

Wells Park School

Wells Park School, Lambourne Road, CHIGWELL, Essex, IG7 6NN

Inspection dates	19/03/2014	
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 benefit significantly in terms of personal, social and emotional development supporting their academic progress and attainment.
- There are robust safeguarding procedures which are central to the school and comprehensively understood by staff. The school proactively advocates for each pupils wellbeing and safety.
- The management of the residential provision is highly effective. There is a dynamic ambitious drive to improve the school further and expand the services offered.
- Feedback from parents, pupils and professionals about the residential provision is exceptionally positive.
- There is a energetic and focussed drive to improve. Significant developments have been achieved since the last inspection.

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 inspection of the residential provision, took place within four hours of notice given to the management staff of the school. The inspection activities included meetings with; the head of care, the school nurse, the residential care staff, the pupils, the deputy Head Teacher, the governor and the catering manager. Observations of the accommodation, meal times, activities and residential evening routines formed part of the inspection. Information was gathered from documents, policies, records, monitoring reports and discussions with parents.

Inspection team

Deirdra Keating

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Wells Park School is a residential special school for 50 pupils of either gender aged between 5 and 11 years. Forty of these pupils reside at the school for four nights a week. The residential accommodation is provided in four linked houses located on the school site. The school is situated in a residential area of Chigwell and caters for pupils who have emotional behavioural, and social difficulties. The residential provision was last inspected in June 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the current approach to quality assurance of records through monitoring checks and regular audits.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

The outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Relationships between pupils are exceptionally good; pupils demonstrate care, acceptance and tolerance of one another. Communal living, sharing rooms and daily routines have encouraged pupils to develop social skills and self-control. Pupils learn to manage their behaviours, increasing their self-esteem and self-confidence. Pupils willingly assist one another when changing shoes in the boot room and are considerate when choosing go-karts and bicycles. The culture of the school is one of respect, consideration and politeness, supporting all pupils to feel equally safe and valued. Pupils are aware of the progress they have made; they are reflective about previous behaviours and show insight. One pupil said, 'I used to kick and fight but they sort you out here.' Another said, 'I like being here I enjoy it because it's fun but mainly because it's helped me.'

Pupils make exceptional progress in their ability to manage personal hygiene and contribute to chores such as bed making, putting away clothes and preparing snacks. Parents are thrilled with the progress pupils make in their self-care, domestic skills, and self-discipline. One parent said, 'He had no self-care skills and refused to do anything before he went to the school.' Another said, 'I cannot explain how much it has changed him; I saw a difference straight away.' Parents report a significant change in self-motivation, creativity and self-regulation. This has a positive impact on the family as a whole and helps pupils learn to be independent.

Pupils benefit from many new experiences that are available to them through the school. These include home cinema nights, cooking, eating out, swimming and cycling. Pupils say there is plenty to do and pupils thoroughly enjoy the range of activities. Parents report that the list of activities is endless. One parent said, 'He swims, plays golf, cycles and goes to the forest, its nonstop and he loves all the things they do.' The wide range of activities promotes pupils' confidence in their abilities as they develop many new skills.

Pupils benefit from a set structure and routine. Pupils eat well, sleep well and get ample exercise and fresh air. Pupils benefit greatly from healthy routines and a good overall sense of wellbeing. This provides a strong foundation, preparing pupils for the school day and cultivating their readiness to learn.

Pupils who have demonstrated successful self-management and are working towards integration into mainstream schools achieve pathways status. Pathway pupils gain increasing levels of autonomy and responsibility. This provides younger pupils with peer role models to follow. Pathways is held in high regard as pupils enthusiastically aspire to gain this status.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of the residential provision is outstanding. Seamless links between care and academic staff promote excellent continuity of care and consistent behaviour management. Pupils learn and develop many new skills that support their independence, self-care and academic achievement. Staff plan pupil induction well; they visit pupils' homes to assess their needs and build a picture of each pupil's family background. A parent expressed how this alleviated anxieties. 'They visited us at home, spoke to him and made him feel welcome.' Staff are adept at setting out clear expectations from the start, this helps pupils understand the expectations and agree to engage. This is key in contributing to the outstanding achievement for pupils in the school.

Pupils thoroughly benefit from stimulating and rewarding experiences that increase their self-confidence and social skills. These include; house games, bowling, music, modelling, and cooking. The popular token reward scheme dovetails into offsite activities. This provides an incentive for

pupils who relish activities. Pupils make every effort to demonstrate progress and responsibility in managing their behaviours in order they can be trusted to leave the school site. Pupils benefit from youth club, top golf, going to the park and using local amenities in the town. One member of staff spoke about taking pupils out for a meal, noting their excellent behaviour. For pupils whose difficulties may have limited their previous social experiences this provides them with equality of opportunity.

Experienced staff are skilled and competent in their roles. Good deployment of staff ensures individualised care and provides personal choice for pupils. Staff compile comprehensive support plans with pupils. Pupils are fully included in their care planning. Staff and the school nurse carefully monitor pupils' health. This includes monitoring height, weight and taking pupils to health professionals. There is a strong emphasis on identifying and understanding the reasons for behaviours and addressing core issues. Consequently, many pupils cease taking existing medication. The approach to pupils' health and wellbeing is holistic and encompasses all areas of individual development.

Catering arrangements are superb. The extremely well organised kitchen prepares nutritious meals and snacks in a five star hygiene rated kitchen. Pupils are safely welcomed into the kitchen to talk to the catering manager. They request favourite foods and ask for recipes. A collection of comments capture positive feedback from pupils regarding their appreciation of food. One parent said, 'The food is excellent.' Another parent said, 'The food is superb.' The bistro dining area is seasonally decorated and promotes family style dining. Healthy options include; steamed vegetables, steamed rice, banana custard, fresh fruit and baked eggs. The salad bar is very popular and includes a wide selection of fresh salad and fresh fruit. The pleasant dining experience and creative presentation of food encourages pupils to try new foods and textures expanding their diet with healthy options. Parents report the positive impact on their children as a result of trying new food groups and eating balanced meals. They say this has affected positive changes in health, behaviour and approach to foods at home.

Each house has a telephone and parents are able to call in whenever suits them and their child. This is varied and according to individual family circumstance. All parents spoken to say the facilities for contacting pupils support the maintenance of close family ties. One parents said, 'When you ring they are so approachable and welcoming.' Another said, 'I know, without reservation, if by a certain time I have not rung the staff will always ring me.' This helps pupils manage being away from home and reassures parents.

Accommodation is a key strength of the provision and of exceptional quality. The home from home touch promotes an extremely comfortable, clean, welcoming environment. The houses are child-centred, colourful and co-ordinated exceptionally well. Each house takes pride in décor, resulting in a well-cared for environment. This helps pupils learn to value their surroundings and treat them with respect.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The safety of residential pupils is outstanding. Pupils' safety is paramount and prioritised by staff throughout the school. Supporting policies and procedures are robust and all staff understand and implement them well.

Recruitment procedures for new staff are established and thorough. Effective systems ensure all stages of recruitment are meticulously evidenced and checked. Recruiting staff routinely verify references from previous employers. This systematic process ensures that, as far as possible, staff are safe and suitable to work with pupils.

The school has successfully promoted empathetic and positive relationships between pupils. All

parents and pupils spoken to during the inspection confirm that bullying is not identified as an issue. Pupils reiterate the zero tolerance approach and say that the ethos of the school is to treat one another with respect and care. They know the rules and are keen to conform to these expectations, building a safe and respectful culture in which pupils feel relaxed and safe.

There are some behavioural incidents that reach defined criteria in which staff use physical restraint. Staff are trained to provide interventions and record incidents. Recording meets basic requirements although some records lack clarity and the monitoring of the records could be improved. However, this does not impact on pupils safety. The record clearly evidences that restraint is only used to protect the safety of pupils or staff. Any incidents are shared with parents who are informed by staff. This helps pupils know that parents and staff are working together to support them throughout behavioural incidents.

The school demonstrate enormous success in helping pupils change their behaviours. Behaviour observed is exemplary; pupils are helpful, polite and welcoming. The token reward system motivates pupils to behave, they eagerly earn tokens and exchange these for beneficial activity rewards. Pupils respect the system and are enthusiastic about taking part. Staff are extremely consistent and calm, all adults who provide interactions with pupils benefit from being trained in a unified approach. This includes adults who transport pupils to and from the school. The consistent boundaries and collective style of interaction helps pupils know where the boundary lays providing security and helping pupils to contain their behaviours. The change in pupils' behaviours is highly valued by parents. Comments include, 'Yes behaviour is the biggest area in which he has made many changes.' Another said, 'I have noticed a massive change in behaviour.' A third parent said, 'There is nothing negative I can say, he is a completely different child. Taking him to that school is best thing I ever did; he is happy.'

Safeguarding procedures are a key strength of the school. Staff all know how to report concerns. Staff follow a clear reporting system to ensure pupil concerns are shared with designated staff before they leave the school. Key staff at the school have developed strong working relationships with external professionals. Staff work with a multi-agency team to support interventions for pupils and families. These strong external relationships ensure the school are able to advocate for pupils in need. Staff are determined and tenacious in promoting the welfare and safety of pupils. Several meaningful testimonies from professionals demonstrate cases where staff have gone above and beyond to ensure pupils views are listened to and they are safe. One professional said, 'Since staff joined the team of professionals working with pupils we have really started to see progress. Expertise and partnership working is a real credit to school.'

The school environment is safe, secure and regularly monitored. Staff check appliances and fire prevention equipment to ensure compliance with safety regulations. Vigilant staff maintain exceptionally high standards of cleanliness, safety and maintenance. This protects pupils from accidents and hazards.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. The head of care leads a team of experienced staff who implement a shared set of values and principles. The residential provision is integral to the school and viewed as an equal priority for pupils. The staff have a superb understanding of pupils' diverse characteristics. This results in high quality care based on the value of each pupil.

The senior management structure gives clear lines of accountability. Deputy arrangements work well and ensure effective management in the absence of key staff. The routines between the school and residence are smooth and seamless. This promotes an orderly environment in which pupils feel secure and safe.

The head of care is extremely dynamic and drives improvement with energy, creativity and tenacity. Goals are ambitious and ensure the residential provision continually evolves and improves. Forward planning and pursuit of excellence has led to high standards of practice, innovative ideas and coordinating modern accommodation that represents the individual tastes and preferences of staff and pupils. This gives pupils a sense of pride and belonging.

A team of governors regularly carry out the monitoring visits. The regularity of visits exceeds requirements. The visits ensure compliance in health, safety and accommodation and provide an overview of records. Records are checked by external visitors and by the head of care. The monitoring of records meets the national minimum standards. However, they lack in-depth critique and some differ in quality and detail. This could potentially lead to an unclear picture of some events. The staff team are high calibre and of mixed age and gender. Staff are dedicated, experienced and long standing. Many staff willingly exceed their job expectations. Staff are well trained and regularly supervised; agency staff are never used. This provides residential pupils with security and continuity of adult care. Consequently, pupils build good attachments generating stability.

There have been no complaints about the residential provision. However, compliments are abundant. These encompass the views of professionals, parents and pupils. Parents all say that communication is excellent.

The partnership with parents and carers is a key strength of the provision. Parents speak highly of the benefits of the residential provision and school. One parent said, 'The school are easy and open and communicate with, I have no faults with it only praise.'

Records personal to pupils' lives are concise, comprehensive and stored securely. Records are reviewed and compiled in conjunction with pupils and parents. This builds a picture of pupils' lives while at the school.

The school has exceeded the national minimum standards and maintained an outstanding residential provision.

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

Unique reference number	115450
Social care unique reference number	SC018021
DfE registration number	881/7022

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.

Type of school	
Number of boarders on roll	40
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	5 to 11
Headteacher	Miss Sue Wraw
Date of previous boarding inspection	20/06/2012
Telephone number	0208 502 6442
Email address	admin@wellspark.essex.sch.uk

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