

Wolverdene Special School

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

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| Inspection dates | 10/02/2014 to 12/02/2014 | |
| 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 overall effectiveness of the residential provision is outstanding. Pupils have a very strong identity with The Lodge, they thoroughly enjoy their time spent there and benefit enormously from the experience. The provision is an integral aspect of the school's operation and is a highly valued resource for supporting pupils and their families.
- Leadership and management of both the school and the residential provision are exceptional. Working closely together, both the head and the head of care are contributing highly effectively to the development of a holistic and nurturing approach to working with pupils across the school. Areas of excellent practice are being disseminated and are being successfully implemented to the benefit of pupils throughout the school.
- The residential provision provides a safe and secure environment which contributes remarkably effectively to the excellent progress made by pupils in their personal, social, and educational development. Extremely close working relationships with parents, external agencies, and staff across the school are highly instrumental in enabling and supporting the progress of individual pupils.
- Pupil welfare is central to practice within The Lodge and there is outstanding provision for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of residential pupils. Pupils feel safe there and parents report being totally confident that their children are being safely cared for. All safeguarding policies and procedures are being rigorously implemented, staff are highly trained and there are close working relationships with key external agencies.
- The individual and diverse needs of pupils are central to how the residential provision operates. All pupils are afforded equality of opportunity, and there is excellent provision for enabling them all to express their views and contribute to what goes on.

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

Brian Mcquoid

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 ten single rooms with shared facilities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- adopt a more formalised and structured approach to supervision for the head of care.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils at the school are outstanding. They have an extremely strong affiliation to The Lodge and thoroughly enjoy their time there. 'It's brilliant', and 'it's excellent', were two responses from pupils which typified the overall feeling towards the residential provision. Pupils feel safe and secure within a highly inclusive environment where they develop remarkably good relationships with both staff and fellow pupils. 'My son has never been happier', and 'he loves staying at The Lodge', were typical of two parent responses. Residential pupils make exceptional progress in their personal and social development, and this is having a dramatic effect upon their educational achievement which improves significantly from their starting points upon arrival at the school. For example, some children have subsequently gained a place in a mainstream school. Staff are strong advocates for pupils in relation to their next educational placement and do as much as possible to ensure a smooth transition.

Residential pupils make outstanding progress socially and in relation to their behaviour. 'My son has made fantastic progress since being at The Lodge', was a comment from one parent, while another said, 'he has come on in leaps and bounds, and is a totally different boy'. Pupils develop a tolerance and understanding of others, learn strategies for managing their behaviour, and form meaningful friendships with fellow pupils during their time spent at The Lodge. They participate in a wide range of activities both within school and in the wider community, where they successfully learn how to socialise and play together. Pupils communicate freely and openly to staff, with circle time, pupil meetings, and key work sessions providing opportunities for them to express their views. Contributions that pupils make to the residential environment include keeping their rooms tidy and assisting with tasks during mealtime. Individuals also take on responsibility for shared reading with their fellow pupils, while one pupil represents the residential provision on the school council.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of residential provision and the care provided for pupils is outstanding. Those pupils identified for a residential placement are subject to a thorough and sensitive induction which prepares them extremely well for their first overnight stay. High quality assessment and care planning supports the delivery of individualised care which is remarkably effective in meeting the diverse and complex needs of pupils, and helping them to achieve positive outcomes in their personal, social, and educational development. Excellent provision is made for addressing specific individual needs, including those associated with health, and the religious and cultural backgrounds of pupils. There is excellent communication between care and education staff with close and collaborative working being highly successful in supporting individual pupils and their families. Working closely with the school's family support worker is a prime example of this. The head of care and individual care staff also work across both care and education which highlights the extremely successful integrated approach to working with pupils.

Parents retain primary responsibility for addressing the health needs of their children, however there is excellent provision for supporting parents where necessary and for addressing specific health related needs. Staff work closely with health professionals involved with individual pupils and have the required information to provide safe and effective care. Pupils have extremely good access to a range of therapists on site which include speech and language, dance and movement therapy, and a play therapist. There are excellent arrangements for the management and administration of medication and established and positive links with the school nursing service. Healthy lifestyles are actively promoted within the school during the educational day and these are re-enforced within the residential provision. Pupils are provided with healthy and nutritious

meals and snacks, and participate in a wide range of activities which contribute highly effectively to their physical and emotional well-being. These include lots of opportunities for age-appropriate play such as soft play and den building.

The residential provision and facilities are of a high standard which are being extremely well maintained, and which, as much as possible, reflects a nurturing and family-style environment. The accommodation is ideally suited for its purpose, with pupils being able to socialise and relax in comfort. The large dining table is an excellent facility used daily as a focal point for group meetings, while the lounge provides a remarkably comfortable environment where pupils can relax as a group on sofas and bean bags while watching TV or a film last thing before bed. There is a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere with all areas being very well furnished, and all pupils having their own rooms which they are able to personalise. There are lots of toys and books available and all pupils spend time reading with either a staff member or a fellow pupil each evening before bedtime. The residential provision is located within the school grounds and provides excellent access to the school grounds and playing areas. A variety of designated play equipment is available to pupils and there are raised beds which are used by pupils to grow vegetables. Pupils are able to keep in touch with their families via telephone and e-mail, and staff work highly successfully to develop working relationships with parents.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

Provision for ensuring the safety of residential pupils at the school is outstanding. The safety and well-being of pupils is paramount with all safeguarding policies and procedures being rigorously implemented. Pupils feel totally safe and secure within the residential provision and parents feel totally confident that their children are being safely cared for. 'He loves staying at The Lodge; he is being safely cared for and staff are really supportive', was a comment from one parent which reflects the responses from a number of parents contacted during the course of the inspection. Staff have an acute awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities and the relevant policies and procedures to follow. They are all trained to the appropriate level with regular refreshers taking place and a high level of alertness to child protection being maintained across the school. There is an established and positive working relationship with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the head of care is one of the school's designated persons with responsibility for child protection. Several staff have completed training on safer recruitment, the procedures for recruiting staff are robust and are being effectively implemented with pupils participating in the process.

Promoting positive behaviour is a real strength of the residential provision. The Lodge provides an environment for pupils which is nurturing, where they feel safe and secure, and where they are able to play and develop meaningful relationships with both staff and their fellow pupils. Skilled staff provide clear and consistent boundaries for pupils within which they work extremely successfully to develop some core principles of group living such as tolerance, respect and the ability to share and support others. Success is celebrated on a daily basis with those who have not necessarily had a good day being supported to reflect on where and how things went wrong, and how they can do things differently the next day. Pupils were very well behaved during the course of the inspection and reported that bullying is not a problem within the residential provision. There is a strong anti-bullying culture across the school and staff are very vigilant for any signs that bullying may be taking place. There have been no instances of any pupil being reported as missing since the previous inspection. Incidents where sanctions have been imposed and where physical restraint have been used are at an extremely low level and are being very well recorded and closely monitored.

The Lodge provides a safe and secure environment for pupils within which there is excellent provision for the management of risk. Security arrangements ensure there is appropriately

restricted access to the residential provision and systems provide for the suitable monitoring of visitors. Comprehensive risk assessments are being regularly reviewed and provide the necessary safeguards for activities undertaken by pupils both on and off site. Health and safety arrangements are excellent and contribute highly effectively to the provision of a safe environment and ensuring the safety of both pupils and staff. All policies and procedures are in place and being regularly reviewed, there are regular health and safety audits being carried out and well-established systems for maintaining the premises and all of its facilities and equipment. Provision for fire safety includes a regularly reviewed fire risk assessment specific to the residential provision, the regular inspection and maintenance of all fire safety equipment, and regular fire evacuation practices.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

Leadership and management of the school's residential provision is outstanding. The head of care is part of the school's senior management team and The Lodge is a totally integrated and very highly regarded part of the school. The aims of the residential provision are clearly stated in the excellent and accessible information provided for parents and prospective pupils. These aims are being effectively translated into practice. Well-established operational systems are being implemented highly effectively and contribute to providing a safe and consistent environment for pupils. Working relationships across the school are extremely good and there is highly effective partnership working with parents. Care staff communicate regularly and work closely with the school's therapists and the exceptionally good family support service. 'Brilliant' and 'excellent' were words used by parents to describe their communication with staff, while one parent commented that they had daily contact, with the family support worker visiting weekly.

Staffing arrangements in the residential provision are exceedingly good. A highly qualified, experienced and well-trained staff team provide an excellent consistency of care and are receiving remarkably good support in relation to their professional development. One member of staff currently undertaking a course on attachment is cascading aspects of this during staff meetings, while another who has completed a course relating to social skills has been instrumental in the programme now being delivered to pupils in the classroom. These are some examples of the commitment to practice development that pervades the school. All care staff receive formalised supervision and have individual performance plans in place with identified targets. The head of care however does not have such a formalised arrangement and this is a recommended point for improvement. Staffing levels within the residential supervision provide the necessary support and supervision for pupils at all times.

The school's residential provision has been judged as outstanding for a significant number of years. There is however a continuing and growing commitment to the development and improvement of the service provided to pupils and their families. In recent years the residential provision has become an integral aspect of the wider school, with a new headteacher committed to disseminating and developing the principles and practice so successful within The Lodge for the benefit of pupils across the school. The development of a 'Nurture Group' within the school is a prime example of this. The head of care now has significant responsibilities across the wider school while some members of the care team are also working with pupils during the school day. Systems across the school provide for the highly effective monitoring of how the residential provision is operating and the quality of care being provided for pupils. All policy documents are being approved by the governing body, a representative of the governing body carries out unannounced visits to the residential provision, and four governors sit on The Lodge committee which meets every term.

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 | 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.

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| 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 | 27/02/2013 |
| Telephone number | 01264 362350 |
| Email address | adminoffice@wolverdene.hants.sch.uk |

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