

Inspection of Wilds Lodge School

Stamford Road, Empingham, Oakham LE15 8QQ

Inspection dates: 5–7 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this caring and inclusive school. They know that in this 'talking' school, they can talk to any member of staff about how they feel or about their work. Pupils trust staff to listen to them and help them. This trust helps them to feel safe, happy and supported. It also helps them to manage their behaviour, which improves significantly over time. Many parents and carers commented on the positive change in their children while they have been at the school. By the time they leave, pupils have greatly improved their confidence and social skills. They are ready to take on new challenges.

Pupils know that staff want the best for them. They respond well to the challenge and support staff give them. They work hard in lessons and enjoy learning.

There are regular opportunities for pupils to learn how to treat others respectfully. For example, pupils and staff eat their lunch together every day. This provides time to talk and to get to know each other. Pupils develop strong relationships with each other. As a result, there are few incidents of falling-out or bullying. Staff act quickly to resolve any that may occur.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Staff are highly ambitious for pupils. They support pupils effectively to manage their specific needs and to engage with learning. Pupils focus well on their learning and achieve highly. Most gain qualifications in a wide range of subjects. This helps them to move on to their next steps, often in mainstream schools or colleges.

There are plans for learning in every subject that identify what pupils should learn and when. Pupils build on what they know as they complete their work or consider new ideas. This ensures that they understand what they are studying and can do more. In art, pupils study facial dimensions and learn how to draw each part of the face before they complete their self-portrait. In English, they learn about different techniques in writing poetry. They then use this knowledge to create their own poems.

Teachers carefully prepare pupils' learning. They adapt learning to fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge they identify. They ask questions to help pupils recall and build on their previous learning. Pupils who struggle receive effective support. Over time, pupils develop determination and resolve. They respond well to challenging work.

Teachers enrich and enliven pupils' learning through experience of culture, the workplace and the community. For example, they go to the theatre to watch a performance of the Shakespeare play they are studying. To learn about gravity, pupils visit a skydiving centre. They discuss the works of famous artists to explore different styles of art. Such experiences excite the pupils and help them to value their learning.

Leaders have ensured that pupils engage well with the local community. Pupils contribute to a local food bank and visit a local care home and hospice. They meet pupils from local primary schools at the school's annual music festival. These opportunities help pupils to learn about those who live and work in the local area.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. Younger pupils in the nurture group regularly practise phonics. Older pupils who struggle to read receive well-targeted support on the 'reading bus'. Pupils become increasingly confident and fluent readers.

A rich variety of opportunities promote pupils' social and emotional development exceptionally well. Wide-ranging therapies enable them to discuss their feelings and grow in self-esteem. Pupils learn that people have different beliefs, values and cultural heritages. They understand the need to respect such differences. They are well prepared for their adult lives and for the challenges and opportunities of life in modern Britain.

Sixth-form students receive high-quality support to achieve well in their studies. Leaders ensure that students study courses that will help them move on to their next steps in learning or work. This is also the case in work-related subjects, such as construction, catering and motor-vehicle maintenance. Students take part in work experience that links to their career interests. They also have the opportunity to be part of the successful sixth-form art and design business that leaders have set up. Students regularly hold discussions about topical issues. Recently, they debated the rights of working mothers.

The chair of the proprietorial body is ambitious for pupils and staff. He ensures that pupils receive the very best pastoral care and teaching. He makes sure that all staff have access to high-quality training. He also encourages staff to provide training to other professionals, including those training to teach. This allows staff to share good practice and learn from others. Staff appreciate these opportunities. They feel well supported and cared for. They enthuse about working at the school.

The school meets all the independent school standards. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. Relevant information about the school is on the school's website. This includes the school's safeguarding policy, which reflects the latest national guidance.

High-quality facilities and resources enhance pupils' learning. There is a strong focus on promoting pupils' engagement with art and technology. Pupils have access to the latest technology, including as part of the therapy available to them. There are many artworks around the school site, including those which staff have created.

Leaders maintain the buildings to the highest standard. They complete all the necessary health and safety checks and risk assessments. Leaders have created pleasant communal areas in which pupils can relax and meet with others. These spaces help pupils to manage their anxieties and behaviour, and develop their social skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders have created a culture of vigilance throughout the school. All staff know their safeguarding responsibilities. They receive regular training on how to keep pupils safe. They know to pass on any safeguarding concern immediately to a safeguarding leader.

Safeguarding leaders act quickly to resolve any concerns. They contact parents, and work well with agencies, so that pupils receive the support they need. Leaders keep detailed records. They meet regularly as a team to discuss the support they are providing pupils.

Leaders undertake appropriate checks on the suitability of new staff.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	134938
Social care unique reference number	SC069231
DfE registration number	857/6005
Local authority	Rutland Council
Inspection number	10116633
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	15
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	67
Proprietor	WLP Holdings Ltd
Chair	Robin Lee MBE
Headteacher	Robin Lee MBE
Annual fees (day pupils)	£70,000
Annual fees (boarders)	£100,000
Telephone number	01780 767 254
Website	www.wildslodgeschool.co.uk
Email address	office@wildslodgeschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–19 January 2017

Information about this school

- The school admits pupils aged five to 19 who have a range of behavioural, social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Many of the pupils have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and Asperger syndrome. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school is situated on three sites. Two sites provide residential and teaching accommodation. The third site provides residential accommodation for sixth-form students. The site at which the school is registered provides education for pupils in key stages 2 and 3. A second site provides education for pupils in key stage 4 and for sixth-form students. This is located at Crossroads Farm, Grantham Lane, Empingham, Rutland PE9 4AG. The site that provides residential accommodation for sixth-form students is located at Rock Lodge, 1 Empingham Road, Stamford PE9 2RH.
- The school's last standard inspection took place on 17–19 January 2017. This was an integrated inspection of both the education and boarding provisions.

Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was an education-only inspection. We did not consider the quality of the school's residential provision.
- We met with the principal, the head of education, the designated safeguarding lead and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector received correspondence from the second director of the proprietorial body that owns the school, who is not the chair.
- We undertook deep dives into English, mathematics, science and art. We met with the subject leader for each subject, visited lessons, met with some pupils and looked at pupils' workbooks. We also met with the teachers whose lessons we visited.
- We met with staff to discuss their understanding of the school's procedures to keep pupils safe.
- The lead inspector met with the head of education and the designated safeguarding lead to discuss safeguarding. He also considered documentation relating to safeguarding, the school's single central register and the system for

undertaking checks on new staff.

- The lead inspector had a tour of both of the school's educational sites to check the school's compliance with Part 5 of the independent school standards.

Inspection team

Simon Hollingsworth, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stephanie Innes-Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector

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