

# Wennington Hall School

Wennington Hall School, Lodge Lane, Wennington, Lancaster LA2 8NS

<b>Inspection dates</b>	06/12/2016 to 08/12/2016	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of care and support	Inadequate	4
How well children and young people are protected	Inadequate	4
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is inadequate because

- Temporary arrangements to cover the absent head of care and deputy means there is a lack of effective leadership within the care staff team
- There have been significant changes in school and residential leadership since September 2016. This includes an acting head who is driving improvement and overcoming historical shortfalls.
- The designated safeguarding leads (DSL) have recently been appointed and are now taking responsibility for their duty to refer allegations of concern. However, a review of previous safeguarding concerns prior to their appointment is required to ensure that suitable action has been taken to safeguard individual children.
- School governance in relation to safeguarding students is inconsistent. The lead governor for safeguarding is unclear about their designated responsibilities and duties.
- Restraint records in the residential provision show that warnings are not given to young people and de-escalation techniques are not always used. There is an element of compliance restraint evident, where physical intervention is used to ensure that students comply with staff instruction.
- Care and control records have been countersigned by the 'duty officer'. Records for the September 2016 term have not been signed off by a member of the leadership team. There is no evidence of routine review by the designated safeguarding leads in school or the lead governor for safeguarding to check for any trends or patterns in

restraint practice.

- The independent visitor's monitoring reports refer to the presence of records of sanctions; restraints and allegations. However, there is no analysis or evaluation of the content of these records.
- Pupils understand the school's behaviour management system of 'restrictions'. If a student, has eight or more 'restrictions' due to identified poor behaviour, (the boys refer to it as being naughty); these pupils cannot return to their family home on a Friday night. This is not an appropriate sanction for children in the residential accommodation. Furthermore, records are unclear about when this sanction takes place or the frequency of such a sanction.
- A positive aspect of the behaviour-management system is that pupils can earn 'privilege bedrooms'. Due to occupancy levels in the residential houses and a limited number of privilege bed spaces, occupants move in and out of the rooms within each term. This means that there is little ownership of personal bed space or security for pupils relating to whom they will share bedrooms with.
- Controlled drugs were decanted away from the original pharmacy storage box. Thus, staff did not have sight of the pharmacist's instructions regarding the prescription. The school ceased the secondary dispensing of controlled drugs during the inspection once the practice was highlighted.
- There is a lack of awareness and recording of individual risk assessment and management for pupils. Despite records referencing self-harming, children going missing, pupils needing restraint, and bullying, there are no specific risk management techniques for individual pupils who present with needs in relation to these issues.
- Pupils enjoy a wide choice of on and off-site activities that help them to develop skills and interests to improve their understanding of society and make a positive contribution to their futures.
- Although there are individual care plans (ICP's) for young people, they record need in relation to what the staff do for the young person. Progress for young people is not routinely measured against input from their residential experience.
- The school could not provide any records of the previous head's annual review of boarding to demonstrate constructive review and challenge for the residential provision.

## **Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools**

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:

■ **NMS 3: Health and Wellbeing**

**3.1** Children's physical, emotional and social development needs are promoted

**3.6** The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of children who are unwell, and ensures that children's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing is promoted. These include administration of medicines (including controlled drugs) and dealing with medical emergencies. Policies for administration of medication should reflect guidance provided by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (Handling of Medicines in Social Care).

**3.7** Suitable accommodation, including toilet and washing facilities, are provided in order to cater for the needs of children who are sick or injured.

**3.12** Where necessary, a child has a clear individual health and welfare plan or similar record, containing relevant health and welfare information provided by parents/carers and recording significant health and welfare needs and issues. This record should be agreed by parents/carers and include health monitoring required by staff.

■ **NMS 5: Residential accommodation**

**5.1** Suitable sleeping accommodation is provided for children. It is well organised and managed with risk assessments undertaken and the findings acted upon to reduce risk for all children.

■ **NMS 11: Child protection**

**11.1** The school ensures that:

- arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school; and
- such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

■ **NMS 12: Promoting positive behaviour and relationships**

**12.1** The school consistently implements their written policy on managing behaviour, including promoting good behaviour. This policy includes:

- measures to combat bullying, including cyberbullying, and to promote positive behaviour;
- disciplinary sanctions;
- when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed;

**12.4** Methods to de-escalate confrontations or potentially challenging behaviour are used wherever appropriate to avoid use of restraint, including reasonable force. Restraint, including reasonable force, is only used in exceptional circumstances, to prevent injury to any person, including the child, or to prevent serious damage to the property of any person, including the child's, or to prevent the child leaving the school's premises where this may lead to the child injuring themselves or others. Restraint in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate.

**12.5** All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) within 24 hours incidents of restraint, including reasonable force, they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by.

**12.6** A written record is kept of major sanctions (including punitive bedroom changes and prevention of home leave on Friday nights), and the use of any reasonable force. Records include the information in Appendix 2 (use of reasonable force). The record is

made within 24 hours and is legible. Children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records. The school regularly reviews any instances of the use of reasonable force and examines trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and learn in a way that will inform future practice.

■ **NMS 13: Leadership and management**

**13.1** The school's governing body monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.

**13.2** There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of residential and care provision in the school.

**13.3** The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, particularly in regard of the safeguarding governor.

**13.4** The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.

**13.6** Staff with management responsibilities have an adequate level of experience or training in the management and practice of boarding to ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted.

**13.9** The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, particularly records of major sanctions, the use of reasonable force, and child protection issues and safeguarding referrals, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.

■ **NMS 15: Staff deployment and supervision of children**

**15.1** There is a sufficient number of competent staff deployed appropriately, both as a staff group and on individual shifts, to fulfil the school's Statement of Purpose and meet the individual needs of all children resident in the school.

**15.2** Records should be kept of staff working in the school demonstrate sufficient competent staff are deployed and that contingency plans are in place in the event of a shortfall in staffing levels.

**15.3** There are clear arrangements for suitably experienced staff to deputise in the absence of the head of care that provide appropriate continuity of oversight and promote the development of the residential provision.

- **15.7** There is continuity of staff such that children's relationships are not overly disrupted.

■ **NMS 19: Staff supervision, training and support**

**19.1** Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school.

**19.4** The learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and is updated if necessary.

**19.6** All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance.

■ **NMS 20: Monitoring by independent visitors**

**20.2** Most independent monitoring visits include:

- checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for

children;

- evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded;
- opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish).

**20.3** Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the head teacher and where applicable the governing body, organisation, or partnership. Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body), within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary. Monitoring reports should be retained by the school and made available during an inspection.

**20.4** The head teacher (or school equivalent), governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school carries out, and records in writing, once each year:

- a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for boarding pupils, in relation to:
  - its Statement of Purpose;
  - its staffing policy;
  - the placement plans for individual children; and
  - an internal assessment of its compliance with these standards.

Where appropriate such a report may be incorporated within a review of the whole school.

## ■ **NMS 21: Placement planning and review**

**21.1** The school's written placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development.

## ■ **NMS 22: Records**

**22.1** Every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress which can be read by the child at any time (except where the data controller is not obliged to supply the information to the child), and add personal statements or statements correcting errors.

**22.2** Each child's file includes in sufficient detail the information in Appendix 2 (individual records), particularly major sanctions, the use of reasonable force, complaints and risk assessments as appropriate.

**22.4** The school keeps a register showing duty rosters recording the identities of the staff and other persons who actually worked at the school or with children from the school, by day and night.

The above records are retained for at least 5 years from the date of the last entry.

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

Due to the inadequate judgement across all outcome areas there were no specific additional areas identified at this inspection.

## Information about this inspection

The school was contacted on the morning of day one by the lead inspector to announce the inspection. The inspection took place over three days with final feedback provided on day three. Two inspectors were present for all three days, and a third inspector joined the team on day three. Inspection activities included: observation of boarding practice and activities; formal and informal interaction with residential pupils; meetings and discussions with the acting head teacher, designated safeguarding lead, team leaders, residential workers, school business manager, chair of governors and the governor responsible for safeguarding, and parents.

Feedback was obtained from the local safeguarding authority. Inspectors were aware during this inspection that lines of enquiry of a safeguarding nature were being followed up by the maintaining authority. The resulting audit report has not yet been issued to or shared with the school. However, it is clear that the authority has unresolved lines of enquiry regarding the school's ability to keep young people safe.

This inspection was conducted at the same time as Her Majesty's Inspectors were inspecting the education element of the school.

## Inspection team

Denise Jolly	Lead social care inspector
Sarah Oldham	Social care inspector
Karen Forster (day three)	Social care inspector (RIM)

# **Full report**

## **Information about this school**

A local authority administers the school. The school provides an environment that can support 77 boys of secondary school age, from 11 years to 16 years old, on a residential or day basis. Pupils using the services provided at the school have experienced some difficulties associated with their academic, social, emotional or behavioural development. The school provides a 38 week programme of education with residential pupils, in the main, spending weekends at home or with their carers. Pupils reside within five houses located in the school grounds.

## Inspection judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Inadequate**

Young people say they enjoy their time in the residential provision. Those spoken to, say that they get on well with staff, and most say that they enjoy the social aspect of staying at school. New arrangements within the senior leadership team have only been in place since the start of the autumn term 2016, and the positive impact of these changes is yet to be fully realised. Due to the absence of a designated Head of Care, there is a lack of effective leadership within the care staff team. There are mixed accounts of how and why pupils develop and progress as a result of their residential experience. While some parents and professionals attribute individual progress to the school's provision, some individuals voice concerns that undermine pupils' outcomes and safety while they are resident. A number of these concerns were under investigation at the time of the inspection and the full extent of any impact on pupils remains unknown.

Pupils have access to positive activities which they readily engage with while in residence. By doing so, they build improved repertoires of alternative activities and experiences that help them to make positive choices and gradually improve their outcomes. Older pupils enjoy opportunities to stay in the independence house for two weeks, as preparation for their future independence. Many pupils were participating in work-experience opportunities during the inspection, mostly in their home areas, to build links for future employment. Other pupils remained at school, taking on work responsibilities under the guidance of teaching staff. They were proud of their achievements, saying that this helped them to think about productive employment in the future.

The school has undertaken pupil surveys in the past, although these have not been completed since the recent change of management. There has been limited independent review of how this survey was administered and responded to so that young people might see the impact of their views and suggestions on the quality of care being provided. Nevertheless, pupils provided examples of when staff listened to them and responded to their needs, such as supporting them in a trial experience of staying away from home, but also listening non-judgementally when they felt it was not for them.

All residential pupils receive their education at the onsite school. The education inspection was completed jointly with this social care inspection, and found that educational outcomes require improvement. The team report that behaviour in school is good and pupil's social and wider development is rapid. The full report regarding the educational features of the school is available on Ofsted's website and should be read in conjunction with this report.

Despite the positive improvements made since September 2016, and ongoing commitment to continue this progress, safeguarding is inadequate. Serious shortfalls in residential practice, including issues in relation to the physical intervention programme; medication; incentives; sanctions and past handling of disclosures and allegations all contribute to an outcome of welfare not being consistently promoted or safeguarded.



Requirements in safeguarding statutory guidance that relate to the job description of the school leader responsible for safeguarding; have not been met over time. Some personnel are unsure of the requirements of government statutory guidance, such as 'Working together to safeguard children', including, for example, which professionals are responsible for child protection and managing allegations against staff.

Temporary leaders and managers are doing their best to tackle an historical lack of attention to weaknesses. Furthermore, the absence of the head of care and deputy head of care has not been adequately covered. This has impeded the rate at which the issues can be identified and addressed, despite the current leadership team's considerable commitment to positively addressing known concerns. Staff say that the acting head is instrumental in encouraging open dialogue about concerns; has set up more effective arrangements for the newly appointed designated safeguarding lead to have clearer reporting systems; has enabled greater access for staff to training resources; and is providing staff with effective feedback about practical matters such as terms and conditions.

### **The quality of care and support**

### **Inadequate**

Most pupils said that they enjoy staying at school and like the varied activity programme on offer. Inspectors observed respectful and positive interactions between pupils and staff and pupils that were observed, were at ease in their residential houses. However, the shortfalls identified such as, low staffing levels; pupils not receiving the correct medication; the practice of changing bedrooms; and the lack of robust oversight of the quality of care planning by managers and leaders have all been taken into account. Due to the inadequacies identified, and their actual and potential impact on pupils, the quality of care and support for young people is judged as inadequate.

Some staff are absent from work, and this has resulted in staff shortages that have not been rectified. Staff say that this has stretched their ability to offer their usual level of proactive care that meets pupil's needs, and means that they often work alone in the houses with boys. Due to poor recording, it is not possible to assess the impact of this beyond staff testimony. There is limited management oversight during evenings. This makes it difficult for staff to receive additional support from colleagues when difficulties arise, to respond to pupil's emerging needs or emergencies. Staff identify that due to inconsistent cover, and despite their best efforts, older pupils are more unsettled because they experience different styles of supervision. One residential worker said that this resulted in more challenge from pupils about their day-to-day routines, and has caused disruption to the smooth running of the house.

There are mixed views about the quality of care provided to children. Information provided by parents during the inspection, from direct conversation and available survey responses noted that staff helped their child to settle in and responded well to concerns about bullying. One pupil's independent reviewing officer said that she had a high opinion of the school because of the progress that she had observed in the behaviour

and sociability of the pupil whom she was reviewing. All parents and carers spoken to during the inspection praised the school for establishing effective communication between them, which enabled their children to make progress. A small number of survey responses and complaints indicate that others are less satisfied with how the school supports positive relationships, one parent stated that their child suffers from being bullied as a result. However, school is addressing all concerns raised with them.

As a result of whistleblowing concerns about standards of care at the school, an investigation was commissioned by the local authority to assess the safety of pupils. The investigation report is critical of the quality of care being provided and identifies similar issues as are identified in this inspection report. The school only received this investigation report during the inspection and has yet to respond with an action plan to address these concerns. More recently, staff whistleblowing complaints have raised some concerns about the quality of relationships within school that are being investigated.

Boys who spoke to an inspector said that their relationships within the the school were generally, 'OK'. An older boy also talked about how he routinely intervenes in disputes between younger boys because staff are not always available. Although most pupils say they have no concerns, due to current limited oversight of the quality of care being provided it is not possible to reach a conclusion regarding the effectiveness of any action that the school is taking to reduce bullying and unhappiness, or the frequency and suitability of peer intervention to maintain order.

Pupils told inspectors that they like the wide range of activities on offer from playing football to go-karting, visits to a dry ski slope, and cycling proficiency. Staff said that the range of off-site activity has diminished this term, due to staffing shortages, although there is still plenty to do. During the inspection, older pupils were excited about playing a football away-match that was part of an external competitive league. It is also clear that other, less sporty activities and competitions were arranged with equal excitement and status, such as console football games, so that others could demonstrate their skills in their favoured leisure pursuits.

Some pupils were able to identify the newly appointed designated safeguarding leads as staff members whom they felt able to go to and confide in. Others said they preferred to talk to staff who they had particular relationships with, while others said that it is not always easy for staff to find time to talk to them. Due to limited senior cover arrangements during residential time, there is no single individual available to support pupils who have serious concerns or complaints; this is exacerbated by low staffing levels although the impact of this is not assessed.

Older pupils enjoy the opportunity to stay in the independence house for a two-week period. This gives them a chance to manage budgets, shop, cook, and make their own leisure and travel arrangements, as preparation for their future independence. Residential houses are well appointed, and there is a programme of refurbishment and repair that ensures that they remain in a comfortable condition. There are kitchen areas that are equipped to enable pupils to make their own breakfast and snacks, and boys said that they sometimes help staff to prepare house meals on the midweek night when they 'stay at house' to enjoy homely activities and relaxation, and a chance to build relationships with key staff. Other meals, served in the school dining hall, are varied and

nutritious, and there is plenty of choice.

The overall number of young people accommodated is within the school's capacity. However, in some houses for older pupils, there is one more pupil designated as living there than there are beds available. This is because one pupil from each house is rotated into the independence house for a two week period. This is a long-term arrangement that pupils see as positive. However, staff expressed concern about these arrangements, saying that despite the benefits of developing independence skills, this means pupils do not have a specific personal sleeping area, or settled roommate, because of the frequent change-around of who is living in each house. One staff member said that some young people find this difficult to manage, but their complaints have been ineffective. It is equally difficult for staff to match compatible young people, to ensure their overnight comfort and safety. There were no records kept of complaints received for inspectors to evaluate. Similarly, in the houses for younger pupils, bedroom occupancy is also not settled, and can change according to risk and behaviour management. This is an ineffective arrangement for young people who have complex behaviours because it lacks stability and consistency.

Due to a limited number of single rooms, one young person is currently sleeping in the medical room as a temporary measure. Until this issue was identified by inspectors, there was no plan in place to review this arrangement; the room is not large enough to enable the young person to store his personal belongings in. Furthermore using the medical room in this way means that there is no facility to isolate any child who may fall ill, which could create infection control hazards and discomfort to them and their roommates. Staff immediately took action to review the arrangements to identify improvement where possible.

Care plans are in place and targets are set jointly between care and education staff and include young people's signatures. However, there is limited recorded description of how the residential support programme supports learning targets, and limited evaluation regarding whether the young person has made progress as a result of their residential experience because their progress is reported through their educational records.

There are good programmes in place to help pupils to improve their health by for example smoking cessation. This includes offering them in-house opportunities for support groups and activities to encourage alternative habits. However, health care plans do not carry all of the information necessary to ensure that all risks are identified and reviewed, such as when young people are at risk of self-harming, or when they are receiving additional support regarding sexual relationships or mental health issues. This fails to support a continuous improvement in their health, social and educational development.

Temporary arrangements for overseeing the administration of medication are unsatisfactory. The role is usually undertaken by the head of care, but it has been temporarily assigned to a team leader who has not undertaken training in the safe administration of medication. Controlled drugs were subject to secondary dispensing, where staff decant medications into containers marked with the 'days of the week'. This practice was rectified during the inspection, so that medication will only be dispensed

from pharmacy boxes, ensuring that the prescription is consistently followed and there is a robust audit trail of all medication.

## **How well children and young people are protected**

## **Inadequate**

Residential pupils live in a school where staff demonstrate poor safeguarding practice. The acting head has made recent changes in personnel at the school who are responsible for overseeing child protection, and this is making a positive difference, but it is very early days, and these staff are new to their role. Boys demonstrated courteous and respectful behaviour during the inspection, and happily engaged with inspectors. The school maintains limited records about student experiences, or the actions that staff take when a student's behaviour requires intervention and support. Managers do not record that they oversee the quality of staff conduct, and fail to help staff to explore the impact of any training or updates that staff receive about child protection matters. When asked by the inspector, 'Are children safe?', staff and governors responded by saying 'Yes', but ascribed this view to a feeling only, because they have no evidence to suggest otherwise. There are ongoing investigations into the conduct of some staff at the school. This means that it is not yet possible to fully assess children's experiences or how well they have been or are being helped and protected.

The quality of accommodation, arrangements for maintaining the property and overall practice for ensuring the routine assessment of risk regarding health and safety are suitable. Evacuation procedures are practised by all, to ensure that young people know what to do in an emergency. The movement of young people around the extensive site is overseen by staff so that they arrive where they should be at appropriate times. One parent said that when their child was new to school, this approach helped him to find his way around, and this helped him to settle in well. The fleet of school minibuses is maintained according to an arrangement with the local authority. However, the site manager does not keep records of staff involved in minor accidents, and this means that individual staff suitability to drive is not reviewed, to ensure that young people are safely transported at all times.

The new designated safeguarding lead and second support have undertaken appropriate training, consulted with the local authority school safeguarding officer, and worked hard to improve the systems and processes in place to respond effectively to any child protection concerns that have arisen. Their impact is making a positive difference to how some children have been supported to access appropriate help, such as securing a mental health assessment, or reporting an incident of peer abuse to ensure that the situation was managed by appropriate external professionals. However, the records of these events are not clear enough to capture all of the actions taken and decisions made about children's welfare and safety. A new system had been set up following a recommendation at the last inspection, and although the system had not been overseen to ensure that it had improved safeguarding practice, they were able to demonstrate that this has been implemented since their appointment, to ensure continuous improvement. There is also a backlog of records about previous concerns that the school has yet to review, to identify any actions that may be necessary. This is due in part, to the designated lead's inexperience in their role, time constraints due to the responsibilities of the post not being recognised in their job descriptions, and poor

historical oversight by leaders and managers of the records and their role.

Until the inspection identified the shortfall, staff relied only on verbal instructions to manage risks posed to and by children involved in child protection concerns. The safeguarding leads rectified this immediately during the inspection by creating an innovative system of written instruction and risk management for children who are currently causing serious concern. However, individual risk assessments for other young people are not in place. For example, staff expressed concern, saying that they decide on bedroom-sharing arrangements by taking into account known behaviour, risk and compatibility where they can, but are also limited by available space and the movement of boy's sleeping arrangements throughout the term. Staff advised that they manage the risks posed by one young person to other pupils by choosing a roommate for him who does not undress in front of him, so that he is not exposed to messages he may misunderstand. This situation fails to ensure that pupils are safe from the behaviour of other pupils resulting in children being placed at risk.

Arrangements for independent oversight of the safety and welfare of pupils are inadequate. The school safeguarding governor acknowledged that he did not understand the extent of his responsibilities, and limited his oversight to reading and signing off behaviour management records. He does not maintain any written review of these records, to demonstrate that he has examined and challenged their content, and he has not reviewed any records since September 2016. He has not attended any child protection training since 2014. The independent visitor to the residential provision similarly records in her report that she has seen records of complaints and behaviour management, but does not provide any evaluation of their content. She advised the inspector that on one occasion she failed to include in her report a concern about staff conduct that she had verbally reported to the previous head teacher. She said that she has no knowledge of statutory guidance such as 'Keeping children safe in education', or 'Working together to safeguard children'. She said that she has had no training in child protection, and is not fully aware of the responsibilities of her role. She has had limited contact with pupils during her visits, although she has recently advertised her role to boys during a school assembly, to improve their interaction with her. Reports of her half-termly visits are not presented to the governing body for their oversight. Together with an absence of any residential management review of safeguarding, this means that there is no meaningful or developmental review of staff practice, to improve children's safety and well-being.

There are suitable procedures in place for the selection and vetting of staff prior to employment. Governors have more recently taken appropriate action to respond to, and report concerns about staff practice. External professionals have been involved in investigations arising from complaints and grievances, but this process is yet to be concluded.

Pupils say that they have a clear understanding of the rules and expectations of the school, and work towards a points system to earn privileges and rewards. They say that this motivates them to follow the rules of school, and this in turn helps their behaviour to improve. One young person said, 'you do as you are told, shut up when you are told, and you can earn and keep the right to sleep in one of the 'privilege rooms'. These rooms have a range of additional facilities like a small kitchen, personal games console

or private bathroom. He said that this privilege is lost for demonstrating 'naughty behaviour', such as 'swearing or fighting'. As a result of this sanction, boys change bedrooms. Staff do not keep clear records of these sanctions, nor could they find records of sanctions such as when a child remains at school on Friday evenings, instead of going home. Staff report that this is a rarely-used measure. It has not been used since the change in leadership in September 2016, although one boy has stayed on one Friday night as a supportive arrangement when his family situation became fraught. Nevertheless, this limits any understanding of how effective these sanctions are, whether they are appropriate or proportionate, or whether they help boys to understand the impact of their behaviour to enable them to make positive change in their decisions and choices.

Records of physical behaviour management remain vague and largely anecdotal. They fail to demonstrate that staff adopt a proportionate response to children's behaviour, employ de-escalation techniques, or respond to the emotional needs of children as a means of avoiding restraint. For example, records state that one young person was restrained for attempting to push past staff, one was forcibly removed from equipment when he failed to respond in class to a staff request to do so, and another was restrained for demonstrating increasingly upset behaviour when homesick at night time. Not all records are signed off by the young person involved, and there is no debrief for children who may have witnessed an incident. There is limited evidence that managers seek to clarify staff accounts, or challenge staff actions. Staff say that they intervene with kindness and proportionality, but this is not evident from the records. Independent oversight of the records is poor, with no monitoring of records since September 2016, and no evaluation of previous monitoring by the safeguarding governor or the independent visitor. Managers do not identify any trends and patterns arising from restraint, to inform and develop future practice. This leaves pupils at risk of continuing unsuitable restraint practice.

The acting head, staff and governors are committed to improving practice to ensure the protection of pupils, and they are developing a more open and transparent culture. They say that until the acting head and the current designated safeguarding leads took up post, there was a tendency to 'brush things under the carpet', and that not all staff actions and concerns were logged. However, it is early days in this process; investigations and actions arising have yet to be concluded, and staff practice and management oversight requires a review of effectiveness to inform an action plan for improvement. This together with the shortfalls highlighted by the inspection, mean that it is, therefore, impossible to judge whether children are safe.

## **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

## **Inadequate**

Despite the positive changes being implemented by the acting head, leadership oversight of the quality of care being provided is inadequate. There is no evidence of any monitoring of the residential service being provided. Informal discussions that are not recorded are the mainstay of oversight. No report from the head of care was available during the inspection, and the last report from the previous head teacher to the

governing body lacks any detailed reference to the residential provision. Reports from the independent visitor lack evaluation and analysis of key safeguarding records, and these have not been shared with the governors. This lack of oversight and review means that neither of the actions identified at the last inspection have been achieved, and consequently significant shortfalls remain in the quality of service monitoring, and there is lack of clarity in records about pupil's lives and experience. This demonstrates a further deterioration in recording practice that was also identified at the last inspection of the residential provision.

The acting head teacher has been in post since September 2016, and is managing a number of staff absences and issues arising from a change in culture and practice. He is driving improvement in a number of areas, including creating a transparent and listening culture. Staff and governors say that he is progressive in his outlook, encouraging staff to express their views, putting systems in place to strengthen responses to staff concerns, and creating a more dynamic school where the welfare of children is central to any school development. However, he recognises that he is at the start of a vast task, is responding to immediate and known areas of shortfall such as staff absences, residential staff rotas and pay and conditions, as well as the school's previously poor response to child protection matters. As yet, he has not updated the previous school development plan, to ensure that the leadership team systematically reviews, evaluates and revises the vision and actions of the past head teacher, in order to improve.

There has been no residential management in place since the beginning of September 2016. Residential team leaders have been undertaking management responsibilities for the day-to-day organisation of staff deployment and running of the residential provision, but this is in addition to their usual job descriptions. This means that there are limited opportunities for reflection, to inform the development of the quality of care being provided. Team leaders are not receiving formal supervision, and, in turn, undertake staff supervision that is simplistic and task orientated; it is unplanned and infrequent; it does not help staff to reflect on their practice; or develop the necessary skills and knowledge with which to care for residential pupils safely and effectively. Staff say that they have pulled together well, to continue to offer cover during evenings, but that there is limited support available to help them to review their practice, and the quality of care they provide. Staff described themselves as 'tired'. There is no duty rota record available to demonstrate actual staff deployment, but staff and leaders confirmed that staffing is stretched, and that some education staff have joined evening support on an ad-hoc basis. This has resulted in a small reduction in the broad activity programme, and inconsistent care being provided to young people which could leave them at risk. However, leader say this is preferable to engaging agency staff who do not know the pupils or the systems in place at school.

While training is regularly offered throughout the year, there is no system in place to oversee residential staff attendance at, or the outcomes from, training. This means that managers are unsure who requires refreshment in such areas as child protection. In response to an inspector comments about this, a system was immediately devised by which to gather a full picture of attendance. An analysis of safeguarding training attendance showed that nine staff members had not attended the session in July 2016, of whom two teaching assistants had chosen not to attend, and one residential worker had not attended the previous formal session in July 2014, (although he was absent due

to sickness in July 2016). The acting head teacher, once made aware, immediately sought to rectify this shortfall by arranging training for staff in January 2017. There is no evaluation of individual residential staff development needs arising from their learning. For example, updates were provided to staff to read about new statutory guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education', but residential staff lacked confidence in telling the inspector about their understanding of it because they had not discussed the guidance or its impact. Similarly, staff were not clear about whom to contact externally if they are dissatisfied with the school's response to child protection concerns. This fails to ensure that all staff have up-to-date skills and knowledge necessary to protect children.

There are ongoing complaints, whistleblowing matters and investigations into staff conduct and the quality of care provided overtime. The leadership team is awaiting the outcomes of external professional's investigations into some of these concerns. The situation has caused a fracture within staff relations, and divided opinions about who is to blame, and what the truth might be. The leadership team recognises that building a cohesive and professional open culture is key to ensuring that children are safe and well cared for in the future. However, this long-term plan is yet to be devised, due in part to ongoing staff disciplinary processes and any outcomes from analysis of complaints and concerns.



## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119873
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC035805
<b>DfE registration number</b>	

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>	Residential special school
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	77
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Boys
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	11 to16
<b>Headteacher</b>	Acting head teacher: Mr P Wealleans
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	01/03/2016
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 221 333
<b>Email address</b>	head@wenningtonhall.lancs.sch.uk

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