enjoy spending time with them, for example playing table tennis or pool with them. Residential pupils have a very strong sense of belonging and have lots of positive things to say about the staff. They say, 'I love staying here it's really fun,' and report that staff are always here for them. Residential pupils have made firm friendships and enjoy the company of their peers, often inviting them to their house or unit for tea or to celebrate special events. Residential pupils show increasing tolerance to one another and are developing an understanding of other people's needs and feelings. They say we do argue sometimes, but explain that is what happens in families.

Developing independence is a significant strength of the provision. Staff use innovative ways in which to support residential pupils' independence and enhance their self-esteem. Residential pupils are eager to explain about how they can now do their own laundry and how staff helped them to achieve this by creating a photographic prompt sheet for them. Residential pupils are encouraged dependent upon their age and stage of development. This means they are able to develop a wide range of life skills such as cooking, travelling independently, shopping and budgeting.

Highly effective support systems are in place to ensure the smooth transition from the residential provision, for example, working collaboratively with mainstream colleges to support young people's choice of further education. Residential pupils say they are much more independent since residing at the school, they say 'I can do lots of things that I couldn't do before.' They are extremely proud of their achievements and are keen to show visitors their photographs as proof.

Residential pupils are valued and respected by staff. This is because their views are actively sourced and are acted upon. Residential pupil's views are integral to the organisation of the provision. They are confident to put forward ideas as to how some areas can be improved. They are keen to explain about the changes to the menu and how staff modified these further when they decided a combination was not working, for example, swapping salad for corn on the cob. Consequently, residential pupils feel empowered as they are able to influence things around them.

Residential pupils are increasing in confidence as they engage in a wide range of self-chosen, stimulating, challenging and rewarding activities. This is made possible by the commitment of care staff to support young people's interest such as finding appropriate activities within the community such as a skateboarding centre. This means residential pupils are able to continue with their specific interests and hobbies. Residential pupils enjoy a wide range of activities such as running clubs, tai chi, youth clubs, photography, music clubs and sports.

Residential pupils have a very good understanding of the need to be fit and healthy. They are aware of the importance of having a healthy diet especially five portions of fruit or vegetables each day and are willing to try different foods. Young people say the food cooked on the unit is good; however, they are not as keen on food provided by the school kitchens. This is because they enjoy the opportunities to cook with staff.

Health care plans are very well written and are tailored to the specific needs of each residential pupil. These actively contribute to residential pupils' emotional, psychological and physical well-being. This is exceptionally well supported by staff who use their own experiences to support young people's awareness of the importance of being healthy. As a result residential pupils are able to make informed choices of the benefits of immunisations and the possible consequences of not having these. Residential pupils good health is further supported by staff's innate understanding their needs and the commitment to working in partnership with other agencies such as child and adolescent health teams. This means young people are more able to cope with their feeling and anxieties and enables them to engage more fully with their education and social activities.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the provision is outstanding. A considerable amount of hard work, time and effort goes into ensuring communication between all staff is the very best. This is achieved as the school has established a climate of mutual trust and respect.

Residential pupils are cared for by a team of highly committed dedicated staff team who truly want the very best for them. Staff say they feel 'valued as in integral member of the team' and there is a 'great sense of unity and purpose which is why the school is successful.' Tight networking between all the departments within

school, including: speech and language therapists; physiotherapist; teaching and support staff, means care staff are extremely well informed about each young person's emotional, physical and social needs. Consequently, they are able to react and adapt swiftly to their ever changing needs.

Excellent induction systems and matching processes for new residential pupils effectively reduces any disruption to the routines of other young people. Students new to boarding are encouraged to spend various amounts of time in the units or houses to enable them to meet with staff and young people. This gradual process minimises any potential stress to young people and enables staff to devise effective support systems around the young person.

Residential pupils receive excellent pastoral care. They confirm their needs and concerns are always dealt with sensitively. They are very aware of the complaints system and grumbles book, and most importantly know their concerns are taken seriously. Residential pupils say they do not feel the need to make formal complaints as staff listen to them and they know they will 'sort things out' for them. Residential pupils' rights, confidentiality, dignity and privacy are always taken into account within staffs everyday practice.

Residential pupils confirm, they have access to a wide range of fruit, healthy snacks and drinks while in residence. Each house or unit is able to choose their own evening meal. This results in four different meals being prepared each night. Residential pupils are very pleased with the opportunities to eat in local restaurants. They are extremely proud that they saved up and budgeted for a meal out with staff. They happily regale visitors with tales about the visit, why some staff were not impressed with the restaurant and where they have chosen to go to next.

Care planning is extremely detailed and allows the uniqueness of each residential pupil to shine. The fusion of health, social and emotional needs is effectively captured, providing clear direction within the plans for improving outcomes. Residential pupils are actively encouraged to participate in the creation of the plans and the decision being made about them. Consequently, residential pupils' voices are equally respected throughout all aspects of their care. Residential pupils have excellent opportunities to remain in contact with those people who are important to them. They enjoy the opportunities to have friends and family over for tea and to celebrate special events with them.

Residential pupils are empowered to make a positive contribution to school life. This includes discussing and agreeing amendments to their schedule so that they fully participate in activities they enjoy. Staff have consistently high aspirations for residential pupils and work extremely hard to enable young people to reach their specific goals. They work exceedingly well with parents and carers to help young people achieve this. This level of positive engagement enables residential pupils to develop their self-esteem and gain increased confidence in their own abilities. This in turn is helping them to overcome barriers that may have hindered their learning.

Residential pupils have excellent opportunities to build social networks by attending community groups, welcoming students from other countries and fundraising for charities. Young people talk enthusiastically about the monies they have raised for charity and how this was achieved. This characterises the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and community cohesion. Residential pupils are developing a secure understanding of the world around them, the rights and needs of others through everyday interactions. This helps residential pupils to enhance their understanding and appreciation of a multi-cultural society.

Residential pupils' safety

The safety of the residential provision is outstanding. The welfare of residential pupils is actively promoted and safeguarded. Residential pupils are protected because staff have an excellent understanding of the safeguarding procedure and are suitably trained in child protection. They are also very aware of the complex need of the residential pupils and how this may impact upon them. The school takes appropriate and decisive action to safeguard residential pupils and works in conjunction with external agencies. Throughout the school and houses there are signs and details about safeguarding with contact details clearly visible. This enables staff, young people and visitors to have an excellent understanding about the roles of people involved in safeguarding in school and beyond. Young people are aware of who they can talk to, including independent people should they have any concerns.

Residential pupils are provided with excellent levels of supervision based upon their age, understanding and ability to make sure they are safe in school and in the community. Excellent advice and support is provided about their personal safety, for example, discussing the potential issues of using social networking sites. All visitors to the school are suitably vetted and supervised during their visit to ensure the safety and well-being of young people. Staff are very aware of residential pupils' vulnerabilities and the risks they face in the community. They work extremely hard to ensure risks to residential pupils are effectively managed. Residential pupils do not go missing. However, there are detailed risk assessments in place and plans for what staff should do should this occur.

Positive behaviour is consistently and effectively promoted. Staff are highly skilled in de-escalation techniques which are implemented well. This effectively reduces the need for physical interventions within the care provision and provides residential pupils with the opportunities to reflect and consider more proactive ways of dealing with the situation. Residential pupils are very aware of the school rules and possible consequences to inappropriate behaviour. They say staff are 'fair' and help them to look at things in a different way. Rewards, target setting and incentives work well as they are meaningful to residential pupils because they are fully consulted and agree to these. As a result residential pupils are able to achieve better outcomes with regards to managing their behaviour. This is evident as rewards outweigh any sanctions imposed.

Residential pupils are aware at varying levels of their own safety. They understand the risk of cyber-bullying and other forms of bullying. They say if this occurred they know staff would deal with it. Staff are aware that bullying can take various forms and this is compounded by the complexities of the residential pupils and their perceptions of bullying. Highly effective monitoring systems enable staff to look for trends or triggers in residential pupils behaviours. This enables them to revise their behaviour management strategies to effectively meet the needs of residential pupils.

Residential pupils are protected by a comprehensive range of detailed health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks. Staff conduct regular health and safety checks, including fire drills and vehicle checks, to ensure the premises and equipment are safe and secure.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

The leadership and management of the setting is outstanding. The principal and head of care promote a culture that ensures residential pupils are always listened to and respected as individuals. The school is professionally and efficiently run by effective senior managers. They promote clear visions and values that provide a safe stable, nurturing environment for residential pupils. Their commitment to providing high quality care to each residential pupil is commendable. This has a very positive effect upon them and is evident from the excellent progress young people are making.

The principal and head of care are highly committed to the sustained improvement in the quality of care. This is evident in the improvements within some records and systems since the last inspection. This includes enhancing the arrangements for the dispensing and administration of medication and a more cohesive approach to risk assessments. These improvements have provided more robust recording systems and ensure staff responsible for specific activities are clearly identified within the risk assessment. The implementation of pupil chronology sheets has enhanced the communication between departments, parents and staff and provides a more effective audit trail.

Highly effective systems are firmly established to ensure nothing gets missed. For instance there are daily handovers between residential and teaching staff to ensure a smooth transition of care is secured. In addition each week staff meet as a team and have the opportunities to review residential pupils' progress and undertake training events. This is further supported by the robust and thorough monitoring systems in place to review the quality of care and identify areas for improvement. School governors are highly committed to ensuring all residential pupils receive the best possible care, education and support. They meet regularly with senior managers to help drive forward future developments. Governors regularly visit the residential provision and compile a report. These reports are comprehensive and show time is taken to seek out the views of residential pupils.

All required policies and procedures are in place and are usually exceptionally well maintained. However on a very rare occasion child care plans do not reflect the most current information, such as a change of address and name another young person in another's records. Also on some occasions staff do not record if any valuables such as mobile telephones have been placed in their safe keeping. However, these minor omissions do not directly impact upon the quality of care provided to residential pupils.

Staff are experts in the diverse needs of residential pupils. This is made possible by the strong support provided from the principle and head of care. This includes regular supervision and the support to gain additional qualifications and new skills. Staff deployment is child focused and provides residential pupils with excellent continuity of care with people they trust and respect. Staff say, 'we are child centred and are dedicated to promoting the well-being of young people.' The rapport between residential pupils and staff is second to none. This is strengthened by comments from residential pupils who describe the staff as 'great,' 'they want the best for us' and 'caring.'

National minimum standards

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

What should the school do to improve further?

- ensure all written records contain the most up-to-date information, for example, care plans and records of valuables placed in staff safe keeping and confidentiality continues to be maintained.

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.



01/10/2012

Dear Residential Pupils,

Inspection of West Kirby Residential School

I would like to say a really big thank you to all of you for making me feel so welcome during my visit and for completing our surveys. It was a pleasure to see you again and have the opportunity to talk to you. Your views are very important and helped me to make some decisions about the residential provision. Consequently, I think you are cared for in an outstanding school.

Thank you so much for inviting me to tea, even though I think I stunned some of you into silence! You have a say in the meals provided and prefer the meals cooked by staff rather than those from the school kitchen. Thank you for my cupcakes too they were great.

You are doing really well and enjoy spending time on residence. I think staff want the very best for you and go out of their way to ensure you have all the help and support you need. You are able to take part in a wide range of activities. I hope you managed to beat the staff at table tennis.

Your views are actively sought by staff and where possible are acted upon. This means you have a greater say in how things are organised and you are able to bring about change, such as changing the activities and menus.

Staff are committed to keeping you safe and ensure that you get the right help and support when you need it most. They look after you when you are ill and ensure you get your medication. It was great to see how you are taking more responsibility for your own health and are able to identify things that affect this.

I think staff are really clever in helping you to achieve your personal targets, such as creating photographic sheets to remind you how to load and set the washing machine. They help you to set reasonable, achievable targets for the week and help you to achieve these. It was good to hear that you all get along, although you do occasionally argue but soon make up.

Thank you all once again, it was wonderful to speak to you and to see how far you have come since the last time we spoke. Keep up the good work!

Yours sincerely,

Chris Scully