

# Shenstone Lodge School

Shenstone Lodge School, Birmingham Road, Shenstone Wood End, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 0LB

<b>Inspection dates</b>	05/03/2015	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 overall effectiveness of the residential provision is good. This is because residential pupils receive a good standard of care that meets their needs and is consistent with their wider school experiences.
- Pupils enjoy their residential stays. There is a child-centred attitude that ensures the approach of the residential team is tailored to meet specific and individual needs.
- Residential pupils experience good emotional and practical support during their stay, which positively impacts on their academic progress and achievements.
- The views of residential pupils are actively sought, valued and acted upon. They are encouraged and empowered to put forward suggestions and make a positive contribution towards their residential routines.
- Residential pupils learn new skills and grow in confidence, which helps them overcome some of their emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Staff fully understand their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. The safety of pupils is prioritised which provides for a comfortable and secure residential environment.
- Residential pupils are protected from any unwanted or bullying behaviour because boundaries and expectations are communicated clearly and any incidents of this nature are quickly managed.
- Challenging behaviour is managed well through good use of approved behaviour management techniques such as distraction and de-escalation skills.
- Residential pupils have access to, and participate in a wide range of enjoyable, fun activities of their choice. Many pupils identify this as their favourite aspect of boarding.
- The school meets all the national minimum standards. Two good practice recommendations have been made that relate to gaining more feedback from parents and stakeholders and to include planned improvements to the residential provision into

the school-wide development plan.

### **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. One evening and an afternoon was spent in the company of staff and pupils. Several pupils were spoken to and nearly all residential pupils were observed during the inspection. One evening meal and one breakfast period was also observed. A range of records were examined relating to the care provided. Discussions were held with members of the senior leadership team, governors, managers and care staff.

## Inspection team

Julian Mason

Lead social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

Shenstone Lodge School is a maintained residential special school catering for boys and girls with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. It offers education for pupils aged 5 to 11 years. The residential accommodation presently caters for boys only. Currently there are 30 pupils on roll, of which 9 are residential pupils. Boarding is predominantly offered four nights a week.

The residential provision is situated in a large country house and is spread over three floors set in a four and a half acre site. The building has been extended in the past to provide staff rooms, offices, a medical room and resource areas. The purpose built school is detached from the residential facilities.

The residential provision at Shenstone Lodge was last inspected in November 2013.

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

- Encourage and gather a greater range of feedback from parents and stakeholders about the operation of the residential provision.
- Incorporate into the annual school wide development plan the areas for improvement and development in the residential provision.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

**Good**

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. They benefit from individualised care given by a nurturing and committed staff team who have practical and realistic expectations for them. Overall, residential pupils make good progress in the social, emotional and academic areas of their lives. Their behaviour improves as a result of boarding, they learn new skills to help them manage their emotions and to have more self-control. The school's monitoring and evaluation of pupils' learning shows that boarding has a significant and beneficial impact on their progress in compassion to their peers who do not board. In addition, the residential team take advantage of opportunities outside of the school day to help pupils with their key skills such as reading. For example, the use of the local library where pupils are encouraged to explore books has meant for some pupils that they use more of their leisure time for reading.

Because of the enabling and positive atmosphere in boarding, pupils become supportive of each other in terms of their participation in activities and what they can achieve as a group and individually. Pupils learn from the adults who purposefully role model behaviours that will help them with their relationships and social interactions in the future.

Residential pupils make friends and learn how to resolve disputes and disagreements with others. Because of the work undertaken by the residential team, they also learn about tolerance and empathy towards others. Residential pupils say they feel safe when they have their overnight stays. They enjoy their residential stays and many state that their favourite aspect of boarding is the many activities they are able to participate in.

Residential pupils develop trusting and friendly relationships with staff. The atmosphere in boarding is lively but relaxed and generally respectful with clear routines and expectations that are understood. Personal goals and targets are individualised and this approach helps each pupil focus on aspects of their behaviour and relationships that need to change or improve. Where they struggle and experience setbacks with their progress, there is a committed approach by the staff team to find ways of helping pupils overcome these difficulties.

Overall, residential pupils learn how to manage their behaviour; they are helped to understand themselves and the triggers for their anger and frustrations. For many residential pupils this helps raise their self-esteem and confidence as they are supported to find ways of communicating their feelings that are less damaging or risky.

### Quality of residential provision and care

**Good**

Residential pupils enjoy good relationships with staff who present as positive role models and provide consistent and familiar routines. Residential timetables offer the right balance between structured activities and free time. Pupils' cooperation and participation is high because they are able to influence how their residential stays are planned and organised. Residential staff work closely with academic staff to ensure pupils benefit from teachers and carers knowing about their individual circumstances and daily routines.

The school has robust assessment, admission and induction procedures for pupils who wish to board. Staff ensure there is an appropriate mix of pupils and they ensure new residential pupils admitted will not have a negative impact on the existing group. Pupils in their final year are prepared for moves to their secondary education placements. This includes a planned reduction in residential stays in readiness for becoming a day pupil at their new school.

Residential pupils are able to keep in contact with family and other important people in their lives

and make telephone calls in private. Staff know who pupils can speak to and are very aware of the importance some pupils place on maintaining family contact when they are not at home. Staff are also aware of the impact on some pupils of being away from home and provide good emotional support in these circumstances.

A strength of the school is how residential pupils are consulted about their boarding stays. Residential pupils' views are sought regularly and are taken on board and valued by staff. They are encouraged to give their views in daily discussions and individual key worker sessions. Bonds and relationships between staff and pupils strengthen because the residential culture promotes consideration, respect and listening to each other as being important.

The school has extensive grounds where residential pupils enjoy playing football and other outdoor activities. They are able to take part in a variety of activities when they board. For example, the school facilitates football coaching sessions and many of the residential pupils have participated in a recent cross-country running competition against pupils from other schools. Residential pupils are kept busy and active, their energy is channelled positively and they are able to develop their social and communication skills through play and wide ranging leisure activities.

Staff ensure the well-being of residential pupils is at the centre of their practice and this approach is underpinned and reflected in comprehensive care plans that document the diverse needs of each pupil and how staff are to meet their needs. Clear targets are in place that are reviewed regularly to evidence pupils' individual progress. A newly introduced programme has further enhanced the way the residential team track and evaluate the impact of their work with pupils. This is a good example of how the school is continuing to develop and improve its residential service for the benefit of pupils.

Residential pupils' good health is supported by ensuring their needs are met and that they are helped to learn about keeping themselves fit and healthy. Staff work in partnership with families 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 specific health and dietary needs. Pupils' good health is further promoted by effective, safe administration of medication practices and routines. They receive their medication according to individual prescription instructions ensuring they fully benefit from their prescribed medicines.

Boarding house accommodation offers a clean, comfortable and homely environment. Dormitory style bedrooms have sufficient facilities that offer private washing and toilet arrangements. Photographs of residential pupils succeeding in various indoor and outdoor activities are displayed throughout residential areas. Brightly coloured and fun educational posters are displayed presenting information about a wide range of topics from children's rights, anti-bullying and the benefits of healthy eating. Residential pupils also benefit from being able to use the school's very well equipped gym and outdoor swimming pool during boarding time.

Residential pupils say they enjoy their meals when they are boarding. Evening mealtimes are sociable and orderly occasions where everyone eats together. Residential pupils learn table manners, to take turns and to help clear up after themselves. Residential pupils are also able to learn and develop cooking skills with support of the residential team. Healthy diets and eating habits are encouraged as part of the school's wider approach in support of positive lifestyles.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

**Good**

Safeguarding arrangements for residential pupils when they are boarding are good. Staff are vigilant, trained and well aware of their roles and responsibilities to keep pupils safe. The school is pro-active at implementing safeguarding policies and procedures and ensuring practices are maintained that keeps everyone safe. Recruitment, selection and vetting procedures are robust

and ensure only suitable persons are employed to work at the school.

Staff are knowledgeable about how best to keep residential pupils safe and what action to take if they have any safeguarding or child protection concerns. The safeguarding manager and designated child protection officers work closely with boarding staff to ensure pupils' safety is promoted and to follow up any reported safeguarding concerns. The school also effectively works in partnership with external agencies who lead in child protection matters.

A strength of boarding is the effective and consistent implementation of behaviour management policies and procedures. As a result of a nurturing approach, along with firm and fair boundaries and rules, many residential pupils learn to improve their behaviour and manage their emotional difficulties. Strategies to manage risky behaviour is focused on safety but also encourages pupils to learn alternative ways to behave that supports more self-control and individual responsibility. This is done by pupils being directly involved in identifying and planning strategies that will help them deal with their difficulties.

There is also a strong emphasis on praising and encouraging positive behaviours that can be rewarded. Residential pupils know what is expected of them and are frequently congratulated when they get things right or use new skills that help to improve their relationships and social interactions.

The use of physical intervention for some pupils is necessary to keep everyone safe but its use is always proportionate to the circumstances and the individual pupils involved. A wide range of information is collected and evaluated around the management of behaviour and related events. Senior managers are very well informed about the effectiveness of the school's approaches to behaviour management and can quickly pick-up on any concerning patterns or trends.

Where incidents of bullying behaviour occur the residential team are quick to challenge and tackle these incidents. Everyone knows that any form of bullying behaviour is not tolerated. Direct work is undertaken with residential pupils to educate them about the impact of bullying on people's lives and how to seek help if needed. The residential team are vigilant and address any unwanted behaviours in a way that presents opportunities for everyone to learn about keeping themselves safe.

Health and safety is very well managed. The school's environment is physically safe and appropriately secure. Assessments provide clear guidance to staff on how to manage and minimise risks that relate to activities undertaken in school or outside in the community. Necessary checks and tests on a range of appliances, equipment and utilities are regularly undertaken to promote everyone's safety and welfare. All residential pupils know what action to take to ensure their safety in the event of a fire. Where reactions to practice fire drills have highlighted that the building could have been evacuated in less time, action is taken to improve response times.

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

There have been a number of changes to the management and staffing of the residential provision. This has caused some disruption to relationships and attachments but there is still a core group of staff in place who are well known to residential pupils. The deputy head of care is acting up into the head of care position with another member of the team acting into the deputy's role. This is because of the long-term absence of the permanent head of care. Some changes within residential team have also occurred and agency staff are being used as a temporary measure while recruitment to vacant residential posts is completed. Despite these changes, the service continues to provide safe, effective care and support.

Governors and the senior leadership team view boarding as an integral part of the school's provision and fully understand and acknowledge the contribution it makes to the social and academic progress pupils make. Aims of the boarding provision are clearly and comprehensively documented. Staff understand the aims of the residential provision and how boarding fits in to the school wide approach to learning and personal development. Staff feel supported in their day-to-day roles and the work they undertake with pupils. Records, policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and managers ensure staff are familiar with updates to policies and procedures.

Residential managers are up to date with proposed changes to inspection frameworks and standards. High staffing ratios ensure flexibility and choice are afforded and facilitated and that the needs of each residential pupil are consistently met. The acting head of care and deputy undertake regular shifts to help shape and model staff practice and to maintain relationships with pupils to ensure they are kept safe and their needs are consistently met.

Staff work closely with pupils' families and other professionals and these partnerships continue to be strengthened through the school's development of its services. For example, parents will soon benefit from being able to access a greater range of expert help and advice on how to support their child more effectively at home. This targeted development is to help pupils and their families improve their relationships and to support their continued engagement in education.

Managers evaluate the quality of care provided and how this can be improved. A new quality assurance system is being introduced that provides for a cycle of monitoring across the residential provision. There is an awareness and understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the service. Pupils provide feedback about their residential experiences, which helps to shape what is provided. Wider consultation with parents and other stakeholders is not as strong so the school is unable to formally evaluate any feedback from these groups. A residential development plan has been formulated but details are not yet incorporated into the annual school wide development plan.



## 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>	104024
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC038726
<b>DfE registration number</b>	333/7001

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 Neil Toplass
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	04/11/2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 480369
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@shenstonelodge.sandwell.sch.uk

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