

Education and residential inspection summary for Walworth School

Bluebell Way, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 7LP

Inspection dates: 19 to 21 September 2023

Outcome

The education overall effectiveness judgement is: good

The judgement for the experiences and progress of children in the boarding for residential special schools provision is: good.

What is it like to attend this school?

- Pupils' behaviour at Walworth school is exemplary. All staff have high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour. Staff teach pupils how to manage their feelings and be kind to one another. Pupils value this and the additional support that they receive from other health professionals when they feel anxious or worried. They say this helps them to feel calm.
- Pupils receive a warm welcome when they arrive at the beginning of the school day. Adults check that they are happy. Pupils are confident to speak to adults if they are worried or need help, which is quickly given. They know that staff care about them. This has helped to create a 'Walworth family' culture. These positive relationships built on mutual respect and trust ensure pupils feel safe, are happy and ready to learn.
- Pupils enjoy taking part in a range of activities and festivals. These include orienteering, wellness activities, games, alternate sports and tri-golf. This helps to build pupils confidence. The summer fete and prom are annual events that all pupils look forward to.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to influence and change aspects of the school offer. They discuss topics through the 'smart council' such as which new activities they would like to participate in during lunchtime.
- Adult's understanding of pupil's wishes and interests enables them to personalise their experiences. For example, some pupils have opportunities to help the members of the school team who act as their role model for the day, such as the caretaker and receptionists.

The inspectors made **one recommendation** to help the school to improve. This was centred upon the further development of a few foundation subjects by training staff to better teach the curriculum and check that pupils had learned the intended knowledge.

What is it like to stay for residential special school at this school?

- Children enjoy attending the residential provision. Staff make sure that the children have fun and feel cared for in a nurturing and homely environment. Children have limited time off their games consoles so that they can spend time with other children and staff playing games and having fun.
- Staff ensure that the children's bedtime routines are calm and relaxing by reading bedtime stories. This helps the children to feel settled before they go to bed, which helps them to sleep. Family members said that they see positive changes in their children, and this is due to the support and guidance that their children receive from the staff.
- Staff provide the children with various activities such as group reading, and they take part in art, physical and music activities. These sessions provide the children with learning opportunities that promote their academic outcomes, as well as their social and motor skills. This enriched learning means that the children receive a 24-hour curriculum during their stays in residence.
- Any incidents or concerns are followed up with discussions between the child and staff. These sessions are carefully planned to encourage the children to reflect on any issues of concern, without leaving them feeling that they are to blame. This helps the children to become more self-aware and helps them to link their feelings to their emotions.
- Children respond well to the structured routine provided by the staff. Children's daily routines include making their bed and getting themselves dressed. This helps to develop the children's independence skills. Staff are calm and nurturing with the children. This reduces the children's anxieties and helps them to enjoy their time during their stays.
- Children learn that their views matter and that they have a right to be understood and to influence their world. The children use a variety of ways to express their views and wishes about staying in the residence. Staff respond to the children's views. For example, following consultation with the children, new, comfortable cushions for the residence have been provided. Healthy meal requests are given to the cook, who then makes them for the children.
- The children's living space is homely and well decorated. Children personalise their bedrooms, which gives them ownership and a sense of belonging. Children's bathrooms have recently been fitted with new showers. However, the refurbishment has not extended to the children's bathtubs, which remain unsightly.

The inspectors made **two recommendations** to help the school improve, covering an opportunity for staff to discuss any incidents of restraint that they may have been involved in and improvements to accommodation and facilities.

- View the full inspection report for the education provision:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/25/114341>
- View the full inspection report for residential special schools provision:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/10/SC040510>



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