

Vale of Evesham School

Vale of Evesham School, Four Pools Lane, EVESHAM, Worcestershire, WR11 1BN

Inspection dates	12/11/2013 to 14/11/2013	
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

- Residential pupils make exceptional progress and development. Aspiration and achievement is high because pupils are equipped to communicate effectively by using signs, symbols and electronic communication aids. This inclusive environment ensures that pupils are empowered and supported with their development.
- The quality of the residential experience is outstanding for pupils. They enjoy a wide range of high quality activities and recreational pursuits. Residential pupils are provided with specialist support so that their health, social development and academic ability are fully met.
- The safety and well-being of residential pupils is at the forefront of staff practice. Residential pupils feel very safe and are safe. Robust safe recruitment practices are followed consistently. Safeguarding training is effectively translated in to practice and well embedded. There is a comprehensive approach to anti-bullying to prevent and deal with bullying.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Residential boarding is well managed and led and wholeheartedly supported by the care staff. Leaders and managers set the tone of high expectations with a sharp focus on continual improvement; ably supported by an effective governing body. Parents and carers rate the residential boarding highly, coupled with the work of the school. Residential pupils are very proud of their achievements and their increased development in their academic and life skills.
- The school meets the national minimum standards.

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 three hour notice period. Time was spent within the three residential suites over two days and evenings. A range of records were examined related to the care provided and a breakfast and two evening meal observed. Discussions were held with members of the management team, nurse, speech and language therapist, key worker meetings, designated child protection officer, health and safety officer and a parents evening meeting. Two groups of residential pupils were joined for woodland trekking activity and swimming activity. Documentation completed at the school examined included health and safety and recruitment records, behaviour management records and other relevant documentation.

Inspection team

Martha Nethaway

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

The school is an Academy and is directly responsible to a governing body. Vale of Evesham School provides education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and learning disabilities. The school caters 175 pupils in total, 118 boys and 57 girls. There are 16 residential pupils, who board on a weekly basis. The school's last inspection was in June 2012.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupils' development and progression is continually sustained and improved. They make substantial progress in their social skills, literacy, numeracy and IT skills. There are purposeful links between social and emotional learning. Residential pupils' development is fully supported because every residential target is fully tracked which helps improve attainment, social skills and personal development.

The context of the learning is used effectively. So for example, opportunities are used for residential pupils to practise their social skills in the dining area, such as, waiting and turn-taking and when choosing food through using sign language and signs and symbols. When walking and trekking in the forest, choosing suitable clothing and practising reading maps on nature trails. This inclusive environment enables residential pupils, without exception, to work extremely hard on their personal targets and make excellent progress in their self-help skills.

Residential pupils' relationships with each other are highly formed. They show consideration, thoughtfulness and respect. Residential pupils are very proud of their time in residence because they do interesting, exciting and stimulating activities. They grow in maturity, confidence and ability. One parent commented, 'There is lots of adult help to socialise.'

Residential pupils behave exceptionally well. They learn to communicate through using highly effective communication aids. This allows pupils to be confident communicators. This affirms their relationships with each other, staff, parents and carers. One parent commented in their residential parent questionnaire, 'My daughter has improved her independence and she has come on with her ability to communicate.' Another parent commented, 'You give him time and lots of understanding. This shows how support is adjusted according to the residential pupils' ability.'

Throughout residential pupils' time they enjoy their residential stays. They get to take part in a wide range of activities including swimming, gardening, forest walking and trekking, gym workouts and supermarket shopping. In these activities, they practise their communication skills, social skills, improve their physical fitness and develop key independent skills.

Residential pupils' participation is highly evolved. They are involved in the school council and are 'eco warriors'. Residential pupils are well represented in these forums. They reach out to the wider community. There are active links with the cinema, local restaurant and the local community cultural groups. Residential pupils have also been involved in fundraising and recycling of textiles. Consequently, this helps to increase social engagement and promotes being a responsible citizen.

Residential pupils' health and well-being is excellent. Pupils have direct access to the school nurse. In addition, there are a range of visiting health professionals including a dentist, optician, consultant paediatrician and psychiatrist. Since the last inspection, the focus has been on increasing residential pupils' fitness. One pupil commented, 'We are getting fitter and having fun.'

Older pupils' independence is highly supported. Pupils have a proven track record of moving onto adult education and training. Many pupils gain the opportunity to take part in a link course at the local college, learning for example, to work with new people through sports and leisure and work related learning. One parent commented, 'My son is doing work experience and this is a valuable life skill.' As a result, pupils are gaining excellent work skills.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of residential provision and care is outstanding. Pastoral support and care is highly formed. The links between residential staff and academic staff are cohesive. For example, at the beginning and end of each day staff meet, exchange information and support pupils' homework. The home-to-school diary is used well to ensure highly effective two-way communication with parents and carers. This diary has been further enhanced by the use of digital photographs so that pupils can directly share their experiences. As a result, this supports partnership working and helps parents and carers to keep in touch with their child's learning.

Care plans are well formulated, focused and clearly linked to measurable targets. The use of digital photographs is widespread so that residential pupils feel involved and connected with their care plans. Over time, they progress significantly in their health, social and communication skills with positive impact and outcomes.

Pupils enjoy a varied number of activities that help to develop and increase their abilities. For instance in swimming, learning to attempt to swim unaided without the use of a floating device. Other examples, are building independent skills such as dressing and undressing, showering, cleaning teeth and washing hands before and after mealtimes. As a result, residential pupils' strengths are emphasised through taking advantage of their daily routines to foster the development of key social skills and gain independent skills.

All pupils enjoy a range of extra curriculum activities. They use the gym fitness room with fully trained staff and high quality gym equipment. They have access to a sensory room and also professional cooking events. Outdoor activities such as, playing at local parks, lots of walks and swimming. One pupil commented, 'We went to the fun-fair and rode the dodgems and carousels. It was great fun.'

The quality of the residential accommodation is of a high standard, safe and well maintained. This is consistent with the ethos of the school. One parent commented, 'It's like a home away from home.' There are many aspects that support residential pupils' learning. So for example, visual cues and aids to enhance sign language and pictorial communication. The recent innovation of using robust portable computer tablets to aid learning through reading, writing and numeracy. This develops their skills further. These are clear examples of supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Residential pupils enjoy high quality food that is freshly prepared and served by a cook. All dietary needs are fully catered for in relation to health and faith needs. One young person commented in their questionnaire, 'I eat well.' The dining room is well managed with pupils eating at different stages in the evening depending on their commitments with extra-curriculum activities. Mealtimes are always experienced by residential pupils as positive sociable and enjoyable experience.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

Residential pupils' safety is outstanding. Their safety is at the fore-front of the care practice at the school. The school has invested and trained staff to a confident and competent standard in relation to child protection and safeguarding. There is an annual rolling programme of safeguarding training. The number of appointed designated senior persons for child protection (DSP) is high and the safeguarding practice at the school is highly child-centred. The role of the DSP's are well defined and clearly understood by staff. Recent improvements include dissemination and training in relation to risks of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) for all staff. Another example includes high quality external training on safety and organising of on-site and off-site extra-curricular activities. The school consistently applies safe recruitment procedures so

that all adults in contact with vulnerable pupils are suitably vetted and checked. All these actions show a proactive approach to pupils' safety and welfare.

The quality and intervention of behaviour management is outstanding. This is attributed to the use of clear behavioural strategies and expecting the best. Staff are highly skilled at pre-empting and de-escalating challenging behaviours. Equally, the whole school's behavioural electronic tracking system identifies trends and patterns so that early intervention takes place. Over time, residential pupils learn to communicate their feelings. This results in minimal or no behavioural incidences. This is strongly correlated with highly skilled staff that are well informed, affirmative and sensitive to the needs of pupils. For example, they use a quick word of praise coupled with sign language. They set clear boundaries and are consistent in their approach. As a result, this encourages residential pupils' self-awareness and self-management.

The school operates a robust approach to anti-bullying. The zero tolerance to unwanted bullying behaviours is well observed and implemented. So for example, careful attention is given to matching residential pupils to different extra-curriculum activities. The quality of residential pupils' interactions and behaviour towards each other are continually monitored. Staff intervene early to help pupils develop life skills related to thoughtfulness, consideration for others, taking turns and sharing activities. Residential pupils' emotional readiness is further supported through the use of 'circle time' where pupils feel safe, valued and listened to. As a result, bullying events are very rare at the school.

Health and safety is given a high profile by staff and the school. This is threaded throughout the residential pupils' time. Individual documented risk assessments are in place and reviewed as circumstances change. There are extensive health and safety checks and a maintenance programme ensures a safe environment. In addition, pupils learn to practise fire drills so that they know what to do in the event of an emergency. As a result, this helps promote the welfare of residential pupils.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. Leaders and managers are insightful, ambitious and deliver outstanding leadership. Residential boarding is fully integrated and exceptionally well managed, organised and led. Staff are fully committed to the lives of residential pupils. They create an enabling environment where residential pupils thrive and develop. They benefit from high quality care, support and guidance. Residential pupils make prompt gains in their social skills, life skills, communication and behaviour.

The school is able to build year-on-year improvement. So for example, this year, concentrated efforts have been made to convert to academy status. After an extensive period of consultation, the school's new freedoms and flexibility continues to drive improvement. This is resulting in good practice being shared within the local community and with other schools.

The staffing deployment and sufficiency of staff is well managed and organised. The vast majority of staff are qualified to work in residential boarding. Those that are not are enrolled and progressing well with gaining their qualification. In addition, there is a comprehensive programme of on-going professional training. For example, accredited training in speech and language, gym fitness instructors training and social inclusion. In addition, staff attended a national speaker conference on behaviour management. As a result, staff are well trained to provide excellent support and continuity of care with residential pupils.

Partnership working is a key cornerstone of the work at the school with parents, carers, health professionals and social workers. There are many excellent examples of this working in practice. Care staff making regular contact by phone, email and visits. The highly accessible school website

helps parents and carers to expand their opportunities to be well informed about their child's education and social learning. A more recent initiative now includes the development of a support group for parents and carers. One parent made the comment, 'It will be great to meet up with other parents, hear their stories and gain help through different experiences.'

The views of residential pupils, parents and carers are regularly sought by, for example, conducting survey questionnaires. As a result of this consultation, efforts have been made to improve residential pupils' fitness levels and additional support has been given with reading. This has helped to improve outcomes for health and learning as they are challenged to meet their full potential.

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	139444
Social care unique reference number	SC043049
DfE registration number	885/7011

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	Academy
Number of boarders on roll	16
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to 19
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Starr
Date of previous boarding inspection	11/06/2012
Telephone number	01386 443367
Email address	astarr@valeofevesham.worcs.sch.uk

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. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email 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, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: 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.

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
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

