

# Loxley Hall

Loxley Hall School, Stafford Road, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 8RS

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Loxley Hall School is a school, part of Manor Hall Academy Trust. The school offers day and residential places to boys, aged 11 to 16 years, who have social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties. There are 100 pupils on roll, and 33 pupils access the residential provision for overnight stays. The school is situated in a rural setting, a few miles outside the town of Uttoxeter. The main building is a large, two-storey country house, where classrooms, offices, a main kitchen and a dining hall are situated. There are two residential houses on the school site, which can provide overnight stays for up to 10 boys at any one time. The residential provision was last inspected in November 2017.

**Inspection dates:** 5 to 7 June 2018

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

**Date of previous inspection:** 7 November 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- Young people love their residential experience.
- Young people benefit hugely from warm and trusting relationships with highly committed and child-focused staff.
- Young people make exceptional and sustained progress in their independence, self-confidence and behaviour.
- Young people benefit from long-standing and highly experienced staff who know them well and listen to them.
- Staff are creative and provide young people with fun activities that support their emotional and physical well-being.
- Highly trained and vigilant staff keep young people safe and help them to understand how to keep themselves safe.
- Young people say that they feel very safe when they stay overnight, and parents agree.
- Excellent behaviour management strategies enable staff to maintain a safe environment for all young people.
- The service is constantly improving its safeguarding practice with the introduction of 'safe and well' checks by the family link worker and 'under the radar' meetings held by managers since the last inspection.
- Parents say that communication between them and staff is excellent, and they greatly value regular feedback regarding the young person.
- Staff skilfully work in close collaboration with other professionals to understand and meet the highly complex needs of the young people.
- Strong management provides a solid foundation to this excellent service.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Young people love their residential stays. They say that the service could not be improved. They have excellent warm and trusting relationships with staff, who have a long-term commitment to the service and know each young person exceptionally well. Young people are confident that staff care about them, listen to them and always have their well-being at heart. One young person said, 'Staff are kind and they help you.' Another young person said, 'It's ace here.'

Young people have great fun together and with staff by engaging in a wide range of activities, including climbing, football, swimming and mountain biking. When young people ask if they can do a new activity, enthusiastic and creative staff respond positively. One staff member went on a bush craft course in his free time to provide this as an option for young people. These activities broaden young people's experiences, support their emotional and physical well-being and help them to work together, to compromise and make decisions for the whole group. One young person commented that the residential provision has a rule that 'What happens at school stays at school', and that they all value and adhere to this.

Overnight stays provide young people with opportunities to spend time with their friends and get away from any pressures at home. This helps them to relax and to develop social skills and self-confidence. Young people love the food and especially the 'themed nights', when teaching and residential staff provide food and activities from different cultures. The large garden enables young people to play football together, or they can sit quietly in the residential house to relax if they wish.

Young people contribute to decisions about the decor of the residential provision and feel a strong sense of ownership. Staff listen to young people, who are encouraged to contribute to their residential plans. Young people are confident that any worries or concerns will be addressed by staff. They know how to complain and are happy to approach the head of care and headteacher if they have an issue. No complaints have been made since the last inspection. Young people attend residents' meetings, which are held once a month, on alternating days, so that they have an opportunity to attend regardless of which nights they stay.

Young people make exceptional, significant and sustained progress in their independence, social skills, self-esteem and behaviour from their starting points. They can transfer this progress to their family home. For example, one young person said that he used to hit his siblings at home, but that since coming for overnight stays he has been able to stop this behaviour. Another young person has learned how to make a cup of tea and poach an egg, which are important long-term life skills that he did not have before. Young people enthusiastically engage with staff in identifying and making progress towards personal targets.

One parent who praised the staff commented that the staff's knowledge and understanding of each young person 'stands out'. Another commented, 'Staff are so

caring, I've never known anything like it.'

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

Highly trained and skilled staff keep young people safe during their overnight stays.

By building positive relationships with staff and their peer group, young people become increasingly safe as their understanding of risk and ability to manage their behaviour develops. Behaviour management strategies are excellent and there have been no physical interventions since the last inspection.

Staff are confident that the training that they receive (which includes child protection, physical intervention, internet safety and anger management) prepares them to understand and meet the safeguarding needs of young people.

Staff engage young people in key-work sessions to help them to understand how to keep themselves safe. Young people say that it is good to know that staff keep them safe in the same way that their parents do. Staff work with detailed, accurate and up-to-date risk assessments which enable them to fully understand the risks for each young person and how to reduce them. Staff involve young people in their risk assessments, enabling them to identify and recognise triggers and suggest strategies that will help them to minimise risks. Effective risk assessment enables staff to take young people out for activities such as rock climbing.

When young people stay overnight, the number of incidents is minimal and young people's behaviour is closely monitored and supported by staff. Staff skilfully enable young people to feel relaxed and this reduces tensions between peers. One young person's parent commented that he gets into a lot of fights during the school day, but not at all when he stays overnight.

The home is well maintained, fire detection and alarm system checks are carried out monthly, and fire evacuations are undertaken regularly with young people. Medication is safely stored and administered, and the school nurse provides staff with additional training on several health issues.

Staff and managers work together to develop and improve safeguarding practice. Since the last inspection, the family link worker has set up a system for early response to young people who have not attended school. He is able to undertake immediate 'safe and well checks' to young people's homes if he has concerns following liaison with parents and other professionals. In addition to this, the emotional support unit staff and the assistant head meet daily to review any young people who have given them cause for concern. They liaise closely with the school and care staff to identify risks and prevent safeguarding issues developing. The school now has a school nurse on site three days a week, which also benefits the residential service. Managers have established a network meeting to support the dedicated safeguarding leads and to share information on a half-termly basis about national and local issues and provide additional training. The head of care has introduced specific safeguarding supervision for his staff and the family link worker.

These innovations significantly enhance safeguarding knowledge and practice.

Staff excel at prioritising positive relationships with young people and their families. This is key to effective safeguarding and underpins all of staff practice. Staff work closely with the dedicated school nurse and family link worker to maintain a valuable open flow of communication and support for young people and their families.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The head of care is open and approachable. He ensures that there is an excellent level of communication between the residential care staff, teaching staff, families and professionals. Staff enjoy working in the residential service and there is an exceptional level of stability in the staff team, with only one change in the past year. Consequently, there is a strong team of experienced staff who are dedicated to the care of young people.

The head of care promotes a strong caring ethos in the residential provision, which is in keeping with the statement of purpose. The staff have created a family feel to the residential provision, which is appreciated by young people and their families.

The head of care ensures that staff receive termly supervision and annual appraisals with clear targets for professional development. Staff feel well supported by managers and say that they are listened to. The head of care's inclusive approach encourages and enables staff to contribute very positively to the development of the service and to feel that their skills are recognised and valued. For example, the family link worker was supported to research and develop the 'safe and well check' system.

Staff training and development needs are identified and met to ensure that they provide highly personalised care for each young person. Communication between teaching staff and care staff is excellent and enhanced by care staff working one day a week in the school, and teaching staff helping care staff in the residential service on a regular basis. Staff have one day a week when there are no young people in the residential provision. This time is used to focus on paperwork and to gather information about young people. This time allows staff to think about each young person's needs, to plan work and to liaise with other professionals. The headteacher also meets with the residential staff to support this process. One staff member said that she considers the management to be excellent, and said, 'I don't know how they do it. I can't speak highly enough of them.'

The head of care has addressed all the national minimum standards shortfalls from the last inspection and has met all the standards. He monitors all aspects of the service on an ongoing basis in consultation with staff, young people and family members. In addition, he incorporates reports by the governors, independent visitor, independent person, the local authority and peers to inform his development of the service. He responds positively to their recommendations. He has made several improvements to safeguarding processes. Increased work with other professionals, including another head of care and the school nurse, means that the service benefits from additional professional expertise and support. This has a positive impact on the

care and support that young people receive.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Residential special school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC038729

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** David Bownds

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

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## **Inspectors**

Louise Whittle, social care inspector (lead)  
Dave Carrigan, social care inspector (second)





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