

Wolverdene Special School

Wolverdene School, 22 Love Lane, ANDOVER, Hampshire, SP10 2AF

Inspection dates	25/03/2015	
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

- Boarders benefit from receiving an extremely high standard of individualised care from a committed, child-centred, well-trained and forward-thinking team. The staff team's knowledge of the individual boarders they work with is exceptional. This is used to ensure individual boarder's needs are fully met and boarders reach their full potential.
- Staff develop extremely effective and supportive relationship with boarders and their families. These are based on mutual trust and respect. This work is enhanced as the staff team are exceptionally effective communicators
- Boarders make exceptional progress academically, socially, developmentally and personally. This is particularly evident in the improvement of the boarders' behaviours which include developing coping strategies and their higher academic achievements as compared with their non-residential counterparts.
- Equality and diversity is woven throughout the schools ethos. Staff help young people to recognise and show a high level of appreciation and tolerance for each other's individuality.
- The school has effective robust monitoring and evaluation systems which ensure high standard of care are maintained and developed.
- The staff are committed to ensuring their care practices reflect not only current developments in this field but they are also involved in innovate work. This has led to the school being seen as a leader in several areas such as safeguarding.

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 was informed 23 March 2015 that the inspection would commence later the same day. During the inspection the boarding house was inspected. Formal meeting were not held with boarders due to the small numbers. Information was gathered from them during the two evenings spent in the boarding house. This time in the boarding houses also provided an opportunity to observe boarding practices and the staffs interaction with young people. Interviews were held with key staff as well as the managers of the boarding provision. The schools policies and records were inspected, including the files of five young people who were tracked during the inspection. There was no input into this inspection from Parent View as there were insufficient responses.

Inspection team

Wendy Anderson

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Wolverdene is a local authority school within Hampshire catering for primary age children experiencing behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school provides mainly day placements, but 10 weekly residential placements are available for boys within The Lodge, which is a separate unit located within the school grounds. The Lodge accommodation consists of ten single rooms with shared facilities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- When external contractors carry out extended test of the emergency lights ensure there is clarity in recording the duration of the test undertaken.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Boarders thrive by living in a highly inclusive community where they have excellent effective relationships with the staff who care for them. Boarders have a very strong affiliation with their boarding house. All the boarders expressed how much they enjoy being in boarding and what fun they have.

Boarders learn how to live amicably as a group. This includes being supportive, respectful and tolerant of each other. One boarder said it was like 'having a lot of extra siblings'.

Boarders make exceptional progress in all aspects of their lives. Their academic achievements are greater than their non-residential counterparts.

Boarders make exceptional progress in all aspects of their development from their starting point upon admission to the school. They have more confidence, self-awareness, social skills and individual awareness.

Boarders' behaviour is vastly improved from their starting point. They develop an understanding of their behaviours and how these affect others. In addition they develop self-management strategies through this understanding. Boarders are also very supportive of each other when they are having difficult times. This empathy and self-management will serve them well for the next stage of their lives.

Boarders say living in the boarding is 'great', 'cool' and the 'best ever'. They are very proud of their boarding house. They feel the staff team look after them really well and 'love' staying in boarding. They really enjoy the vast range of activities they get to take part in. One boarder said, 'since being here I've got to do loads of things, some I've never done before. It's lots of fun here.'

Boarders really like the schools reward systems. They spoke proudly of their achievements and what they are working towards next. Through these systems they learn not only to celebrate their own achievements but also those of others.

The staff team develop boarders' understanding and appreciation of living a healthy lifestyle. All enjoy balanced healthy meals and have expanded their food experience by trying new things.

Staff support boarders with moves to new schools and have campaigned on behalf of boarders for appropriate placements. This is seen as a key area of their work as boarders can become very stressed and anxious about change. Staffs' work enables the boarders to make successful transitions.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

Pastoral and residential provision at the school is outstanding. It is viewed as a area of excellence within the school and the surrounding area. Boarders benefit from living in a nurturing supportive environment that ensures all their individual needs are met. They are supported by an extremely dedicated and knowledgeable staff team who have the boarders' well-being and progress at the heart of all they do. This 'wrap around' approach ensure that boarders' academic success surpasses that of the non-residential pupils.

The school has an excellent induction system for new boarders. The duration of the induction

period is tailored to the individual child and parents' needs. Staff are very skilled in ensuring this process is handled sensitively and at the families pace as this can set the tone of their ongoing relationship. During this period boarders are introduced to the boarding routines and the staff expectations of boarders in their care. Effective communication between the boarding and academic staff assists this process as both aspects of the school work together to develop holistic plans for individual boarders which ensures consistency of care. This communication continues throughout the boarders' time at the school. The school as a whole has very high expectation for the pupils in their care so cohesive working is seen as essential to achieving this.

The staff team's knowledge of the individual boarders they care for is incredibly detailed. This along with the strength of the staff relationships with boarders forms the foundation for all work the team undertake. Staff are exceptionally committed to providing boarders with the best possible care, support and opportunities to develop, thrive and grow. These relationships are based on respect, honesty, knowledge and a very child-centred approach. Staff looked at all work they undertake with the view 'how will this benefit the boarders'. This ethos leads the team to be imaginative and creative in addressing individual boarder's needs

The individualised care plans are comprehensive. These are frequently reviewed and updated, with the boarders' input, to ensure they reflect the boarders' current situation. These plans ensure that the boarders' emerging needs are continuously addressed by being very focused and rigorously implemented. These plans are monitored by the boarders' keyworkers and senior staff within the boarding team.

The school has a range of specialist teams on site including an assessment and reintegration team, family support workers and psychotherapists. The most recent addition to these is a Child Adolescent Mental Health Service clinic. The school took this step due to the delays they were experiencing when referring pupils. In addition to the in-house services the school provides they have developed excellent working relationship with other support services in the community.

Consultation with boarders is embedded in the school culture and is carried out in various forms. It is seen as essential for the boarders' development as individuals. There are regular surveys, including ones for parents and carers. The school strongly believe that by consulting with their stakeholders they can improve the service they offer. Evidence of consultation was overwhelming positive and full of praise for the staff team.

Staff work very closely with boarders to develop their understanding of their wider environment and how their behaviour affects this. After each evening meal boarders sit with staff and talk as a group about their day. This includes discussion on what difficulties they may have experienced, how they can put thing right and what support the other boarders can give them in achieving this. These sessions are very powerful. This reflective practice helps boarders see the effect their behaviours has on each other but also they learn how to support and value others. At the session boarders achievements are celebrated.

Boarders are enabled to take part in an excellent range of activities both on-site and in the local community. These are not only great fun but are purposeful enabling boarders to develop their social skills, self-esteem and motor skills. Boarders also learn the need to share and work together as a team. One boarder said they had 'got to do loads of things I've never done before and best of all I now have a lots friends'. Staff consult with boarders each tea time as to what they would like to do for activities and what ideas they may have for future activities.

The health care needs of boarders are robustly met. There are excellent policies and procedures in placed for the handling, administration and storage of medication which is closely adhered to in practice which safeguarding boarders' health. Staff ensure boarders lead a healthy lifestyle and take part in regular exercise. Boarders also receive education on health related topics such as

smoking, drugs, alcohol and sexual health. This is delivered at an age-appropriate level. Extensive medical consents are obtained to ensure staff are clear about the action they can take in an emergency and should first aid be required.

The boarding accommodation is of a very high standard. Since the last inspection there has been substantial refurbishment which includes the boarding house having its own library. The boarding house has an excellent atmosphere. It is warm, welcoming and furnished to a high, homely standard. This provides the boarders with a nurturing environment in which to live, grow and thrive. Boarders are encouraged to personal their rooms and be involved in décor choices for the communal spaces. The security of the residential provision is excellent which safeguards boarder's welfare.

Catering is of a high standard. Meals are well balanced, varied and nutritious. Boarders are involved in the development of the menus and in the preparation of some meals. Boarders who earn the title of 'star of the week' are able to choose one of the main meals in that week. Boarders said they really liked this and all were striving to obtain this accolade. Staff encourage boarders to try new foods in a very caring supportive way. They have to have a 'taster' and if they do not like this then an additional alternative is provided. Boarders said the food is really good and there is always lots to eat. Some say that since coming into boarding they now eat lots of foods they would not have eaten before. Boarders have ready access to snacks and drinks outside of meals times. Boarders are able to put forward ideas for the menus.

Boarders are able to maintain contact with the families while boarding via phone or email. The staff are very effective at developing working relationships with parents and maintain regular contact with them.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

Safeguarding at the school is outstanding. Safeguarding is at the heart of the work undertaken by the school as it is seen as part of its core business. The school has innovative, proactive safeguarding policies and procedures which are strictly adhered to in practice. The development of these has involved consultation with local safeguarding experts as well as taking into account research and develop of safeguarding practice. The work the school has undertaken and developed in this area has been identified as excellent practice and has been disseminated to other provision in the area.

The school has a very robust recruitment and vetting procedure for all staff which is clearly implemented in practice. Staff undertaking recruitment duties are trained in safer recruitment. Staff personnel records include all the required information. The systems for recording this information have been reviewed and improved to increase their robustness. This work is seen as the foundation for protecting pupils from harm.

Staff benefit from receiving high quality safeguarding training. This is frequently refreshed to ensure staff practices reflect current development in safeguarding. Staff interviewed were able to demonstrate their knowledge in this field. Well-established links have been made with the local safeguarding team and ensure that their practice is in line with current legislation. Safeguarding is a key component of the thorough induction programme for all new staff.

Behaviour of boarders observed throughout the inspection was excellent. Boarders have a clear understanding of the behaviour the school expects from them. These expectations are based on good community living, tolerance, acceptance of the individual and respect. The main focus of behaviour management is positive reinforcement and reflective practice. The school mantra in this area is 'positive reinforcement, reflection and repair'. This develops the boarders understanding of their own behaviours and how they can self-manage. It also looks at the affect

their behaviours have on others. In addition boarders learn tolerance and respect from the excellent role models the staff provide. Staff and boarders celebrate achievements and each boarder has their own individual goals which are set between them and their key worker. Boarders proudly display their reward and star charts. Boarders say sanctions are fair but rarely used. Physical restraint is only used as an option of last resort. Where this has been used, and is minimal, clear records are maintained. Staff share information with parents, carers and teaching staff on boarders' behaviour. This results in a consistent approach in managing pupils' behaviour which has dramatically improved boarders behaviours from those displayed upon admission.

Boarders did not see bullying at the school as an issue. Where it has happened staff have been very quick to address this. Some boarders said they had been bullied at other schools but not here. This is linked to the work the staff do with the boarders on tolerance and talking things through rather than reacting negatively.

Health and safety is taken very seriously at the school. Staff work very hard to provide boarders with a safe nurturing environment in which to live. This is achieved through an excellent risk assessment process. Risk assessments are seen as living documents and must be so to be effective. Fire safety is also well managed and supported by clear records.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

Leadership and management at the school is outstanding. Boarding is at the heart of the school and has a very high profile. The boarding provision is managed by a fully committed and enthusiastic team which have the boarders well-being at the core of their work. They have high expectations for the boarders and work tirelessly with the boarding team for the boarders to achieve these. Leaders of the boarding provision also have high expectations of themselves and the staff team. They see this as a key component to the boarders reaching their potential. The boarding team are extremely driven and focused on providing a high quality effective service to the boarders they care for. They have a 'can do' attitude and are always thinking 'what more can we do'. This includes a commitment to the evaluation and reflection of their current practices and work. They scrutinise these as useful and part of the school development processes. These evaluations are robust and provide a realistic picture of the school. Information gathered from these exercises form part of the schools development plans.

Senior boarding staff are exceptionally experienced and well trained for their roles. Despite being in post for a considerable time they remain committed and enthusiastic about their work. The staff team speak very highly of these individuals. They praise them for their support, extensive knowledge which they are keen to share and their approachability.

The staff team are extremely committed to their work and are well trained for this. Staff training is given a high profile as it equips staff with the skills they need to work with very vulnerable boarders. The training programme for staff is excellent and is kept under review so that it meets not only the needs of the current group of boarders but also addresses any developments in their sector and the boarders increasing complex needs.

There are excellent opportunities for staff to receive both formal and informal supervision from their managers and each other. This approach has resulted in a cohesive, well-trained staff team who provide excellent consistency of care for the boarders. It also enables the staff to develop as workers and be proactive in their thinking and approach.

The staff team are excellent communicators. This is especially true in their communication with parents and carers. Recent consultation was full of praise for the boarding team. Parents felt their regular updates gave them a thorough understanding of the work the school was doing with their child and how they were responding. Parents also praised staff for the support they gave them.

The school provides pupils, parents, carers and staff with comprehensive documentation which clearly explains the aims and objectives of the provision. These provide an accurate reflection of current practices.

All the required policies and procedures are in place and reflect current practice.

At the last inspection there was a recommendation for the supervision of the head of care to be formalised and structured. This recommendation had now been met.

All of the national minimum standards have been met with the vast majority being exceeded.

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	116635
Social care unique reference number	SC012029
DfE registration number	850/7067

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	
Number of boarders on roll	
Gender of boarders	
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Mr Paul Van Walwyk
Date of previous boarding inspection	10/02/2014
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