

# Wennington Hall School

Wennington Hall School, Lodge Lane, Wennington, LANCASTER, LA2 8NS

<b>Inspection dates</b>	30/09/2013	
<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 receive outstanding levels of care and support in a comfortable, stimulating child focussed environment that recognises and meets individual need. This leads to pupils experiencing outstanding outcomes in all areas of their lives.
- Residential pupils benefit from living in an environment where they feel safe and are kept safe, with clear boundaries and expectations of behaviour clearly laid out for them, which they are comfortable with and reassured by.
- Residential pupils live in an inclusive environment where their views matter, achievement is celebrated, the promotion of equality and diversity is strong and disability is not viewed as a barrier to experiencing a full, enriching lifestyle.
- Residential pupils are given opportunities to experience a wide range of activities and leisure pursuits that are meaningful and designed to introduce them to new experiences and support existing interests, with a view to taking them forward in their future life.
- Residential pupils benefit from a strong, hierarchal, child focussed management team who have high aspirations and expectations for them. The continued drive for improvement, coupled with the outstanding management and organisation of the school, significantly improves pupils outcomes.

### 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

Graham Robinson

Lead social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

A local authority administers the school. The school provides an environment that can support around 76 boys of secondary school age, from 11 years up to 16 years old, on a residential or day basis. Pupils using the services provided at the school have experienced some difficulties associated with their academic, social, emotional or behavioural development, which makes normal schooling inappropriate for them at the present time. The school provides a 38 week programme of education with residential pupils, in the main, spending weekends at home or with their carers. There are currently 76 pupils on roll, 47 of them being residential pupils. They live in five houses located within the school grounds. The school was last inspected in July 2012.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. They benefit from living in a fully inclusive community where individual need and differences are fully accepted without prejudice. Pupils and often their families, develop outstanding relationships with staff, who work cohesively and supportively with them, which significantly improves outcomes for pupils. This support is recognised by all. For example, one parent says; 'The school inspires pupils with its high aspirations for them, pushing them towards high levels of achievement.' Another parent of a pupil who left in the summer says; 'He came to the school with low expectations. He left with qualifications that allow him to study for A levels, is more rounded and a much better person.'

Residential pupils speak highly of staff and their residential experience. They feel well supported and have genuine ambitions for their future. For example, a number described their plans to go into further education. One pupil spoke in depth about the experience gained looking after the school's farm animals and developing skills in dry stone walling, which he sees as a stepping stone to a future career. Pupils own positive views of their future provides evidence of their personal growth, development, ambition, self-confidence and esteem. Based on their personal starting points, outcomes are outstanding.

The behaviour of all pupils around the campus and residential provision throughout the inspection was observed as excellent. Pupils recognise and understand the clear boundaries, structures and high expectations of behaviour set for them by the school. They are comfortable and accepting of this, saying they feel safe and secure in the school. This results in pupils having a deep pride in the school which fosters a strong sense of community. This is recognised by others. For example the social worker for one pupil says of his progress; 'He would not have done as well if he had not gone to Wennington.'

The ever changing, diverse and complex needs of pupils are identified and addressed positively by a knowledgeable and fully committed team of residential care staff. A high standard of personalised care is provided, giving pupils a sense of security which allows them to grow and develop in an environment sensitive to their individual needs. Disability is not viewed as a barrier, with pupils encouraged to be supportive of each other. For example, one pupil spoke with great pride about his role and responsibilities as mentor to one of the younger pupils. Not only did this boost his own self-confidence and esteem, it gave him an appreciation that there are others less well off than himself.

The energy and positivity of the school is reflected in the high levels of on-going communication between staff and pupils. As a result, consultation levels are high, with pupils contributing effectively to aspects of the residential provision, where they are encouraged to make choices and express opinions. This gives them a feeling of worth as well as the experience that their views do matter and can be used constructively to plan for change.

Residential pupils are extremely well prepared for life beyond the school. From first entering the residential provision, all pupils work with staff to improve and develop both practical and social skills. For example, one pupil new to the school has quickly developed new skills for eating and socialising in the dining room. As pupils progress, there are excellent facilities linked into the residential provision, where they are introduced to and experience independent living.

This is one component of a wider, holistic approach taken by the school to encourage pupils to take more responsibility for themselves and move towards greater independence. Since the previous inspection, exit booklets have been created and are given to pupils when they leave the school. They contain a summary of their life in the school, celebrate achievement and gives them

a range of personalised information to help and assist them in their future. For example, details of health facilities in their home area through to letters to use when applying for a job. This is one of a number of new, outstanding initiatives recently introduced by the school.

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

## **Outstanding**

The quality of care afforded to residential pupils is outstanding. The culture, ethos and working practices of a school that strives for continued growth and development, are child-centred and designed to meet specific and complex individual needs. High levels of communication and inclusion ensures pupils develop appropriate relationships with adults who act as excellent role models. As a result, they are well supported, stimulated and encouraged to develop skills which helps them to participate fully in school life, as well integrate effectively back into their own communities.

A programme to refurbish the bedrooms has just been completed, which means all bedrooms used by residential pupils are of the same high standard. All living and recreational areas around the campus provide pupils with excellent facilities that are of a high standard, along with the flexibility to meet their needs. Pupils feel safe, secure and are proud to show off their school to visitors. Bedrooms are personalised to suit the taste and interests of the occupants. Furnishings, fittings, equipment, décor and general state of repair is of a very high standard.

The general and specialist health needs of residential pupils is being promoted positively. The school maintains its excellent links with services that provide and meet pupils everyday health needs, with more specialist services available when required. Pupils have their own specific health plan, which is updated regularly. The arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils are effective and ensures their health needs are well met.

Residential pupils benefit with improvements to their general health and fitness levels as they are encouraged to modify previous lifestyle through exercise and diet. Pupils are exposed to a variety of initiatives designed to educate and improve their health. For example, the smoking cessation hut in the grounds is popular with pupils who can drop in and speak informally with trained staff, who provide them with advice and information. This is deemed to be an excellent facility.

Feedback from residential pupils confirms they are happy with the quality, quantity and choice of food served. Food is balanced and nutritious. All staff, including the catering staff, are fully briefed on any specific dietary requirements a pupil may have and those needs are met in full. This view is supported by pupils with one saying; 'I am a vegetarian and there is a veggie option available in the cafeteria.' Another says; 'I strongly agree that the food is good because there are lots of choices.'

One of the strengths of the school is the range of activities and leisure interests pupils experience. Activities are meaningful, well planned and cater for both individuals and groups. The whole school campus is fully utilised to give pupils new experiences as well as following the more traditional interests they may have. For example, activities on one evening of the inspection ranged from astronomy at the schools own observatory, chess and cooking through to more active events such as field craft, football and quad biking.

Pupils are also guided towards community based activities and interests that serve and meet their specific needs. For example, one spoke about representing the school at motor cross, another at go-karting. One pupil spoke about developing a keen interest in fishing and others about a range of sporting events where they are proud to have represented the school. As a result of the individualised leisure arrangements, pupils benefit enormously from developing new interests that can serve them well in the future, as well as experiencing an improved, healthy lifestyle.

Residential pupils live and thrive in a safe, supportive and nurturing environment. Individual needs are identified, with plans strategies put into place to address those needs. Pupils progress is continually monitored and evaluated to ensure planning is kept current. Pupils are involved in all aspects of these processes which underpins the inclusive society they live in, as well as encouraging them into taking some responsibility for their own actions and lifestyle.

Residential staff work with and support many families of pupils attending the school. Senior staff and key workers take an active role in this, often working outside the physical boundaries of the school. They take a pro-active response with this work so often crises and major incidents can be avoided. For example, one parent described how she can ring the school at any time and receive support from staff who are always available. Parents report outstanding levels of communication between themselves and staff and say they are welcomed to the school, even if its unannounced. The working partnerships between school and parents gives pupils a greater consistency of care, which serves them well for the future.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

### **Outstanding**

The school has retained its outstanding arrangements which keep pupils safe at all times. Working practices are constantly evaluated and reviewed to ensure the current needs of pupils are being met in a safe environment. For example, any incident is monitored and evaluated to look at cause and put plans into practice to avoid similar incidents re-occurring.

The school maintains excellent links with external agencies tasked with keeping children safe. Staff have the necessary training, knowledge and experience to implement and recognise any potential safeguarding issues. Records show that potential safeguarding issue are dealt with quickly and effectively, ensuring young people are fully protected. The school implements safe recruitment and clearance procedures for new staff to ensure pupils are only looked after by suitably cleared staff.

Residential pupils confirm they feel safe within the school. This view is fully supported by parents, social workers and others spoken with. Living areas create a warm, calm and relaxing environment where individual need is addressed. As a result, serious behaviour management incidents in the residential provision, whilst rare, are well managed.

Pupils confirm that bullying is not an issue of concern, confirming that staff are quick to step in, which makes them feel safe. The school works pro-actively with all pupils to raise awareness around bullying and its potential affect. For example, its an area regularly addressed in assemblies as well as in daily life within the living areas.

Residential pupils are protected with a range of risk assessments that identify hazards both in and away from the school campus. Pupils participate in regular fire drills and can safely exit the residential areas when needed. Checks to maintain a safe environment are regularly undertaken, with appropriate service contracts in place.

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

### **Outstanding**

The leadership, management and organisation of both the school and residential provision, remains outstanding. This is a school that does not stand still or rest on its laurels. There is an energy, drive and commitment towards continued improvement, based on the needs of pupils and improving their outcomes. A strength of the school is to monitor all aspects of its operation critically and take action to improve. Pupils are at the centre of this with regular consultation taking place to ensure their views and needs are being met.

Residential pupils benefit from being looked after by a skilled, well-trained residential staff team, who are fully supportive and committed to the culture, ethos, aims and working practices developed in the school. They understand their own role and responsibilities, working together with a team-centred approach to provide pupils with a consistency of care. Staff work professionally and collaboratively with other school staff, parents and professionals to ensure pupils needs are fully addressed.

Residential staff improve their knowledge and working practices through participation in the schools active training programme. They are well managed, monitored and supervised effectively by an experienced senior staff team. Expectations of their performance is high. Pupils are being looked after by a stable, highly motivated staff group who possess the competences and skills to effectively meet their diverse needs.

Both the internal and external monitoring of the provision takes place systematically. Monitoring reports are evaluative and quality assure all areas of the schools operation. They identify areas for improvement, which translates into written plans for future development. For example, last years school improvement plan recognised a need for all pupils to have an appropriate mobile phone to use for contact purposes. This aim has been fully addressed.

Residential pupils enjoy living in an environment that is focussed on meeting their needs. They are looked after by a staff group they like, trust and respect. Staff have high aspirations for all pupils and this is mirrored through discussions with pupils, who demonstrate their own dreams for their future which are both realistic yet ambitious.

## 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>	119873
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC035805
<b>DfE registration number</b>	888/7028

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>	
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Joseph Prendergast
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	05/07/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 221 333
<b>Email address</b>	head@wenningtonhall.lancs.sch.uk

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