

# Cuckmere House School

Cuckmere House School, Eastbourne Road, SEAFORD, East Sussex, BN25 4BA

<b>Inspection dates</b>	04/06/2013 to 06/06/2013	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is good because

- The residential provision provides residential pupils with outstanding outcomes and an exemplary quality of care.
- Previously exceptional safeguarding practice has not been sustained. Safeguarding arrangements within the residential provision are good.
- Opportunities for residential pupils to develop personally and socially are extensive, and engagement is excellent.
- Residential pupils overwhelmingly say they enjoy their boarding experience and are proud of their residential achievements.
- Diversity is well-celebrated within the residential provision and throughout the school as a whole.

### 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 announced in the morning, and the social care inspector arrived on the residential site at lunchtime the same day. The residential accommodation and grounds were fully inspected. Residential pupil's feedback was obtained through Ofsted survey replies, evening activities, three shared mealtimes and general discussions. Staff, senior residential staff, parents and external professional's feedback was sought in person and over the telephone. Records and policies relating to the safety and welfare of residential pupils were sampled and scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Anna Williams

Lead social care inspector

# **Full report**

## **Information about this school**

This residential special school is for boys aged between five and 16 years who have an educational statement for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). The school is maintained by the local authority. It is part of a federation, which is a collaboration/formal partnership that includes one other residential BESD special school, a day BESD special school and a range of alternative provision provided by the local authority.

The school's residential provision is located in a separate building in a residential area of the town, approximately half a mile from the main school site. Up to 12 boys can stay overnight and they generally stay between one and three nights during the school week. There is an extended day provision for both primary and secondary pupils, enabling them to stay into the evening for activities and a meal before returning home.

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

- complete a written risk assessment for any member of staff who commences work while a DBS check is 'in progress', which identifies risks associated with their individual role, such as 'sleep in' duties.
- ensure any health and safety action points arising from routine maintenance tests or inspections are promptly addressed.
- provide written confirmation of the review dates of residential pupil's individual risk assessments.
- provide appropriate safeguarding training to parent governors who undertake an independent visitor role within the residential provision.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding.

Residential pupils make significant progress in relation to their starting points when joining the boarding house. They make consistent advancements in overcoming challenging behaviours, such as, anger and aggression. They make exceptional progress in building and maintaining appropriate peer friendships. The whole residential experience successfully supports each child to progress and develop personally and socially. Comments from parents and carers include, 'my child's confidence has soared through the residential overnights' and, '(young person)'s behaviour has improved remarkably'.

Residential pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the residential provision. Comments from residential pupils include, 'it is very nice to have a second home' and, 'since boarding, I am more mature. I cope with things better. I am more calmer.'

The whole school ethos of helping others continues within the residential house. Residential pupils are extremely supportive of each other. Their relationships are notably positive. Residential pupils enjoy taking part in charity events to raise money. This raises their awareness of helping those in need.

The voice of residential pupils is strong. Their views are heard through the school council and regular internal surveys. The in-house questionnaires demonstrate an exceedingly high level of satisfaction with their boarding experience. Through these consultative forums, there have been changes in the running of the house, menus and activity choices. This demonstrates to residential pupils that their views are valued and listened to.

Residential pupils learn suitable independence skills during their short stays. These include assisting with food preparation, tidying rooms and maintaining appropriate personal hygiene routines. Comments from residential pupils include, 'I really enjoyed taking part in the cooking competition; I cooked dishes I had not tried before'. Since the last inspection, residential pupils have successfully started completing modules towards an external 'life skills' qualification. Comment from a parent / carer, '(young person) now helps with cooking and laying the table at home as well'. This provides residential pupils with highly effective preparation for adult life and further education.

### Quality of residential provision and care

### Outstanding

The quality of the residential provision and care is outstanding.

The induction process into the residential provision is creatively planned. Extended days provide opportunities for pupils to try out and experience after-school activities. This builds relationships with care staff and sensitively allows the pupil to build confidence in the residential experience. This well-designed process results in pupils successfully transitioning to overnight stays. Residential pupils value the warm relationships they build with care staff. In particular, the individualised pastoral support and guidance that staff offer is praised by them. Residential pupils are fully involved in the planning and review of their social plans. Comments from residential pupils include, 'I think staff understand me and my background really well', and 'staff are nice, always there for you'.

Care staff also work within the school setting. This provides strong and effective links between school staff and residential care staff. These very strong connections effectively promote the 24-

hour curriculum and has a positive impact on outcomes achieved by all residential pupils.

Residential pupils talk enthusiastically about the wide-ranging choices of leisure activities. Events are imaginative and appropriate to their age, interests and needs. For example, residential pupils enjoy taking part in cycling activities locally. They have also have learnt essential skills around bike maintenance and successfully undertaken safe cycling certification. Off-site trips to places of interest and learning include a local fire station. Individual talents are supported and encouraged after-school, such as art and music sessions. Care staff wholeheartedly take an active role in all the planned activities. This proactive approach succeeds in encouraging residential pupils to engage and benefit from all the experiences on offer. Achievement books capture visually what a residential pupil has accomplished through their residential time. Feedback from residential pupils include, 'I like to look at the pictures in my book, it reminds me of what I have achieved'.

Residential pupils engage in opportunities given to take part in the running of the residential accommodation; such as, planning and running events for a forthcoming residential barbecue. This develops leadership skills and effectively promotes personal development.

While parents and carers maintain the lead responsibility around health matters, residential pupils receive excellent support when accessing the residential provision. Arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective. Where appropriate, care staff work in strong partnership with Child and Adolescent Mental Health services. This results in a consistency of care which benefits residential pupils.

Catering arrangements are outstanding. Individual dietary needs are identified and fully met. Comments from parents include: 'Since visiting the residential provision, (young person) has started to eat a much more varied diet. It is so much better for his health'.

Residential pupils keep in contact with family and friends while accessing the residential provision. This enables them to maintain contact with those who are important to them.

Residential pupils benefit from outstanding accommodation which is well-maintained and homely. Facilities and resources strongly support pupils learning and development. Residential pupils' art works are displayed throughout. Vibrant photo displays celebrate activities undertaken in residential time. This promotes self-esteem and celebrates residential pupil's talents. Comments from residential pupils include, 'I really like my bedroom and the house' and, 'my stuff is safe here'.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

**Good**

The arrangements for safeguarding residential pupils are good.

Residential pupils all report that they feel safe while accessing the residential provision. No residential pupils report any bullying. Feedback from parents include, 'staff know the individual needs of my child. This fills me with confidence. I know he is safe'.

Matters of safeguarding and child protection are referred to external professionals promptly and appropriately. This protects residential pupils. Care staff demonstrate excellent knowledge of safe caring practices and procedures. They recognise the particular vulnerabilities relating to the diverse needs of the residential pupils and take well-planned actions to address them. Care staff receive appropriate safeguarding training refreshers in-line with the whole school. However, parent governors who undertake an independent visitor role have not received safeguarding training. This compromises their ability to effectively monitor the quality of the residential provision and assess whether residential pupils are adequately safeguarded.

Strong and proactive relationships with the local police support and promote the safety of residential pupils. Positively, there have been no residential pupils reported as missing since the last inspection.

Processes for the recruitment of new staff follow safer recruitment guidance. However, one member of staff commenced work while a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check was 'in progress'. A verbal assessment of supervision levels required took place. However, there was no formal written risk assessment evaluating supervision required for the staff's unique role and their access to residential pupils while the check was being processed. This compromises otherwise robust recruitment practice.

Residential pupils successfully develop skills in managing conflict and developing positive relationships through individualised social plans and risk assessments. Social plans are updated on a termly basis. They clearly track progress and residential pupils' achievements. Individual risk assessments are reviewed informally by staff. Their review dates are not noted within files. This compromises management auditing and monitoring to ensure that all risk assessments are current. Reward systems are highly effective at supporting positive behaviour within residential time. There has been no use of physical intervention, and only one sanction since the last inspection.

Residential pupils know what actions to take in case of fire or emergency. Regular evacuation drills take place in 'residential time'. Overall, the health and safety of residential pupils is very well-promoted and records are detailed. However, one routine maintenance inspection, undertaken by an external contractor, resulted in an unsatisfactory result. Prompt works to remedy identified risks had not occurred. The school took effective immediate action to address this during the inspection. However, some risks to residential pupils were present and this shortfall had not been highlighted through internal monitoring.

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

The leadership and management of the residential provision is outstanding.

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The residential provision has a suitable statement of principles and practice. This describes the overall purpose of the boarding house and is followed in practice. On admission, residential pupils receive induction booklets. These explain in a child-friendly manner what overnight stays will be like. This ensures that residential pupils, parents and external professionals are all clear about the aims and objectives of the residential setting.

Parents and external professionals confirm that the communication between them and the residential provision is consistently effective. One external professional commented, 'this school goes the extra mile for their pupils, the communication between us is excellent, our relationship is strong'. There have been no complaints about the residential provision since the last inspection. Residential pupils know how to complain.

Residential pupils benefit from a very stable care staff team. The majority of the team hold relevant childcare qualifications. New staff complete an appropriate induction programme. Staff are sufficient in number to meet the individual needs of residential pupils staying. Staff receive regular supervision, through which consistently high expectations about the quality of care and outcomes for residential pupils are addressed. Staff receive on-going refresher training, as well as wide-ranging further professional development. This includes courses on spiritual, moral and cultural awareness, and autism. This ensures residential pupils are cared for by staff who are appropriately trained and very well-supported.

The residential provision is an integral and highly valued part of the whole school. The boarding provision is well-organised and run in the best interests of all pupils who access it. Policies and procedures in place are followed consistently. This provides a well-ordered and safe environment. Records are stored securely. They consist of formal documents, as well as photos, physical mementos and a DVD of their stays. They provide a superb record of the residential pupil's time within the boarding provision, demonstrating the positive impact it has had on lives of pupils who access it.

Monitoring visits take place in line with minimum standards. Residential pupils views are sought and records scrutinized. This feeds into a strong-ethos of effective self-evaluation systems, which drives forward further improved outcomes for residential pupils.

Progress towards the residential development plan is excellent. Since the last inspection, there has been a focus on developing ways to further engage with parents. Parents coffee mornings now occur on a termly basis. This offers time for parents or carers to celebrate residential pupils' achievements and seek support and guidance if necessary. Management also use the opportunity to seek further direct feedback on the quality of care from parents. This feeds into a continual cycle of pro-active feedback and development strategy to ensure outcomes for residential pupils remain outstanding.

## 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>	114696
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC050165
<b>DfE registration number</b>	845/7036

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>	12
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Boys
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	11 to 16
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Frank Stanford
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	11/07/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01323 893319
<b>Email address</b>	office@cuckmerehouse.e-sussex.sch.uk

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