

# Osborne School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Brian Mcquoid

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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**

Osborne School is a maintained residential special school owned and managed by Hampshire County Council. It provides education for 137 boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years old with a range of special educational needs and complex learning difficulties. The school has a 10-bed residential unit, Osborne House, which like the rest of the school is purpose built, and is fully accessible for pupils with disabilities and wheelchair users. Osborne House also contains the post-16 provision, and at the time of the inspection all of the residential students were attending this unit. The school is located near to the centre of Winchester and admits pupils from a wide geographical area within Hampshire. The school provides weekly term-time only boarding.

The school was last inspected in March 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>outstanding</b>
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.

- Overall effectiveness of the school's residential provision (Osborne House) is outstanding. Students are extremely happy and feel totally safe within an inclusive and caring environment where they receive excellent support and where they make significant progress in areas of their lives. Osborne House is an integral part of the school with the residential aspect merging seamlessly into the overall provision for post-16 students. There is strong leadership of the school with a staffing structure that provides exceedingly well for the day-to-day management and for the overall monitoring of Osborne House.
- The residential provision works in close partnership with parents, who have a very high regard for how their children are cared for and the progress that they make. 'Massive progress', 'grown up lots', 'much more confident', 'definitely more responsible and mature', 'my son is so valued, it's inspiring', were just some of the positive comments received from parents who reported feeling wholly involved in the care of their children.
- Residential students enjoy exceptionally positive relationships with the staff who look after them and benefit from high quality, individualised and consistent care. 'I love it here', 'it's fantastic', were comments received from students. Transitions into the residential setting are handled extremely well and arrangements for supporting students to move on to adult services have been highly successful. Staff manage the diverse needs of individual students extremely well and support them to make significant progress in their personal, social, and educational development. Helping students to acquire life skills is a particular strength.
- Osborne House provides a safe and secure environment within which students feel safe and where there are excellent arrangements for managing risks

associated with the premises, individual students, and the activities they undertake. The behaviour of students is excellent, there is no bullying and they benefit from positive social interaction encouraged by staff. Staff are acutely aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and employ safe working practices successfully. Parents are totally confident that their children are being safely cared for as residential students.

- Student accommodation is of a high standard and is being extremely well maintained. There is excellent access to school facilities during the evenings, and students enjoy a wide range of activities both within the school and the community. Osborne House provides a unique environment within which care and education staff work in harmony for the benefit of students. The facilities and the close proximity to the local community successfully support work being carried out with individual students to further their personal development and to prepare them for their lives as adults.
- Staffing is a real strength of Osborne House, with a well-established, experienced and committed group of care staff working highly effectively to meet the diverse needs of individual students. There are remarkably close working relationships with education staff which benefit students and provide an excellent consistency of care. Staff receive high quality training which enables them to meet the needs of students, and are well supported with arrangements for regular supervision and appraisal. Effective and efficient management is provided by a deputy headteacher of the school, and there is close monitoring and active involvement from the school's governing body. All of the national minimum standards are fully met and there is a clear commitment to the continuing improvement of the residential provision for students.

## **Outcomes for residential pupils**

Outcomes for residential students at the school are outstanding. They are happy living in Osborne House, which provides them with a very comfortable environment within which they are able to totally relax and feel safe. 'I love it here', and, 'it's fantastic', were comments received from students, who also enjoy mutually respectful and trusting relationships with the staff who look after them and have positive relationships with their peers. Students make really significant progress in many areas of their lives as a direct result of being residential. Becoming more mature, more independent, more responsible, gaining confidence, being more social, having improved behaviour, and acquiring lots of life skills, are all areas commented on remarkably positively by parents in relation to their children, and in one instance by a consultant psychiatrist. The residential facility provides an environment totally suited to its purpose and where students with a diverse range of needs feel valued and develop a tolerance of others.

Seeking the views of students is an integral aspect of how Osborne House operates and there is an elected representative from the residential provision on the school

council. Students are routinely provided with choice in their daily lives. They contribute to the running of the house by helping with household tasks and by helping with the preparation of meals, including shopping for ingredients. Care staff successfully support the delivery of a waking-hours curriculum which sees students benefiting from social interaction and from opportunities to do things that they enjoy doing. Buying things for themselves while out shopping and ordering while eating out are typical examples of this. Acquiring life skills is part of an on-going programme of preparing students for their lives as adults. The school has established links with local colleges and there is detailed planning for the transition of students to adult services placements and in some instances to independent living. Parents reported being extremely grateful for the excellent support provided by the school during this process.

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

The quality of the residential provision is outstanding. Residential students receive personalised care of a very high quality within a caring environment where they are treated with respect as individuals. Parents and students comment extremely positively on a sensitive and gradual induction process, and students receive excellent support to enable them to settle in. Osborne House provides both residential and educational provision for post-16 students under one roof. This arrangement supports the personal, social, and educational development of students remarkably well, with care staff working with students both during and outside of the school day. They work exceptionally closely with education staff and support the delivery of a waking-hours curriculum for students extremely effectively. Activities undertaken outside of the school day by students frequently contain elements of learning, for example, road safety while going into the local town, and these can contribute to a scheme of accreditation for individual students. Detailed care plans for individual students are implemented very effectively and are being highly successful in achieving positive outcomes for students in many areas of their lives.

Students are suitably encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles, and staff work very closely with health professionals and specialist services such as physiotherapists and occupational therapists. A consultant psychiatrist commented remarkably positively on the progress made by one student during the relatively short time they had been at Osborne House. Students enjoy very good quality meals and routinely contribute to menu creation as well as shopping for ingredients and being fully involved in meal preparation. The provision of snacks when students return from school is an area recommended for review to ensure healthy options are always included.

Residential students have lots of opportunities to do things that they enjoy doing. There is excellent access to school facilities during the evenings which includes the use of a hydro-pool and sensory room, and there are frequent trips out into the community for meals out and for activities which include ice skating, shopping, and going to the cinema.

The residential accommodation for students is of an excellent standard and is being extremely well maintained, with facilities lending themselves exceedingly well to supporting the personal development of students and their acquisition of life skills. Students are able to keep in touch with their families, and friends and parents are welcome to visit at any time.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

There is outstanding provision at the school for ensuring the safety and well-being of residential students. Osborne House provides an extremely safe and secure environment where students feel safe, where they are very well protected from harm and have a range of adults they are able to talk to. Students interact positively with their peers and are able to relax in communal areas with no concern at all about any bullying behaviours.

The behaviour of students is exceptionally good and they feel fairly treated by staff, with whom they have really positive relationships. Sanctions are not routinely used within the residential environment, and the use of any physical intervention with a student is rare and only of a supportive nature. Staff have an excellent understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and complete relevant training on an annual basis. Policies and procedures support and promote safe working practices, and since the previous inspection there have been no child protection related incidents, or any incidents of a student being reported missing. Staff are vigilant at all times and are skilled and creative in managing student behaviours, adopting a positive approach and celebrating their achievements.

There is excellent provision for managing risks to residential students associated with both the premises, their individual behaviours, and the activities that they undertake both within the school and in the wider community. Detailed written risk assessments are regularly reviewed and effectively support the delivery of safe care to students. Staff are not risk averse, however, and do take reasonable risks to support the personal development of individual students. Cutting up vegetables during meal preparation was one example witnessed.

Health and safety arrangements for the residential provision are excellent with daily checks of the premises being carried out rigorously and an effective system in place for addressing any hazards or maintenance matters. Electrical, gas, and specialist equipment such as lifts and hoists are being inspected and serviced regularly, and all checks and tests of fire safety equipment are being carried out as required. Fire drills are performed regularly and students confirmed knowing what to do in the event of the fire alarm sounding. Recruitment procedures are being rigorously implemented and provide the appropriate safeguards for the welfare of students. References are being verified; however, there needs to be recorded evidence of this.

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

Leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. The school's residential provision is being managed extremely effectively and efficiently for the benefit of students. There is very clear leadership and a staffing structure which provides remarkably well for ensuring a consistency of care and support for students. Well-established operational systems are implemented successfully by an experienced team of staff, and things run very smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

Students and their parents are provided with excellent information about the residential provision in accessible formats, and the stated aims and objectives are clearly being met. Parents hold Osborne House in high regard. There are regularly held parents evenings specifically for residential students, and parents describe having excellent communication with the staff working with their children.

There were no recommendations arising from the previous inspection; however, the school has an excellent track record over the years of addressing any recommendations made and demonstrates a clear commitment to continuing improvement. There have been no complaints made relating to the residential provision since the previous inspection.

Care staff in Osborne House thoroughly enjoy their jobs and are clearly committed to the work they do with the residential students. 'It's my dream job', said one staff member. Students have excellent relationships with staff and feel 'listened to' by them. A deputy headteacher of the school has responsibility for the residential provision and provides extremely good support for the care staff team which includes seniors who manage the daily shifts.

The school provides high quality training for staff and excellent opportunities for their professional development which enable the diverse needs of students to be well met. Currently three staff have completed their National Vocational Qualification at level 4 and one is being supported to become a teacher. Regular supervision and annual appraisals take place as part of a performance management system, and there is excellent communication and informal support happening on a daily basis. There is rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring of the residential provision with an audit against the evaluation schedule having been carried out, and monitoring visits by governors also being linked to areas of the schedule.

## **National minimum standards**

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



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

- Ensure that there is recorded evidence of employment references having been verified.
- Review the provision of snacks which students have immediately after the school day is over.

**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.**



05/12/2012

Students,

### **Inspection of Osborne School**

I am the Ofsted inspector who recently visited you at Osborne House to make sure you are being properly cared for. I thoroughly enjoyed spending time with you and would like to thank you for making me feel so welcome.

I was delighted to find you are being looked after so well and that you have really good relationships with the staff who work with you. They do an excellent job in providing you with the support you need and in helping you to become more independent and confident in all areas of your lives. They also do everything to make sure you are safe at all times and it was good to hear you say that you feel safe at Osborne.

I was impressed with the progress you have all made since being residential students and how well you all get on together; I thought your behaviour was excellent. You feel fairly treated and listened to by staff, both of which are really important, and care and education staff work remarkably well together to help you achieve positive outcomes.

I am pleased that you like your accommodation, which I thought was excellent and it was good to see that you all have lots of opportunities to do things that you enjoy doing. You are able to keep in touch with your families and friends while being residential and I found that your parents feel extremely positive about Osborne House and what you are achieving there. My conclusions were that Osborne House is being managed really well and is doing a fantastic job in helping you to gain life skills and prepare you for further education and adult life.

Many thanks again and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Mcquoid