

# Skilts School

Skilts School, Gorcott Hill, Beoley, REDDITCH, Worcestershire, B98 9ET

<b>Inspection dates</b>	05/02/2013 to 07/02/2013	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is outstanding because

- Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy staying at the school, feeling safe and well cared for by an enthusiastic and dedicated staff team.
- Planning is highly individualised, being written specifically to respond to the needs of each residential pupils, with their help, and information from parents.
- The home areas are comfortable and homely as well as being clean and well maintained. Residential pupils enjoy an excellent range of meals that support a healthy lifestyle and activities are promoted.
- Residential pupils' safety is paramount at all times, including full health and safety checks, effective and well-known safeguarding procedures and thorough recruitment procedures.
- Improvements made by the pupils while in residence have a significant impact on their lives and those of their families.
- The residential provision is highly integrated into the running of the whole school, with effective links between school and the homes being well managed and records consistently monitored.

### Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was completed by one inspector following a half day notice period. Time was spent within both homes over two days and evenings, examining individuals files, records that staff have completed pertinent to the care provided and spending time with residential pupils including three meals. Discussions were held with members of the management team, staff, parents, social workers and a governor as well as a range of residential pupils. Documentation completed at the school was also examined including health and safety and recruitment records, behaviour management records and relevant policies.

## Inspection team

Andrew Hewston

Lead social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

Skilts is a maintained day and residential special school for boys with emotional, social and behaviour difficulties and associated learning difficulties between the ages of 5 and 11 years. The school is operated by Birmingham City Council Children's Services.

There are 72 children on the school roll with 17 children using the overnight residential service at some time during each week. It is situated approximately five miles from the Birmingham boundary.

The residential provision was last inspected February 2012.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The school has made good progress and now meets all the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding because they thrive and consistently develop while being in residence. A pupil stated that they really enjoyed staying at the school because they knew that their behaviour was improving and it was 'a place to make new friends, including the staff.' Records show how pupils have developed in their ability to interact and improve their self-esteem so decreasing problematic behaviours are being displayed. This is supported by a parent stating that residence 'has made a difference to the whole family, he now goes out on trips, has a proper bedtime routine and has mellowed out. The school is an absolute godsend to us and to him.'

Pupils' health is highly supported through differing health professionals offering consistent and effective help to both the child and their families in areas such as mental health and enuresis. Staff have helped to support residential pupils with decreasing levels of medication and promoting enjoyable healthy activities which they had not previously experienced.

Residential pupils learn to develop positive relationships with their peers and also adults within the staff team. Care staff are important role models and pupils talk about them with both affection and respect, regarding how they have helped them with getting on with others. Care staff in turn are well aware of the differing likes and dislikes of the young people and care planning is highly individualised to meet their specific needs.

Excellent communication systems are in place between home and school to develop a consistent level of care and also to share behaviour management techniques. A parent stated that the 'care staff are approachable, you can really talk to them and this makes a difference to the way that we all look after my boy and help him improve.'

An effective reward structure and consistent staff responses to keeping healthy allows residential pupils to develop in their self-help and independence skills. This develops their ability to have successful transitions into senior education and also supports home life for the pupils and their families. Pupils learn a wide range of skills from being in residence, from tying their shoe laces to learning of the dangers relating to cyber bullying.

Being in residence has dramatically improved some residential pupils' school attendance and subsequently their educational ability. The high level of support that is offered to residential pupils with areas such as homework and reading allows them to develop both their knowledge and their self-esteem within the classroom and the residential environment.

### Quality of residential provision and care

### Outstanding

The quality of the boarding provision is outstanding due to the highly individualised level of care that is given to all of the pupils from the start of their residence to leaving the school. Admissions are well organised, with parents visiting the school and information shared relating to differing aspects of the pupil. This allows a full picture to be developed within placement plans and a greater consistency of care between school and home. Plans are therefore highly personalised and highlight specific areas where the care staff can support difficulties that residential pupils may experience, or to promote effective ways of working. Plans are updated following reviews and termly assessments to ensure that they are always meeting the needs of the residential pupils effectively. Pupils also have an input into the plans through a 'this is me' section to inform all staff of aspects of how they prefer to be cared for.

Residential pupils' accommodation is of a high quality following a complete redecoration since the last inspection. All bedrooms are clean and have a good level of personalisation with support from

the care staff team. Communal areas are comfy and homely, with photos of previous activities on the walls. A wide range of activities are available across the two home areas including computers, games consoles, a pool table, and board games, to make sure that there is always something for pupils to do in the home. The school site offers a well-resourced playground, hard standing area for ball games, grassed area and gym. All of these are well used for activities after school with one pupil stating that 'there is always something to do to stop you being bored.' Evenings also include trips off site to local amenities to promote healthy activities as well as involving the residential pupils in the local community. Evenings include a good variety between organised activities and less structured time for them to choose what they would like to be involved with.

Residential pupils' health is of a high priority within the school. All meals nutritional values are examined to ensure they are appropriate for the pupils, and differing cultures and conditions are catered for. Food is of an excellent quality and pupils are given a choice of meals so that there is always something that they like. Mealtimes are pleasant social occasions where issues of the day are discussed. Cooking occasionally forms one of the options in the evening for activities, where pupils are involved with cooking their own tea to develop their independence skills. Care staff are fully trained in medication administration and these are robustly audited on a regular basis to support the residential pupils' safety. Care staff have recently supported a pupil with the reduction of medication. The school works extremely well with differing health professionals, often additionally supporting the pupils families to ensure that there is a communal awareness of the best ways to work together. Additional health support is also accessed by the school through the Big Community organisation, to further enhance the school's health provision to the pupil and their family.

Relationships between pupils and the care staff are highly professional yet caring and sensitive. Residential pupils proudly discuss staff that they get on best with although they also state that they could 'talk to whichever staff, because I know that they would listen and try to sort things out for me.' Parents state that the care staff make great role models. Care staff are incredibly knowledgeable about the pupils that they work with, being aware of their lives, achievements and areas that they are working on to improve while in residence. This allows the pupils to get a high level of support by the care staff team.

Residential pupils stay at the school for between one and three evenings, returning to their homes for the rest of the time. During their time in residence they are encouraged to contact family, where appropriate, with full details being kept on file. This allows news and information to be shared between school and home by the pupil.

As pupils near the end of their time in residence there is a specialist Year 6 residential experience that supports the development of independence skills. This increases the pupils' awareness of issues that they may come across within senior school as well as allowing the older pupils to develop stronger peer support mechanisms. A dedicated parent support advisor helps families and pupils with transition arrangements, helping them with choices relating to appropriate schools.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

## **Outstanding**

The arrangements for keeping pupils safe are outstanding. Residential pupils' safety is at the heart of their care within residence and they state that they feel safe when they stay. A highly organised and proactive health and safety team has developed since the last inspection. This has increased awareness of health and safety practice across the school site, revisiting risk assessments and necessary checks to ensure that these are all up to date and appropriate. This has led to the development of inventive fire safety practices such as simple checklists to be checked by marshals during drills to support the safety of all at the school. Risk assessments relating to residential pupils are updated in line with changes in their behaviours to promote the

most effective way of ensuring their safety. Arrangements for the recruitment of new staff are very well organised, through a highly colourful checklist that shows clearly all the necessary stages that are completed in this process. Staff involved with recruitment have all completed training in safer recruitment to further support the safety of the pupils.

Safeguarding policies and practices are robust and when concerns are raised they are recorded, due consideration given to them, and acted on swiftly when required. Records show responses to events that occur within school and at pupils' homes with a clear chronology of what has been done to support the pupil. The geography of the school means that effective cross boundary relationships are necessary relating to differing safeguarding boards. Differing school forums are in place for causes of concern to be discussed and responded to fully. The care staff team are well aware of their responsibilities to safeguard children through regular training. Those in charge of safeguarding complete more in depth training including external courses to ensure that they are fully aware of both the local authority's responsibilities and differing agencies that are able to offer additional support.

Negative behaviours from the residential pupils are clearly identified within the admissions arrangements. These are examined within placement plans and targets set to respond to them by the care staff team. Pupils are able to discuss what behavioural issues they are working on and how the system of rewards helps them with this. Behavioural targets allow both rewards for the individuals and their peers within the residential home where appropriate. This promotes peer support to achieve while they are in residence and is excellent practice. Issues relating to bullying or name calling are responded to quickly by the staff team and residential pupils are aware of the expected behaviours in school. Behaviours leading to restraint are rare, with a wide range of distraction techniques used before such action is required. When restraint is used it is fully recorded on both a paper system and computerised log. This allows for full auditing and the ability to examine trends or individual issues at the click of a button.

The school now has policy relating to pupils who go missing from the school. No such incidents have occurred at the school since before the last inspection.

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

The leadership and management of the provision is outstanding due to the effective way that all systems are monitored and developed to support residential pupils. The Statement of Purpose clearly shows how the school works with pupils to allow them to achieve, this statement is simplified into a very child friendly set of 'Simpsons' based targets. There is a high awareness among residential pupils that they are all different and have different needs and skills and need to respect one another.

The residential provision forms an important part of the school with a governor stating that 'residence is key to a lot of pupils education here.' Clear managerial structures are in place and during periods where the Head of Care has been absent the level of care is consistent. The residential homes are well staffed to meet the needs of the pupils. There are strong and effective links between the education and residential staff who intermesh and offer reciprocal support throughout the school day. This means that there is a consistency in the way that pupils are looked after during the day and evening and they are looked after by staff that they know and trust. Staff are enthusiastic and willing to take on differing challenges that the pupils and management may provide. This rubs off on the pupils who are also enthusiastic about activities and the whole residential experience.

Care staff complete on-going training in a wide range of areas relating to the care of the residential pupils, ranging from health issues to safety. New staff fully complete necessary induction programmes and more established staff further develop their knowledge through

developing systems such as the reward structure. Annual performance management of staff helps to ensure that staff are always thinking of new ways that they can support residential pupils. Staff state that regular formal supervision takes place but there is a constant dialogue between staff relating to how differing pupils' needs can be responded to, sometimes making supervision less necessary.

Relationships and communication between the residential provision and the pupils' homes are of a very high quality. This is due to the consistent information sharing between home and school and also the effective role of the parent support adviser. This ensures that pupils and their families are supported by the committed staff team.

Regular and thorough monitoring systems are in place to examine the residential structure and recordings. The independent visitors are experienced and qualified residential staff that are fully aware of how the school runs and areas to examine. The reports that they produce are insightful and give a clear picture of how residence is working and includes records of discussions with pupils. These allow residence to develop further. The managerial monitoring of the service is of high quality and examines specific trends in practice, noting where issues or recording could be improved upon. Pupils are regularly consulted about the development of the school and residence, through daily meetings and school councils. It is pleasing to see that the decision to demolish some old buildings to allow greater playing space came from a school council decision.

Areas raised at the last inspection in relation to the accommodation, records and monitoring have all been fully responded to showing a commitment to constant improvement of the provision.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103617
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC033753
<b>DfE registration number</b>	330/7037

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Maintained Residential Special School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	74
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Boys
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	5 to 11
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr S C Herriotts
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	28/02/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 853851

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

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 St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

