

Wolverdene Special School

Wolverdene School, 22 Love Lane, ANDOVER, Hampshire, SP10 2AF

Inspection dates	27/02/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
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

- Boarders receive exceptional care from a committed, child centred, well-trained team who have developed outstanding skills in working with very vulnerable boarders who have complex and evolving individual needs.
- A consistently high standard of care is provided which demonstrates a consistent commitment to promoting equality and diversity. This ethos can be found throughout all aspects of the school's work.
- The leadership of the residential provision is outstanding. Senior staff routinely monitor the work of the staff team to ensure their high expectations are met.
- Relationships between staff and young people are extremely positive and based on mutual respect. Through their relationships, staff help young people to recognise and show a high level of appreciation for each other's individuality.
- Boarders make exceptional progress academically, socially, developmentally and personally. This is particularly evident in the improvement of the boarders' behaviours which include developing coping strategies.
- Boarders are enabled by staff to expand their life experiences whether this be through trying new activities to trying new foods. This provides them with a stimulating and safe environment in which to live.
- The school's robust quality assurance systems ensure boarders receive a consistent high standard of care which is individually tailored. A part of this review is to develop new approaches and ways of working.
- High regard is given to the interests and preferences of individual pupils. An extensive range of facilities, resources and communal accommodation together with high staffing levels enables these to be facilitated.
- A consistently high standard of care is provided within which equality and diversity is

given top priority. Relationships between staff and young people are extremely positive and based on mutual respect. Through their relationships, staff help young people to recognise and show a high level of appreciation for each other's individuality.

- Behaviour is extremely well managed within the residential setting and sanctions and physical restraint are consistently low. Boarders are taught how to reflect on their own behaviour and how this affects others.
- Pupils are protected within the residential environment by excellent safe work practices which are supported by robust policies and procedures. These are adhered to in practice. They are also frequently reviewed and updated to reflect best current practice.
- Boarders are extremely positive about their boarding provision.
- Medication procedures are clear and robust. These ensure that boarders health care needs are well met.
- The school has met the national minimum standards and has taken appropriate action to meet the recommendations from the previous inspection.

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

Inspection team

Wendy Anderson

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Wolverdene is a local authority school within Hampshire catering for primary age children experiencing behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school provides mainly day placements, but 10 weekly residential placements are available for boys within The Lodge, which is a separate unit located within the school grounds. The Lodge accommodation consists of six single and two double rooms with shared facilities.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

The residential setting is a highly inclusive community where individuals are respected and valued. Outstanding relationships exist between the staff and the boarders which is the foundation on which all of the work rests. Boarders are enabled to support each other in a safe relaxed environment. Boarders are very proud of their residential provision and also of the achievements they have made. They said they 'love it' and the staff who cared for them. They said 'it's like a second home'.

Boarders make excellent progress both academically, socially and developmentally. Boarders proudly talk about their own goals and achievements. They really like the star chart and the 'star of the week' awards. Through this pupils learn to recognise and appreciate each others strengths and individuality. Staff work very closely with boarders, enabling them to develop behaviour which is socially acceptable. This means equipping the boarders with coping strategies they can use.

Staffs' knowledge of the individual boarders they care for is exceptional. This ensures that individual needs are met. Boarders see the staff as fun, helpful, and said 'staff look after me really well', 'I can talk to them about anything' and 'I trust them'.

Boarders love the activities they take part in. These include the boarders own individual interests as well as trying new ones. Boarders take part in a range of physical activities such as swimming, bike riding and an adventure playground.

Boarders are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Staff support boarders with moves to new schools and have campaigned on behalf of boarders for appropriate placements. This is seen as a key area of staffs' work as boarders can become very stressed and anxious about change. Staffs' work enable the boarders to make successful transitions.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of the residential provision is outstanding. Boarders receive excellent individual guidance and support from the care staff which enhances their academic and personal progress. This begins with an outstanding induction process which is again individually tailored to each boarder's needs. The length of this induction is flexible and taken at a pace which suits that boarder. This ensures that boarders are well supported and quickly settle into the boarding routines and clearly understand what is expected of them. There are clear and effective systems for sharing information between the residential setting and the school, which include morning and afternoon briefings. These systems ensure that boarders receive consistent care in line with their individual plans and all staff have consistently high expectations for all boarders.

Every boarder has a very detailed individual plan which is frequently reviewed and updated with the boarder's input. These plans ensure that the boarder's evolving needs are continuously addressed. The key worker sessions staff hold with the boarders contribute to these plans. Boarders benefit from the school having a range of specialist teams on site which include an assessment and reintegration team, family support workers and psychotherapists. The school has also developed strong links with additional services in the local community so the boarders can receive any additional services as a need is identified.

Boarders have access to an exceptional range of extra-curricular activities. These are age appropriate and the boarders are fully involved in the development of the activities programme. Boarders said there was always 'loads of great fun stuff to do'. As well as being fun activities

there are those which build on the boarders' self-esteem, coordination, personal development and involvement in the local community. These enable the boarders not only to pursue current interests but to develop new ones as well as learning social acceptable behaviours.

Boarders are cared for by a very committed and well trained staff team. Boarders well-being and welfare are at the very core of all work undertaken by the staff who are incredibly child centred. Very strong relationships exist between the boarders and the staff which are based on honesty and respect. These relationships are the foundation on which all of their work is based. Boarders said that staff were 'great', 'like my second family' and 'they take really good care of me'. Boarders said they could talk to all of the staff about anything. They always knew who was on duty and there was always enough staff on duty. There is also an independent listener and a Governor who regularly visits the residential provision which provides the boarders with persons outside the staff team they can talk too.

Boarders have various opportunities where they are able to express their views and have input in the running of the residential provision. One of the most effective is the round the table meetings before the evening meals where the evening's events are also discussed. Boarders are asked for their views on who should take part in what activities. This is where, if a boarder has had a difficult day at school their peers discuss if they should take part in certain activities. This enables the boarders to discuss with their peers the effect their behaviour has on others. These meetings are empowering for all and help to develop understanding and tolerance of others.

Boarders' accommodation is of a high standard, well maintained and safe. Boarders are encouraged to personalise their rooms. All areas of the accommodation are well furnished and have a warm, inviting and welcoming atmosphere. There is an effective rolling programme of refurbishment which ensures standards are not only maintained but improved. The security of the residential provision is excellent. Boarders love their accommodation. One said 'I want to live here all the time'. The residential provision does have two double rooms but these are currently being used as single rooms due to the needs of the boarders.

There are excellent facilities for ensuring that boarders health and well-being are promoted. Robust policies and procedures are in place for the handling of medication which is adhered to in practice. This ensures that boarders medication is appropriately stored, administered and robust records maintained to evidence this. This has recently been enhanced by a new system which tracks medication received by the school from the boarder's home and vice versa. The school is proactive at promoting a healthy lifestyle by ensuring that boarders take part in physical activities and have a healthy balanced diet. Boarders also receive education on health related topics such as smoking, drugs, alcohol and sexual health. This is delivered at an age appropriate level. Extensive medical consents are obtained to ensure staff are clear about the action they can take in an emergency and should first aid be required.

Boarders are provided a balanced, nutritious and varied diet. All meals provide boarders with a choice. Where there are individual catering needs these are catered for. Staff encourage boarders to try new foods in a very caring supportive way. Boarders said the food is really good and there is always lots to eat. Boarders have ready access to snacks and drinks outside of meals times. Boarders are able to put forward ideas for the menus.

Boarders are able to maintain contact with the families while boarding via phone or email. The staff are proactive at developing working relationships with parents and maintain regular contact with them.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The school makes outstanding provision to safeguard the welfare of boarders. The safety of

boarders is at the heart of all the work the school undertakes. Boarders stated that they feel very safe at the school. All staff receive comprehensive training in this area which is frequently refreshed. Staff demonstrate a robust working knowledge of safeguarding policies and procedures and they view this as an essential part of their duty of care to each boarder. Well-established links have been made with the local safeguarding team and ensure that their practice is in line with current legislation. Safeguarding is a key component of the thorough induction programme for all new staff.

The school has a very robust recruitment and vetting procedure for all staff which is clearly implemented in practice. Staff undertaking recruitment duties are trained in safer recruitment. Staff personnel records include all the required information and staff carrying out these duties have a clear understanding of the importance of this work in keeping the boarders safe from contact with unsuitable people. Boarders have recently been involved in the recruitment process which they found empowering and exciting.

Boarders have a clear understanding of the behaviour the school expects from them. These expectations are based on good community living, tolerance, acceptance of the individual and respect. All of these are clearly demonstrated in the relationships between the staff and the boarders and how the staff treat the boarders and each other. Boarders behaviour throughout the inspection was excellent with the boarders being a credit to themselves and the staff. Positive reinforcement is the main driver in behaviour management at the school. Staff and boarders celebrate achievements and each boarder has their own individual goals which are set between them and their key worker. Boarders proudly display their reward and star charts. Open discussion is held about any behaviour issues with individual boarders which may include their peers. Boarders said sanctions are fair but rarely used. The main approach in this area is discussion, reflection and getting the boarder to understand the impact their behaviours have; not only on them but on others. Physical restraint is only used as an option of last resort. Where this has been used, clear records are maintained. There has been a decline in the number of restraints. Staff successfully share information with parents, carers and teaching staff. As a result they are largely successful in achieving a consistent approach in managing pupils' behaviour.

Bullying is not seen as an issue by boarders at the school. Boarders were clear on what they would do if it happened to them or they witnessed it. Boarders said 'staff would sort it out really quickly'. Staff take all forms of bullying seriously and work proactively with the boarders to develop their awareness of their own behaviours as well as respect and tolerance of others.

Staff work very conscientiously to ensure the school is a safe environment for the boarders to live. There are robust health and safety systems, risk assessments and fire precautions in place which are supported by clear policies. Robust audits are carried out on all of these systems to ensure they are adhered to in practice.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

Leadership and management at the school is outstanding. The boarding aspect of the school has a high profile and run by a committed and enthusiastic staff team. The managers of this team are proactive at continuing to develop the services they offer to the boarders and the staff team. Managers have high expectations of the boarders, the staff team and themselves. Managers have a strong commitment to reflect on their current practice, evaluate it and then develop new methods and areas of work. The staff team are full of praise for the head of care and the deputy head of care. The residential provision has been sharing its outstanding practice across the school campus which has further enhanced its profile at the school. This is particularly evident in the changing role of the head of care who is increasingly involved in a wide variety of activities across the school campus and in working with the pupils' families. This enhances the continuity of care the pupils receive not only in the school but also at home.

The school provides pupils, parents, carers and staff with clear aims and objectives of the provision which are reflected in its current practice.

The staff team are extremely committed to their work and the boarders they care for. The staff team are well trained which equips them with the skills to work with very vulnerable boarders. This coupled with the experience of the team and their managers ensure the boarders receive a high quality service which is in line with current practice and approaches. Staff training is frequently reviewed and evaluated; this results in staff keeping up to date with boarders' changing and in some cases increasingly complex needs.

There are outstanding systems and opportunities for staff to receive both formal and informal supervision from their managers and each other. This approach has resulted in a cohesive, well-trained staff team who provide excellent consistency of care for the boarders. It also enables the staff to develop as workers and be proactive in their thinking and approach.

Relationships between the staff team and the boarders' parents are excellent. Parents are very positive about the care their children receive and also the help they receive from staff.

The school carries out a comprehensive assessment of all pupils with additional assessments for pupils wishing to access the boarding provision. Within this, not only are the needs of the individual pupil assessed but also the needs of the existing group of boarders who form part of the assessment. The boarding provision offers not only Monday to Friday boarding but also flexi boarding and extended days. This enables the staff to work effectively with a number of pupils and each care package is tailored to the individual pupil's needs. The staff to boarder ratio is very high. This is needed due to the boarders' complex needs and also to allow the provision of effective one-to-one work.

Robust monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to ensure boarders receive the best care. The school has carried out an evaluation of the progress boarders make against their peers who do not board. Those that board or access extended day programmes clearly have a higher level of achievement socially, academically and developmentally.

The school continues to provide the boarders with an outstanding service. They have a strong ethos of review and evaluation and their clarion call is 'what can we do better, what can we do next'. This ethos of striving forward ensures that boarders receive the best possible care.

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

Unique reference number	116635
Social care unique reference number	SC012029
DfE registration number	850/7067

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.

Type of school	
Number of boarders on roll	
Gender of boarders	
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Mr Paul Van Walwyk
Date of previous boarding inspection	30/09/2011
Telephone number	01264 362350

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