

# Radlett Lodge Schools

Radlett Lodge School, Harper Lane, RADLETT, Hertfordshire, WD7 9HW

<b>Inspection dates</b>	12/02/2015	
<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

- Residential pupils thrive in a warm friendly environment where their individual vulnerabilities and strengths are recognised. Individual interests are used effectively to develop trusting relationships between residential pupils and staff and ensure residential pupils' choices are optimised.
- The safety of residential pupils is a priority at the school. Leaders and staff have an excellent understanding of safeguarding and child protection issues. Residential pupils, cares and visiting professionals report young people are safe
- A multi-disciplinary approach to care is embedded into practice. Behaviour is very well managed by staff who consistently maintain boundaries.
- Staff are extremely well trained and experienced and provide high quality care in a warm nurturing environment. Effective use of different forms of communication ensures all residential pupils have a voice and can influence the care provided on a daily basis.
- A particular strength of the service is the reflection on practice and commitment to continually improve. The management team has a clear vision and have plans in place for the short term and long term future of the service. For example, developing the homework support provided to residential pupils and improving buildings and facilities on site for the school and the residential service.

### 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 provides a residential service to 14 residential pupils. At the time of the inspection pupils received residential services between four nights a week and termly stays.

This was a standalone inspection. Three hours notice was given prior to the start of the inspection. The inspection methodology included: observation of residential routines and practice; scrutiny of school policies and records; discussion with parents; meetings with staff and residential pupils. Discussions took place with staff responsible for leading; managing and organising residential care these included residential staff, support staff, the head of care, Principal, head teacher. External professionals linked with the service were also spoken with and include the independent person, social workers and psychology staff.

## Inspection team

Gwen Buckley

Lead social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

Radlett Lodge is a National Autistic Society school that caters for 55 pupils aged between 4 to 19 years of age. Attached to the school is a residential building called 'The Lodge' catering for up to 14 pupils on either a weekly or termly basis. There are currently 14 pupils resident. The school is registering to offer a holiday scheme service for nine weeks in the year. All children attending the school or holiday scheme have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The staff group are contracted to work in both the school, the Lodge and holiday scheme. The residential provision was last inspected on 6 March 2014.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the external monitoring visits to help service development by raising recommendations to improve practice when possible.
- Continue to explore ways in which the accommodation can better meet the needs of all residential pupils. This specifically relates to: the wider age range of pupils being cared for and freedom of movement around the site.
- Embed into practice the recording of the debriefs that take place with all residential pupils following incidents.
- Better reflect the outcomes for residential pupils in the annual Principal's report to the board of trustees. Especially the positive impact the residential experience has on the educational progress of residential pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Residential pupils overall progress and development is outstanding. Emphasis is on developing highly individualised communication strategies to maximise their capacity to understand and be understood. Residential pupils also get support to manage their behaviours when needed. This ensures residential pupils are well supported to reach their personal and educational goals.

Residential pupils undertake a wide range of activities using school facilities where they build their confidence and develop their skills. Activities take place in the Lodge, the school and in the community offering further opportunities to integrate into the wider society.

Those residential pupils able to verbalise, report that they are safe and feel safe in the residential house and all were seen to enjoy the activities. Parents and external professionals consider the residential pupils are safe and enjoy living at the school. Extremely good interaction is evident between staff and residential pupils. Residential pupils have access to a variety of adults, including the Principal and independent person, to discuss any concerns or problems they have.

Residential pupils' health needs are well catered for, with first aid-trained staff available and access to medical support in the community. Excellent ongoing contact between residential pupils' parents and carers means that medical issues are always addressed promptly. Meals provided are well presented and tasty offering a balanced diet. Residential pupils are encouraged to eat well and make the right choices to maintain a balanced diet and exercise.

Residential pupils develop a good sense of self and are exposed to a variety of experiences that will enhance their quality of life. Residential pupils are proud of the fundraising the school has achieved. Some residential pupils have been actively involved in the community, which helped raise awareness of autism, this helped the community engage with the project and raise money for the school. As a result, a new sensory room has been installed which residential pupils enjoy and use a lot.

School leavers are well equipped for the next stage of their lives having learned additional skills in residential time. Family members stated that the progress their children make because of being in residence is 'fantastic'. External professionals report that the progress residential pupils make in the Lodge is reflected at home which improves the life of the pupils.

### Quality of residential provision and care

### Outstanding

Residential pupils are thoughtfully introduced into the residential provision to ensure it suits them. Excellent relationships between academic and residential staff means that pupils are very well supported as they all know how residential pupils are doing at any time of day. Those pupils needed additional support then receive this immediately.

Care plans are highly individualised and give a tremendous insight into pupils' needs and ability. These include targets for residential pupils to achieve that relate to both time spent in school and in the residential provision. Residential pupils and family members are fully involved in agreeing these targets. These well thought out plans bring together a range of specialist to assist the care staff such as specialist behaviour management staff, clinical psychologist, health services and other relevant professionals. This holistic approach means that residential pupils' needs are fully addressed. The plans are robustly reviewed and updated to ensure residential pupils get the support needed to achieve.

As a result of the support provided to residential pupils and their families, some family members

report they are confident to take their child into the community again. This means they are less isolated when at home.

First aid trained staff are always on duty, consent forms for medical treatment are standard practice and the security and administration of medication is excellent.

Boarders live in well-decorated surroundings. The house has the feeling of a place where young people live. A variety of equipment and resources ensures residential pupils are entertained. The grounds are secure and lend themselves well to outdoor activities. The management team are reviewing the implication of the use of some locked external doors has on all the residential pupils. This is to ensure the rights of residential pupils are respected while keeping them safe. Family members state, 'The care staff go above and beyond what is expected of them, I can't fault them. Over the years the care has been fantastic, I will be very sad when my son has to leave.'

Notices in the communal areas give appropriate advice and information such as school council representatives and help lines.

Residential pupils receive visitors during their stay. Family members and carers visit for meals and can take their children out for trips. This assists pupils gain confidence by maintaining contact with those important people and develops friendships outside the residential community. The school supports relatives and carers as needed to learn about autism. They effectively share strategies used to help the residential pupils. This ensures consistency of care and supports their education and overall development. Families are invited to attend the school for special occasions which helps foster and maintain positive relationships with the staff team.

Residential pupils are actively encouraged to respect each other and their own space. They do this by undertaking light domestic tasks in the house such, as tidying personal and communal areas after use and displaying good manners. The ethos of the residential environment supports increased independence, social etiquette and enables pupils to achieve and challenge themselves further.

At all times difference is respected and promoted. The staff team has a wide range of skills and specialist knowledge. This and the good racial, gender, age and cultural mix of staff ensure excellent role models are available to pupils.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

### **Outstanding**

The arrangements for ensuring that residential pupils are safe and protected from harm are outstanding. Robust systems ensure that pupils' safety is central to the service provided. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and known by staff provide enhanced protection. The pupils and family members consider the house is a safe place to live.

The designated safeguarding person has built up an excellent knowledge of safeguarding. The Local Authority Designated Officer considers his dealings with Radlett Lodge School have been very positive and he has no issues in relation to the school's safeguarding process & procedures. Child protection training is always provided and updated as required and all managers and care staff take the role of protecting boarders seriously.

The school has excellent forums to meet and discuss any concerns regarding a pupil's progress. Prompt attention is paid to any information received, which enhances pupils' safety.

The safety of residential pupils is further promoted through a detailed approach to the recruitment of staff. Amendments to recruitment procedures reflect new government guidance.

Key staff have completed safer recruitment training and interviews do not take place without at least one trained representative on the panel.

Residential staff effectively work with psychologists assigned to the residential house which enhances their level of knowledge. The strategies they employ are subject to regular review and consultation with family members. This ensures they are effective and being implemented in a consistent way which helps keep the residential pupils safe. The staff have a good understanding of the various forms of bullying and remain vigilant. Media and other forms of bullying are understood and rules are in place, which residential pupils agree to, to minimise potential incidences.

Residential pupils are helped to mature by understanding their behaviour and make correct choices. No sanctions have been used. Physical intervention is on occasion used and when used clear records are maintained of the event. Action is taken to find out how all the residential pupils are, following any incidents. This is good practice and records are well maintained when residential pupils are able to verbalise their feelings, but not when they are unable to do so.

Health and safety is of paramount importance. Equipment is regularly maintained. Staff report repairs and response times are speedy. There are detailed arrangements to evacuate boarders in the event of a fire. Each residential pupil has a personal evacuation plan in place. Residential pupils confirm that evacuations happen and they know where to assemble.

Excellent level of risk assessment ensure residential pupils are safe on outings to local shops and further afield. All assessments are agreed and signed by a senior manager prior to the event taking place.

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

There is a clear Statement of Purpose outlining what the residential provision aims to do. This is available in differing formats to help residential pupils understand the service. The Statement of Purpose is very effectively translated into practice. The staff team are highly skilled and able to address the needs of the residential pupils without compromising any aspects of their welfare, safety and development.

Policies and procedures are updated as necessary to ensure they incorporate current legislation. Staff understand their responsibilities to implement them. Key policies are available on the school website for parents and carers to access.

There is a culture of encouragement and reaching your potential, whether it is for staff or residential pupils. Residential pupils are helped to lead the life they want by being encouraged to make and being supported in the choices they make. Photographs and other reminders are provided to help pupils remember the times they have had and they can take these into their adult lives.

Training, supervision, appraisal and team meetings contribute very effectively to the staff developing an in depth knowledge and understanding of their role. They deploy flexible approaches to meeting the highly varying residential pupils' needs. The management team are exploring the tension between pupils freedom and their responsibility to keep them safe and constantly evaluate if they have achieved the correct balance. Staff feel privileged to work with the young people and enjoy this work; they report feeling respected and valued by management who want them to progress

The residential pupils have access to an independent person. Residential pupils have regular visits from the local police who have very good working relations with the school. This helps police

understand the vulnerability of the residential pupils, which develops their knowledge of children with autism and helps to keep them safe.

The management team is committed to driving improvement. The internal quality reviews include reflection on practice at every level which means continued development. An independent visitor also completes monitoring of the provision. The reports are provided to the Principal and the organisation, but they seldom include recommendations to improve practice. This does not have any impact on the care of pupils or the organisation, because additional robust mechanisms are in place to regularly monitor progress and the service is continually evolving to meet residential pupils' needs. The annual report to trustees does not reflect the evidence the school has which shows the positive impact the residential experience has on the education of the pupils.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117646
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC019505
<b>DfE registration number</b>	919/6215

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>	14
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	6 to 18
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Jo Galloway
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	13/03/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01923 854922
<b>Email address</b>	radlett.lodge@nas.org.uk

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