

# 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 with social, emotional and/or mental health needs. There are 103 pupils on roll, of whom 43 access the residential provision and 33 have overnight stays. The school is situated in a rural setting a few miles outside the town of Uttoxeter. The main building is a large, three-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 head of care oversees the residential provision and is suitably qualified and experienced.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

### Inspection dates: 10 to 12 December 2024

**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:** 12 March 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Children thoroughly enjoy attending residential. They have excellent relationships with staff, who provide them with high-quality care. Residential and school staff work collaboratively, and this partnership working has provided staff with a better understanding of children, helping them to thrive. All children who have attended residential over the past four years have gone on to further education, training or employment due to the ongoing support and encouragement to do well in their futures.

Residence has been a wonderful support for children and their families. Due to leaders' and staff commitment to children and the flexibility of the service, this had enabled one child who struggled at home to remain with their family. One parent said: 'They give them the opportunity to do things I can't. I have other children, one is complex. I have a lot to do with staff and teachers and they work well with me when I am struggling.'

Leaders and staff are fully committed to ensuring that children are prepared for the next stages of their lives. It was agreed for one child's stay to be extended to help them develop their independence skills further. This extension was agreed to ensure that the child had access to an appropriate educational provision. As a result, this child has been equipped for life outside of residence.

Children are provided with the opportunity to complete extra-curricular awards. This is linked to education and the local authority careers hub. The awards have provided all children with an opportunity of finding employment or accessing further education or training. Children engage with projects which support the local community, this links to the community service accreditation. One pupil when out on an activity had offered food to a homeless person. These community activities provide children with a sense of pride.

Despite the large number of children, staff have a strong understanding of children's individual health needs. There are robust systems in place, which has allowed all children's health needs to be clearly identified. Medical snapshot sheets help staff to clearly highlight any health concerns or medication which a child may be on. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans are also available for children who have additional needs, which are updated regularly and are detailed. For two children with special educational needs, it was fully assessed what they can do for themselves during fire evacuations to promote independence.

Professionals speak highly of the service provided by leaders and staff in residence. One professional said: 'Children appear comfortable, and the setting makes a big difference. I can tell children who attend residence appear more settled and make progress.'

Children's voices are held in high regard. Children said: that they are confident that their views and wishes will be listened to. There are effective systems in place for children to share their views, including a clear complaints system and regular discussions with children. Through the children's wish list, a festive burger meal was requested by children for Christmas, which staff had committed to. This event was well attended, and children wore Christmas jumpers to make this a memorable event. These events make children feel valued and involved in life at the school.

Staff provide children with enriching activities. Children regularly engage in swimming, bowling, golf and skating. All children can attend an annual camping trip in Wales. Children are proud of their experience and reflect on the memories made from their most recent trip with their friends and staff. Children have developed skills from their experiences, belief in their own abilities and self-confidence.

The environment is well maintained and decorated, with children at the heart of the setting. There are photos of current children around the residential provision. Leaders and staff provide children with ways of expressing themselves, including drawing on select areas around the provision. This has been achieved while ensuring that the residential provision remains well kept.

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

There have been developments made to policies and risk assessments for children sharing bedrooms. Risk assessments are clearer, and now show how it has been decided that it is appropriate for children either to share rooms or have a solo bedroom during their stay. As a result, children are having safe and enjoyable stays.

The approach to safeguarding is exceptional. Leaders and staff have a strong knowledge of children's risks and any vulnerability areas. There are clear processes in place to protect all children who access residence. Where concerns are raised about a child's well-being, leaders and staff respond promptly to this and liaise with relevant professionals. One professional said: regarding a concern raised about a child in education: 'This was investigated fully and appropriately. All actions taken are really spot on.' Risk assessments are robust. They are regularly updated and contain relevant information that staff follow. Leaders have established great links with the local and surrounding authorities, police and other independent agencies, including Childline and Kahoot.

The senior leadership team continuously reviews the approach to behaviour management and specialises in promoting positive mental health and positive behaviours. This is achieved through the use of research-based practice using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. Staff strongly promote the individual growth and resilience of children, and as a result there have been a low number of incidents which have occurred in residence.

Rewards are highly promoted by staff. There have been developments to the previous rewards and consequence system; it is now clearer to see when children are being rewarded for positive behaviour. Leaders and staff provide many opportunities for children to gain treats through incentives, including Boy of the Week. Staff give children rewards daily for small achievements to show children unconditional positive regard. Due to this approach, children want to do well and strive to achieve rewards daily. This contributes to the decrease in incidents in residence.

The staff team has remained consistent and there continue to be safe arrangements for the onboarding of new staff. Senior leaders have developed a clearer system to ensure that all relevant checks have been completed for all staff. There are also additional checks completed in collaboration with the local authority to ensure that any additional staff, such as contractors, are safe to access the setting.

Staff support children to rebuild positive relationships with each other following any conflict. Children who have previously fallen out are supported by staff with restorative work. This has helped children to rebuild rapport and communicate better with each other. Children are confident in the systems to share bullying concerns, though there are currently no issues regarding bullying in residence.

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

The head of care has the utmost dedication to children achieving the best possible outcomes. He works alongside a strong senior leadership team and education staff. Leaders have excellent oversight over the service to ensure that children are achieving their best outcomes. Leaders speak about children with passion and care. They also have positive relationships with the children. Due to this commitment, the staff team shares the same vision. Staff acknowledge that residence is a positive factor in many children's lives and it is clear that children want to attend education on the days that they attend residence due to their positive experiences.

Staff receive regular training to provide a high quality of care. This includes behaviour management strategies, bullying, county lines, food hygiene and food safety. Staff also complete additional training in critical bleeding, a contraceptive access scheme and epilepsy. One member of staff has completed bushcraft training to ensure that there is consistently a trained staff member available to carry out this activity for children.

The senior leadership team has strong links with professionals outside the setting. Due to the positive outcomes in residence, local services are using the school's work around emotional and mental health support and sharing this with other services within the county.

Parents of children who attend residence value the service. One parent said: 'No concerns at all, they are absolutely amazing with my child every week. They helped him learn how to cook for himself and be more self-sufficient. The residential staff call me once a fortnight to update me on his progress. They have become better due

to residence, and this has given him time away from his siblings and allowed him to be more himself.'

Leaders ensure that there is a high level of scrutiny to drive continuous improvements. A new visitor has been appointed in addition to the current independent visitors. Reports are robust and they always review whether children are safeguarded effectively. Children are familiar with visitors who come to the residential provision and feel comfortable speaking with them about their experiences.

A newly appointed chair of governors is in post. He knows the school very well due to previously working across the school and residence. The previous chair is still involved and conducts regular visits at the setting. Children enjoy her visits and are comfortable speaking with her. They are also very respectful and support her around the setting. Governors are heavily involved in the setting and have a strong knowledge of developments.

## **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

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## **Inspector**

Chanel Bryant, Social Care Inspector

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