

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 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 30 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 June 2018.

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 February 2020

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **Outstanding**

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: 5 June 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make remarkable progress in the development of their social, emotional, educational and practical skills. Committed and knowledgeable staff work with education staff, children's families and external agencies to deliver care and support that reflects children's individual needs. As a result, children thrive in this residential provision.

Relationships between children and staff are exceptionally strong. These are sensitive, respectful and nurturing. Staff use these relationships to encourage children to identify their own goals and to help them to understand how these link to their educational targets. Residency is a clear extension of the school curriculum and this service supports children's academic progress. One parent said, 'I know he does better in school because he goes to residency. He's learned so much; he can control himself better and this helps him with his lessons.'

Staff devise extremely detailed internal care and support plans for children. These take account of children's individual emotional, social and learning needs as well as any adverse childhood experiences. Staff implement these plans effectively. This inclusive approach to assessing and addressing children's needs enables children to make significant and sustainable progress.

Children are very happy in residency. They are proud of their achievements and welcome the opportunities that residency affords them. Children participate in a wide range of stimulating, fun and educational activities. They learn new skills and develop new interests. This means that children grow in confidence and self-esteem.

Staff ensure that children's views, wishes and opinions are central to routines in residency. Children and staff make decisions about residency together, and children say that they are confident that managers will address any concerns that they may have. The atmosphere in residency is relaxed but supportive. This creates a warm and welcoming environment that children enjoy spending time in. Children told inspectors that they 'feel at home'.

Staff work in partnership with children's families. Parents continually praise the commitment of staff, and their knowledge of children's needs and passion for their role. One parent said, 'The residential service is absolutely brilliant! Staff are amazing and communication is great. [Name of child] has grown in confidence and this makes him want to go to school.' This collaboration means that children have a positive residential experience.

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

Children are safe and protected from harm. Staff are extremely competent in the identification, assessment and management of risks to children's safety. Risk-reduction strategies are clear and effective. These help children to take an age-appropriate responsibility for their own safety. This means that children learn to keep themselves safe and develop the skills they need to prosper.

The use of sanctions and physical restraint is exceptionally rare. This is because children benefit from clear and consistent boundaries. Staff continually praise and reward children's achievements and their positive behaviours. They use their de-escalation skills to motivate children to make positive choices. This approach to managing children's behaviours promotes children's safety and welfare.

Relationships between children and their peers are positive. However, there have been a few incidents of bullying. In these circumstances, staff act immediately to prevent any physical or emotional harm. They work with children to help them to understand the detrimental impact bullying has on others. This practice means that children quickly change their behaviours. However, staff do not always log these incidents as bullying, categorising them as physical or verbal threats instead. Managers are planning to refresh staff training in this area.

All staff participate in regular safeguarding training. This ensures that they fully understand their role and responsibility. Safeguarding training includes information relating to child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, neglect and radicalisation. Staff are exceptionally alert to any changes in children's physical presentation or behaviours that may indicate abuse or harm. Excellent safeguarding practice is at the forefront of residential routines. Governance of this area of practice by senior school managers and in partnership with the designated officer for the local authority is consistent and effective. This keeps children safe.

Facilities managers ensure the regular completion of relevant health and safety, fire safety and environmental checks. They quickly address any known hazards or risk to children's safety. This means that children reside in a safe and secure environment.

Residential staff and school staff are subject to vigorous recruitment processes. Recruitment records include verified employment references and a range of suitability checks. Consequently, staff are deemed safe to work with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The head of care consistently promotes high expectations for children to help them to make the most of their time in residency. Staff demonstrate a clear and determined commitment to delivering a high-quality service that meets children's individual needs. This effective approach means that children make excellent progress in all areas of their development.

Senior managers continually review internal policies and procedures to ensure that these reflect children's needs and promote their safety and welfare. Leaders, managers, staff, governors and independent visitors regularly assess and evaluate the residential provision. They have a clear understanding of service strengths and any areas for development, and constantly seek new and innovative ways to develop the service, such as profiling children's needs by considering adverse childhood experiences and the impact of these. This means that managers can adapt the service to meet children's changing needs.

Staff are extremely passionate about their role. They benefit from regular and reflective formal supervision. Managers ensure that staff have the skills and experience they need to support children, and they continually seek to offer new training and development opportunities. For example, since the last inspection staff have completed training around mental health first aid, sexualised behaviours in adolescents and adverse childhood experiences. This ensures that children receive care from highly trained, skilled and well-supported staff.

Partnerships between leaders and managers and external professionals are exceptionally strong. These are supported by an active governing body. Together they fully understand the positive impact residency has on children's social, emotional and academic progress and development. This means that children receive a well-organised package of care and education.

Staff work closely with children's families. Parents are exceptionally positive about the care that their children receive. They say that the residential provision provides huge benefits for their children. One parent said, 'Being in residency has helped my child grow into a well-mannered young man who now enjoys school. They bring out the best in him. The staff are amazing.'

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- Ensure that staff accurately log and categorise any incidents of bullying and that staff regularly refresh their training regarding this area of practice.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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

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Inspectors

Jo Stephenson, social care inspector (lead)

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