

# Wishmore Cross Academy

Wishmore Cross Academy, Alpha Road, Chobham, Surrey, GU24 8NE

<b>Inspection dates</b>	27/01/2014 to 29/01/2014	
<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

- The quality of care in the residential provision is high. Boarding makes a very strong and positive contribution to the life of the academy and the extraordinary success of its residential pupils. Attendance and academic achievement are excellent in relation to starting points.
- A highly integrated approach across the academy is a significant strength which benefits residential pupils. Exceptional collaborative working and attention to detail ensures all aspects of care are highly personalised to meet the individual needs of each pupil. Education and care staff work extremely well together and with external agencies. There is full inclusion within the local and wider community including links with a local college. Residential pupils speak very positively of the opportunities they have while at the academy.
- The academy has an exceptional leadership team who knows the strengths and weaknesses with clear strategies in place to address the future challenges. There are established policies and procedures to guide staff. However, on occasion, these are not consistently followed. There is no negative impact on the residential pupils.
- The accommodation is of a very high standard. Pupils benefit from a maintenance team who understand their unique preferences and respond quickly to any repairs. All certification by external contractors are in place to ensure the necessary checks are made on a regular basis to ensure residential pupils live in a safe environment.
- The safety and well-being of residential pupils is of paramount importance. Risk assessments for the environment, activities and for individual pupils are in place. However, in one case the risk reduction strategies for a particular behaviour are not explicit in the risk assessment. The staff team demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the issues and residential pupils are not at risk as a result.
- There is an excellent approach to health with clear understanding of who takes

responsibility for any health needs. Likewise the catering is of a high standard. Residential pupils benefit from a range of healthy options at meal times.

### **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 academy was notified of the inspection four hours before it commenced. Time was spent in the boarding provision during the inspection. Meals were attended as well as activities. Observations were made of the interactions between staff and residential pupils. Meetings took place with the headteacher, deputy head, director of performance, care staff and other professionals in their specialisms. Discussions were held with parents and governors. Residential pupils' views were sought through copious time in face-to-face contact and through observation of interactions. Records, policies and procedures were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Keith Riley

Lead social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

Wishmore Cross Academy is a publicly funded independent state academy and is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust. The academy is situated in Chobham, Surrey and draws pupils from a range of backgrounds, both urban and rural, across Surrey and also neighbouring LEAs.

The academy is a special school for young people all of whom have a statement identifying behavioural, emotional and social difficulties as their primary need. The academy can admit up to 60 boys between the ages of 11 to 16 and can offer up to 22 residential places (including extended days) on a flexible basis for up to 4 nights per week. Within the building there are three separate residential units where boarders have single or double bedrooms. The residential pupils have access to the academy grounds and facilities for evening activities.

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

- Ensure staff follow documented procedures at all times, in particular security arrangements and recording when medication is refused.
- Ensure all risk reduction measures for known behaviours are explicitly recorded in risk assessments.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. They benefit from a supportive and nurturing environment where they develop their confidence and self-management competencies. The ethos of the academy is one of mutual respect and understanding. Pupils are encouraged and enabled, with excellent support, to develop constructive, tolerant relationships with their peers as well as the adults caring for them. They live in an environment with clear boundaries and where tolerance and respect is promoted and valued. Consequently, their behaviour is of an excellent standard. Residential pupils give very positive feedback about their experience while staying at the academy. Parents speak very positively about the outcomes. One parent said, 'There are positive boundaries and support with really good male role models and I have seen a huge change in my son that have improved his life chances'.

Residential pupils are at the centre of practice. There are positive and constructive relationships between pupils and staff. A parent commented on how much her son enjoys boarding and looks forward to his time at the academy each week. The emotional needs of residential pupils are met resulting in high self-esteem and confidence in their own abilities. This means that residential pupils feel good about themselves and are highly motivated to succeed. They have high attendance and achievement rates in the educational provision or in local colleges. Their life chances are greatly improved as a result of their boarding experience.

Invaluable opportunities are made available such as work experience placements which enable residential pupils to pursue their career choices. Close liaison ensures transitions, such as moving on to college, are thoughtfully planned with input from the education and residential teams. Consequently, college placements are successful and residential pupils gain skills that will greatly aid them in their future life. Former residential pupils speak very positively of their experiences at the academy and how they have been helped to mature into responsible members of society.

There is an excellent approach to equality and diversity. The culture in the academy embraces differences so that residential pupils feel safe and confident in expressing their individuality. Rooms are personalised to reflect interest. There is a strong affiliation to the academy and a sense of belonging.

### Quality of residential provision and care

### Outstanding

The quality of residential provision and care is excellent. Residential pupils receive excellent pastoral support which assists them to engage fully in the educational, social and vocational aspects of academy life. An experienced and knowledgeable staff team work closely together to provide joined-up care and a positive sense of community living. A flexible approach to inducting new pupils at the academy means there is every chance of success. Placement breakdowns are rare.

Boarding facilities provide students with a homely environment with all living areas in top condition. The décor of the environment is family orientated. There is a calm, relaxed atmosphere. Residential pupils benefit from on-site facilities which include a sports hall, a sports field and outdoor play areas. Pupils also access other healthy activities in the community such as swimming or joining a local cadet group. They show a sense of community responsibility, for example by helping clear storm-water drainage areas during inclement weather conditions to help stop the local village from flooding.

There is a robust approach to health needs. Health action plans inform staff of any action to be taken such as booking routine vaccinations. Clear plans identify who takes responsibility. There

are robust medication procedures in place that, in the main, are followed religiously. However, on two occasions, it was not recorded in records that a residential pupil had refused prescribed medication. This was a clerical error and no residential pupils were at risk as a result.

Residential pupils receive an excellent standard of catering. All meals offer a suitable choice and much variety. Seconds are plentiful. Catering staff demonstrate an understanding of individual preferences, in addition to any dietary needs, and ensure these are met. This gives residential pupils a sense of being well respected and cared for.

Residential pupils benefit from having comprehensive care plans that contain clear and relevant information as to their individual needs. Committed and motivated residential staff implement the plans thereby providing strong quality care. A positive system of rewarding good behaviour means that sanctions are no longer used. Residential pupils learn what is right and acceptable and their behaviour improves. There is a robust approach to anti-bullying with the effectiveness of strategies under review. Bullying is not an identified issue at this academy.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

### **Outstanding**

The academy makes excellent arrangements for ensuring that residential pupils are safe and protected from harm. Systems and training aim to protect residential pupils and actively promote their well-being. There are clear methods to report any concerns with links to the relevant agencies. The senior management team ensures there are child protection liaison officers trained to the required level.

Risk assessments inform staff of the immediate and on-going risks for individual residential pupils. While the quality of these is high, it was found in one case that some known risk reduction strategies are not explicitly written down in the risk assessment. Residential pupils are not at risk as a result due to the consistent staff who support them and the intimate knowledge of their needs. However, this is raised as a point of improvement.

Missing from care and bullying are not identified as issues at this academy. Likewise, the management of behaviour through physical intervention is extremely rare. Any incident is carefully recorded and reviewed by senior staff. The psychological and emotional well-being of residential pupils are carefully considered to establish what led up to the behaviour. This ensures there is learning and feedback into practice. The senior management team places great importance on being leaders in behaviour management. This is exemplified by the academy receiving a national accreditation in behaviour management training and working with other academies to give advice on best practice.

The robust recruitment procedures ensure that staff are fully checked prior to starting work at the academy. The recruitment of staff is conducted in accordance with relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State and this information is maintained on the academy's single central record.

Well established systems and effective communication between the premises manager and staff result in a highly responsive service to any potential hazards and means that the required health and safety checks are competently completed. Risk assessments are in place for the environment. These are mainly followed diligently by staff. However, it was observed a door that is locked at night for security was locked early during the inspection. Although there is no immediate negative impact, there is the potential this could be a source of frustration for some residential pupils.

Excellent monitoring and overview is in place for health and safety. In addition, a comprehensive fire risk assessment has been completed and fully implemented. Residential pupils live in a safe

environment that is maintained to an exceptional standard.

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

The leadership and management of the academy are of an outstanding calibre. This is a key strength and influence on driving forward improvements and high expectations of staff and residential pupils. As a result, they are experiencing consistent, well-planned care across a 24 hour curriculum. Parents and professionals speak very highly of the academy and its leadership. The senior management team have identified the need for further psychological support for some residential pupils, as the academy accommodates pupils with more complex emotional needs.

There is effective monitoring and guidance, for example there is a dedicated board of governors who are actively involved in the life of the academy. An independent visitor makes unannounced monitoring visits and an independent advocate comes in regularly and talks to the residential pupils. Both produce reports to the senior management team with recommendations that are taken very seriously.

The academy ensures that excellent communication is maintained with parents and carers. A parent said, 'they inform me of every need'. Joint working allows strategies to be implemented both within boarding and at home, which in turn assists residential pupils and their families to make outstanding progress. A parent who said she used to think her son would be unemployable, now has great optimism for his future as a result of the progress he has made at the academy.

The core staff team are stable, strong and experienced. Staffing levels meet the needs of residential pupils extremely well. A parent said the staff are always warm and welcoming. The senior management team recognise the need to increase staffing numbers as the occupancy increases and have clear plans in place to do this.

All national minimum standards are met. However the leadership and management team, together with the governors, recognise the future challenges with clear plans to continue to develop and improve the quality of care to ensure the best possible outcomes for residential pupils. There is a culture of continuous improvement, for example a system for the electronic recording of incidents has been introduced. This allows for faster and more effective analysis of events and subsequent feedback into practice.

## 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>	138766
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC013899
<b>DfE registration number</b>	936/7024

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>	10
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Boys
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	11 to 16
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jed Donnelly
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	24/09/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01276 857555

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