

# Wennington Hall School

Wennington Hall School, Lodge Lane, Wennington, Lancaster LA2 8NS  
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

A local authority administers the school. The school provides an environment that can support 80 boys of secondary school age, from 11 years to 16 years old, on a residential or day basis.

Pupils using the services provided at the school have experienced some difficulties associated with their academic and social development.

The school provides a 38-week programme of education, with residential pupils, in the main, spending weekends at home with their parents or carers. Pupils reside in five houses located in the school grounds.

**Inspection dates:** 15 to 17 May 2018

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,** taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 17 July 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** requires improvement to be good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- The residential staff know the pupils well. They have established good trust and the pupils enjoy effective relationships with them and with each other. All staff have a good insight into the pupils' backgrounds and family circumstances.
- The pupils' behaviour is managed well and there is a positive and relaxing atmosphere in the school and in the residential houses.
- Pupils' emotional, social and physical health needs are supported. Specialist help is available, for example psychology services, therapy and a sensory room are available to pupils, as and when needed. Any need for physical health assistance is either sourced locally or within the pupil's home town.
- Activities are varied and plentiful. They provide the pupils with unique opportunities to develop new skills, work as part of a team and improve their self-esteem and physical fitness.
- Pupils have good opportunities to progress at school and they make good progress in developing practical skills for adult Leaders and managers, staff and teachers plan pupils' transitions into and out of the school and ensure that pupils are prepared and supported to make these transitions.'
- Pupils' aspirations are supported and they secure college placements or career opportunities before they leave the school.
- The staff have a sound understanding of how to raise safeguarding concerns. When concerns are raised, they are quickly responded to by one of three designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) in the school.
- The interim headteacher and leaders of care demonstrate their passion, drive and commitment to the continuous improvement in the education and care provided for the pupils.
- Governance over the school and the residential provision has been strengthened. This has had an effective impact on the pupils' welfare and on the running of the school.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Complete the transfer of pupils' records from paper to an electronic system so that the pupils' information is in one place and reflects the work undertaken.
- The school's website has been under construction for a period of time. This restricts access to information for stakeholders, parents and carers.
- Not all staff have received training in autistic spectrum disorders.
- Not all national minimum standards (NMS) are met.
- Regular supervision and appraisals need to be completed for all staff.

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

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools**

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:

- 3.12 Where necessary, a child has a clear individual health and welfare plan or similar record, containing relevant health and welfare information provided by parents/carers and recording significant health and welfare needs and issues. This record should be agreed by parents/carers and include: records of developmental checks; health monitoring required by staff; intimate care or bodily functions requiring staff help; and the involvement of a child's parents/carers or significant others in health and welfare issues.
- 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.
- 19.1 Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school.
- 21.1 The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan there is appropriate consultation. Where applicable the plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Where feasible, children in the school are aware of the content of their placement plans, and confirm that the school is providing care for them that is consistent with the plans.
- 22.1 Every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress which can be read by the child at any time (except where the data controller is not obliged to supply the information to the child), and add personal statements or statements correcting errors.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure information on the school's website is clear and accurate. This specifically refers to the length of time the school's website has been under construction. (Linked to NMS 1.1)

- Ensure effective links are made between academic and residential staff. (Linked to NMS 13.2)
- Ensure evaluation is undertaken on the information within the records in order to better evidence the pupils' progress. (Linked to NMS 19.4)
- Ensure all staff have regular supervision and appraisal. (Linked to NMS 19.6)
- Ensure pupils' records contain all of the information in Appendix 2. (Linked to NMS 22.2)

## Inspection judgements

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

Pupils make good progress as a result of their residential and school experiences. They quickly develop better strategies for managing their behaviour, and are making progress in developing their social skills and personal identities.

Irrespective of the pupils' backgrounds, culture or age, pupils say that they feel valued. This mutual respect creates a sense of family, with each pupil benefiting and increasing in confidence. Pupils receive a high quality of individualised care at the school. Pupils told the inspectors that they enjoy school and the experiences of living in the residential houses. Residence has a positive and measurable impact on their social, emotional and academic progress. For some pupils, this is the only opportunity they have to socialise and make friends outside of school time. They enjoy good relationships with staff and, for the most part, with each other.

The residential houses are welcoming, warm and comfortable. Pupils and staff take pride in their house areas and this is reflected in the many pictures, displays and arts and crafts the pupils have contributed towards. Some bedrooms are large and shared by pupils. Bedrooms, or individual spaces in their bedrooms, are personalised and the pupils are encouraged to bring favourite belongings from home. There is helpful information and advice on display. This provides the pupils with guidance on topics such as religion, diversity, how to stay safe, healthy eating and how to make a complaint.

Pupils' views are gathered by their key workers, who then meet regularly with teaching staff to discuss the pupils' needs and progress. House meetings take place and pupils' views, feelings and wishes are listened to and acted upon. The leaders in care challenge the local authorities effectively, or use advocacy services to ensure that pupils' feelings and wishes are acted upon.

Residential educational care workers know the needs and vulnerabilities of each pupil in their care. Some of the pupils' care, health and placement plans are in the process of being transferred to an electronic system. Residential care staff ensure that pupils have access to additional services that they might require to help them improve their outcomes in life. For example, staff have secured the help of animal therapy and psychological services and there is also a sensory room on site.

Staff are trained in first aid and pupils' physical health is, if needed, taken care of by local health services. The pupils also have access to health services in their home areas. Medication is stored securely, administered by trained staff and audited and accountable in the records kept. These arrangements ensure that the pupils' physical health and their emotional, social and psychological well-being are being met.

Pupils are regularly taking part in a variety of confidence-building activities through school projects and well-planned evening events. They enjoy exploring and learning

about forestry, camp building and outdoor survival skills. This enhances their self-worth and keeps them fit and active and they learn to live and share with others. The pupils learn about the maintenance needed for the on-site quad and motorcross bikes and with the staff they help to design and build electrical bogie carts. All of these motor-skills activities are enjoyed by the pupils, who have fun driving or riding under staff supervision in 16 acres of very well-maintained grounds.

Pupils are fully supported to develop their independence skills by taking part in daily and evening chores in the houses. The Year 11 pupils told inspectors about their aspirations for their futures. The staff described in detail how they support the pupils sensitively to secure college placements or career opportunities long before they are due to leave the school. These arrangements ensure that the pupils have smooth transitions from school into adulthood.

The Head of Care is mindful of the anxieties of pupils arriving at the school for the first time. Careful consideration is given to ensuring that all new pupils are welcomed, and that they have extra support during their settling-in periods.

All residential pupils return home to their families or carers at weekends and school holidays. There are good arrangements in place for communicating effectively with parents and carers.

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

The three DSLs who cover care, school and home are dedicated to and persistent in working in the best interests of the pupils' safety and welfare. They advocate well for the pupils when an issue comes to light, no matter where or when the incident occurred. The records of child protection and safeguarding concerns are detailed and maintained in sequence, and can be easily tracked during investigation or can show the conclusion of an investigation. There are currently no outstanding safeguarding investigations taking place.

All staff are notably alert to safeguarding concerns and they have reflected on learning from past safeguarding incidents, meetings with the local authority designated officer and training that they have received. British values are evident in the school and the residential houses and in addition celebrations of other faiths and cultures are enjoyed by the pupils. Radicalisation, grooming, online safety and child sexual exploitation are covered through posters and conversations with the pupils. This further educates pupils about how to be safe and stay safe.

The positive aspects of risk-taking behaviours are understood by the staff team. Staff support the pupils to take risks that are appropriate to their development, that will prepare them for increasing independence and that will increase their ability to succeed in the adult world. The level of staff engagement encourages a proactive and preventative approach to keeping pupils safe from bullying, hazards and risks,

including those that they may pose to each other. Risk assessments are clear and in the main reflect low risk concerns.

There are no immediate safeguarding concerns. Pupils do not go missing from the school and on two occasions where pupils were absent from class, they were quickly returned safely back to class, having been wandering around the school grounds.

The conduct and behaviour of the pupils is excellent. Restraint is rare and consequences for inappropriate behaviour are understood, signed and agreed by the pupils. Those who struggle with low self-esteem are supported to gain their confidence, which enhances their social integration. Pupils demonstrate respect and maturity, and have good manners when eating with the staff. Pupils are polite and respectful when chatting to visitors.

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, residential care managers and Senior Administration Managers make up the extended senior leadership team (SLT). They are responsive to immediate risks as demonstrated by the ongoing repair programme or plans to improve the gas supply into the school. Clear danger signs and secure fencing protect the pupils, staff and visitors. They ensure that the necessary health and safety certificates are in place for the environment, grounds and fire systems.

The SLT follows the Department for Education guidance around 'keeping children safe in education'. This results in new staff to the school or residential houses being safely recruited and vetted. The school, residential areas, conference and meeting rooms and the gym are not used by anyone other than the staff and the pupils. All visitors report to reception and are required to show their identity and sign in. These arrangements prevent any unsuitable persons from having direct access to the pupils, and help to keep the whole site secure.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

Following the last full inspection, in July 2017, and a monitoring visit in November 2017, eight of the 13 NMS that were not being met, have now been met.

As a result, there have been improvements in the leadership and management of the school and the residential provision since the last inspection. This is largely due to the appointment of a new interim headteacher. The headteacher, the now permanent head of care and the acting associate head of care now have an ambitious vision, and are making steady progress towards this.

The head of care and the acting associate head of care are visible in the residential provision and have a practical approach to ensuring that pupils receive a high level of care and that all required paperwork is in place. However, balancing this with the need to transfer all residential records to an electronic system has created a delay in the school's leaders and managers consistently fulfilling their responsibilities effectively so that all NMS are met.

Not all of the pupils' files have clear health and placement plans agreed by the pupils' parents, carers or placing authorities. This means that all of the information needed as required by appendix 2 of the NMS to meet the specific needs of the pupils is not in place.

Furthermore, not all staff have received regular supervision and none of the staff have ever had their performance appraised. Some, but not all, of the staff have completed training in autistic spectrum disorders. As a result, staff are held back from exploring professional development opportunities. Furthermore, in some cases different approaches are used or misunderstood when staff are working with pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders.

The school is not financially viable and one of four proposals to reduce the financial deficit is being considered. Although consultations have taken place with all staff, inspectors could not yet judge the impact of this proposals on the pupils or staff until they are agreed by the governors, the SLT and the local authority.

Governance is now a strength of the school and governors are effective in their roles. A team of competent and experienced governors underpins the leadership of the school and residential provision. The governors act as critical friends, often visiting the residential houses and listening to pupils' views. They provide a report about their visits that the headteacher and head of care use as a further tool to improve practice. These improvements include the evaluation of care practice and pupils' progress.

Although there are shortfalls in practice, the SLT is clear about the issues and has plans in place to address them. These shortfalls do not relate to safeguarding or the quality of the care that the pupils are experiencing. The SLT has a clear understanding and knowledge of strengths and weaknesses of both the school and the residential houses, with clear plans in place to address any areas for development. There is an independent person who visits the residential houses to speak to the pupils and the SLT regularly reviews the report he provides about the quality of care and the views of pupils.

## **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:** SC035805

**Headteacher (interim):** Mr G Berman

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Telephone number:** 01524 221 333

**Email address:** [head@wenningtonhall.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:head@wenningtonhall.lancs.sch.uk)

## **Inspectors**

Mark Kersh, social care inspector (lead)  
Sarah Oldham, 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](mailto: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 <http://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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

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 4234  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2018