

Wilds Lodge School

Stamford Road, Empingham, Oakham LE15 8QQ

Inspection dates

17–19 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Not applicable
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders have successfully removed the barriers to learning for pupils. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Senior leaders of both education and care are committed to ensuring that the pupils' needs are always at the heart of the school's work. Consequently, the school continues to improve and pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Teachers take account of the individual needs of the pupils to motivate them successfully to learn.
- The quality of care provided by all members of staff is outstanding. The staff know the pupils well and understand their complex needs. Pupils feel safe.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed extremely well. The staff have high expectations and constantly reinforce class rules. Pupils remain focused on their learning in the classrooms.
- The leadership of post-16 provision is outstanding. There are excellent links with colleges to ensure that pupils can study a wide range of courses. Almost all pupils complete their qualifications.
- To improve the school's work further, leaders should ensure that all safeguarding records are consistently of the highest standard.
- Teachers should consistently check that pupils are punctuating their writing across the curriculum.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve safeguarding procedures by:
 - ensuring that all records match those of the highest quality
 - further developing the meetings between the pupils and the staff following a physical restraint by including the views of the pupils regarding the physical hold
 - ensuring that the administration of medicines policy reflects the exemplary practice of the staff.
- To ensure that all the staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' written work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision	Outstanding
How well children and young people are protected in the residential provision	Good

- The senior leaders are highly ambitious and committed to ensuring that the pupils achieve the best possible outcomes. The proprietor has successfully led the school since its opening and is continuing to inspire both staff and pupils to aim high. He is well supported by the talented heads of education and care, and their deputies. As a senior leadership team, they monitor and evaluate the school's work accurately to ensure that the school continues to improve and to achieve the highest possible standards for the pupils. Recently, pupils have been very successful in their GCSE examinations and vocational studies in a wide variety of subjects.
- Senior leaders are very focused on providing the highest quality of care for pupils. They are aspirational and are always looking to improve their work. As a result, the pupils' needs are always at the centre of plans and of practice. The care provided by all members of staff is outstanding.
- The residential provision is effectively managed to a high standard. The leadership team take particular pride in the maintenance of the building, the quality of the furnishings and of attending to all health and safety matters. The building is immaculately clean and the exterior grounds are beautifully maintained. Consequently, the pupils highly respect their accommodation and the school buildings. The pupils' conduct around the school is excellent.
- The leadership team strongly promotes the professional development of all staff. Recent training has focused on autistic spectrum disorder, e-safety, first aid, sensory education and how to conduct lesson observations. In addition, there are excellent opportunities for staff to develop to become teachers or to study at a higher level. The quality of teaching and care continues to improve. The school has recently received 'Autism Accreditation' by the National Autistic Society for meeting the needs of pupils who have autistic spectrum disorder.
- All staff who completed the questionnaire said that leaders use professional development to challenge and support teachers' improvement. Through the performance management process, leaders set appropriate targets for teachers and use the teachers' standards to judge a teacher's performance. The quality of teaching remains outstanding. Staff morale is high.
- Pupils benefit from the therapeutic approach to education that the school provides. The head of therapy is inspirational. She leads this expanding team of staff to tailor programmes to meet the individual needs of pupils. The pupils' social and emotional development is supported well and as a result their self-esteem rises.
- The pupils understand British values and show a deep understanding of people's different characteristics. The school has recently hosted a transgender day and pupils had the

opportunity to discuss related issues during assemblies. The pupils are very respectful of people's different sexual orientation.

- The school leaders closely track the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and emotional development. The pupils have had the opportunity to visit a synagogue, a church and a mosque to deepen their understanding of different faiths. In addition, pupils celebrate Diwali and Chinese New Year to ensure that they are knowledgeable of different religions and cultures.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and exciting. The school provides a range of academic courses and vocational courses to meet the needs of individual pupils. Vocational courses include mechanical construction, animal care and public services. All pupils have the opportunity to complete the bronze award for the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Pupils also have the opportunity to study the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at GCSE as well as Spanish, computer science and statistics. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as the most able pupils.
- The vast majority of parents are highly supportive of the school. One parent wrote: 'Since our son moved to this school he has made massive progress, not just academically but emotionally and socially.' Another parent wrote: 'Wilds Lodge has proved to be more than just a school for my son and the whole family.'
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for residential special schools have been met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The staff are well trained and are highly vigilant to meet the needs of the pupils. The risk assessments for each pupil are continually updated to meet their needs and are highly effective. The environmental health and safety needs are well met and this reduces the risk of any harm to all.
- The safeguarding policy is available on the school's website. The most recent policy includes the latest guidance from the government.
- The school works closely with parents and carers if there is a concern about their child and staff take prompt action to resolve issues.
- The pupils know that they can't access inappropriate material from the internet and that their usage of the internet is closely monitored.
- The school staff are trained and aware of the potential risks of peer-to-peer abuse. The staff are vigilant and do not hesitate to report concerns to external agencies.
- All the staff have had 'Prevent' training, which helps to inform them if pupils are in potential danger of being radicalised.
- The staff work closely with a range of external agencies, including local authorities, social care and health professionals, to meet the needs of the pupils. The subsequent actions by the staff are recorded, but, occasionally, the actions were not recorded on the main safeguarding log to ensure that all records reflect the full detail of actions taken.
- Physical restraint is used when necessary. Each incident is reviewed with the pupil to find

out how it can be avoided in the future. The staff are very proactive in finding the causes of poor behaviour. Pupils feel listened to. However, the discussions following any physical restraint incidents have not specifically included the pupils' reaction to the physical hold.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and communicate this effectively to the pupils. The teachers plan interesting lessons which inspire the pupils to learn. They take into account the individual needs of pupils and tailor the lessons to meet their needs. As one pupil said: 'They remove the obstacles to learning.'
- The most able pupils are challenged well. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson, pupils were learning how to convert different currencies to pounds. The teacher quickly challenged the pupils to calculate more difficult problem-solving questions and to explain how they worked out their answers. Consequently, the pupils' mathematical reasoning skills were being developed well.
- The teachers ask challenging questions to ensure that the pupils understand what they have learned. In a science lesson, the teacher asked a pupil to explain scientifically why an insect landing on a piece of fruit may be unhygienic. The pupils were engrossed in their learning about viruses and bacteria and remained focused throughout the lesson on their learning.
- Teachers demonstrate high expectations of pupils' behaviour. On the infrequent occasions when individual pupils are not focused, the teachers remind the pupils of the class rules and skilfully ensure that the lesson continues to enable the pupils to learn. The pupils respect the teachers and there is a positive learning environment in all classrooms.
- The school promotes reading well. The school teaches phonics to those pupils who need help to develop their reading. The reading bus has a wide range of good-quality fiction books, for example books by Phillip Pullman and Michael Morpurgo, to inspire the pupils to read. Individual support is provided to those pupils who need extra support and, as a result, they make accelerated progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of art is promoted well in key stage 2. Pupils were observed making Viking brooches and constructing a Viking building replicating wattle and daub. The pupils were highly engrossed in this activity and learned how to make the walls waterproof, like the Vikings. Their knowledge of historical events was further consolidated through the teacher using a timeline to develop pupils' chronological understanding of British history.
- The school has an established assessment system to track the pupils' progress. There are regular opportunities for teachers to assess and for pupils to take tests which then inform them how the pupils are achieving. The teachers use this information to tailor the curriculum to meet the individual needs of the pupils, ensuring that they are studying the most appropriate courses in key stage 4 and in the sixth form.
- There are a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities for the pupils to participate in. Some examples of clubs are: textiles; fitness; poetry/reading; multi-sports; pottery; and drama. This inspires the pupils to take an interest in their learning and achieve well.
- In English lessons, pupils learn grammatical techniques to improve their writing. Pupils in Year 10 have used ambitious vocabulary and personification, for example, 'The clouds

seemed to show anger', to develop their writing. However, not all teachers are consistently checking that pupils are using the correct punctuation in their writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The pupils quickly gain self-confidence due to the encouragement and support of the staff. Consequently, the pupils are settled and are interested in their learning. The pupils ask questions and readily ask for support if it is required. The staff are skilled not to give the pupils the answers straight away, but to offer more support to enable the pupils to work out solutions. Consequently, the pupils have a good understanding of how to be a successful learner. Many pupils are experiencing success as a learner for the first time.
- The pupils' physical development is promoted well. Indoor and outdoor gymnasiums encourage the pupils to stay fit. Pupils also have the opportunity to participate in regular swimming lessons.
- The school's cook is very proactive in ensuring that the pupils' diet is healthy. Pupils have opportunities to express their feedback about the food. The staff eat their school lunches with the pupils, which makes for a harmonious atmosphere where pupils and staff sit and talk to each other. Pupils enjoy eating the food that is served.
- The support for pupils' emotional well-being is outstanding. The staff know the pupils extremely well and encourage the pupils to express their feelings and put in support to ease their anxieties. Consequently, pupils begin to make excellent progress with their personal development.
- The nurture group in key stage 2 allows pupils to learn academically and socially. Pupils learn to cooperate with each other under close guidance from the staff. Pupils have made very strong progress from their starting points and are accessing more learning opportunities.
- The staff promote the school's values. During an assembly, the pupils listened attentively to a video clip of the feelings of people who couldn't forgive, and of those who could forgive. The curriculum allows opportunities for pupils to explore these values further to enable pupils to become thoughtful and to develop positive relationships with each other.
- The school is very proactive in teaching the pupils about the potential dangers of being online. Recently, the police came into school to talk about the potential harmful consequences of speaking to strangers over the internet. This was a powerful message for the pupils to hear. It had a strong impact on the pupils' understanding of the potential dangers of being online.
- The pupils say bullying is rare, but if they report an incident, the staff deal with it efficiently. They say there is good communication between the teachers and the care staff and very quickly people know about the issue and are determined to resolve it.
- The pupils receive impartial careers advice as well as support from the school staff. The school makes every effort to make contact with the transitions officers in the placing local authorities. If this is not possible, the school purchases careers advice from the private

sector. The school supports pupils' transition into college through accompanying them on taster days to help pupils become familiar with their potential new setting. All pupils who were in Year 11 last year transferred into higher education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The pupils' individual needs are assessed upon their arrival and regularly reviewed. For some pupils, participating in a classroom environment has been difficult prior to arriving at Wilds Lodge. Through receiving close support and encouragement from the staff, the pupils learn to participate in the classroom and enjoy good relationships with the teachers and the support staff. Consequently, pupils' conduct in the classroom improves rapidly and they want to learn.
- The staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively. They know the pupils well and can diffuse any potential problems before they arise. Support staff also carefully gauge how the pupils are feeling towards their learning and act quickly to prevent misbehaviour.
- The school environment is very calm and orderly. The rooms are immaculate and the pupils respect their environment greatly.
- Pupils' attendance is high. It is well above the latest national average for special schools and improving further. The staff closely monitor attendance and work closely with social care, local authorities and the police if they have concerns about a pupil's attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make strong progress in English and mathematics from often low starting points. In 2016, the overall progress for both subjects was outstanding. Pupils achieved a range of qualifications up to GCSE, and the most able achieved highly. Current progress also shows that most pupils are making rapid progress from their starting points in these subjects.
- The range of qualifications that pupils achieve has expanded in recent years. Five students passed statistics GCSE last year. Pupils can study a range of subjects, including Spanish, computing and sport studies. The school's current tracking shows most pupils are on track to achieve their targets.
- The most able pupils are challenged well in lessons and have been successful in their GCSE examinations.
- There are a wide range of vocational courses that pupils can choose to study. These include metal work, motor vehicle repair and maintenance, construction, catering and animal care. The school has close links with several colleges to support students on placements. The support workers from the school communicate the pupils' needs effectively on a day-to-day basis. This enables the pupils to quickly settle into college and to study for qualifications, such as ASDAN and City and Guilds. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment. The retention rates on college courses is high. The large majority of pupils achieve at least one qualification.
- The pupils are making good progress in their science. Pupils can study for GCSE and staff support pupils studying at A level. Pupils enjoy science and remain focused for sustained periods of time. The pupils in Year 9 investigated states of matter accurately and used the

correct scientific vocabulary to explain their results. The pupils' work in their folders demonstrates a consistent high level of challenge.

- Pupils achieve well in physical education. During a gymnastics session, pupils jumped over a vault. Pupils benefit from excellent feedback by teachers and strive to improve their performance. The most able pupils performed their vaults to a very high standard.
- The outcomes for pupils are at the centre of the education, health and care plans or statements for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that these outcomes remain the focus for everyone who teaches and cares for the pupils. The outcomes are broken down into small steps in the learning pathways and the coordinator carefully tracks the progress the pupils are making towards their targets. If a pupil is not on track, additional support is provided to meet the pupils' needs. As a result, pupils make strong progress from their starting points.
- The education, care and health plans of pupils who are looked after are carefully monitored to ensure that this group of pupils make strong progress. The school staff are acutely aware of the potential barriers to learning for this group of pupils and work closely together to devise individualised timetables to meet the pupils' needs. The school's current tracking shows some pupils in this group are making better progress than others. Leaders are constantly reviewing the extra support provided to this group of pupils to ensure that all are making good progress.

Early years provision

**Insufficient evidence –
amnesty granted**

- The school has never had children in the early years on roll.

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- Teaching and learning are highly individualised and based on secure initial assessments of learners' needs and learning characteristics. Ongoing assessments track the progress of the learners to ensure that they are on target to reach the outcomes expected. The learners appreciate the support they receive and make strong progress from their starting points.
- The leader of the sixth form is very effective. He works closely with his small staff team to ensure that the learners are well prepared for higher education, and develop the skills needed to live independently and to keep healthy. The excellent relationships between the staff and the learners enable these aims to be realised. The learners are articulate and engage in the learning positively.
- There are similar high expectations for learners who choose vocational courses at AQA unit level as well as for those learners who study subjects at A level. Both academic courses and vocational courses are equally effective at meeting the needs of learners. Students studying metalwork are very confident at moulding and rolling metal. The school uses local colleges to enrol learners onto some A-level courses and supports the learners back at school with extra tuition. The school also teaches learners at A level, for example, mathematics.

- As part of the core curriculum, learners study life skills. In one lesson observed, learners participated in an informative discussion about what to do if there was a fire. The staff supported learners to complete written answers to questions. All learners participated fully in the lesson and achieved well. Through studying the course, learners have become more confident as members of the school community.
- The effectiveness of careers advice and guidance is outstanding. The staff support learners to gain work experience as well as during the application process for a place at college. The school has very strong links with colleges and monitors how well the learners are doing. Analysis of the destinations of leavers from the sixth form show the large majority of learners have successfully engaged in further education, training or employment. All learners in the current sixth form are making good progress and have transition plans in place.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision

Outstanding

- The residential facilities are excellent. The accommodation is well organised and run for the benefit of the pupils. The buildings and the grounds are extremely impressive and scrupulously clean.
- The pupils' safety and well-being are prioritised. The pupils are happy and enjoy the residential experience. They have numerous opportunities to take part in activities which are stimulating and support their personal development.
- The relationships between the staff and the pupils are excellent. The pupils know the staff are there for them and are very comfortable seeking support and nurture from the staff.
- The feedback from the pupils, parents and social workers is very positive. One parent became tearful when expressing the positive impact the school has had on her son.
- All pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit each summer. Last year some pupils visited Barcelona. The pupils enjoy these trips and they support their personal development.
- The facilities to support the sixth form learners to live more independently are excellent.

Quality of care and support in the residential provision

Outstanding

- The staff know the pupils extremely well. The therapeutic approach supports the pupils' emotional development. Therapists for speech and language, music and dance provide bespoke programmes to meet the needs of individual pupils. The support helps pupils to understand their own emotions and leads the pupils to start to self-regulate their emotions and behaviour. This in turn opens up broader opportunities for the pupils within the school and at home.
- The daily house meeting allows the pupils to express their views about the day. The pupils know if they have a concern they can share it at these meetings and the staff will

act to resolve any issues. Consequently, there is a high level of respect between the pupils and the staff.

- The pupils' health requirements are met. The school nurse knows the pupils' medical needs well and has put in place all the necessary arrangements to meet the complex health needs of some pupils. Staff manage the administration of medicines very well. However, the school's policy does not reflect in enough detail the procedures that staff follow.
- The support provided by the catering team to meet the needs of the pupils is excellent. They promote healthy eating and, for example, create imaginative shapes out of fruit to inspire the pupils to eat healthily.
- The work by staff to engage the pupils in their learning is very good. Staff accompany pupils horse-riding, in the sensory room or when undertaking construction activities. Consequently, pupils learn to stay engaged on a task for a sustained amount of time.

School details

Unique reference number	134938
Social care unique reference number	SC069231
DfE registration number	857/6005
Inspection number	10026049

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of residential provision 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	Other independent special school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	88
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	13
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	65
Proprietor	Wilds Lodge School Ltd
Headteacher	Robin Lee
Annual fees (day pupils)	£55,000
Annual fees (boarders)	£85,000
Telephone number	01780 767254
Website	www.wildslodgeschool.co.uk
Email address	office@wildslodgeschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–20 March 2014

Information about this school

- Wilds Lodge School is a residential and day special school which makes provision for up to 105 boys aged between five and 19 years.
- The school is situated on two large rural residential sites with residential and teaching accommodation in very attractive buildings and grounds near Rutland Water. The second site has facilities for vocational courses, science, physical education and art. A third site in Stamford provides residential accommodation for learners in the sixth form.
- The school opened in January 2007 and there are currently 88 pupils on roll, of whom 65 are boarders.
- All the pupils and learners have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan to address their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. One in 11 pupils are looked after by their local authority.
- The school provides a therapeutic approach to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of the pupils. It aims to create a positive climate for learning with high standards of care and education.
- The school uses Brooksby Melton College as an alternative provider for a small group of pupils.
- This was an integrated inspection of the school's educational and residential provision.
- The previous integrated inspection took place in March 2014 and the last social care inspection took place in February 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a variety of lessons, lunchtime arrangements and after-school care. Some lessons were observed jointly with senior members of staff and inspectors observed the feedback to the teachers. Inspectors held discussions with pupils, the proprietor, senior members of staff and staff linked to education and care. Inspectors held telephone conversations with representatives from a college and placing local authorities.
- Questionnaires were completed by 83 members of staff and these were considered with the six responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's free text service. In addition, phone calls and discussions were held with three parents and carers. There were too few responses to Parent View for the views to be published.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; the school's most recent information on pupil achievement; and information relating to teaching, performance management, curriculum planning, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors also toured the premises and checked health and safety requirements were met.

Inspection team

Martin Finch, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Young	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Timms	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Caroline Brailsford	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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