

Oakfield

Hopewell Road, Hull, HU9 4HD

Inspection dates	23/06/2014 to 25/06/2014	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The residential provision is good. Pupils receive good quality individualised care within a nurturing and stimulating environment. Pupils benefit from participating in a range of social and recreational activities. These experiences contribute significantly to their social, educational and moral development.
- Academic outcomes for pupils are positive. Attendance levels and educational achievements improve over time. A planned and structured approach supports pupils develop their independence and progress into further education.
- There is a well-developed safeguarding culture within the school that ensures the safety and well-being of pupils is paramount. Good working practices ensure pupils are not subject to unnecessary risks.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils. Pupils respond positively to the attention and support they receive from staff. This helps pupils to develop emotionally and improve their behaviour. Residential staff work effectively with parents and other professionals to contribute to placement stability.
- The school has a new Head of Care who has made significant improvements since the last inspection. This indicates a capacity to drive forward further improvements to residential provision.

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

Simon Morley

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Oakfield School was opened in January 2013 and is located in east of the city of Hull. The school is a maintained special school for boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16. The school has six residential homes accommodating up to 35 pupils. One of the units is specifically adapted for children with physical disabilities.

Residential pupils stay during term time for a maximum of four nights per week, Monday to Thursdays. The school offers flexible support to families and children. The number of nights residential pupils stay varies according to individual needs.

The school has 67 pupils on roll. At the time of inspection 19 pupils use the school's residential facility. The school's residential provision was last inspected in June 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency and quality of care records detailing the support provided to pupils after an incident. In particular evidencing pupils views and verbal, emotional and practical support given to them to develop positive, alternative ways of managing their emotions.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Good

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. Many pupils have had past difficulties in maintaining an educational placement, lack confidence and have poor self-esteem. Staff have high expectations of the pupils in their care, are non-judgemental and provide clear, firm and fair boundaries. Coupled with individualised support and positive reinforcement, this enables pupils to channel their emotions into more constructive behaviour and develop their self-esteem. The social interaction between pupils and staff was observed to be spontaneous and warm. Pupils commented that, 'Staff are kind, helpful and care about them.' As well as improvements in emotional well-being, pupils develop better physical health and fitness. Residential pupils develop an understanding of their own health needs, learn about healthy diets and take part in regular exercise.

Pupils develop good relationships with each other and staff. They are enthusiastic about the residential provision and enjoy the opportunities available to them. They develop their social skills, learn to work together, co-operating towards common goals such as overnight camps, the Residential Council and the whole School Council, culture nights and football world cup activities.

Residential pupils actively participate in a wide range of physical and social activities. Pupils are quick to say one of the best things about the school are the different activities. They enjoy fishing, keep fit, cycling, arts and crafts, games and trips out. They learn road safety, map reading skills, use public transport and develop independent living skills. As pupils move into their last year they benefit from a structured programme of accredited learning to support their future outcomes. This includes skills in personal presentation, communication, problem solving and teamwork.

Pupils make progress with their education and benefit from the new homework clubs. Pupils commented, 'The homework clubs help me learn more.' Older pupils learn to work independently and are successful in applying to local colleges to further their education. Parents and carers commented, 'Pupils learn to be independent and are more motivated about their future'.

Residential pupils like taking on various responsibilities within the school. They develop their team-working and social skills broadening their sense of community living and co-operation. Pupils help with tasks such as chores in each house, organising activities and being part of the Residential and School Councils. This helps pupils learn advocacy and negotiating skills by learning to express themselves appropriately, taking turns, listening to others and reaching agreements. Residential pupils learn to express their views and are confident that managers and staff hear what they have to say. Pupils are able to make suggestions for improvement and affect change in the school. Positive role modelling by staff, individual targets and incentives helps to reinforce pupils good behaviour. As a result pupils generally work well together, have good relationships with each other and learn to accept different points of view.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

The quality of residential provision and care is good. There are good links between residential and school staff. For example staff from the residential provision take part in lessons and vice versa. Separate care and education plans have been combined into one. There is joint input from teachers and residential staff agreeing key targets and objectives for pupils. There is good communication between the academic and care provision, enhancing individuals' potential for progress in all aspects of their development. This is extended to parents and carers who

commented 'Communication and partnership working has been exemplary, staff are friendly and welcoming and we are listened to.'

The admissions process for new pupils is sensitive to their individual needs. Parents, carers and prospective pupils are able to visit the residential accommodation prior to commencement of boarding. All parties are able to share their views about individual pupil's abilities, skills and areas for development. The school completes a six week assessment which is reviewed ensuring pupils and their families are happy and there are benefits from the residential experience. Parents and carers commented 'The transition to residential schooling was such a positive experience, we are able to visit, come for tea and included in decision making.' The high regard for the residential provision is shared by pupils. Day pupils often ask to board.

Staff have developed a wide range of activities, such as fishing, football, cookery, art and craft, cycling, keep fit sessions and regular culture nights. The planning of activities and range of choice for pupils is exemplary. For example the regular culture nights suggested by pupils includes learning about different country's cultures, their dress, language and food. Pupils enjoy dressing up and taking part in fun events such as sumo wrestling and trying different food. Staff are adept at using their own interests to motivate pupils to organise mini-expeditions involving route planning, cycling proficiency and team work. Activities are well structured and contribute to personal and social learning objectives in pupils care plans. There are well designed systems ensuring that individual progress is recorded, evaluated and pupils achievements celebrated.

Care planning and record keeping has improved. Residential staff now have access to background information on all pupils, including looked after children. These improvements help ensure that residential pupils' needs are effectively assessed. As a result individual targets, achievements and progress are better defined. This provides pupils with more personalised care.

Residential pupils' health care is well managed. There have been substantial improvements in the way that healthy eating is promoted and pupils regularly asked for their views about menu changes. Residential staff take a key role in promoting health including the new menus, regular exercise and safe arrangements for administering any medication. Additional specialist therapeutic support is available to help pupils with their emotional well-being on top of the caring and nurturing environment staff provide. Pupils are able to make use of horse riding and equine activities that promote their emotional health and development.

The boarding accommodation is purpose built, safe and well maintained. Staff make it feel homely with photos, artwork and choice of colour schemes. Residential pupils have used their pupil council to obtain individual budgets for each pupil to spend on personalising their bedrooms. There are six separate houses, one has facilities for disabled pupils, one is used for new admissions and another for older pupils preparing to leave school and become more independent. Placing pupils in each house is based on consideration of their needs and careful matching with other pupils for good mix of pupils. Staff are flexible and able to respond positively to the changing needs of pupils and their families. For example, the number of nights each young person stays can either be increased or decreased in response to their progress and changing circumstances at home.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

The safety of residential pupils is good. Safeguarding has a high priority and the school is run within an established risk assessment framework. The safety and well-being of pupils and staff is underpinned by policies, procedures and working practices with robust systems in place to report any safety concerns.

Concerns about pupils safety are referred appropriately to the local authority and there are good working relationships with local safeguarding agencies. Representatives from the school attend meetings with external professionals to promote pupils welfare and safety through effective multi-agency arrangements.

School staff have all completed safeguarding training and know their individual responsibilities to report any worries or concerns relating to any pupil.

Good behaviour is expected and promoted and any form of bullying is addressed by staff. Residential pupils say they feel safe and get along with each other. Staff work closely with young people to help them improve their behaviour and understand the consequences of their actions. This helps pupils develop their social skills, relationships, learn to get along with each other and recognise other people have different views. There is an integrated whole school approach to behaviour with school and care staff working well together to promote good, safe behaviour. Parents commented, 'Behaviour improves, staff are calm and no one flaps'.

Physical intervention is only used as a last resort when an individual pupil is putting themselves or others at risk of harm. Good records are kept of such incidents. These are thoroughly monitored to ensure staff practice is safe. However recording of discussions with pupils following these incidents is not as efficient. This makes it hard to see how pupils will be supported to behave differently in the future.

Residential pupils do not go missing from the school. The school has a detailed policy and procedures based on local police protocols about what action to take should a pupil be missing. Senior staff were updating this with latest government guidance. Staff are confident in what action to take in the event of a missing pupil. There are good levels of supervision and staff keep residential pupils occupied in interesting and fun activities which is a good proactive measure. There are regular checks of pupils whereabouts ensuring they are kept safe.

Risk assessments are extensively used to assess the environment, activities and the behaviours of individual pupils. Staff are not risk averse and pupils are encouraged to engage in exciting activities such as mountain biking, climbing and camping. All activities are subject to detailed risk assessments and are run by suitably qualified and experienced staff. Pupils participating in such activities learn about safety issues and develop their abilities to identify potential hazards and minimise risks. The whole school site is subject to regular health and safety checks. Pupils learn appropriate safety practices through regular fire drills.

Pupils are protected by a range of measures. For example, security arrangements ensure restricted access to both the residential accommodation and main school building. On arrival all visitors must sign in, produce personal identification and sign out. Staff are subject to appropriate vetting and checks prior to working with children in the school.

Leadership and management of the residential provision **Good**

The leadership and management of the school is good. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new Head of Care. This has been instrumental in driving improvements in the quality of the residential provision and keeping a focus on future improvements. Recommendations made at the last inspection have all been implemented. The school now meets all the national minimum standards

The team of residential staff have strong aspirations for pupils. Staff are eager to help residential pupils develop their potential and be able to set their own goals for the future. Everyday practice fulfils the aims and mission of the school set out in the school prospectus and is underpinned high quality leadership and management. The resulting good quality care ensures that all pupils

are treated equally, respectfully and valued regardless of their age, gender, needs and backgrounds. Staff advocate well for pupils, encourage them to become confident in advocating for themselves and ensure that no one is disadvantaged.

The Head of Care motivates and supports the staff team to be more unified, establishing better routines, boundaries and expectations. Within this environment pupils feel safe, enjoy their time at school and make good progress in their development. Care staff receive good levels of training and supervision to support their professional development. All residential staff and the Head of Care have achieved or are working towards appropriate qualifications to ensure that pupils welfare is promoted with confidence. Staff are able to pursue additional learning and development opportunities to enhance their effectiveness in working with pupils. For example staff are undertaking additional training in nutrition and cooking skills to continue improvements in providing pupils with healthy diets and well cooked meals.

The monitoring of the quality of care has substantially improved. Since the last inspection the Head of Care has set up a new system of regular half-termly quality assurance reports, completed by Independent Visitors. This term there was a significant improvement in the quality of these reports with regard to their detail, thoroughness and particularly in evaluating the quality of the residential provision. These monitoring reports raise areas for improvement that are addressed by the senior management team contributing to the school's continuous improvement. The Head of Care has set up new systems to monitor both care records and practice increasing the levels of accountability from care staff to the senior management team. Consequently, senior managers are able to drive forward improvement in all areas of the residential provision.

In particular there is a well established and rigorous approach to monitoring behaviour incidents and use of physical intervention. Regular reports are analysed by senior managers identifying pupils who would benefit from additional support or reviews of their care. As a result pupils and their families benefit from additional targeted support such as personalised timetables, therapeutic input, family support and parenting courses. This helps families through times of crisis and supports individual pupils using an effective whole school approach to their care.

Arrangements for seeking the views of residential pupils' about the quality of their care have improved. There is an independent person who visits regularly, spends time with pupils and talks to them about the school. There is a new Residential Pupil Council enabling pupils are able to raise concerns and make suggestions. Pupils say they feel valued and listened to. The complaints process is familiar to all of the pupils should they wish to complain.

All the required policies and procedures have been reviewed and developed since the last inspection and are effectively implemented. The residential provision clearly provides added value to the schools provision. It plays a key role in ensuring that a number of its most vulnerable pupils receive extra support they need to progress with their education, socially, emotionally and develop skills for their future.

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	118140
Social care unique reference number	SC466264
DfE registration number	810/7007

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	
Gender of boarders	
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Mrs Rachel Mary Davies
Date of previous boarding inspection	24/06/2013
Telephone number	01482 854 588

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