

# Wilds Lodge School

Stamford Road, Empingham, Oakham, LE15 8QQ

## Inspection dates

18–20 March 2014

### Overall effectiveness

### Outstanding

**1**

Pupils' achievement

Outstanding

1

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

1

Quality of teaching

Outstanding

1

Quality of curriculum

Outstanding

1

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

1

Leadership and management

Outstanding

1

Overall effectiveness of the residential experience

Outstanding

1

## Summary of key findings

### This school is outstanding because

- Students of all ages make outstanding progress with their learning as a result of the outstanding teaching and care which they receive.
- The school provides an outstanding range of learning experiences for the students which help them to develop essential life skills and to prepare securely for life beyond school.
- The exceptional premises and accommodation, which are continuously developed and improved, provide a marvellously rich environment in which students develop respect, independence and cooperation.
- The outstanding residential experience fully encourages students to explore and develop their potential. Students make exceptional and significant progress as they grow in self-esteem and emotional resilience.
- Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are exemplary in both the school and the residential accommodation.
- The proprietor and school leaders inspire all members of staff to work consistently and imaginatively to ensure that students' achievement and personal development are outstanding.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- The inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by 15 teachers and held discussions with the proprietor, senior members of staff, the school's external improvement partner and representatives of placing local authorities.
- Questionnaires were completed by 61 members of staff and these were considered together with 20 responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's on line Parent View' questionnaire. Discussions were held with a number of students and members of staff in the school and the residential service.
- A range of school documentation, including policies and procedures, teachers' planning, records of students' progress and care plans, and examples of students' work, were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter McKenzie	Additional Inspector
Elaine Cray	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Wilds Lodge School is a residential and day special school which makes provision for up to 95 boys aged between five and 18 years.
- The school is situated on two large rural sites with residential and teaching accommodation in very attractive buildings and grounds near Rutland Water. The second site opened in April 2010 and, in addition to facilities for physical education, science and art, is currently being developed as the vocational centre for the school. A third site in Stamford provides residential accommodation for post-16 students.
- The school opened in January 2007 and there are currently 84 students on the roll of the school aged between seven and 18 years, of whom 65 are boarders.
- All the students have a statement of special educational need to address their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Over half the students have additional learning difficulties and one in eight is looked after by his local authority.
- The school places an equal emphasis on the educational, social and psychological development of the students which includes a therapeutic approach to education. It aims to create a positive climate for learning with high standards of education and care, so that students feel safe and secure and reach their full potential.
- This was an integrated inspection of the school's educational and residential provision.
- The school was last inspected in July 2010 and had a social care inspection in March 2013.

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

- Ensure that the detailed information gained from the assessment of students' progress is presented in a way which enables clear judgements to be made about the extent of students' progress over time and how this compares with national averages.
- Extend the range of opportunities available for students to understand and celebrate the range of different cultures and beliefs in British communities.
- Ensure that planned opportunities to challenge and extend the learning of higher attaining students are implemented consistently and effectively.
- Streamline the recording process for cause for concern reports to ensure that the action taken, outcome and decision-making process is clear and easily accessible.
- Ensure that issues raised in cause for concern reports are effectively reviewed and appropriately captured within the complaints process.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

### Outstanding

The quality of students' achievement is outstanding; they make excellent progress over time, mostly from starting points which are below the national average for their age. The disruption and disaffection which is common in students' previous educational experience is rapidly replaced with enjoyment and success. On entry to the school, students develop the confidence and motivation to engage with learning and to experience success. Students make excellent progress with the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. The school places a clear and appropriate emphasis on the development of students' skills in reading and spelling; the teaching of these skills is exceptional and students enjoy reading books of their own choice. Improvements in writing are not always as rapid but the work in students' books shows good improvements in the use of punctuation and, for many students, the legibility of their handwriting. Students make rapid progress in mathematics as a result of concentrated challenge in the levels of work completed. GCSE results demonstrate the sustained effort that students are making to achieve their potential in these subjects. All students demonstrate accelerated progress with their learning and many exceed nationally expected rates of progress. Increasing numbers of students are achieving success in GCSE examinations and vocational qualifications as a result of the variety and richness of the courses available for study. Almost all the students who left the school in the summer of 2013 moved on to places in colleges of further education. This represents outstanding progress for students who entered the school with very limited success and prior achievement.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

### Outstanding

Students' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. Students make excellent progress in managing their own behaviour. The quality of relationships between adults and students in all aspects of school life is exemplary. The school provides a vibrant, motivational and nurturing environment to promote students' educational and social development. Self-confidence and empowerment are key developments for all students using the residential provision. Pastoral care is of a very high standard. The diverse and often complex needs of the students are effectively met as a result of a sound care planning framework. Comprehensive and regularly reviewed care plans address all aspects of residential students' care and educational needs. Care plans also identify a clear process for independence and transition. The focus on development, progress and transition results in meaningful support and successful target setting. As a result, residential students are supported practically and emotionally to develop skills and confidence to do more independent activities. They learn to make safe and independent choices. This essential support promotes sustainable and personalised preparation for the challenges of young adulthood. Attendance at school is excellent and students engage willingly in the full range of opportunities provided by the school.

Arrangements for the spiritual, moral and social development of students are outstanding. There are wide-ranging opportunities for students to take part in activities within the local community. The school's annual music festival, for example, involves musicians from local secondary schools and up to 300 Year 6 pupils from surrounding primary schools attend as an audience. Students take part in sporting events with other schools and visitors to the school contribute to students' awareness of public services and facilities. Strong links have been established with local colleges and these are increasingly used to raise students' aspirations to continue in education beyond school. Activities, for example through a citizenship day, provide students with an understanding of democratic processes and internal elections link effectively with the national voting system. There is a strong emphasis on tolerance and mutual respect throughout the life of the school, including trips to places of worship which provide opportunities to recognise the diversity of beliefs and cultures within the community. However, a widespread celebration of the richness of cultural and religious diversity in the wider national community is at an embryonic stage at present. Students

are extremely well prepared to move on to further education and to enter employment as a result of the combined support and challenge provided through the school and residential service.

### Quality of teaching

### Outstanding

The quality of teaching is outstanding and contributes to students' rapid progress with their learning. Students are clear about the objectives to be achieved in each lesson and they understand how these support them in achieving their individual learning targets. Teachers plan an imaginative range of activities and students are keen to be involved and to succeed. There is an excellent balance between activities which widen students' perspectives and the reinforcement of essential basic skills. During the inspection, for example, students played an active part in lessons related to 'fair trade' bananas, the study of First World War poetry, and understanding the relationship between plotting coordinates on a graph and basic algebra. In all lessons there is considerable intellectual challenge and students maintain their concentration and involvement for sustained periods of time. Similarly, they work extremely effectively in practical activities such as constructing a wall, cooking a breakfast, exploring the properties of acids in science or preparing to take part in geography fieldwork.

Teachers are skilled at questioning students, encouraging them to reveal deeper levels of understanding as lessons progress. Learning support staff similarly contribute very effectively to the extension of students' knowledge and assisting them with the practical tasks which enable them to gain the maximum from their learning. The staff are also aware of the therapeutic dimension in students' learning, enabling them to respond to varied moods and feelings, for example through working with horses or exploring rhythms in music. Teachers plan extremely well to meet the range of learning needs in their teaching groups. They are aware of the need to ensure that all students are challenged at an appropriate level. However, higher attaining students do not always move quickly enough on to the more challenging activities which are planned to enable them to fulfil their potential in each lesson.

Arrangements for the assessment of students' progress are robust and comprehensive. Regular assessment of progress across all subjects builds up substantial evidence of students' progress from the baseline assessed when they join the school. This information is used extremely effectively to motivate students and to identify targets for individual further achievement. The staff have an excellent knowledge of the successes and areas for improvement in each student's learning. Evidence from assessment demonstrates the excellent progress that students are making but this information is not recorded and displayed in a manner which provides an easily accessible evaluation of the extent of students' progress over time.

### Quality of curriculum

### Outstanding

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding and enables students to achieve outstanding outcomes across a wide range of learning. Daily timetables cover a suitable balance between the development of essential skills and knowledge and the opportunity to take part in challenging and stimulating, practical activities. Students are prepared well for a range of external accreditation including GCSE, BTEC and ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Assessment Network) awards. All students complete a course in first aid and life-skills activities, including budgeting, planning menus and shopping. These courses make an effective contribution to students' readiness for life beyond school. Individual subjects and courses are extremely well planned to provide students with progressive experiences which build up their learning at a pace suited to individual needs. Appropriate academic challenge is complemented by motivating and effective physical education in which students work hard and enjoy success. The premises and accommodation at both teaching sites have been developed to an extremely high standard and are very well matched to the wide range of subjects and activities provided. Specialist facilities, for example, a construction workshop, a science laboratory, an impressive sports hall, kitchens for cookery lessons, and stables and paddocks, complement the range of well-equipped classrooms and provide excellent facilities for

effective learning.

Residential students are unanimous in how much they enjoy staying at the school. They highly value their relationships with staff. Their positive attachments result in excellent self-esteem and a firm sense of stability and security. Residential students thrive and grow in confidence because they have access to a range of activities and new opportunities. For example cycling, street dance, football, drama, art, relaxation, yoga, swimming and trips out in the local community and to attractions. Opportunities are provided, where appropriate, for students to take part in work experience within the local community. Local facilities such as a public swimming pool are used effectively to extend the school's activities.

### **Pupils' welfare, health and safety**

### **Outstanding**

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of the students are outstanding and make a strong contribution to the confidence and personal development of students. All the independent school regulations and the national minimum standards for residential special schools are met. Safeguarding of students is held in the highest regard throughout the school and supported with comprehensive policies and procedures. All the required checks on the suitability of staff are completed robustly and entered in a single central register. Residential students are safe because staff are well trained and there are established links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. All members of staff are trained to the required levels in child protection. Health and safety are effectively managed. Excellent checking and monitoring systems are in place to monitor and promote safety, including fire safety. Behaviour management is an exceptional strength throughout the school. Students' behaviour significantly improves because staff develop and consistently implement individually tailored behaviour strategies. Students feel well understood because staff have in-depth insight into, and respect for, the individuality of each student. There is an excellent understanding of residential students' communication processes and challenges. Relationships are exceptionally strong because staff take time to get to know and understand the students.

Students are safe as a result of effective risk assessment and management. Concerns and challenges are clearly identified. Strategies to manage these concerns focus on safety but also ensure all students have opportunities to achieve their potential. Physical interventions are only used as a last resort. Records are accountable and usefully monitored to ensure patterns and trends inform future support and staff practice. Students develop an excellent understanding and tolerance of each other. These qualities contribute to an anti-bullying culture throughout the school. Residential students are confident about airing their views. Participation is valued and exemplified by twice daily meetings in the residential provision. Consultation is facilitated with one-to-one personal support work with students. Residential students say they get choice about the targets for their care plans, activities and food. They know how to complain and they understand the role of the school council, including the identity of their current representatives. Residential students benefit from improved medical and health outcomes. Their health and thorough enjoyment of their experiences are supported with healthy eating; menus are varied and the quality of food is exceptional. They are also able to try new foods from different countries and this develops their cultural awareness and promotes the celebration of diversity.

There is excellent practice within safeguarding. However, some recording processes lack streamlining. For example, cause for concern reports are clearly identified, but finding information about the action taken and decision-making process is sometimes time-consuming. Similarly, there is some potential confusion between identifying behavioural issues, causes for concern and capturing potential or actual complaints.

### **Leadership and management**

### **Outstanding**

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding and has an effective impact on all aspects of what the school provides and on students' achievements. The proprietor communicates

an inspiring vision for the school, including the residential service, with clarity and passion. In his role as Principal he has appointed influential senior staff, in particular outstanding heads of care and education, who oversee the implementation of school policies in an exemplary manner. Consequently, the regulations for independent schools and the national minimum standards for the residential care are all met. Opportunities for the further training of staff are excellent and a number of staff have extended their qualifications and skills to the benefit of the school and its students. Robust policies and procedures underpin all aspects of the work of the school and the staff implement these with dedication and consistency. As a result, the quality of teaching and arrangements for the care of students are outstanding. There are an exceptional number of strengths throughout the residential service. This results in outstanding progress and outcomes for residential students. Students, families, carers and social workers are highly complimentary about the provision. They identify a clear and positive impact across all aspects of the students' lives. Students are very proud of their significant progress in education, behaviour and family and social relationships. Members of staff state unanimously that they are proud to work at the school.

The school's senior leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and continuously plan for improvement. The areas for improvement identified in this report arise from an intensive dialogue with leaders who strive for excellence; they are intended to enhance and reinforce the outstanding quality of the school. Recent awards, acknowledging the quality of the school, include the 'Certificate of Quality Autism Provision' awarded by the National Autism Society, and the 'Quality Mark as a Values-based School' awarded by the International Values-based Trust. Effective arrangements are in place for regular monitoring of classroom practice, including the highly valued perspective of an external partner. The premises and accommodation are of the highest quality; students live in outstanding residences and regular additions to the premises ensure that new opportunities for academic, social and vocational education are secured and extended. All the required information for parents and carers is readily available, including suitable procedures for the management of any complaints. Staffing arrangements in all areas of the school are effectively managed. High staffing ratios have excellent impact due to high levels of experience and training. Residential students are looked after and educated by an extremely motivated, dedicated and competent staff team. The dedication, enthusiasm and energy of the staff team permeate throughout and across all levels of the school. Strategies to promote the social, educational, therapeutic and behavioural needs of students are fully connected and reinforced by the residential service. This ethos promotes a very holistic approach to ensuring that students reach their potential emotionally, socially and academically. Managers and leaders are highly committed and work consistently to develop both the educational and residential services of the school.

<b>Outcomes for residential pupils</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Quality of residential provision and care</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Residential pupils' safety</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Leadership and management of the residential provision</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>



## What inspection judgements mean

School and residential provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education and care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education and care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education and care has serious weaknesses.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134938
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC069231
<b>Inspection number</b>	422773
<b>DfE registration number</b>	857/6005

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school. 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Residential and day special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
<b>School status</b>	Independent residential special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	84
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	65
<b>Proprietor</b>	Robin Lee
<b>Principal</b>	Robin Lee
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£50,000
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£80,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01780 767254
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