

# Horton Lodge

Staffordshire County Council, Horton Lodge Special School, Rudyard, Leek, Staffordshire, ST13 8RB

<b>Inspection dates</b>	12/12/2014	
<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

- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is outstanding. This is because residential pupils receive a consistently high standard of care, which not only fully meets their needs but also provides further opportunities to build on the progress already made in school. Areas for improvement raised at the last inspection have been positively addressed. All national minimum standards are met.
- Residential pupils learn new skills and grow in confidence, which helps them overcome social and physical barriers they face in their lives. Consequently, the outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding as they make excellent progress throughout their time at the school.
- The safety of residential pupils is given a high priority and this is at the forefront of the team's practice. Residential pupils are very comfortable and relaxed in their residential environment and have excellent relationships with their carers. They confidently and easily seek out members of staff for attention and interaction which is reciprocated with warmth and care.
- Staff fully understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities which is underpinned by local authority child protection training. Residential pupils are further protected from any unwanted or bullying behaviour because boundaries and expectations are communicated clearly and any incidents of this nature are sensitively and quickly managed.
- The trained staff team consistently promote positive and improving relationships. Challenging behaviour is calmly managed through very good use of distraction and de-escalation skills. Staff are excellent at managing the complex dynamics brought about by the diverse needs and different age ranges of the residential groups. Many pupils are able to make significant and beneficial improvements to their behaviour that has a positive impact on their peer, adult and family relationships.

- Residential pupils have access to, and participate in a wide range of enjoyable, fun activities and play opportunities of their choice. Many of these experiences significantly enhance the opportunity for them to develop their own individual capabilities and skills as well as enhancing their social learning and independence.
- The views of residential pupils are actively sought, valued and acted upon. Residential pupils are encouraged and empowered to put forward suggestions and make a positive contribution towards their residential routines. Staff are patient and encouraging, adapting methods of communication to ensure views, choices and feelings can be expressed and contribute to the running of the residential provision. As a result, residential pupils show a great deal of investment in their school community. They are valued and respected as individuals.
- Staff are very observant and aware as pupils are not always able to articulate in clear or straightforward ways about how they feel. This area of practice is exceptional and set into the daily support and observation routines that ensures pupils are responded to and cared for in a timely manner.

### **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

This welfare only inspection was completed by one social care inspector following the appropriate notice period for this type of visit. A tour of the residential accommodation was undertaken. Two afternoons and early evenings as well as time before school in the mornings were spent in the residential accommodation. A number of residential pupils were spoken to. A range of records were examined relating to the care provided. Two evening meals and several breakfasts were observed. Discussions were held with a governor, members of the management team, care staff, a visiting professional and parents. Documentation examined included health and safety information, behaviour management records, care plans, progress reviews and management/independent visitor reports.

## Inspection team

Julian Mason

Lead social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

Horton Lodge is a local authority maintained residential special school for 59 boys and girls aged 2 to 11 years with physical disabilities and associated learning difficulties. Some of the children have additional visual, hearing and/or speech and language difficulties. The school's education and residential provision is based on 'Conductive Education'.

The residential provision operates from Monday to Thursday each week with six to nine pupils residing at the school on any one night. Pupils access the residential provision on a rolling six monthly programme and usually for a maximum of two nights per week. Pupils from a federated local authority school also use the residential provision one night a week.

The residential provision is called Kiplings and is located in a separate wing of the school. The school is situated in the village of Rudyard approximately three miles outside the town of Leek. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2014.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. The overall experience of their residential stays and the excellent quality of care makes an exceedingly positive impact on the lives of each pupil. They are well supported to develop their own identities and personalities, achieve familiar and stable routines and plan positively for their future. Consequently, residential pupils are making excellent social, personal and academic progress.

The residential team have high aspirations for all pupils; they are very knowledgeable about the progress being made which is tracked against individually set targets and goals some of which are matched to school wide targets. These are regularly reviewed and assessed to track progress and achievements, which are also frequently celebrated.

Relationships between residential pupils and staff is a major strength of the service. Strong, meaningful relationships are developed and individual differences are accepted and valued by all living and working in the school. Staff work hard to get to know residential pupils at the start of their placement. This raises staff awareness and helps develop strong and trusting relationships from the point of arrival. Residential pupils are obviously at ease with staff, engaging in positive interactions and friendly exchanges throughout their stay. They show a strong sense of belonging and a keenness to be involved in whatever is planned or going on at the time.

Particular attention is paid to how pupils' communicate their wishes and feelings. Staff have a clear focus on enabling and supporting an approach to communication that does not disadvantage or exclude anyone from making safe daily life choices. Pupils consistently have control over their lives that is consistent with their abilities and levels of independence. The residential team are diligent in ensuring pupils are treated fairly, respectfully and with due regard for their individual needs. Staff are committed to helping pupils overcome barriers and challenges, particularly those that relate to learning and physical disabilities.

Residential pupils' good health and well-being supports them to lead and learn about living healthy lives. Staff work in partnership with parents and carers who retain primary responsibility for their child's health. This ensures continuity of care because staff are fully aware of such matters that relate to lifelong health conditions, dietary requirements and medication. This is enhanced further by the role of the school nurse who plays a key part in promoting and maintaining pupils' good health and well-being.

Pupils are encouraged and supported to learn about and become more independent and to develop their skills according to their own abilities and potential. Well thought out independence and life-skills activities and programmes, that take into consideration age, ability and understanding are delivered. This is enhanced by the use of specialist equipment and adaptations to further support pupils' progress. Staff help pupils to expand and develop their social, personal and independent skills irrespective of their physical or learning disability. Staff do not make assumptions about pupils' capabilities. They assume that all pupils have the potential to develop their practical and social skills in pursuit of greater independence and autonomy.

### Quality of residential provision and care

### Outstanding

The quality of care is outstanding. The 24-hour curriculum provides strong links between academic and residential staff. Staff from both groups provide overlapping help and support through the school day and residential time. This provides residential pupils with continuity of care, stability and tailored support from people who know them very well. Transitions to and from school are seamless because of the highly professional working relationships between school and

the residential team.

The admission and induction of residential pupils is extremely well planned. Pupils and their parents have the opportunity to visit the school to view the residential facility, meet with staff and other residential pupils. This enables them to make an informed decision about their child using the residential facilities.

Residential pupils are cared for by staff who give their individual needs the highest priority. Care plans are detailed and clearly reflect key information that has been gathered from a range of sources to ensure nothing is missed. Care planning and day-to-day staff practice acknowledges each residential pupil as being unique. There is a clear focus on residential pupils making progress and this is reinforced by praise and celebration, no matter how small the achievement is. This enabling approach encourages residential pupils to work hard towards their individual goals and targets.

Medication is safely administered and closely monitored to ensure pupils benefit from the prescribed medicines they take. This is especially the case for medicines that are taken for life long health conditions and diagnoses. Pupils' health also benefits from effective partnerships the school has with health professionals such as learning and physical disability specialists. This ensures key professionals can quickly access information from carers to help with the treatment and review of long-term conditions that can affect an individual's quality of life. The introduction of school wide health plans are also helping to strengthen the information sharing systems within the school.

Meals provided by the school are balanced, nutritious and really good quality. Choice is actively promoted and specific diets catered for. This ensures the range of food caters to residential pupils' individual needs and preferences, some of which relate to their allergies or religious preferences. Mealtimes are social occasions where residential pupils are encouraged to sit together and enjoy the domestic routine. Staff are attentive and enabling, ensuring pupils are supported to participate in the occasion; aiming to develop social skills and promote independence according to individual needs and abilities. This results in a pleasant, purposeful and relaxed atmosphere that further promotes a residential culture of respect and tolerance.

Residential pupils are actively involved in a wide range of enjoyable, stimulating and creative activities designed to build self-esteem, enhance independence and promote social inclusion. Staff make good use of the resources available within the school and the wider community.

The accommodation and facilities are to a good standard and provide a safe and suitable environment to meet the needs of all residential pupils. The space available to pupils is used to its full potential which includes being able to access onsite resources and facilities after school.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

### **Outstanding**

The arrangements for keeping residential pupils' safe are outstanding. They benefit from being looked after by a team of staff who are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. They are familiar with the school's safeguarding procedures and how to report a concern if needed. This is because they receive relevant child protection training that is regularly refreshed. The school is proactive and has ensured senior staff who are designated officers within the school are trained to the appropriate level for the role. Also, designated school-wide safeguarding meetings are now held weekly to improve communication and information sharing. There have been no safeguarding concerns or child protection issues since the last inspection. This further enhances the school's arrangements in protecting residential pupils' welfare and to manage any allegations or suspicions of abuse should they occur.

The recruitment of residential staff is robust. Staff are subject to appropriate vetting checks prior to working in the school and with residential pupils. The head of care is fully involved in the recruitment process to make sure staff have the right competencies and skills to meet the needs of residential pupils. There are safe arrangements in place to ensure visitors to the school are suitably checked and supervised. This means residential pupils are protected from contact with adults who may pose a risk to them.

The school maintains highly effective anti-bullying practices and staff are vigilant to any signs of this form of behaviour. Staff are aware of residential pupils' vulnerabilities and work hard to encourage them to share their feelings and discuss any concerns they may have. Staff implement risk assessments in practice which means that they consider how each residential pupil will be supported in a safe and proportionate way. This means balancing risks between the need to experience appropriate levels of independence and the need to maintain everyone's safety.

Being missing from the residential provision is not an issue for pupils. The school has very good practices for monitoring residential pupils to ensure their whereabouts are known at all times. Detailed procedures are in place should a residential pupil go missing. All staff are familiar with the procedures and the necessary action they must take to gain a pupil's safe return to the school.

There is a calm and effective approach to behaviour management. This is because staff have developed a good understanding of the circumstances and factors that contribute to residential pupils becoming frustrated and anxious. Staff are trained in behaviour management which is refreshed annually. They use well planned and effective individualised strategies to manage residential pupils sometimes complex and challenging behaviours. Staff use their relationships with residential pupils to effectively de-escalate difficult situations which avoids the need to use more formal measures such as physical restraint.

Residential pupils are protected from hazards by a comprehensive range of detailed health and safety procedures, risk assessments and routine maintenance checks to ensure the premises are safe. Regular fire drills ensure that all residential pupils and staff know what to expect if the alarm is raised and how to evacuate the school in the event of an emergency.

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

The leadership, management and organisation of the school's welfare and residential provision are outstanding. Pupils benefit greatly from their residential experiences because its stated function and purpose is translated into an exceptionally well run service. The residential provision has a strong record of delivering high quality care and building on pupil's achievements and progress made in school. The established, nearly qualified and experienced head of care provides clear leadership that shapes a child-focused approach to the work of the whole team. The head of care is well supported by senior managers and the residential team who all actively contribute to the provision's successful operation. This whole school approach helps influence and secure improvements that positively benefit all residential pupils.

Parents and professionals are uniformly positive about the service and can readily identify the impact the residential provision has had on individual pupil's lives. Communication between staff and parents is excellent and indicative of the positive relationships that exist. There are clear lines of accountability that are further enhanced by effective oversight by the school's senior leadership team. The residential service is seen as an integral part of the school, which consistently provides further opportunities for pupils to develop personally and socially.

There is a sufficient number of appropriately trained, effectively supervised and supported staff working in the residency. They receive informed management support and guidance enabling

them to fulfil their roles and provide a high quality service to all pupils. Staff are enthusiastic and want all residential pupils to succeed and achieve. The team regularly receives feedback about their performance highlighting successful practices and areas for improvement. Roles and responsibilities are regularly discussed that relate to key practice areas, ensuring all pupils continue to receive a service that is matched to their changing needs and circumstances.

The school has an excellent range of quality assurance systems that are used effectively for monitoring the quality of care, pupil progress and residential records. There is a genuine commitment from the school's senior management team and governors to develop and improve the service further. Governor's as well as independent visitors play a key role in monitoring the residential provision and the welfare and safety of pupils.

Despite the service being judge as outstanding for a number years, the school has continued to develop the residential provision and improve practice. A number of developments have already taken place since the last inspection in March with more being implemented in the coming year. The service does not standstill and through the use of monitoring information, pupils experience a service that continues to focused on what can be better.



## What inspection judgements mean

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
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>	124496
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC038727
<b>DfE registration number</b>	860/7003

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>	
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Charlie Rivers
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	25/03/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01538 306214
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@hortonlodge.staffs.sch.uk

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