

# Oak Lodge School

Oak Lodge School for the Deaf, 101 Nightingale Lane, LONDON, SW12 8NA

**Inspection dates** 23/03/2015 to 25/03/2015

<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

- The residential provision is managed exceptionally well and with high levels of integrity, efficiency and effectiveness. Insightful professional supervision and rigorous monitoring procedures support the school's reflective and improvement culture.
- The residential provision makes a significant positive contribution to the extraordinary progress that children make. Staff are highly effective at empowering children to make choices and to assert their uniqueness. The outcomes for residential pupils across all aspects of their welfare and development are exceptional.
- The effective collaboration and the robust risk management processes underpin the excellent safeguarding practice. The culture of positive relationships and of valuing differences acts as an effective safeguard against any form of bullying or intimidation.
- The promotion of diversity and equality is at the heart of all activities at the school and it is integral to the outstanding practice. Through the continued interface between the deaf and hearing communities and through championing excellent practice, the school promotes cohesion and integration within our society and is a bastion of British values.

### 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 received approximately four hours of notice of the inspection. Inspection activities included talking with pupils, staff, parents and professionals and scrutiny of school policies, records and boarding routines. The inspectors saw all the residential areas and observed the care practice. The inspectors did not have their own sign-interpreter and used the school's staff to interpret conversations with pupils and deaf staff members.

## Inspection team

Seka Graovac

Lead social care inspector

Lee Kirwin

Social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

Oak Lodge School is a maintained residential special school for pupils of both gender aged 10 to 19 years. It is the responsibility of the London Borough of Wandsworth. It provides an inclusive multi-modal communication environment for deaf pupils and hearing pupils with language, communication and/or auditory processing difficulties. Many of the pupils have additional needs, such as emotional and behaviour difficulties, visual impairment and motor difficulties. The school offers up to 110 educational places and up to 14 residential places. The school is an enriched linguistic community.

The residential unit is located within the school building. Pupils may reside there for up to four nights a week during term time.

The residential provision was last inspected on 19 November 2013.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

**Outstanding**

The outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding.

Pupils view the residential provision as something wonderful that they all want to be a part of. They describe the opportunities for communication, friendships and learning as the best things about the school.

Their confidence has grown significantly. They have found their individual voice. Their vocabulary and their communication skills have improved dramatically. Pupils have made excellent progress in being able to recognise and label their feelings and describe their experiences. They have developed patience and treat others with respect and understanding. Pupils have mastered the art of relaxed friendly conversations. Often having arrived to the school in a state of isolation, anxiety and limited communication, this is a tremendous achievement.

The increased awareness of the needs of others has led pupils to develop further their cognition, social skills, caring attitudes and empathy.

Residential pupils describe opportunities for communication, friendships and learning as the best things about the school. They have developed a deep love for learning together and motivation to make effort to fulfil their potential. They communicate and ask questions. They seek and accept guidance from adults whom they trust. They are eager to know about themselves and the world around them without being constrained by the usual divide between the school and residential or after-school provision. They are model learners who are curious and look for any opportunities for observing, listening, communicating and learning.

Residential pupils have gained many practical life-skills.. Some of them have become fantastic cooks. Staff use the meals to facilitate children's organisational skills, effective team-work and the knowledge of other cultures and food-related customs.

### Quality of residential provision and care

**Outstanding**

The quality of the residential provision is outstanding.

From being sensitively introduced to the residential provision to being prepared to leave the school, residential pupils consistently receive support and care that are of exceptional quality. The residential provision makes a strong contribution to the school's tremendously positive impact on the pupils' development across all aspects of their well-being. It enhances their progress by providing them with a precious experience of group living with other deaf children. The contact with deaf staff provides them with positive models and inspiration.

The school's integrated approach across education, care and therapy ensures that residential pupils receive consistent support and have all their needs met effectively.

In particular, the residential staff work very closely with the emotions curriculum teacher and the complex needs co-coordinator. The progress that the residential pupils achieve in their emotional development acts like a spring-board that has a profoundly positive impact on all other aspects of their lives.

The care practice is highly personalised. Staff effectively harness the preferred communication style of each child, while at the same time introducing them to new ways of communicating. A

parent highlighted the staff's attention to the individual needs of children as one of the biggest strengths of the residential provision. She told the inspector that when she talked to the staff about her daughter, 'it was like she was the only child in the residential provision.'

Detailed individual care plans contain short and long term targets that have been agreed with the residential pupils to foster their progress and enhance their individuality. Those targets are specific, stretching, aspirational and achievable.

Through an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities and projects, residential pupils develop new skills and meet their targets. Their achievements are rewarded and celebrated in ways that are meaningful for them. Residential staff are highly effective at empowering children to make choices, assert their uniqueness and to continue to develop at an amazing pace.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

### **Outstanding**

The safety of residential pupils is outstanding. Residential pupils talk about the school, as if it is a sanctuary for them. They told inspectors that they felt safer at the school than at any other place. The multi modal signing environment makes them feel understood, secure and safe. They have developed trusting relationships with staff members. They are able to talk with staff about any concerns that they have. They receive excellent support to learn how to keep themselves safe. In line with the robust risk management process, residential staff proactively implement highly individualised strategies that are effective at safeguarding pupils and promoting their welfare.

The culture of positive relationships and of valuing differences acts as an effective safeguard against bullying or intimidation.

The whole school approach to behaviour management is exceedingly successful. The emotions curriculum underpin this fantastic progress. Staff are highly competent at providing clear boundaries within a flexible and nurturing environment. They creatively use role play and drawing to help pupils to understand better their own feelings and those of others and to develop more constructive behaviours. Residential pupils have improved their self-awareness, emotional resilience, consequential thinking and self-regulation. One pupil, in her previous school, was restrained on a frequent basis. Since being a residential pupil in this school, staff have needed to use a restraint only once, during the first week at the school. This is incredible progress.

All staff receive regular training and demonstrate excellent safeguarding thinking and practice.

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

### **Outstanding**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The leaders and managers have a vision to provide an enabling and empowering service that champions the rights of deaf and language impaired children to have excellent opportunities for learning and development. This vision flows seamlessly from the top to the bottom of the organisation. There is a strong team spirit and unity of purpose. The school is also reaching out to the wider community by providing classes in British Sign Language to parents and carers and championing the excellent practice within the professional community.

The residential provision is managed with high levels of integrity, efficiency and effectiveness. Excellent management ensures that all residential routines run smoothly. The care and support are delivered to residential pupils in an relaxed and orderly manner. The head of care works alongside the staff members and embodies excellent management values through actual practice. Staff members receive comprehensive training and regular supervision of excellent quality. The school

has a reflective, learning, and improvement culture that all staff, as well as pupils fully subscribe to.

All aspects of the residential provision are executed with precision and meticulous attention to detail. The records kept by the school are of exceptional quality.

The school is consulting with pupils, their parents and other professionals to continue to improve and to continue to move the service forward.

## 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>	101094
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC042132
<b>DfE registration number</b>	212/7068

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>	12
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	10 to 19
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Shanee Buxton
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	19/11/2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8673 3453
<b>Email address</b>	info@oaklodge.wandsworth.sch.uk

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