

Wendover Campus

Church Lane, Wendover, Aylesbury, HP22 6NL

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The quality of education has rapidly improved under the strong leadership of the federation Principal and the head of campus. Leaders are determined for the school to become outstanding, and demonstrate good capacity to achieve this.
- The school has successfully improved the quality of teaching which is now good, by appointing teachers with strong subject knowledge, and by providing regular staff training.
- Students make good progress in their academic and social skills. Older boys make the fastest progress.
- Behaviour and attendance have improved. Parents and students very much value the way in which the school has achieved this.
- The safety of students is a priority for the school. Good policies and procedures are in place to support and achieve this.
- The school has high expectations for all students. Challenging goals are set, aimed to get the best from every individual. When progress is less than expected, action is taken quickly to address this.
- The governing body knows the school well and provides good support.
- The overall effectiveness of the residential experience is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Improvements in behaviour, attendance and students' progress have happened only recently. The school needs to demonstrate that it can maintain this progress over a sustained period of time.
- Not all teachers are confident in their assessment of students' abilities, and there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking.
- There are some weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics
- Leaders and managers rely too heavily on fixed term exclusions as a sanction for improving behaviour.
- The school must ensure that it meets all the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 11 lessons. This often included looking at work books, listening to students read, and talking to them about their learning. Several of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Observations were also carried out at the start of the school day, at break time, during lunch, and in a student forum meeting.
- Meetings were held with school and federation leaders and staff, representatives from the governing body, an advisor from the local authority, parents, and students. There were insufficient responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to provide an analysis.
- Documentation and records about the school’s work were examined, including documents relating to safe recruitment practice, safeguarding, care standards, self-evaluation, progress tracking, behaviour, and individual student case studies.
- Inspectors considered 22 completed staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Andy Lole, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Penman	Additional Inspector
David Kidner	Social Care Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wendover Campus is a special school providing for secondary aged boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
- All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- Over half of the students are supported by additional funding provided by the government for those eligible for free school meals, from service families, or who are looked after by the local authority. There are only a small number of students looked after by the local authority.
- The school is part of the Chiltern Way Federation, which also runs another local special school. The federation has a team of staff who provide leadership and support to both schools. The schools share the same governing body. Each school has its own headteacher, known as head of campus. Following the completion of a building project later this year, numbers of students on the Wendover site will increase to approximately 100.
- There are currently no Year 7 students at the school. The other school in the federation has all of the Year 7 students.
- A number of older students spend time each week attending courses at local colleges. These are provided by Hayden Training, and Aylesbury Youth Motor Project.
- The school has residential provision for up to 15 students. This has been temporally closed since November 2013 due to low staffing levels. These students have remained on roll as day placements.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a significant turnover of staff, including the appointment of a new head of campus.
- The school enters students early for GCSE.
- The federation has appointed an education welfare officer to work to improve attendance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress for students at Key Stage 3 so that all achieve the challenging targets set for them by:
 - closely monitoring progress and providing additional support when rates of progress are less than expected
 - ensuring accurate checks on pupils' progress and good quality marking are taking place.
- Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics by:
 - enabling all subject teachers to extend students' mathematical skills and knowledge in all lessons.
- Reduce the frequency of fixed term exclusions currently being used.
- The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.
 - Suitable sleeping accommodation is provided for children. Where children are aged 8 years or over, sleeping accommodation for boys is separate from sleeping accommodation for girls (NMS 5.1).
 - Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for children, which are reasonably accessible from the sleeping accommodation. Separate toilet facilities are provided for boys and girls unless each toilet facility is provided in a separate room intended for use by one pupil at a time, the door to which is capable of being secured from inside. Toilet and washing facilities

provide appropriate privacy for children (NMS 5.3).

- Accommodation is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any children with restricted mobility. The accommodation contains suitable specialist facilities to support children whose disabilities require them (NMS 5.4).
- Review the practice of curtains being used to replace bedroom doors. This will further promote students' privacy and dignity.
- Ensure that all accommodation areas are clean and well maintained before students are accommodated at the school, in particular the showering facilities.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training to equip them with the necessary skills required to meet the needs of the students accommodated at the school. In particular, training in communication skills, basic counselling skills, and working with those with a diagnosis of autism.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Many students enter the school with skills that are below those expected for their age. This is often due to a history of erratic attendance and disruption to their education at their former school. Students often start at the school part way through their secondary education.
- The vast majority of students make good progress, both in their academic work and social skills. Progress is best for students after being in the school for two years or more, and for those in Years 10 and 11. There is more variation in the rates of progress for younger boys. Students make similar progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has developed a challenging approach to setting goals for individual students' academic progress. Most students are expected to progress at the same rate as their peers in mainstream schools. Students who have identified learning difficulties that are most likely to restrict their rate of learning have slightly lower targets set for them. Systems to collect information on students' progress are used to regularly check if students are on track to meet their targets. When they fall behind, swift action is taken to address this.
- All groups of students make similar rates of progress. This includes students who receive additional funding which is used to support a wide variety of activities to help them improve their literacy and numeracy skills and to manage their behaviour more positively.
- The school works closely with training providers who run courses in practical subjects for the older students. These include courses in light vehicle maintenance, engineering, textiles and sports leadership. The federation vocational manager assures the quality of these courses, as well as monitoring the progress and attendance of the students while they are there.
- Many students read aloud in lessons fluently and with confidence.
- The school is very successful in preparing students to go onto further training or education when they leave school, or go straight into employment. Only one student did not take any of these options at the end of the last school year, and he is now applying for a college course.
- All students leave with an appropriate range of academic, practical and work-related qualifications.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because not all students are meeting their challenging targets.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection. The school is now much more focused on the importance of academic learning. An iGCSE course in English has recently been introduced. There are several new teachers in the school, many of whom have previously taught in mainstream schools. They have brought a good level of knowledge about how to teach particular subjects. Science teaching is now a strength of the school.
- Where teaching is effective, students really enjoy their learning, becoming very engrossed in their work, and even ask for more homework. Teachers have high expectations, and plan their lessons carefully to make sure that what they ask students to do can be achieved. When this happens, students get on with their work, requiring minimal input from adults. Any behaviour difficulties are quickly and skilfully sorted out, resulting in little learning time being lost.
- In some cases, teaching is not so well planned and does not enable students to learn as much as they should. This is sometimes due to staff being new to the school and not yet being able to set work at the right level. At other times, it is due to the adults not having sufficient subject knowledge.
- The teaching of mathematics has been affected by the difficulty the school has experienced in appointing a suitably qualified teacher. This has resulted in a period of time when students have

been taught by non-specialist teachers. The school has worked hard to ensure that this has not affected students, but a suitably qualified teacher needs to be appointed.

- Marking in books is fairly consistent, with teachers often giving written advice about how students could improve their work. However, this does not always happen. The standard of work varies in some subjects. Geography books show a wide range of topics covered throughout the year, which, as well as helping students learn about different parts of the world, also helped them consider ethical issues such as employment practices and sustainability issues. When asked about their work, a student reported that he really enjoyed his geography lessons.
- Teaching sometimes is carefully planned to extend social skills as well as academic learning. In an English lesson, students analysed conversations between two people, identifying characteristics that were likely to lead to good communication. They were able to reflect on their own experience of the impact on others when they use an angry tone of voice, or avoid eye contact.
- Although the checking of pupils' progress has improved, there are examples of teachers not being confident in knowing exactly what students can do. When teachers are clear about this, it helps students have an idea of what they can realistically achieve in the future. This helps boost and promote high levels of motivation and self-confidence.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because there are some inconsistencies in marking, checking of pupils' progress and setting work at the right level. Also, the teaching of mathematics requires improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. The school is an orderly, calm environment, where students display good behaviour towards each other and the staff. When behaviour difficulties arise, these are generally dealt with quickly and efficiently in order that the learning of others is not interrupted. Relationships between staff and students are very positive.
- Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed its approach to behaviour management and there is now a stronger emphasis on de-escalation, and the avoidance of high level intervention. The school ensures that all staff are well trained in these techniques. The use of physical intervention at the school has reduced significantly and robust monitoring processes are now in place.
- Behaviour in lessons is usually good and sometimes it is outstanding. The behaviour of individual students improves the longer they remain in the school. Older students are able to be very good role models to younger peers, and can be observed giving helpful and supportive advice when difficulties arise.
- Ten members of the student forum ran their own meeting with no adult input. This was skilfully chaired by an older student. They conducted a very sensible debate about current behaviour difficulties. All students were keen to find ways to make improvements, and share constructive ideas. The group demonstrated the progress they had each made in their social skills, in order to understand how to work together in such a democratic and mature way.
- Students and their parents acknowledge what a positive impact the school has had on improving their behaviour. Students talk about finding staff very approachable, and valuing the way in which the behaviour team give advice and choices when students are finding things hard. Both students and parents appreciated having nominated members of staff as mentors for students.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. The school places a high priority on the safety of its students. There are robust policies and procedures in place in order to promote safety, including how to stay safe online, child protection, behaviour management, bullying and safer recruitment. Any concerns raised in respect of safeguarding and child protection are acted upon immediately. All staff receive regular child protection training and are fully aware of their responsibilities in respect of this. Staff are familiar with the named person who takes the lead for child protection.

- The school has worked hard on improving attendance. This has included appointing an education welfare officer who works with external agencies, students and their families, to find ways to make attendance at school easier. As a result, rates of absence have been reduced. A number of strategies have been deployed, such as increasing the range of practical subjects, providing anger management training, and contacting agencies to provide additional support during evenings and at weekends.
- The school has developed the role of the pastoral support manager. Through the very strong relationships she has developed with students, she is able to help de-escalate emerging problems, and run individual and group counselling and social skills sessions as required.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because despite improvements, rates of fixed term exclusions have remained constant, averaging three per week.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders of the federation and the school hold a very clear vision about how to create a high quality school where all students make the best possible progress. In a short amount of time, significant progress has been made to realise this. Staff and students are responding very well to these changes, which is already resulting in better outcomes.
- The head of campus has a very accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She oversees a detailed plan which identifies how all improvements are going to be addressed within set timescales and budgets.
- Leaders recognise the importance of having suitably qualified and experienced teachers. The recent high staff turnover is a reflection of the school's determination to achieve this.
- A major redevelopment of the site is almost complete, which will give students new purpose-built facilities. The governing body and federation Principal have worked closely with the local authority to ensure that this project has been properly coordinated and financed.
- Teaching is carefully monitored. Senior leaders completed lesson observations in pairs so that they can share their views. Students' work is regularly scrutinised. Information from the checks on students' progress is accurately analysed.
- Teachers and senior leaders have annual performance management reviews, which identify strengths and areas for improvement. There are weekly staff training sessions where skills and knowledge can be further developed.
- To make sure that teacher assessment of students' work is similar to that of teachers in other schools, meetings are run with other special schools to compare judgements. The school plans to extend this to include mainstream schools
- Staff with middle management responsibility are ambitiously contributing to raising standards. This has included helping all subject teachers develop their skills in supporting student progress, particularly in English.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements.
- The school ensures that additional government funding it receives is used to enable good progress to be made.
- The school provides students with a variety of stimulating activities, including trips to the local Royal Air Force base, and visits from well-known people help to celebrate students' achievements. Carefully planned lessons develop students' awareness of culture in poetry and art. These all contribute well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning. The length of the school week is now in keeping with national expectations
- Advisors from the local authority have provided six days of support over the last year to help develop the teaching of English in all subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school has much improved since the last inspection. Governors now have a very good knowledge of the day-to-day workings of the school, and how well students learn

and improve their social skills. They carry out regular unannounced visits to monitor the work of the school, including the quality of teaching. Minutes of their meetings demonstrate how they ask challenging questions of school leaders as part of their responsibility. They keep finances under close scrutiny, including how effectively additional funding is used. They have an accurate view of how well the school's performance management system rewards good practice and addresses under performance. They are suitably trained, to ensure safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

Outcomes for residential pupils	Not Judged
Quality of residential provision and care	is adequate
Residential pupils' safety	is good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	is good

- At the time of this inspection, pupils were not being accommodated at the school. As a result, not all of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools were judged and in addition, the judgement rating of outcomes for children was not judged.
- There is strong leadership and management of the residential provision and good links between school and residential staff. There are clear arrangements in place in the absence of a Head of Care.
- The standard of the residential provision is adequate. The care team aim to promote a homely environment. However, there are shortfalls in the standard of the accommodation, so it does not currently provide students with a homely and well-maintained environment
- Since the last inspection, the school now ensures that monitoring visits take place regularly.
- The residential care staff currently employed have attained a relevant minimum level 3 qualification.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>
Boarding/Residential provision		
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	110590
Social care unique reference number	SC023101
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	431008

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision 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	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Number of boarders on roll	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Ward
Federation Principal	Ian McCaul
Head of Campus	Lisé Sugden
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2012
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