

Wargrave House School

Wargrave House School, Wargrave Road, NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS, Merseyside, WA12 8RS

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| Inspection dates | 02/12/2013 to 03/12/2013 | |
| 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

- The residential provision is an area of excellence within the school. Residential pupils are growing in confidence and independence as a direct consequence of their residential experience.
- Residential pupils feel safe and parents are confident the school is meticulous in their duty of care to ensure every residential pupil remains protected and safe.
- The residential provision success emanates from the very top. The director of services and members of the leadership team share a clear vision, in which the residential pupils welfare and well-being is their top priority.
- Residential pupils have daily opportunities to participate in activities that support their personal development, talent and abilities, including accessing a variety of structured activities each evening. Even the smallest of achievements are consistently celebrated.
- Residential pupils have enriched experiences as a consequence of the effective liaison secured between care staff and specialist services; they have access to innovative communication aids; and lastly, they have the support of passionate care staff, who strive hard to make positive difference to all aspects of their lives.

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

The school was informed about the inspection at 08.35 on the first day. During the visit, observations of practice were undertaken including speaking with staff and residential pupils. A tour of the school was completed. A visit to residential units at key times, morning and evening was completed. A selection of policies, records and written guidance were sampled, including parents and children's surveys. Individual and group discussions took place with managers, senior staff, residential workers and residential pupils. A range of evening activities were directly observed.

Inspection team

Michelle Moss

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

This is a non-maintained special school, established in 1971, for students with autistic spectrum disorder. The school operates as a registered charity (charity number 1104715). It offers a day school, weekly and part-weekly residential boarding for up to 14 residential pupils at any one time who are aged from 5 to 19 years. Residential facilities are on-site both in the main school building and in the post-16 department, Lakeside House. The school was last inspected in February 2013.

In September 2012, following approval from the Department for Education, a specialist college catering for students aged 19 - 25 opened. As some residential provision is provided, the service has been registered with Care Quality Commission. This new provision does not fall within the jurisdiction of this inspection and therefore forms no part of this report.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Offer residential pupils the opportunity to see the school nurse after a physical restraint and hold a record of any medical check undertaken.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

The outcome of the boarding experience is outstanding. Residential pupils are flourishing from opportunities to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities that positively stretch their abilities and enhance their physical fitness. For example, residential pupils can choose to participate in swimming, bowling, and attending a variety of organised clubs, such as dance and drama. The residential pupils also have access to more sensory designed activities, and daily opportunities to develop community links as a means of achieving community cohesion.

Residential pupils achieve high standards of exceptional behaviour as a consequence of the trust and sense of security they get from a stable and consistent staff team, who know their individual needs extremely well.

Residential pupils are receiving nutritious diets which are helping improve their general health and well-being. They benefit hugely from the comprehensive oversight of school health professionals who monitor all aspects of their health care. This includes staff having access to essential information about medical conditions, such as epilepsy and asthma, in addition to receiving training. Care staff are also well informed about children's allergies, including how this can affect them and the emergency treatments required. These committed measures ensure health of children is safeguarded.

Parents and carers are well informed of their child's development and every achievement. This is enabling residential pupils to be reassured that key information about their school and residential experience is frequently shared with people who are important to them.

Residential pupils are hugely benefiting from the all-inclusive approach to meaningful participation. For example, they are able to successfully use Communication Boards board makers to picture exchange communication (PECs) to make informed choices on a daily basis.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of boarding provision is outstanding and as a consequence residential pupils are flourishing from their stays at the residential provision. Residential pupils experience genuine care from a consistent, stable and trusting care staff team who are committed, well trained and experienced. The level of trust amongst residential pupils and staff means each residential pupil is being supported to feel safe, protected and valued.

There is a whole school approach to ensuring respect for diversity, sensitivity to race, culture, religion, sexuality and disability is always acknowledged and robustly promoted. This creates a wholly inclusive provision in which every aspect of practice is set at optimising life chances for all.

The care and support residential pupils are receiving means from starting at the school, they are making remarkable progress. This is validated in comments made by parents, who talk about the remarkable turnaround their child has made as a direct consequence of the school in the past two years. Professionals also find the school to be, 'very in tune with the individual needs of children'. When they visit, 'it is a happy learning environment in which staff are always very friendly'. The biggest change is described in areas of communication and confidence which has, 'transformed children's lives for the better'. One professional describes the residential provision as, 'one of the best', in particular its, 'holistic care and high quality provision'.

Forward thinking about children's transition to adulthood, means residential pupils are being encouraged to begin developing essential life skills. This includes acquiring skills associated with

managing money, cooking, or purchasing food. Residential pupils are equally being supported to become increasingly assertive in readiness for life after school. This creative learning is in turn helping them overcome barriers that have previously hindered their social development.

Placement plans are individually tailored to match the needs of residential pupils. The plan draws together health, social and educational needs in a cohesive way, to ensure there is a very clear direction towards improving outcomes. These plans are frequently audited and reviewed, so that the smallest of change in needs are quickly drawn into an active support plan.

Meticulous attention is given to ensuring medication important to residential pupils health is administered in accordance with the prescribing doctor's instructions. This includes having a conscientious health professional overseeing the care of medicines and taking a lead on all aspects of health promotion throughout the whole school. These measures enhance the physical, emotional and mental health of residential pupils.

The accommodation and facilities are all used to the maximum by residential pupils. The premises are maintained to a high standard to ensure residential pupils are able to feel relaxed, warm and comfortable. Residential pupils show pride in their accommodation and assist staff to maintain these high standards.

The meals times are delightful occasions in which residential pupils receive good quality and plentiful food. Residential pupils and their families are able to access a user friendly complaint procedure which is reflective of the diverse needs. This ensures the smallest of concerns can be raised with the knowledge the school will listen and act.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The school has outstanding arrangements for keeping residential pupils safe. Everyone in the school is diligent about keeping residential pupils safe. Visitors are alerted to the school's child protection procedures through an informative leaflet given when signing in at reception. The process for recording incidents, concerns and making referrals for child protection are robust. These processes put residential pupils' safety at the very heart of every action taken by the school.

All members of staff and governors are trained in child protection at levels that reflect their responsibilities within the school. Furthermore, training and written guidance on safer recruitment practice are implemented to ensure the recruitment and selection process remains meticulous. This ensures that only suitably vetted people work with residential pupils. There is detailed guidance for the appropriate use of information technology, such as email, digital cameras and the internet, to make sure that residential pupils are not put in danger or exposed to abuse or exploitation.

There are comprehensive risk assessments used that help identify any potential dangers to residential pupils. These take into consideration their vulnerabilities and additional needs. Care staff implement these assessments throughout their daily practice and in doing so, help to keep residential pupils safe.

Care staff are highly skilled in deploying techniques such as de-escalation and redirection to help residential pupils self-modify behaviour. By utilising these skills, physical intervention is always seen as a last resort. Bullying is infrequent. Nevertheless, care staff are well trained in recognising bullying and in practice are highly vigilant in monitoring the slightest changes in mood or behaviour.

Full recognition is given by leadership to the vulnerability of residential pupils and the dangers

associated with missing from care. A policy and procedure is in place and utilised by care staff to ensure safeguarding measures keep residential pupils safe. As a consequence of these effective measures, no residential pupil has been reported missing.

Residential pupils health and safety is safeguarded through comprehensive checks made against all environmental risks. This includes routine checks and servicing being maintained on areas such as electrical, gas, water and fire safety. Repairs and maintenance are centrally managed to ensure swift action is taken to keep the premises safe for all.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential provision is outstanding. The leadership promote a culture that ensures every residential pupil has a voice and is respected as individual. This is made possible through the creative and imaginative use of diverse communication, which all staff are highly skilled in using in their support of residential pupils.

There are well organised multi-professional meetings that aim to formulate individualised tailored support plans around specific needs. These include the assessment of social and emotional needs to enhancing health and communication. These tight networks of expertise means residential pupils experience holistic care that promotes their emotional, physical and social needs in totally child centred way.

The care staff fully deploy their responsibilities in a manner that treats residential pupils with dignity, respect, sensitivity and fairness. This includes being polite and courteous in all their interactions with residential pupils.

Highly effective systems are well engrained into the life of the school so that nothing gets missed. For instance, there are daily handovers between residential and educational staff to ensure a seamless provision of care. In addition, each week there is set time for a full care staff meeting to take place. This enables a full review of residential pupils progress to be comprehensively discussed.

There is a very good balance of experience amongst the care staff. Individual members are well qualified and taken as a whole, they have a range of qualifications, skills and training relevant to their responsibilities and the needs of residential pupils. All care staff regularly receive supervision and annual appraisals to ensure their own personal developmental needs are monitored and reviewed.

There is excellent use of self-evaluation completed by the director of services to monitor the quality of care. This includes a thorough self-evaluation report which measures the extent in which the school is complying with National Minimum Standards. These exceptional measures mean the welfare and well-being of residential pupils is given top-priority at the school's leadership level.

A well-established rota is set up between governors and trustees to ensure regular visits to the residential provision are maintained. These visits are conducted at various times, including breakfast and evenings. These varied times allow for a comprehensive assessment to be completed on the quality of care. Following each of these visits a report is completed and submitted to the appropriate leadership meetings. These are detailed and demonstrate time is taken to observe practice, meet residential pupils and staff, to ensuring the residential premises remain fit for purpose.

All required policies and procedures are in place and implemented effectively so that residential pupils health and welfare is always appropriately met.

The school has acted on the couple of areas for improvement raised at the last inspection. This has meant developing the school's Statement of Purpose and improving the use of words in sanction records.

All national minimum standards were met at the last inspection and this continues to be the case.

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

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| Unique reference number | 134888 |
| Social care unique reference number | SC022446 |
| DfE registration number | 342/7009 |

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.

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|---|-----------------------------|
| Type of school | |
| Number of boarders on roll | |
| Gender of boarders | Mixed |
| Age range of boarders | |
| Headteacher | Mrs Sheila Jaeger |
| Date of previous boarding inspection | 11/02/2013 |
| Telephone number | 01925 224 899 |
| Email address | enquiries@wargravehouse.com |

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