

# Lakeside School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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**Inspector** Anna Williams

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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**

Lakeside School is a local authority day and residential special school for boys aged between 11 and 16 years, who have emotional, behavioural, and/or social difficulties. The school can accommodate 78 pupils with a maximum of 18 weekly residential pupils. At the time of inspection there were 12 residential pupils. The boarding house, which is split in two, is located on the school campus. The boarding provision was last inspected on 29 February 2012.

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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>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.

- This residential provision provides a satisfactory service to residential pupils. Residential pupils achieve good outcomes through their boarding experience. The quality of care within the residential provisions is good. However, the overall effectiveness of the residential provision is compromised by shortfalls in leadership and management and safety. Previous excellent practice within the residential provision has not been sustained.
- The residential experience has a positive impact on residential pupil's educational and social development. They build confidence and they learn appropriate life skills.
- Residential pupils benefit from a school which promotes equality and diversity and a 'respect for others' ethos.
- Safeguarding arrangements within the school are satisfactory. The school does not meet 2 national minimum standards in this area. The school recruitment policy has not been followed. This does not demonstrate robust safer recruitment practice. The school procedure on pupils missing is not compatible with the Runaway and Missing from Home and Care procedures.
- Meals within the boarding house provide a homely and relaxed environment for residential pupils to eat and socialise together. However, there is not a risk assessment in place to inform staff around the safe preparation and safe transfer of foods around the boarding house.
- Arrangements for the administration of prescribed medication to residential pupils are safe and effective. However, controlled drugs are not stored, administered

and recorded in line with pharmaceutical guidance.

- Records kept suitably capture the story of a residential pupil's time at the school. However, there are inconsistencies in the level of detail captured on some children's files.

## **Outcomes for residential pupils**

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. Relationships between residential pupils and staff are warm and appropriate. Positive relationships exist between residential pupils who use the residential provision. The school's 'respect for others' ethos and inclusive environment is reflected within the residential provision. Comments from children include 'since boarding, I now know lots of different boys. Everyone is different. I have learned to get on with people more.' The behaviour of residential pupils is generally good.

Through the residential experience, residential pupils make good progress with regard to their personal and social development. Some residential pupils have successfully progressed how they manage their own behaviour. This benefits them within the school, and in their home setting. Some residential pupils have made good progress in personal hygiene goals. This builds their self-esteem and benefits their health. All residential pupils make new friends socially through the boarding experience. This provides children with opportunities to develop social skills and interact with other children. Older residential pupils take on supportive roles with newer boarders. These additional responsibilities help older residential pupils to think about and support others. Comments from children include 'I like helping out with the younger boys in the after-school group. I can help them and I enjoy it.'

Residential pupils are positive about their school experience and their time in the residential provision. They contribute to the running of the residential provision through house meetings and the student council. Through these forums, residential pupils have seen changes in activity plans, menus and resources within the house. This demonstrates to residential pupils that their views are important and are listened to.

Residential pupils are positively involved in community based activities such as visits to local shops, activity centres and walks or trips to the beach. Residential pupils enjoy a wide range of physical activities on offer. These include weekly swimming sessions, football, cycling, power kiting and snowboarding. These experiences offer residential pupils opportunities to try new sports and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Residential pupils make good progress in acquiring appropriate life skills and prepare for adulthood. Independent living plans support residential pupils in learning daily living skills such as cooking, laundry and cleaning. Comments from children include 'we all have chores to do in the house. It helps us practice things like washing and laying the table.'

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

The quality of the residential provision is good. The residential accommodation is of a good standard. It has benefited from recent redecoration to communal areas. This

offers bright and child-friendly spaces to relax and play. The accommodation is well-maintained. Residential pupils personalise the bedroom they stay in. The accommodation provides space for residential pupils to unwind and also for appropriate learning in line with the 24 hour curriculum.

Overall, catering arrangements are good. Specialist diets are well-catered for. Food is plentiful, of good quality and menus are healthy and balanced. This promotes a healthy lifestyle. Residential pupils eat their breakfast and evening meal within the house, not the school dining room. This offers a homely environment where residential pupils and staff eat together. Comments from children include 'I like eating in the house. The canteen can be really noisy and it's quite big' and 'it's better eating in the house as it's like a family sitting together.' However, staff cater for up to 20 people within the domestic kitchens and transfer hot food upstairs. There is no risk assessment to direct staff in safe food preparation within the house and the safe transfer of foods. However, no adverse incidents have occurred.

There are good links between care and education staff which positively supports residential pupils' personal and academic progress. Initiatives such as homework group and literacy group offer residential pupils opportunities to access extra support after school and they are well attended. New residential pupils receive a suitable induction into the school and residential provision. Transition arrangements are tailor-made to the individual needs of the child. The school social worker undertakes home visits to new residential pupils. This ensures that children are effectively supported to understand what staying overnight will be like. Residential pupils maintain appropriate contact with family and those who are important to them during their stays.

There are good systems in place to ensure the health needs of residential pupils are met during their stays. Residential pupils are well-supported to learn the key health risks around drugs, alcohol and smoking. Residential staff have good links with external agencies such as child and adolescent mental health services. Arrangements for the administration of prescribed medication to residential pupils are safe and effective. However, controlled drugs are not stored, administered and recorded in line with pharmaceutical guidance.

Residential pupils have regular visits from governors and the independent visitor. These provide further opportunities for residential pupils to share their views about the residential provision. Residential pupils have access to a broad range of on-site school facilities such as computers, the art room and gym with suitable supervision and support. This offers provides them with a good choice of activities to take part in.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

Safeguarding arrangements within the residential provision are satisfactory. Residential pupils say they feel safe staying in the house. Residential care staff

knowledge of safeguarding policy and procedures is sound. Senior management are aware of their responsibilities with regard to investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm. The school benefits from an on-site social worker who liaises effectively with the school child protection officer to ensure safeguarding procedures are followed.

Bullying is not an identified issue within the residential provision. Any occasional behaviour which may target or upset another pupil is quickly identified and effectively addressed by residential staff. The school has a strong anti-bullying philosophy. A recent week highlighted bullying issues and pupils creatively made posters addressing different types of bullying behaviours such as cyber-bullying and verbal abuse. Some residential pupils wear anti-bullying wristbands to show their support for the campaign. This creates a harmonious and friendly environment for all.

Some residential pupils have been reported missing since the last inspection. The action taken by staff during these incidents was appropriate and in line with the school procedures for missing pupils. However, these procedures are not agreed with the local police and are not compatible with the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) procedures.

Regular maintenance routines ensure the environment within the residential accommodation is physically safe. Fire drills take place within residential time on a regular basis. This ensures residential pupils and staff understand emergency procedures.

The school policy to promote good behaviour is consistently implemented by staff and is effective. Restraint has been used within residential time since the last inspection. Residential pupils confirm they have debriefing meetings after any physical intervention. All incidents of restraint are closely monitored by senior managers.

The safety of pupils is potentially compromised by poor recruitment and vetting practices. The school recruitment policy has not been followed consistently. Some staff commence employment at the school without formal interview, and at least two satisfactory references. The school took immediate action to address some shortfalls. However, this does not demonstrate a robust approach to safer recruitment.

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

The leadership and management of the residential provision is satisfactory. The residential provision follows adequately the aims and objectives of its Statement of Purpose. The school has appropriate policies and procedures in place for staff to refer to and to seek guidance from. However, the school recruitment policy has not been followed and the RMFHC procedures are not reflected in the school missing procedures.



Monitoring visits to the residential provision take place at least every half term. During these visits, records are scrutinized and reports highlight areas of comment and improvement. Suitable action is taken following these reports. The whole school development plan and residential self-evaluation focuses on improved outcomes for residential pupils. However, evidence of the impact of improvements is not strongly demonstrated.

Staff training needs are identified and met. Regular refresher sessions take place to ensure that staff maintain up-to-date skills. This ensures residential pupils are cared for by suitably trained and qualified staff. Staff receive regular supervision and an annual appraisal. Regular staff team meetings allow opportunity to discuss the individual needs of children. This means that residential pupils are cared for by staff that are suitably supported and adequately supervised.

The school maintains a complaints log. Positively, there have been no entries from residential pupils or parents or carers regarding the residential provision since the last inspection. Communication between the school and parents is satisfactory. Records are stored securely and adequately capture what life is like for a residential pupil in the school. However, there are inconsistencies in the level of detail captured on some children's files. This means not all children's records are capturing the same level of detail around progress and any incidents they are involved in.

Since the last inspection, placement plans for residential pupils have been revised. They now include the child's strengths and emotional needs. Placement plans are up-to-date, comprehensive and now clearly detail the unique needs of each child. Residential care staff implement individual placement plans consistently and effectively.

A previous recommendation to review the arrangements for monitoring and managing incidents of bullying during the school day has been robustly addressed. An anti-bullying survey involving pupils and staff across the whole school was undertaken recently to further focus on this issue. This ensures that residential pupils are protected from bullying behaviours at all times of the day.

## **National minimum standards**

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

- Schools operate safe recruitment procedures and vet staff in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 14.1)
- The school's procedures are compatible with the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols and procedures applicable to the area where

the school is located. Where children placed out of authority go missing, the Head of Care follows the local RMFHC protocol and complies with and makes staff aware of any other processes required by the placing authority. (NMS 15.7)

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

- risk assess the dining arrangements within the boarding house to ensure the safe preparation and transfer of meals to residential pupils.
- review the arrangements for the storage, administration and recording of controlled drugs to ensure compliance with pharmaceutical guidance.
- review the system in place to monitor the quality of record keeping to ensure it is effective at maintaining consistency and appropriate detail within children's records.

**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.**



27/11/2012

Dear pupils,

### **Inspection of Lakeside School**

I recently visited the school to look at the residential provision. Another inspector also came to visit with me. We enjoyed spending time with you in the boarding house. Thank you to the group of boys who also spoke with us during lesson time. It was great to hear all your views about staying in the residential house.

I found that boys feel safe staying in the house. I found that boys make good progress with their goals and targets, especially around behaviour. Well done! I found that boys feel listened to. New activities have been tried and new computer games have been bought. I found that boys can keep in contact with family and friends when they are staying.

There are some things which the head teacher and the head of care will be looking at following this visit. This is to make sure everyone is safe in the residential provision. Boys said they like eating in the house for breakfast and dinner. Staff will look at how this can be done safely when there are lots of students and staff eating together.

Overall, the residential provision is satisfactory. Thank you again for talking with us. Wishing you all a fun remainder of the term, and warm season's greetings.

Yours sincerely,

Anna Williams