

Wishmore Cross School

Wishmore Cross School, Alpha Road, Chobham, Surrey, GU24 8NE

Inspection dates	12/11/2014	
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

- Arrangements for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils is of paramount importance. Designated staff who take the lead in child protection are suitably qualified and experienced. Practices are of a very high standard in relation to referring onto, and working with child protection agencies. The residential care staff are also suitably trained in dealing with any concerns and identifying any areas of risk. Residential pupils have access to a wide range of adults they talk to if they have a worry or concern. Bullying is very well addressed and if any incidents occur excellent support systems are in place. The school has great success in managing incidents by using restorative justice practices.
- The substantial strengths in the quality of the provision and care for pupils have resulted in excellent progress made across many areas of individual pupil's lives. The impact of the residential provision has enabled pupils to focus on positive future outcomes, especially post 16 education. Pupils experience positive and smooth transitions to further education, employment or training.
- Residential pupils receive excellent levels of pastoral care. Individual needs are assessed, regularly reviewed and met. Support is provided by an experienced and trained staff team. Pupils enjoy spending time with staff and they develop positive, sensitive and nurturing relationships. This high quality of care shows a commitment to promoting equality and diversity and ensuring all individual needs are met. They are treated fairly and with respect. This enables them to trust staff and progress without fear.
- The leadership and management team are well informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body supports and challenges the leadership to ensure the school is continually meeting its aims. The school's residential provision is extremely well organised and managed. There is a strong commitment to improvement through evaluation and review. Parents are very satisfied with this provision and the progress their children are making.
- School staff across both residential and education have great depth of knowledge of each

individual pupil and are sensitive to the challenges faced daily by the pupils. A real strength is the quality of the daily communication had between all school staff, so everyone is aware of how each pupil is managing their day. There are very positive views from pupils, parents and placing authorities about the quality of residential provision.

- This is an ambitious school, keen to embrace new initiatives and take proactive action for the benefit of pupils' well-being and learning.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools. Areas to develop further include; better evidencing of fire evacuation drills, monitor the staff's use of language used in report writing and continue to develop systems that show how the pupils' views and opinions are captured.

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 given three hours notice of this inspection. During the inspection all accommodation areas were seen. The inspector had meetings with pupils of all ages. She also took lunch and supper with them. Interviews with key staff were held including the head teacher, the lead staff for child protection and safeguarding, residential care staff, the pastoral team, the premises manager, the catering manager, and the human resource manager. The inspector also met with the chair of governors and two other members of the governing body. School policies and procedures, records and boarding routines were scrutinised. Feedback was gained from the local authority designated officer for child protection. Internal questionnaires delivered by the school for pupils was viewed.

Inspection team

Liz Driver

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Wishmore Cross Academy is a publicly funded independent state academy and is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust. The academy is situated in Chobham, Surrey and draws pupils from a range of backgrounds, both urban and rural, across Surrey and also neighbouring Local Education Authorities.

The academy is a special school for young people all of whom have a statement identifying behavioural, emotional and social difficulties as their primary need. The academy can admit up to 60 boys between the ages of 11 to 16 and can offer up to 22 residential places for 4 nights per week. Within the building there are three separate residential units where boarders have single or double bedrooms. The residential pupils have access to the academy grounds and facilities for evening activities

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- better evidence the effectiveness of fire evacuation drills (NMS 7)
- further develop systems to show how pupil's views and opinions are captured (NMS 17)
- ensure staff's use of language is consistently of a good standard and therefore reflects the situation, incident or what the pupil said. (NMS 22)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding.

Pupils make outstanding progress at this school and benefit from the residential experience. Taking their starting points into account, pupils make excellent progress in areas such as education, behaviour management and social skills. Residential pupils benefit from exceptionally good quality relationships with experienced and committed staff members. These positive relationships assist residential pupils in forming and maintaining friendships with their peers. There is a sense of community and belonging to the boarding provision and residential pupils display pride in their boarding environment and achievements. The highly effective practice of older pupils supporting younger pupils when they are experiencing difficulties is a particular strength of the school. This peer support is extremely well managed by staff with positive outcomes for the young people.

Parents report high levels of satisfaction with comments such as, `this school has changed my son's and our family's lives` and `I have full confidence in the school`.

Residential pupils achieve higher levels of attendance and lower levels of exclusion than day pupils. This is credited to the residential structure and overall management. Residential staff receive feedback from teaching staff, attend assemblies, annual reviews and support pupils with homework which has a significant impact on their educational progress.

Residential pupils make great progress in managing their behaviours. Their progress from their starting point on arrival is, in the majority of cases excellent. Cohesive and well planned behaviour management strategies, delivered across both education and residential, has resulted in improved behaviours. Residential pupils recognise themselves how they have been supported to manage feelings of anger and frustration and how they continue to utilise strategies to reduce such behaviours whilst improving their social skills.

Residential pupils are supported in developing confidence and self-worth. They successfully develop independence skills, and gain an understanding of how they fit into community life and the level of responsibility required to be successful. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities both on site and in the community. Some of the activities positively stretch the pupils. This can be seen through for example, pupils attending local St Johns Ambulance and Army Cadet Groups. The incentive scheme of daily points covers many aspects of behaviour such as, daily living skills, respect and kindness to other pupils, attitude to adults and achieving personal targets. This system is very effective and residential pupils respond well, understanding what is expected of them.

A multi-disciplinary team of therapists are available to address any emotional and psychological health issues. Having such a team of professionals on site ensures that residential pupils are not having to travel to appointments elsewhere and can therefore engage in more education time. Appointments with the local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) are supported by the school staff, where necessary. Acces to the local CAMHS service is very good.

Residential pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives. All pupils who left in July 2014 went onto employment or training.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of the residential provision is outstanding.

Residential pupils benefit from being cared for by an experienced staff team who deliver consistently high standards of care. This means pupils understand what is expected of them and trust staff to guide and support them. Pupils benefit from an excellent pastoral care system via a linkworker programme both in residential and school. School staff regularly work in the residential unit which results in effective working relationships between residential and academic staff. Classroom staff visit the residential provision at the end of each school day to report on the achievements and any difficulties that have arisen. Residential staff are able to continue with some topical themes of learning into the evening activities in addition to supporting pupils with homework.

The easy access to the provision of therapeutic services such as CAMHS, art and play therapy and bereavement counselling enables pupils to receive the specialist input when needed. Detailed placement plans set out individual needs and promotes pupil's development. These plans compliments the personalised care plans. Plans are implemented and reviewed on a regular basis ensuring any changes are quickly addressed so pupils can benefit from the correct support. The school continues to develop systems to further evidence the pupil's views and opinions across all aspects of their care.

Care plans and weekly records are monitored by a senior member of staff. This not only ensures that residential pupils are being supported with an up-to-date care plan and targets, but also ensures that parents have weekly communication from the link worker. Parents and carers speak very positively of the communication they receive from the school.

The individual induction packages for new pupils are highly effective in ensuring that they settle quickly. New residential pupils reported that they like the DVD made by older pupils, showing what life is like as a boarder. Pupils benefit from a visit to the school including overnight stay. Considering most pupils previous difficult educational experiences, they make excellent progress in a short period of time.

Pupils say they enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Staff encourage them to participate in activities such as swimming, trips to the beach, astro turf football, cooking, art and craft and on site football. All activities are risk assessed and supervised by staff. Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy the range of activities.

A strength of this residential provision is the commitment and dedication of all staff who place the wellbeing of pupils at the centre of their practice. Staff are imaginative in finding ways to support pupils, ensuring it is meaningful and with purpose. The rules of the residential unit are displayed in individual units. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them in relation to group living and behaviour. Individual targets are more effective as a visual prompt for some pupils. This creative approach has engaged pupils in striving to achieve.

Residential pupils receive excellent health care, supported by a highly robust medication system. Medication is managed and administered by an extremely well trained team of staff. Residential pupils enjoy the school meals which are nutritionally assessed to ensure a balanced diet is provided. Menus reflect any cultural or specials diets pupils may require. Healthy eating is promoted and pupils are encouraged to make suitable healthy choices of snacks and drinks outside of meal times.

The residential accommodation is secure, very well maintained, and decorated and furnished to a high standard. Pupils like their bedrooms and they are able to personalise their space with photographs and posters. Residential pupils can readily contact family and friends with school telephones or their personal mobile telephones.

The school's arrangements for ensuring pupils safety is outstanding.

The senior management team are highly experienced and knowledgeable with regard to safeguarding matters. They provide clear leadership in the management of allegations or concerns. Members of the senior management team are suitably qualified and keep their knowledge up to date by attending training provided by the local safeguarding board. Training is cascaded to the whole school staff team who, as a result, are very well informed of the school's and local procedures in handling concerns and allegations. In addition, staff attend safeguarding training provided by external agencies to supplement their in-house training. There are excellent links with outside agencies, including the local police missing person's officer, who offer support and guidance when requested. The school has recently focused training on areas such as child sexual exploitation and e-safety. Staff use this knowledge to promote safe use of media in the school and also to inform parents of how they can keep their children safe at home and when out in the community. Pupils say they feel comfortable in talking to staff about concerns or worries. Relationships observed between staff and pupils show that the young people trust the staff team.

Residential pupils are given information on how to keep themselves safe, building on information delivered in school through the personal, social and health education programme. For example, safe use of computers and mobile telephones, radicalisation, appropriate interaction with others and the dangers of alcohol and drugs. Pupils say they feel safe at the school and are confident in the staff's ability to manage challenging behaviours safely.

Proactive behaviour management strategies, supported by robust policies and procedures are consistently applied to promote residential pupils' positive behaviour and relationships. The school's policy on working with challenging behaviour, physical intervention and the use of sanctions is focused on de-escalating incidents and is consistently and successfully implemented in practice. The deputy head is trained to deliver the management of challenging behaviour to all staff and on occasions is asked to disseminate this area of practice to other schools. All incidents at the school such as aggressive, anti-social, racist and bullying incidents, are comprehensively recorded and monitored each week to bring about sustained improvement in pupils' behaviour. The frequency of such incidents has, and continues to significantly decrease as pupils successfully learn to develop socially and emotionally. Success and achievement is consistently recognised and in addition to earning points, pupils can be rewarded with the accolade of boarder of the week.

Residential pupils say they have a wide range of adults they can talk to if they have a worry or concern, including the independent visitor and key workers. They also have access to a worries or concern leaflet which they complete and discuss with senior staff.

High levels of staff and well organised supervision of the pupils results in few opportunities for bullying to occur. Pupils know that bullying is not acceptable and they are supported to understand how some behaviours can make others feel, regardless of intent. The school has high regard to restorative justice practices when managing any incident of actual or potential bullying that may occur, although actual incidents are very low. The impact of this practice is extremely positive and successful. As a result pupils can reflect on their behaviours, learn how to apologise and maintain good relationships with their peers.

Excellent procedures are in place for any pupil who may go missing. The school has clear protocols for staff to follow if a pupil did go missing. The protocol has been shared with the local safeguarding board. The school's protocol works alongside the local run away and missing from

home and care procedures (RMFHC). The school has been proactive and obtain the missing pupil protocols for other local authorities from where pupils are placed. Incidents of pupils going missing is extremely low. Staff are quick to respond to any incident of a pupil going missing and work in partnership with the local police to ensure a quick and safe return. Pupils are offered a return interview which enables them to reflect and address issues they may have. This also enables staff to re-evaluate any future risks. Staff are aware of the risks to pupils when missing such as risk of sexual exploitation, drug use and involvement with gangs.

Residential pupils are further protected by the school's thorough vetting procedures that ensure all adults are safe to work at the school. Visitors are supervised and monitored to ensure only suitable people have contact with pupils. A school survey carried out shows all parents feel their child is safe at the school.

The school provides a secure and safe environment for pupils. All potential hazards are identified and made safe. Health and safety procedures are well organised with gas, electrical and fire safety equipment regularly checked. Pupils participate in regular fire evacuation drills so they are well prepared for any emergency in the event of a fire. Records of fire evacuation drills do not show as much detail as they could to fully evaluate their effectiveness, for example recorded timings of drills are not always evaluated in regards to time of day and location of pupils. However, this does not affect the safety of the pupils as they are extremely well informed of fire evacuation procedures.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

The residential provision is at the heart of the school. Staff, parents and pupils are extremely positive about the value of boarding and its contribution to pupils' personal, social and academic development. Senior leaders and managers consistently apply high expectations for pupils and staff. The excellent daily communication that flows from senior managers through to the whole school staff team results in the smooth organisation of the provision. This enables pupils to engage in their education or social life with the knowledge they are being well cared for.

The senior leadership team is well informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has a comprehensive action plan in place with a clear aim of driving improvement. Pupils are accorded equal opportunity and say they are treated fairly.

There is a clear focus on improving outcomes for each pupil on an individual level with inclusion at its centre. The school has created an off-site education centre where the curriculum can be personalised and delivered on a one-to-one basis. This supportive approach is a commitment to pupils and their learning to avoid exclusion from education.

Residential pupils benefit considerably from the collaborative working of the residential staff, school staff, the multi-disciplinary team and parents. This ensures that pupils receive consistent messages and all the adults in their lives can apply similar strategies. Parents feel supported by school staff and feel fully informed of their child's progress or any difficulties as they receive at least weekly telephone contact from key workers. Parents have trust in the leadership and management and state, 'The staff at the school are fantastic and my son's life is much better because of it' and 'the school is perfect'.

Senior staff ensure a sufficient number of suitably trained and qualified staff are always on duty. Staff receive regular and high quality supervision. There is an excellent and proactive programme of professional development for all staff. The staff team are informed of the school's aims and

how both the academic and residential provision work together to provide a safe community that gives pupils the chance to make changes and to progress.

All records are kept safely and securely. The introduction of a new data system is enabling the school to improve the recording of the pupil's journey whilst at the school and the progress they make. This is an area the school are working hard to further develop. Records kept, are generally of a high standard, however in a very few cases the recording needs to be more detailed and exact.

The head teacher and governing body have ambitious plans for the school and pupils. A future focus is on extending the support to pupils and their families outside of the school term. An independent visitor carries out half termly visits and supplies a written report on the quality of the residential provision to the head teacher and governing body. This allows for senior managers to review and gain an accurate and insightful evaluation of its performance and to use these findings to drive forward improvement.

The school has a robust and effective complaints policy that, when activated, is managed well. All complaints are taken seriously with investigations carried out if necessary. The school addresses any actions identified as a result of complaints or investigations.

All required policies are in place and implemented effectively and overall record keeping is of a high standard. This helps to ensure that pupils' welfare is promoted.

The two areas to improve further made at the last inspection have been addressed; all medication refused is recorded with a clear protocol for staff to follow, and risk assessments include all known behaviours.

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	138766
Social care unique reference number	SC013899
DfE registration number	936/7024

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	8
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	11 to 16
Headteacher	Mr Jed Donnelly
Date of previous boarding inspection	27/01/2014
Telephone number	01276 857555
Email address	contact@wishmorecrossacademy.org

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