

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 who have social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties. There are 101 pupils on roll, and 39 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 in which 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 February 2020.

Due to COVID 19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 March 2022

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: 25 February 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children are thriving because of the high-quality care and support that they receive. Each child receives a bespoke package of care that meets their diverse needs and is enabling them to make excellent progress across all areas of their development. Children's confidence significantly improves, as does their ability to communicate and to make friends. This enhances children's social skills and improves their self-esteem. The progress that children make is transferred to school, where conflict reduces, and their concentration improves. One parent commented, 'Residential has been great for my son. The staff have supported and encouraged him to get involved in activities and socialising with the other boys. Because of this, I have seen an increase in my son's confidence and a reduction in his anxiety. Residential is like one big family, where all the children are accepted.'

Working collaboratively with staff across the school, residential staff use their in-depth knowledge of each child to provide individualised, nurturing care and support. This starts when children are preparing to use the residence for the first time. The number of visits and meetings with parents is tailored to each child. A child-friendly booklet identifies what residence is about. Each child has an identified key worker to support them through their residential journey.

Children's medical and wider health needs are well met. Medication is stored securely, and clear records are maintained of all medication dispensed. Staff are excellent at identifying children who require extra support or interventions to prevent concerns escalating. The need for additional resources is identified early, leading to timely referrals to specialist services to support children with their emotional and psychological health.

Communication between school and residential provision is strong, with effective systems in place to ensure that up-to-date information is shared between the two areas. Residential staff also work in the school environment. This helps to ensure that children receive a consistent level of care.

Support to children and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic has been exceptional. Staff provided varied packages of support, including home visits, telephone contact, virtual quizzes, food parcels and signposting to organisations who could offer further support.

A wide range of activities enables children to pursue their interests, which, in turn, provides children with opportunities to extend their social experiences. Children are active in putting forward their views, both informally on a day-to-day basis with staff and more formally through forums such as the student council. Leaders and staff are

responsive and act on children's requests, demonstrating that children are listened to and their views are important.

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

An ethos of safeguarding children is embedded in all aspects of the school. Systems for reporting concerns about children are strong. Staff understand their responsibilities for protecting children. They promptly pass on their concerns to experienced designated safeguarding officers, who take appropriate action, including referrals to external safeguarding agencies, when necessary. Successful partnership working between the school's safeguarding team, external safeguarding agencies and families ensures that all children are protected.

All staff receive comprehensive information and training in how to keep children safe. This is completed as part of whole-school training and residential team reflection. This promotes consistency and ensures that everybody knows and understands the key messages emerging from best practice and any changes in legislation and guidance.

Individualised risk assessments and behaviour support plans are detailed, regularly reviewed, and provide staff with clear and valuable guidance. Effective teamwork means that staff inform each other of different approaches that work to safeguard individual children. Staff manage peer relationships and the environment in order to reduce anxiety for children. Physical intervention is seldom used and is only used as a last resort. Children are appropriately debriefed afterwards, and staff use incidents to learn, reflect and develop their practice. Children talk openly about their behaviour towards one another, and they communicate any concerns to staff with confidence. This openness provides children with additional protection from bullying.

Behaviour management strategies are highly effective. Staff know children extremely well and are constantly vigilant for signs of anxiety that could lead to the child becoming distressed. Interactions with children are based on rewarding good behaviour and understanding and supporting heightened or challenging behaviour. Children's warm and trusting relationships with staff clearly enable them to feel safe and secure. Staff help children learn to manage their own behaviour and understand their own emotional and mental health needs.

The health and safety arrangements benefit from careful scrutiny. A thorough audit of health and safety arrangements ensures that fire safety and health and safety are fully compliant with the relevant regulations. The site manager keeps excellent records and produces clear reports. All health and safety policies are ratified and signed off by the senior leadership team. This ensures that leaders have good oversight of the safety arrangements for the school.

When appointing staff, the school follows safer recruitment practice guidelines. This means that only those deemed suitable to work with vulnerable individuals look after children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Ambitious and aspirational leadership is reflected in a culture of high expectation. The staff strive to support and motivate children to achieve to the best of their abilities. The quality, skills and experience of the leadership team are broad, and all members of the team deliver their roles to an extremely high standard. Their passion feeds through to all the staff, who reflect on the quality of leadership with high levels of positive regard. This creates a unified sense of ownership and a whole-school commitment to continuous improvement.

Leaders and managers have an exceptional understanding of the holistic needs of children. This is because they have extensive knowledge, experience and skills in working with children in this setting. They know each child personally and are committed to making sure that each child reaches their individual potential. Parents are unanimous in confirming this. One parent said, 'The staff do a fantastic job. They know my son so well and have worked with him around his behaviours, which has supported us as a family.'

The residential staff team undertakes a wide range of training to meet the unique needs of children, with a sharp focus on safeguarding them and promoting their well-being. Staff receive effective support through supervision, group supervision and informal support from leaders, who staff report are approachable and available for advice and guidance.

Leaders and managers provide clear evidence of the progress and plans for each child. Meticulous internal and external quality assurance provides detailed analysis of the care provision. This means that leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the residential service's strengths and weaknesses. Firm plans are in place to ensure that decisive and effective action is taken to drive continual improvement.

Governors play an active role in the residential provision. They regularly undertake quality assurance visits and speak to staff and children. They evaluate the school's performance through monitoring reports, complaints and safeguarding incidents. They provide a supportive role and a constructive challenge to the head of care and the executive headteacher in order to maintain high standards and to drive continuous improvement.

Leaders consistently access research and information about best practice in the sector in order to influence and drive forward their plans for school improvement. For example, the school, in partnership with an educational psychologist, was active in trialling and developing a school's mental health audit tool in an effort to promote positive mental health. Because of this, staff have completed a large amount of

training and professional development in mental health and related topics. This has been so successful that last year the school achieved the bronze mental health charter mark and are beginning the process of achieving the silver charter mark. The success of this will allow for targeted areas of development in this area that will contribute to children's well-being and to their mental health.

Professionals hold the school and residence in high esteem. One professional working with the school reported, 'I was especially moved when we visited the residential houses, seeing how homely and non-institutional they were, and hearing from the staff team how much the boys genuinely love staying there. What an incredible achievement by all involved to create such a safe, warm and caring environment in which your young men can thrive.'

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

Type of school: Residential Special School

Telephone number: 01889 723050

Email address: headteacher@loxley.manorhall.academy

Inspectors

Dave Carrigan, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Dean Wilton, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children’s social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children’s services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022