

Wennington Hall School

Wennington Hall School, Lodge Lane, Wennington, LANCASTER, LA2 8NS

Inspection dates	08/12/2014 to 11/12/2014	
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 school provides residential pupils with a stimulating, child-centred environment which is comfortable and has all the facilities to meet their complex needs. As a result, pupils experience outstanding outcomes in all areas of their lives.
- Residential pupils live in a structured environment that has clear boundaries and where they feel safe. Expectations of behaviour is clearly defined, which pupils accept as being fair. This gives them a feeling of security which they are comfortable with and reassured by.
- The school promotes and creates an inclusive environment where disability is not viewed as a barrier to experiencing a full, enriching lifestyle. The promotion of equality and diversity is strong and achievement is celebrated. Consultation with residential pupils is high and they feel they have real influence into certain ways the residential provision operates.
- Residential pupils have an outstanding choice of activities and leisure interests to pursue. The range is wide and designed to introduce them to both new and meaningful experiences as well as supporting existing interests.
- Residential pupils benefit from a strong, hierarchal, child focussed management team who continue to have high aspirations and expectations for them. The drive for improvement has continued, which is a reflection of the ambitions of an outstanding management team who consistently make improvements to the school and its residential provision, all designed to significantly improve outcomes for pupils.
- Residential pupils and their families benefit greatly from the wrap around support provided by staff who will make visits to the home in the evenings and weekends to support young people and their families during those times.
- Consider reviewing current format for reporting independent monitoring visits, with a view to improving the detail and consistency of report content.

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 commenced three hours after notice was given to the school. The inspector met with: residential pupils, the headteacher, head of care, senior residential staff, residential care staff, visiting safeguarding governor, chair of governors as well as speaking with Safeguarding Children's education manager, social workers and parents. Inspection activities included: a tour of the premises; observation of activities, meal times and residential routines: and examination of policies, records, monitoring reports and a number of discussions with staff from the school and other external sources.

Inspection team

Graham Robinson

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

A local authority administers the school. The school provides an environment that can support around 76 boys of secondary school age, from 11 years up to 16 years old, on a residential or day basis. Pupils using the services provided at the school have experienced some difficulties associated with their academic, social, emotional or behavioural development, which makes normal schooling inappropriate for them at the present time. The school provides a 38 week programme of education with residential pupils, in the main, spending weekends at home or with their carers. There are currently 76 pupils on roll, 46 of them being residential pupils. They live in five houses located within the school grounds. The school was last inspected in October 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the current format used to report on the half-termly monitoring visits, to improve the detail and evidence gathered, all the areas looked at during these visits.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Residential pupils experience outstanding outcomes as they journey through the school. They benefit from having a residential provision that steps out of its boundaries to actively support parents and pupils when they are at home. This is achieved through visits and by keeping in regular contact. This results in strong relationships forming between school staff, pupils and their carers. This aids the stability of home placements, due to the excellent support mechanisms being provided. As a result pupils make outstanding progress, something recognised by parents. For example, one writes; 'We would like to say that in our opinion this is a fantastic school and we have nothing but praise for the Headteacher and staff. In the 18 months (pupils name) has attended, he has made amazing progress behaviourally and educationally.'

Residential pupils recognise the progress they make, being able to compare their starting point to where they are now. For example, one pupil spoke in detail about his behavioural issues when he first came to the school. Now he is settled, maturing, has clear ambitions for the future and no longer presents serious behaviour management issues, something he is very proud of.

Within the residential provision, pupils are actively encouraged to take on responsibilities, which in turn aids self-confidence, self esteem and develops resilience. For example, being part of a dry stone walling team, having responsibility for farm animals, acting as prefects and participating in the Boys Council. These and other activities give pupils a sense of worth and importance, while at the same time giving them the experience of benefitting others through their own positive actions.

There is a clear expectation of good behaviour for residential pupils which is rewarded appropriately. In practice, the behaviour of pupils throughout the inspection was excellent. Pupils confirm they are comfortable with the structure and the clear boundaries in place, which gives them a feeling of safety and security. This helps them to progress socially, emotionally and educationally. Parents recognise this with one saying; 'Getting our son into this school is the best thing we have done. Its changed his personality and I have got my little boy back.'

An area of strength for the residential provision is in promoting and fostering a community spirit amongst residential pupils, as well as being highly successful in addressing individual need. This is reflected with the high standard of personalised care being provided, which addresses the specific needs of each individual, while promoting a tolerance of others less well off than themselves. This is a view supported by others. For example, a parents says of her son; 'the school has been excellent in getting him to realise there others worse off and that has triggered his desire to volunteer and help others less fortunate than himself.'

The high levels of consultation between staff and pupils is a result of the strong relationships formed and high levels of communication that is on-going between pupils and staff. Pupils confirm they are confident to express views and make suggestions which has resulted in a number of changes and improvements being implemented. For example, improvements to lounge areas and bathrooms, new mattresses being purchased, the setting up of a new DJ training centre and lighting the BMX track, plus others. This input shows pupils that their views and ideas do matter, which gives them a feeling of inclusion.

The general and specialist health needs of residential pupils is being promoted positively. The school maintains its excellent links with services that provide and meet pupils everyday health needs, with more specialist services available when required. Pupils have their own specific health plan, which is updated regularly. The arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils are effective and ensures their health needs are well met. A number of improvements to systems

and to facilities have been achieved since the previous inspection. For example, improvements in the way medical information about their child is collected from parents, along with improved systems for gaining parental consents. The school's sick bay is another area where improvements have been made.

As pupils journey through the school, the quest to arm them with experiences and skills that move them towards a more independent lifestyle, commences early. Pupils take on responsibilities around the school which helps to prepare them for greater independence. For example, being given opportunities to develop a range of practical skills, through to gathering knowledge about community facilities available to them in their home areas. Pupils can experience independent living within the residential provision. Another feature is in the provision of exit files. They contain a range of information about the area they are to live in, giving them practical information such as draft letters to use when applying for a job, through to capturing a range of memories and achievements they have experienced during their time in school. This is deemed to be an outstanding example of the detail the school is prepared to go into to ensure the best outcomes for pupils.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

Residential pupils continue to receive an outstanding quality of care. They live in a structured, safe and child-centred environment, where complex, individual needs are recognised and met. They form strong trusting relationships with a stable, experienced and well trained staff group. A parent captured the views of many when discussing the school and how well her son is looked after by saying she is; 'Very happy with the school which suits him and very happy with how they cope with his needs'. Residential pupils are consistent in their positive responses and in their views about the residential provision. For example, one says; 'I like all of the staff and the food is really good and the school is safe.' Another says; 'This is the best school I have ever been to.' One says simply; 'This school is amazing.'

Residential staff excel in the work with and support given to many families of pupils attending the school. Senior staff and key workers regularly work away from the campus during non-school times, supporting families and pupils in their homes. This is an area that has expanded since the previous inspection. For example, with the introduction of weekend activities, targeted towards certain communities. The purpose is to educate and actively show pupils what community facilities are available to them in their home area. This is deemed to be an outstanding example of how the school looks to improve its practice, provide additional support to pupils and families at weekends which overall, results in improved outcomes for all.

The physical standards of the residential provision are high and remains an area identified in development plans for continued development. For example, since the previous inspection, all mattresses have been replaced. Overall, furnishings, fittings, equipment, décor and the general state of repair is of a very high standard. The living and recreational areas used by pupils, provide them with a wide range of outstanding facilities, with all areas of the campus being fully utilised. Pupils feel safe, secure and are proud to show off their school to visitors.

Residential pupils benefit from having a range of activities and leisure interests which are both campus and community based. This is a particular strength of the school where pupils are introduced to and can pursue activities that interest them and meet their needs. They range from sporting, agricultural and academic, through to an appreciation of the Arts. It is an area in which the school continues to grow. For example, two pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their recent introduction to a community based youth theatre group. Another group of pupils proudly showed the inspector some of the dry stone walling they have completed around the campus since the previous inspection. Developing new interests not only develops skills, but gives pupils an appreciation of what the community has to offer, as well as expanding their social networks.

Residential pupils benefit with improvements to their general health and fitness levels. For example, through a variety of programmes linked to smoking cessation, drugs, alcohol and sexual health. The excellent working relationships with external agencies gives pupils the opportunity to reflect on past lifestyles and gives them the support and encouragement to modify those lifestyles where necessary. A recent new initiative which forms part of the schools overall health improvement programme, is with the provision of electric toothbrushes to residential pupils. This has proved to be a popular move with pupils who are more focussed on and are achieving significant improvements with oral hygiene.

Residential pupils provide positive feedback about the quality, quantity and choice of food available. Balanced, nutritious menus provide choice and cater for any dietary needs required. One pupil reported that; 'The food is great and I can't get enough of it.' Consultation levels about food and other areas linked to the residential provision are high. This is achieved informally through the excellent levels of communication that exist between pupils and staff and more formally through forums such as the prefects and boys council meetings, which take place regularly with the headteacher. Minutes from meetings are available, although pupils willingly discuss their views on inclusion and consultation. For example, one says; 'We have a lot of input into some things running in the school, because we have regular meetings with (headteacher).'

Residential pupils continue to thrive in a safe, supportive and nurturing environment. Individual needs are recognised, with plans and strategies put into place to address those needs. Pupils progress is continually monitored and evaluated to ensure planning is kept current. As pupils grow and mature, they develop a greater appreciation of others, which improves their sociability and expands their thinking and ambition. Parents appreciate this with one saying, when describing the journey her son is taking through the school; 'He now understands that others have opinions as well as himself. He is more understanding, will listen and values other opinions.'

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

Residential pupils are united and consistent in their views that they feel safe in the school. The school's ethos and cultures have developed and grown over the years, with improved relationships, high levels of communication and a greater pro-activity now being used to manage behaviour. Pupils report they feel that rules are fair and no issues, concerns or complaints about any aspect of behaviour management were raised by residential pupils during the inspection.

The monitoring and evaluation of all behaviour management incidents, along with working practices are consistently undertaken, enabling the school to see trends and patterns of behaviour early. This is with a view to overall reduction. For example, for the school year 2013/14, the number of incidents requiring physical intervention decreased from previous years, which follows an overall trend. Serious behaviour management incidents in the residential provision, whilst rare, are well managed.

The school has retained its excellent links with external agencies tasked with keeping children safe. For example, no concerns were reported by the local authorities educational safeguarding team, who confirm links with the school are strong. Staff understand their role and responsibilities in ensuring pupils are kept safe, with training being updated regularly. The school implements safe recruitment and clearance procedures for new staff and since the previous inspection, have implemented three yearly clearance checks for longer serving care staff. This is recognised good practice.

Residential pupils report that bullying is not an issue of concern to them, confirming that staff are quick to step in should an incident occur. This makes them feel safe. The bullying theme is one given high publicity around the school with staff being fully aware of an individuals ability to bully

or be bullied. For example, national bullying week which took place in November, was given a high profile around school with pupils actively engaged in a series of activities and projects designed to raise awareness and re-enforce individual rights.

Residential pupils are protected with a range of risk assessments that identify hazards both in and away from the school campus. Pupils participate in regular fire drills and can safely exit the residential areas when needed. Checks to maintain a safe environment are regularly undertaken, with appropriate service contracts in place.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership, management and organisation of both the school and residential provision is highly effective. There is a continued commitment to move the school forward, develop working practices and improve facilities, all with the aim of improving outcomes for pupils. Residential pupils benefit from being looked after by an experienced, stable staff team who are well trained and work with a team centred approach. This provides pupils with a consistency of care which is of high quality.

Residential staff work cooperatively and cohesively with other school staff, parents and professionals. There are high expectations of their performance, which is closely monitored by senior staff. There is an active programme of supervision and performance management, which is supplemented with the schools on-going training programme. Residential staff confirm they feel well supported and are confident that with continued training, they have the skills necessary to meet the diverse needs of the pupils they look after.

There is an energy and a commitment towards evaluating practice and driving the school forward. As a result the school and its practices do not stand still. A number of new initiatives and developments have taken place since the previous inspection. For example, the computer system accessed by pupils and staff has been upgraded to improve safeguarding. Improvements have been made to work experience placements which are being targeted more effectively to meet need, an area that had an obvious positive impact on a number of residential pupils during the inspection. The school has introduced greater empowerment for year 7 pupils by developing systems such as assistant prefects and involvement in planning and other groups, such as the young farmers project. Planning for the future is continuous and is reflected in the detailed and comprehensive written development plan which is in place for next year.

The internal monitoring of the school and its residential provision is both systematic and thorough. Following quality assurance and evaluation, areas for improvement are identified and these cascade into the schools written development plans. The external, independent monitoring of the school takes place regularly and fully meets the areas laid out in the standards for residential special schools. However, this is an area that generated discussion during feedback as a possible area for improvement, with regard to the quality and consistency of the reports being produced, following such visits.

The residential provision is popular with both parents and pupils. Residential pupils enjoy being in the school and are proud to be associated with it. Pupils settle into the school and regularly make positive changes to the lifestyle they experienced before attending the school. They and their parents recognise the changes made, with one parent summing this up simply by saying about her son; 'The changes he has made since first attending the school are remarkable.'

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	119873
Social care unique reference number	SC035805
DfE registration number	888/7028

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	Maintained
Number of boarders on roll	46
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	11 to 16
Headteacher	Mr Joseph Prendergast
Date of previous boarding inspection	30/09/2013
Telephone number	01524 221 333
Email address	head@wenningtonhall.lancs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

