

Vale of Evesham School

Vale of Evesham School, Four Pools Lane, EVESHAM, Worcestershire, WR11 1BN

Inspection dates	06/03/2015	
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Outcomes for residential students are outstanding. They have a highly inclusive, yet individualised and well-planned residential experience that enables them to make significant strides in their educational, personal, and social development. They enjoy their residential experience, are proud of their contribution to it and their achievements, and have exceptionally positive relationships with residential staff.
- Residential students receive excellent professional care and support from consistent and skilled staff. The staff team work effectively in partnership with professionals, parents and carers to deliver care to meet each student's health and care needs in accordance with their wishes. Parents are highly positive about the improved outcomes the residential experience gives their child.
- Arrangements for the protection of residential students are outstanding and ensure young people are safe and prioritised at all times. Excellent procedures and practice in recruitment, health and safety and safeguarding support this ethos to fully address all aspects of student safety.
- Leadership, management, and organisation of the residential provision are outstanding. The residential service is carefully organised to meet the needs of residential students first and foremost. The Head of Care routinely monitors practice and uses information gained to drive forward continuous improvement.
- This consistently outstanding service continues to proactively meet the individual needs of residential students and support them effectively to make excellent personal progress towards achieving their full potential. At the last inspection, Ofsted judged the service outstanding overall and this premium standard continues in all outcome areas, exceeding the majority of the national minimum standards.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Dawn Bennett

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

The school is an academy and is directly responsible to a governing body. Vale of Evesham School provides education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and learning disabilities. The school caters for 175 pupils in total. The residential service operates from Monday to Friday. It can accommodate up to 15 students, between the ages of 8 and 19. There were 12 residential pupils receiving a service at the time of the inspection. The school's last inspection was in November 2013.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential students are outstanding. They benefit from a school where education, residential, speech, language, and health care are delivered as a seamless, holistic service. They effectively develop and improve their individual emotional and social skills, independence, self-esteem, and relationships.

Residential students achieve their educational potential and make excellent personal progress. They are valued, active members of the school community and develop skills in interacting with others and expressing views and opinions. They contribute to the running of the residential service and see that their views and opinions matter. For example, they value and enjoy a new opportunity to express their views, wishes and concerns directly to the head of care at a new forum open to all. They see direct results to their suggestions. For example, one young person had visited a local pub and a group of older young people had organised special nights to watch films with a more sensitive rating.

The approach to healthy lifestyles and informed decision-making is successfully integrated into the health and wellbeing ethos of the whole school. Residential students make good use of the new gym in the evenings; they eat healthy nutritional snacks and meals and learn personal care skills. They benefit from healthy initiatives and become fitter and better coordinated.

Enjoyment and achievement is a key strength of the service. A parent stated: 'The staff team are far more adventurous with where they take my son than I am. As a result, he is experiencing so many new and different things. He is thriving. He goes with the group and his behaviour is excellent. Spending more time in groups is really important for him and his future possibilities. As a result his confidence has grown.' Residential students are able to experience and develop from a wide range of leisure and learning activities and increase their skills in communication, coordination, socialisation, and independence. They have fun participating in a wide range of purposeful activities. Those with complex needs have a diverse range of resources on site, and good support from staff to attend regular activities in the local community. For example, some recently attended their first cinema showing, specifically for young people on the autistic spectrum. Some now regularly attend these public showings which mean they have increased social opportunities and a wider choice of films.

Residential students significantly increase their independence and life skills. Sensitive support for independence means that students do not consider their participation to be an extension of the school day and formal learning. They achieve through fun activities, improving all independent living skills such as travelling, shopping, cooking, and personal care. As a result, they leave the school with improved further education and accommodation choices.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of residential provision and care is outstanding. Residential students' achievements, care, and support are outstanding because of the positive impact the residential staff team has on their progress. There is excellent partnership work with education staff, therapists, health, social care professionals, and parents. Key staff cross-over between education and residential to enhance this joined up working. This experienced, empathetic team work is crucial in enhancing

student's learning, social, and emotional potential and delivers excellent consistency.

Since the last inspection, the school has developed and refined ways in which it measures aspects of the achievement of residential students. All parties meet regularly to plan and review students' progress and support and decide if additional professional expertise is needed. A new life skills curriculum, alongside observations and already existing, focused work on targets illustrates that the progress and achievement of students from their starting points is outstanding shows, regardless of differing attainment. The trained residential staff team ensure all students are challenged to make the best possible progress in all areas, including behaviour, communication, and social development.

Staff have high expectations and support students to do their best. Detailed care planning ensures each student learns skills on a one-to-one, and group, basis. The constant focus on learning through meaningful relationships, fun activities, and play produces positive outcomes and boosts individual progress and confidence.

Partnership work between each student's family and professionals throughout the school is seamless. The staff team supports each student and their family to access the service in a smooth and planned way, at an individualised pace. Excellent communication resources in residence help each student experience a positive transition, feel safe, at ease, and express their views.

The school promotes diversity and a sense of community at all times across the students' whole day. For example, everyone celebrated Chinese New Year in the evening with cooking and tasting activities. Residential staff also prepare students well to participate in school activities. For example, making costumes and dressing up for World Book Day.

The accommodation is friendly and welcoming. Students have personalised their private space and can socialise with others in shared areas. Staff display their photos, pictures throughout the accommodation, and celebrate events and their activities. The accommodation continues to be developed and improved and the school takes student views and opinions of students into consideration. For example, they discussed the planned refurbishment of some of the bathrooms at the meeting facilitated by the Head of Care.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

Residential students' safety is outstanding. Robust welfare arrangements protect them from harm. Students, parents, and staff are familiar with the school's comprehensive policies for safety and wellbeing. These underpin staff practice; an established programme of induction and training for all staff includes listening to complaints, safeguarding young people, promoting positive behaviour, e-safety, and anti-bullying. A range of rigorous quality assurance processes specifically monitor the success of safeguarding systems, such as the governors' annual safeguarding audit. This ensures critical challenge of systems and practice throughout the school.

Staff are very aware of the vulnerability issues for students with learning needs and sensitively respect their need for privacy and confidentiality. There is continual debate and discussion with regard to the important balance between promoting independence and keeping students safe.

They promote positive friendships and respectful relationships. Bullying is unknown and students do not go missing. Students are able to express their feelings and frustrations to staff knowing that they will listen to them and help them to manage their feelings in an acceptable way. Parents and carers have access to an established complaints procedure, but feel the staff team proactively listen to them and quickly address any concerns. As a result, there have been no formal complaints since the last inspection.

Residential students make outstanding progress in regulating their own behaviour and become more socially able. All staff are trained in a range of techniques that support students to make excellent progress. Where necessary, individual behaviour support plans guide staff in consistent strategies to reduce students' inappropriate behaviours. They give clear, yet reassuring support to students. The school has an established system to collate and monitor all incidents. This enables the senior management team to have an overview of patterns and trends in behaviour, as well as a clear understanding of individual student's progress.

Students develop skills that promote their personal safety and broaden their opportunity. For example, they develop personal care skills to minimise their dependency on others. They complete tasks first with physical prompts, then verbal or pictorial prompts and then independently. Parents express confidence in the safety and security of the school. Safe procedures are in place to protect residential students through tests on fire systems and other electrical equipment at appropriate intervals. Environmental risk assessments are in place to ensure staff are fully informed about potential hazards to reduce risks. These inform staff how to manage and plan to minimise risks to student's well-being without hindering students' opportunities to explore new activities or experiences.

The school's robust recruitment systems protect students and ensure all staff are suitable for the work. The involvement of students on interview panels and a member of staff who has completed safer recruitment training enhances these systems. Proactive monitoring of visitors to the school prevents students' exposure to unsuitable adults. This excellent practice further safeguards their welfare.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. A new Head of Care and headteacher continue to develop the school's residential provision. For example, they have introduced a new residential staff structure which includes a deputy post. This promotes career opportunities for staff and better meets the needs of residential students.

Consistently excellent residential care practice echoes the aims and objectives of the school. All staff have comprehensive knowledge and understanding of each student and deploy flexible approaches according to individual needs. The residential staff team ensures that the provision focuses on the development, safety and welfare of students at all times. A parent stated: 'I would confidently recommend the residential service to other parents. The staff team are excellent and have the best interests of the young people at the heart of all they do. Allowing my child to use the residential service was the hardest thing I've ever had to do. However, he has gained so much. He has gone on outings and participated in activities he has never before experienced. He has also developed new friendships and relationships.'

Residential students receive excellent support from a consistent and professional team of staff. Routines and procedures are clear and provide a safe, sensitive, and motivating environment for the residential students. There is consistent focus on reward and a strong emphasis on maintaining meaningful and respectful relationships between staff, residential students, and families. The service is flexible to meet individual's needs with students able to stay for between one and four nights a week, depending upon their assessed needs.

The positive staff team achieve the best for students in their care by continually reviewing and improving their own knowledge and practice. They receive reflective practice-focused supervision and annual appraisals to promote their learning needs. Regular staff team meetings and briefings ensure that communication and practice is enhanced. New staff go through an informative induction process and an established whole-school training programme. They are well trained, especially with regard to specialised skills required in supporting students with complex learning, communication, and health needs.

Governors, and the senior leadership team, have a clear analysis of the residential provision through the established quality assurance programme. This monitoring and review of practice enables them to systematically develop the service to suit the changing needs of students. The needs of students and their families are understood and their views are gathered, listened to, and acted upon as part of this process. The quality assurance system for the residential service has recently been developed with the introduction of an additional external independent visit and reports. The Head of Care has also been involved in the setting up and quality assurance of a new residential service within the county. This promoting sharing practice and has further enhanced his leadership and management skills and knowledge. This forward thinking approach continues to develop the school's effective culture of continuous improvement. The strengths and areas for development identified through these processes feed into the school's detailed development plan.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	139444
Social care unique reference number	SC043049
DfE registration number	885/7011

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Academy
Number of boarders on roll	15
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Garside
Date of previous boarding inspection	12/11/2013
Telephone number	01386 443367
Email address	sgarside@valeofevesham.worcs.sch.uk

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