

# Woodeaton Manor School

Woodeaton, Oxford OX3 9TS

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Woodeaton Manor is a special day/boarding school for 78 day pupils aged seven to 18 years who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. The vast majority of the children are on the autistic spectrum. There are 12 boarding placements which are available for four days a week during term time only. Children usually attend once a week. The aims of the boarding experience are to extend a child's social network, develop their independence and to enable them to try new experiences.

**Inspection dates:** 20 to 22 March 2018

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good

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:** 6 February 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- From the moment that children arrive at this school, the care and support that they receive is exemplary.
- Children's educational, social and emotional progress is supported exceptionally well.
- Relationships between the staff, the children and their families positively promote children's safety and welfare.
- Good health is promoted throughout the school day and boarding provision.
- Family support is extremely effective.
- Safeguarding is afforded a high priority and is sensitive to children's needs.
- Senior managers provide good role models for the staff team and have developed and maintained an open and inclusive ethos.
- Staff training positively enhances the skills and knowledge of the staff team.
- Well-organised monitoring systems are in place. These quickly identify and rectify areas of concern.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- The independent visitor does not complete regular reviews of the records that the residential staff make.
- The staff do not consistently sign and date records or documents.
- Fire evacuations are not undertaken at differing times of the day and night.

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

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards**

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

The senior management team and board of governors should:

- Ensure that the independent visitor regularly reviews the individual care plans for children and other associated documents when they visit.
- Ensure that any records or documents that the staff complete are always signed and dated.
- Ensure that fire drills occur at a more diverse range of times during the day and night.

## Inspection judgements

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

Well-planned and individualised care supports children from the time that they arrive at the school. The school has regular support from a psychologist who assists in identifying and supporting children's needs from the time their placement is agreed.

The make-up of children who attend boarding is carefully planned around children's needs, taking account of the friendships that they have already made. The staff carefully monitor the make-up of the group and make changes if this will benefit individuals. One parent said of their child's transition to boarding: 'Initially it was difficult, and he caused a lot of chaos for the [residential] team. However, the staff never gave up on him... they found the perfect formula for success.'

The staff build and maintain very effective relationships with children. These relationships support children to progress in all areas of their development. Boarding successfully helps children to try new things, manage their anxieties, develop social skills and improve their confidence, learn how to look after themselves, make and maintain friendships and have fun.

Children unanimously consider their residential experiences are very good; many gave it nine out of ten or more. One young person said the school is, 'The most amazing experience I have ever had.' They added: 'When I came I had no confidence. They have given me a lot of praise and this has really helped me.'

Healthcare is promoted and supported exceptionally well. Children are encouraged to engage in healthy lifestyles and to learn about their health needs, including changes to their bodies during puberty. Children are encouraged to attend their health appointments.

Positive links with a range of health professionals support children's good health and provide helpful guidance to the staff team. The senior leadership team has created a method of collating information about children's mental health in a format that health professionals can easily understand; this supports a quick response if a child needs this.

Children's ability to be independent is assessed and monitored very well. Children's progress is monitored in partnership with the child's parents so that it is clear whether the child can transfer their learning to different environments. Being able to transfer a learned skill to another environment is often an important step for children who have a learning disability.

Family support is an integral part of this school's ethos. The staff sensitively and inventively support parents and carers to develop greater skills in managing their children's behaviour, to learn about the safeguarding risks their children may face

and to manage their own well-being. Parents were very complimentary about the school in general and the residential experiences their children receive.

Plans to help older children and young people to move on from the school support them to successfully manage this change. The staff understand and develop individual strategies that will support the variety of issues that this period of change presents to each young person.

The school leadership team continuously reflects on how to improve. This year it is developing an outreach service which will monitor young people's progress when they leave the school and provide support to their new educational service and to parents during this important transition period. This is an exciting development which helps to promote young people's long-term success and achievement.

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

Positive behaviour is celebrated. Children are consistently given messages about adults' expectations of their behaviour and how well they are doing. Any negative behaviour is used by the staff as an opportunity for change. One parent said: 'The difference in approach at this school helped my son to make fantastic progress. He has developed an interest in learning and has aspirations for his future which he previously did not have.'

Children are encouraged to make positive changes to their difficult behaviours at a pace that works for them. The staff nurture and celebrate each child's successes, recognising that small changes in breaking behaviour patterns can result in strong improvements over time. One child said that, while she had only been here a year, she has made 'amazing progress'. She is no longer angry and is doing well in school. She said, 'I am [a] completely different person to who I used to be.'

Children's safety is prioritised and carefully monitored. Well-organised and detailed systems are in place to identify risks and safeguarding concerns; staff manage these extremely well. Staff refer to regular informal meetings with the school governor who oversees safeguarding, however these have not always been recorded. This recording has improved recently. Plans are in place to extend the board of governors' insight into the level and complexity of the safeguarding matters that are managed by the school's safeguarding team. These changes will improve further the governors' ability to understand and challenge this important area of practice.

Safeguarding concerns are logged appropriately and are referred to other safeguarding agencies when necessary. No restraints have occurred during the evening or night since the last inspection; no sanctions have been issued and a minimal number of incidents have occurred. One young person said that if there are any issues between children during the night 'the staff manage these well'.

The staff understand safeguarding procedures and follow these assiduously. The

staff have a wealth of knowledge about local safeguarding issues and wider concerns such as female genital mutilation (FGM). The headteacher is part of an established local schools network which works together to develop a coordinated response to any emerging concerns.

A variety of well-used opportunities support children to learn how to keep themselves safe. Topics include dealing with bullying, making appropriate friendships and understanding the potential for child sexual exploitation. Children clearly value the support and guidance the staff provide and this has a positive impact on their safety and well-being.

The safety of the environment is proactively managed and any repairs are prioritised and dealt with quickly. The maintenance team has very good links with relevant health and safety agencies which frequently provide support and guidance about health and safety matters; the maintenance team adopts these effectively.

Fire safety records are well maintained and demonstrate that appropriate checks are carried out. The timing of fire evacuations for boarding does not vary. This does not help the children and staff to see what might happen if there were to be a fire at different times of the day and night.

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

A universally positive and aspirational culture is evident in the school, focusing on children's needs and experiences. The culture promotes an atmosphere where tolerance, equality and diversity can thrive. This positive ethos is acknowledged by outside bodies. For example, in 2017 this school was the first in the county to obtain an award for the 'effective provision for looked after children'.

High expectations are supported through good role-modelling by the senior staff. The senior leadership team has developed very effective links with a range of external bodies and has a real presence in the everyday life of children who attend the school.

The senior leadership team monitors all aspects of the school's operation well. Managers quickly identify and act to address any issues of concern. For example, when bullying increased, the reasons were identified and a swiftly implemented action plan successfully reduced its occurrence.

Staff deployment is carefully managed so that there are a good number of diverse staff on duty who can meet the children's needs when they stay overnight.

Good coordination between the residential and educational teams supports the staff's abilities to flexibly meet children's individual and collective needs. This results in a clear picture of each child's progress and the steps needed to achieve greater things. However, the staff do not always sign and date the records that they make; this means it is not always apparent when records were made and who wrote them.

Training programmes are comprehensive, clearly reflect children's needs and are regularly updated. However, systems to check that the staff complete any mandatory training updates have not been effective. Practice was changed during the inspection, to improve monitoring and to ensure that these oversights will not occur in the future.

Supervision and appraisal systems are in place and the staff feel supported by senior managers. Some residential staff supervision is held regularly; for other staff it is not. As a result of this inspection, changes have been made to ensure that the regularity of supervision is improved. Staff appraisal takes place annually, but the appraiser does not record their view about the member of staff's performance. The appraisal system has also been changed so that it clearly records the appraiser's review of the person's performance.

An independent visitor frequently assesses the quality of boarding and provides a comprehensive report of her findings to the board of governors. The reports lack regular comment on the quality of records that the residential staff complete. This is a missed opportunity for the school to assure itself that these records are of a suitable quality.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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:** SC013056

**Headteacher/Teacher in charge:** Anne Pearce

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Ruth Coler, social care inspector



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