

# West Kirby Residential School

West Kirby Residential School, 107-119 Meols Drive, West Kirby, WIRRAL, Merseyside, CH48 5DH

<b>Inspection dates</b>	25/02/2014 to 27/02/2014	
<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

- Residential pupils flourish, and continue to progress extremely well in managing their own behaviour and social interactions, because of the exceptionally high quality of relationships that are encouraged and nurtured by staff. Residential pupils feel valued as staff and independent visitors listen to them and respond to their requests.
- Staff always place the well-being of residential pupils at the centre of their practice. Residential pupils are safe and say that they feel safe because of integrated and rigorously well-implemented safeguarding procedures. Residential pupils are empowered to use their voice to drive change and improvement within the school community, and this ensures the service remains relevant to them.
- Staff work well with parents and other professionals, to provide integrated and individualised packages of care that address the needs of residential pupils in an holistic and progressive way. Key workers involve residential pupils in identifying goals and reviewing their care plans, so that they can celebrate the progress they make.
- School leaders model high drive to plan and implement continuous development and improvement of the school. The school continues to be an example of residential provision that stands out as a beacon for equality and diversity. There is equity and partnership across all disciplines within the school. An exceptional arrangement for the provision of an integrated, whole school approach enables residential pupils to experience success in every aspect of their lives.
- Records and documents are generally very well maintained. On rare occasions, there are minor shortfalls in the records, such as occasional sanction reports that lack detail. However, this minor omission has not detracted from the welfare and safety of residential pupils.

## **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 contacted on the morning of day one by the lead inspector to announce the inspection.

The inspection took place over three days with feedback provided on the afternoon of day three. During the inspection records and documentation were examined. Interviews took place with the residential pupils, head of care, principal, staff, governors, school nurse and child protection coordinator to secure their views upon the quality of care provided. A tour of the premises and grounds was undertaken. Evening activities were also observed over two nights.

## Inspection team

Denise Jolly

Lead social care inspector

# **Full report**

## **Information about this school**

West Kirby Residential School is a non maintained special educational needs college for young people with complex and significant emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. Many young people also have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are currently 91 pupils on roll aged from 5 years to over 16 years; of these 74 are boys and 17 are girls. The school currently is providing residential places for up to 17 young people during weekdays in term time. There is a variety of boarding arrangements available depending on the needs of the child, ranging from one to four nights each week. The school provides residential accommodation on the main site and in two houses in the local area. The residential provision was last inspected on the 01 October 2012.

The location of the school and the houses enables young people to access facilities in the community easily. They are close to bus stops, a train station, leisure centres, swimming pools, youth clubs, shops, the beach, parks and other schools.

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

- ensure that recording systems provide clear accounts of all of the experiences of residential pupils, for example consistently provide full details of any sanction that is imposed.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

The outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupils flourish because of the exceptionally high quality of relationships that are encouraged and nurtured by staff. Residential pupils have a strong affiliation to the residential environment. They say, 'I give this house 10 out of 10, because I really like the staff, and I get to do loads of stuff when I stay.' They talk about the positive impact that being a residential pupil has on their growth and development, and show remarkable insight to their needs. Residential pupils say, 'It's good here. Although I miss seeing my family in the week; staff help me to be more independent and I get a rest from noisy brothers and sisters. That means I do better in school.'

A key strength is that residential pupils continue to progress extremely well in managing their own behaviour and social interactions. They are interested and knowledgeable about the needs and feelings of others. During tea times, they chat animatedly together about what they have done and what they will do during the evenings. Staff support their communication so that exchanges are successful, and this builds their confidence and self-esteem. Residential pupils know and use strategies that help them to remain calm, such as leaving the room for a short while, or asking staff for help. By overcoming small difficulties independently, they increase self-confidence to manage larger problems, and this means their behaviour continually improves.

Residential pupils develop the skills required for successful relationships by learning about and practising social communication such as seeking the views of others, or taking turns in a conversation. Staff expertly encourage all residential pupils to have their say in the running of the residence. At regular group meetings, they write down their agenda item. This helps them to remember what they want to say, and ensures that everyone has a chance to contribute. They feel empowered to ask for what they would like, such as a friend visiting for tea, or trying a new youth club.

Residential pupils have a clear understanding of the link between rights and responsibilities. They say, 'I can get the train independently, but I know that I must only go to where I should be, so that staff do not worry.' They say they are pleased that staff help them to become more independent, and look forward to the extensive opportunities that transition between the residential units affords. Residential pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of the community houses. They say that they are happy to be involved in such activities as designing a kitchen refurbishment, or keeping their bedrooms clean and tidy. This helps them to acquire skills to support a successful adult life.

Residential pupils have a good understanding of the need to be fit and healthy. They readily engage in a wide range of physical activities, from dance to badminton or playing on the swings, as well as participating in team activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Residential pupils said, 'It's important for me to try new things; I never ate vegetables, but now I do because staff asked me to try small amounts to find what I really don't like.'

Staff reinforce social life skills work from school about sexual health, or the dangers of alcohol misuse, so that residential pupils can increase their awareness of how to make positive, safe and healthy choices. Residential pupils have their physical and emotional health supported because the school nurse oversees their individual and comprehensive health care plan, and staff work in partnership with any healthcare professional that supports them, such as mental health professionals. Residential pupils get the medicine they need at the correct time, because staff follow clear procedures for the administration of medication.

The quality of pastoral care and support is exceptional. Staff follow a whole school approach to identifying and meeting the social, emotional and physical needs of residential pupils. The underpinning approaches used by the school, such as proactive behaviour support and enhanced communication structures, are embedded within the residential service. This means that staff provide residential pupils with continuity of care that is tailored to their individual needs, because they are the focus of any decision that is made about their lives.

Residential pupils experience transition to the service at their own pace. For some, this means that they participate in an extended day, that helps them to become familiar with the activities and routines that characterise the residential experience. The introductory process is gradual: staff work in partnership with them, to agree systems and strategies that will help them to feel settled and secure in their time away from home. According to age and identified need, residential pupils spend varying amounts of time in residence, from overnight stays to a full school week. Residential pupils say they are very happy to be staying at school because they think the staff are 'great'.

Key workers provide clear, prioritised and effectively reviewed plans of care, to support individual growth and development. Residential pupils participate in assessing the progress they have made, and in identifying goals and targets for future success. They record their hopes and aspirations, for example, 'I need help to make friends, and learn how to keep them.' According to their age and understanding, they ask for help with independence skills, from brushing their teeth to travelling alone. Together with staff and their family, they devise careful prompts and routines that maximise individual opportunities for achievement and progress. Parents say that their child 'comes on in even greater leaps and bounds', once they become a residential pupil.

Residential pupils say they can balance activity with time for peace and relaxation, and this helps them to prepare for the demands of positive relationships. Staff ensure groups are organised according to ability and interest, so that everybody enjoys the many outings and experiences that are on offer. This means that groups are flexible, and often include invited friends from school, to provide an enriched social mix. Parents say that this is a very valuable aspect of the residential service, because it prevents their children from being lonely and socially isolated.

Residential pupils are empowered to make a positive contribution to school life. They enjoy relationships of mutual respect and trust with staff, and are confident to negotiate their wishes about daily life. Staff actively encourage residential pupils to engage with making choices at every level, and provide them with the tools to help them make the right decision for their health and wellbeing. Their views are canvassed across a range of forums, such as individual sessions, group house meetings, and the school council. Residential pupils are proud of the contribution they make, and say that it makes them happy to help others.

There are excellent facilities for the care of residential pupils who are sick, or who have suffered accidental injury. A school nurse oversees a well-equipped and sensitively designed medical suite, that provides a low arousal space in which to treat the ill or upset. Residential pupils benefit from well-organised health care plans that contain clear descriptions of the communication and behaviour support that they require to ensure they get the help they need to regain and maintain good health.

The accommodation provided is spacious and comfortable, and reflects the individual personalities and tastes of those who use it. There is sufficient diversity of accommodation, such as houses in the community as well as residential units within the school buildings, to enable staff to match the changing needs of residential pupils with the place that they stay. This means that they benefit from safe and secure placements that are sufficiently flexible to ensure they continue

to progress in skills and independence.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

## **Outstanding**

The safety of residential pupils is at the very heart of the school, and is a main strength of the setting. Staff know and energetically pursue robust procedures for child protection. They attend appropriate training throughout their time in post. This includes multi-disciplinary and specialised training, for example in awareness of behaviour that may lead to self-harm. The school takes appropriate and decisive action, and liaises well with external agencies to safeguard and protect young people.

Staff display child-friendly notices around the school and residential environment, to support residential pupils' knowledge and understanding of the roles of staff to help them stay safe. Information includes what they should do if they are worried or upset, or if they feel bullied. The role of independent visitors is welcomed. Residential pupils say that they like speaking to the governors, who visit them regularly and listen to their moans and grumbles, to see how they can help. There have been no complaints about the residential provision, because residential pupils prefer to discuss and negotiate directly with staff about their choices and concerns.

There are robust systems in place for the recruitment of staff, which assess their suitability to work with young people. Visitors are monitored and effectively chaperoned at all times. Staff provide an excellent level of supervision for residential pupils, based on their age, understanding and ability. On the rare occasion that residential pupils leave the school without permission, staff act immediately to look for the young person. They alert the police and other relevant professionals according to agreed protocols, such as making contact with identified family and friends. This minimises any unauthorised absence from school, and ensures their safety is a priority.

Staff use dynamic and progressive risk assessment of the needs and vulnerabilities of the residential pupils. Staff help them to identify individual areas of development, and create effective strategies that help young people make the right choice. In this way, residential pupils learn and practice self-determination and emotional regulation that underpins the significant progress they make in keeping themselves safe. They talk knowledgeably about the dangers of smoking or cyber bullying, and know what appropriate relationships and interactions look and feel like. Because staff promote positive and helpful interactions between them, residential pupils have high expectations of feeling safe and comfortable when they stay at school, and understand the part they play in maintaining positive and helpful relationships.

Positive behaviour is exceptionally well promoted and is a key strength of the provision. Residential pupils have a clear understanding of any rules and expectations because residential and education staff work together to consistently plan, apply and review behaviour support programmes in both the residence and the school. They respond well to the rewards system in place because it enables them to identify small steps to success. They choose an activity option that they would really like to do, such as going to a place of special interest, or having some friends to stay for tea.

Restraint is used rarely, and only when necessary to ensure the safety of young people. Any sanctions imposed are far outweighed by rewards earned. Residential pupils and their families say that staff are excellent at helping them to manage and improve behaviour. Residential pupils grow and mature in ways that develops them as confident and competent citizens.

A comprehensive range of detailed health and safety procedures, risk assessments and checks protects residential pupils. Staff include regular fire drills, to ensure the premises are safe and

secure.

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

The leadership and management of the setting is outstanding. The principal and head of care ensure that the residential community is at the heart of the school. Energetic and highly involved senior managers effectively promote clear visions and values that provide a safe, nurturing and dynamic environment. They demonstrate a commendable commitment to ensuring a whole school approach underpins every aspect of young people's lives at school. This has a very positive effect on residential pupils. They are proud of their excellent achievements and positive progress made, and bask in the praise and recognition given by staff when high expectations are met.

All staff, residential pupils and their families know and understand the school's stated ethos of 'improving social communication and developing independence', as a measure of success. Integrated approaches to learning and citizenship are embedded within the management framework of the school. This is evident in aspirational and individual plans of care for residential pupils. Department heads meet regularly, to monitor and review how well staff support residential pupils. They identify staff training needs, to improve their delivery of high quality care. For example, speech and language staff trained the whole school to use communication profiles that enhance the understanding of individual residential pupils.

Recently, the residential team devised and delivered whole school training on the roles and responsibilities for residential staff. This promotes mutual professional understanding and respect, and nurtures effective joint working to improve outcomes for residential pupils. Thorough and effective systems for daily information exchange also characterise staff commitment to integrated working. Handovers between school and the residence help staff to consider any emerging support needs for residential pupils, as well review appointments or visitors that may affect their welfare or emotional stability.

The school's development plan encapsulates the school's vision for the residential provision. School governors are highly motivated to ensure all young people receive the best care and education. They meet regularly with the principal and head of care to discuss the residential provision, and are helping to drive forward future developments. They visit the residential provision regularly and unannounced, spend time with the residential pupils, and publish aspirational reports on the conduct of the service.

Records and documents are generally very well maintained. Care plans are up-to-date and contain lists of valuables that are brought into school. On rare occasions, there are minor shortfalls in the records, such as occasional sanction reports that lack detail. However, the minor omission has not detracted from the welfare and safety of residential pupils.

Staff work very well with parents, and have an excellent understanding of the diverse needs of residential pupils. Staff are energetic, enthusiastic, and appropriately trained and supervised to continue to deliver high quality care to complex and vulnerable young people. Qualified, stable and experienced staff are deployed effectively by the head of care, to ensure residential pupils receive care that respects their dignity and supports their unique capabilities and personalities. As a result there is excellent rapport between staff and residential pupils, who comment favourably about staff, saying 'staff are fun', 'staff help me', and 'thank you for all your support'.



## 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>	105137
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC018958
<b>DfE registration number</b>	344/7015

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>	Non-Maintained Special Residential School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	17
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	5 to 16
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr G W Williams
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	01/10/2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 632 3201
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:garethwilliams@wkrs.co.uk">garethwilliams@wkrs.co.uk</a>

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