

# Oakfield

Oakfield, Hopewell Road, Hull HU9 4HD

<b>Inspection dates</b>	16/01/2017 to 18/01/2017	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
The quality of care and support	Outstanding	1
How well children and young people are protected	Outstanding	1
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is outstanding because

- Leadership is exceptional. There is a rigorous approach to continuous improvement which ensures that residential pupils receive an outstanding service.
- Senior leaders, school governors and an independent consultant excel in monitoring and reviewing the quality of care and experiences of residential pupils. This ensures consistently high standards.
- All staff are very motivated and ambitious in supporting residential pupils to succeed.
- Staff make a significant contribution to developing the school, and there is excellent teamwork and collaboration at all levels.
- The residential and educational provisions are thoroughly integrated. Residential pupils benefit from the significant impact that this makes to their academic, social and emotional development.
- The emotional and physical health needs of residential pupils are extremely well supported. They thrive in a caring school environment and make immense progress compared to previous placements.
- Residential pupils enjoy an extensive choice of well-planned activities. These vastly improve their skills and abilities.
- Parents are extremely happy with the residential experience and the impact that it has on their children at school and at home.
- Strong safeguarding practice and procedures keep residential pupils free from harm.

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

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

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

- Develop a more systematic approach to fully describe and highlight the progress that individual pupils make.
- Consider establishing a parents' support group.

## Information about this inspection

The head of care was given two and a half hours' notice of the inspection. The inspector spoke to a range of residential pupils individually and in a small group, and spent time observing routines at lunch, teatime and during evening activities. This included observing the ways in which residential pupils and staff interact. The inspector met with the headteacher, head of care and residential staff. Parents' views were collated from the Ofsted Parent View website, from the school's consultation processes and individual meetings during the inspection. The inspector consulted with a representative from the local authority safeguarding team and examined a range of records, policies and procedures in relation to the safeguarding and care of residential pupils.

## Inspection team

Simon Morley

Lead social care inspector

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

Oakfield School opened in January 2013 and is located in the east of the city of Hull. The school is a maintained special school for up to 67 boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16. The school has six residential homes accommodating up to 20 pupils. One of the units is specifically adapted for children with physical disabilities. Residential pupils stay during term time for a maximum of four nights per week, Monday to Thursday. The school offers flexible support to families and children. The number of nights that residential pupils stay varies according to individual needs. At the time of inspection, there were 34 pupils on roll and 19 of these used the residential provision. The school's residential provision was last inspected in February 2016.

## Inspection judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Outstanding**

This exceptional residential provision is an integral part of the school and stands out for the high quality of care that residential pupils receive. The whole-school approach and extended support to families impact very strongly on the experiences and progress of residential pupils.

In comparison to day pupils, residential pupils make vastly significant improvements in their personal, social and emotional development. In turn, this makes their school attendance a lot higher, exclusions are very low, they complete much more homework and their academic progress is far better. A parent said about his child, 'His attendance is 100% now, far better than before.'

Residential pupils benefit from a nurturing environment, clear expectations and consistent routines. As they grow up through school, they become more mature and independent, and develop good life skills. Residential pupils have strong relationships with staff and make friends with each other. Staff are very good role models and the positive attachments that pupils make contribute to improvements in their emotional well-being. Pupils like the activities, and boarding is a fun and enjoyable experience. Parents' comments include: 'He has friends and he talks about how he likes the staff. There are lots of activities and he is never bored,' and, 'He is happy, has new friends and joins in activities.'

Residential pupils develop their motivation to learn and they improve their behaviour and attitude. The results are clearly seen in the high levels of attendance and their achievements. Before coming to this school, pupils experienced multiple exclusions, changes in school placements, and attendance levels were poor. The structure and stability that they experience in this school helps them overcome their personal challenges and barriers to learning. One parent explained: 'It's amazing here. He had real issues in other schools. He used to be excluded a lot and was poorly treated. Now he is happy, his behaviour is much better and he likes it here. The staff treat him well and he responds.'

The strong and robust cohesiveness between care and teaching staff, the emotional well-being team and the safeguarding lead ensure that residential pupils and their families receive a thorough wraparound service. Pupils and parents are fully included in care planning, which gives them a strong voice and ownership of targets and care strategies. There is frequent contact with parents who receive additional support with pupils' health needs, form-filling and parenting skills.

Residential pupils have a very good say in the running of the school through their input into the school and residential councils, house meetings and regular daily conversation with staff. They are able to influence the way that the school uses its resources. They choose meals, activities and make decisions about the decor and furniture in their houses.

Staff have developed a comprehensive system for assessing and tracking the needs of residential pupils. Excellent communication throughout the school ensures that these needs are thoroughly met on a day-to-day basis. Teaching staff help in the evening with homework and care staff support pupils during the day. The thoughtful design of care and education planning systems, monitoring and communication across school is very effective in empowering residential pupils to succeed. Regular review and scrutiny of pupil outcomes make sure that they make continuous progress.

The planning of activities is an integral part of the support for pupils to achieve. All activities are linked to individual targets on a pupil's personal and social profile, which include, for example, independence, motivation, attention and sociability. Each pupil's participation is assessed and linked back to their chosen targets. There is a wide and stimulating choice of activities that includes football, boxing, rugby, music, art and the school's new allotment. Consequently, listening skills, initiative, collaboration, motivation, attention and sociability are all areas of high personal and social development. New skills, abilities and achievements boost pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Whereas pupils were failing in previous schools, they are now succeeding.

Each house provides pupils with even more stimulating social and leisure pursuits, including games consoles, board games, books, word games and music. As part of the Artsmark awards, some pupils are working together to produce a complex Minecraft Hama bead display. After school, pupils are excited and keen to take part in the activities on offer and are consulted about what they would like to do. The daily structure and routines allow for a lot of fun while still learning and achieving. Day pupils are eager to stay for afterschool clubs and extended evenings because they enjoy it so much.

Residential accommodation is of good quality, and each pupil has a single ensuite bedroom. They have the opportunity to personalise their rooms and make them as homely as they want. Houses are clean, tidy and well maintained. Each has a particular role: one is for girls, another for new pupils and a third for older pupils with a strong focus on promoting independence. Pupils in this house achieve a recognised qualification in independence skills equivalent to a GCSE.

Staff are very good in promoting the health and well-being of pupils. Diets are healthy and the quality of cooking and nutrition has improved. Pupils enjoy homemade cooking and regular themed cultural nights. Medication arrangements are robust and there are effective arrangements for supporting individual health conditions. Parents are generally responsible for pupils' regular health appointments and benefit from extra staff support if this becomes difficult to manage. The emotional well-being team is now fully established and plays a key role in promoting pupils' mental health.

Staff across the whole school provide an excellent quality of care to residential pupils, which has a big impact on their development and progress. This starts at the pre-admission stage with an improved child-centred admissions and transition process. Consequently, new pupils settle in and start to benefit from the nurturing care and support almost immediately. A social worker commented: 'Staff are amazing in how they

are supporting him.' The consistency, attention to detail and high quality of care exists all the way through school. The successful independence programme helps pupils with the transition to post-16 education. A parent commented: 'It's brilliant, he would be locked up if it wasn't for the school. He can still get into trouble but they stand by him. His behaviour is much better and I can now trust him to go out on his own with friends. He likes the school and is keen to go.'

Residential pupils and parents are able to keep in touch when pupils stay at the school. Parents rate the school highly and consider the quality of communication about their children's progress to be good. They commented: 'No faults with the school, staff are very supportive and always ready to listen. Communication is very good,' and, 'I know plenty of staff and all of them are approachable.' One parent suggested that establishing a parent support group would be a good idea, otherwise there was nothing that could be better.

### **How well children and young people are protected**

### **Outstanding**

Residential pupils said that they feel safe and that staff respond quickly to any disputes between them. Staff listen to them and pupils feel cared for. The care planning process is sensitive to pupils' individual needs and vulnerabilities such that daily routines and the high levels of care afforded to pupils make boarding a positive and safe experience. Older pupils become positive role models for younger ones and contribute to the caring environment.

There is an excellent approach in promoting the emotional well-being of residential pupils. This is underpinned by the work of the emotional well-being team, combined with regular home visits and extended support to families. There is great success in empowering pupils to feel safe and secure so that they are more able to concentrate on their academic learning as well as to make huge strides in their personal and social development. Pupils prone to violent behaviour, and those who have experienced isolation and exclusion in previous settings, thrive at this school.

There are robust risk management processes that facilitate significant reduction in risk-taking behaviour. Aggression, dangerous activities, withdrawal, anti-social behaviour and incitement of others all decline. Exclusion is a last resort and staff will endeavour to do whatever they can to support pupils. Annual reviews and termly reports consistently evidence pupils' achievements and awards, and their greater maturity, independence, social skills and respect for others.

There are times that pupils need additional support with their emotions and behaviour. Staff respond well to such incidents and physically intervene only as a last resort. Record keeping is better, with a distinction between incidents in school and in the residential provision, allowing additional management review and staff reflection. Pupils learn from these incidents and develop better coping strategies. Their development is reinforced through the emotional well-being team, which has a strong impact on reducing the number of incidents.

Proactive care practice is based on highly individualised care and behaviour support plans, which are regularly reviewed. The high quality of planning minimises risks both

inside and outside of school. At the same time, pupils benefit from high levels of inclusion, participation in the wider community and new experiences. Pupils join local organisations such as a rugby club and cadets, they contribute to school awards such as the Artsmark, and help out on the school allotment. This is exemplary compared to their previous school experiences. Furthermore, residential pupils learn how to responsibly manage high-risk activities such as the school's new climbing wall, mountain biking, abseiling and outdoor rock climbing. Accomplishing such feats adds further to pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

There has been significant improvement in regards to policy and record keeping of absences or missing from school incidents. There is now a clear distinction between unauthorised absence and missing as opposed to using the term 'absconding'. Practice is robust when pupils are absent, and there is effective work with local police and parents to keep pupils safe.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive and regularly reviewed. There is a robust system within school for staff to report any concerns about a pupil. These are overseen by the designated safeguarding lead. She is persistent and dedicated in making sure that there are positive outcomes from any concern raised for pupils and their families. There are good links with partner safeguarding agencies, and any shortfalls in their actions are robustly challenged. Frequent meetings within school ensure that any issues, outcomes and necessary action to be taken are effectively communicated. Roles and responsibilities are clear and understood by all staff so that pupils are kept free from harm. A parent commented: 'If I have any worries, I know I can call the school and they will look into things.'

Residential pupils benefit from living in a safe environment. The recruitment process for new staff is thorough and ensures that only suitable adults are appointed. Health and safety arrangements are thorough and the fire safety risk assessment has been reviewed as recommended at the last inspection.

## **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

## **Outstanding**

Leaders and managers have developed a clearly defined, strong staff structure that embodies an ethos focused on delivering excellent outcomes for pupils. Staff at all levels are ambitious in their determination for pupils to maximise their potential. There is a strong practice of reflection and a realistic commitment to continuous improvement that impacts significantly on pupils' achievements. Staff are empowered by senior leaders to be creative and innovative and contribute to developing the school.

There have been many improvements since the last inspection. There is a better focus on restorative practice and helping residential pupils develop coping strategies. This links with the work of the emotional well-being team that is now fully in place and is helping pupils become more resilient. The inclusion of families, more home visits and extra support have encouraged more parents to visit the school for tea and to see the emotional well-being team. Residential pupils are more motivated from seeing how committed and supportive staff are in helping them and their families. The admissions process is better, helping new pupils settle in quicker. Staff have developed healthier menus based on recognised standards, aimed at improving the health of pupils. Staff are

leading on achieving the Artsmark award, developing an allotment and providing pupils with better resources and recognition through local contacts. All four of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection are now in place.

The head of care completes honest, realistic and comprehensive self-assessments of the residential provision. Despite the numerous improvements already in place, he is still committed to further review and development. This is testament to the strength of leadership in the school and to his wanting the best for pupils.

The governors play a key role in holding the school to account and are proactive in fulfilling their responsibilities. The excellent level of governance and monitoring is underpinned by regular external scrutiny from a very experienced consultant. These systems provide regular challenge to senior leaders and help ensure that residential pupils continue to receive high standards of care.

Staff undertake a thorough induction programme that has been recently reviewed and updated. This includes a new assessment of their progress. Following this, staff go on to achieve the recommended qualification. Along with a wider training programme in particular areas, such as behaviour management and safeguarding, staff develop the skills to support the holistic needs of pupils. All the residential staff feel valued and teamwork is very effective, with close collaboration and integration with other staff in the school.

There are well-developed and comprehensive tracking systems in place to monitor residential pupils' progress. Regular reviews ensure that care strategies can be adapted to maximise progress. There are strong links between the targets for personal, social and emotional progress and academic achievement. The residential provision has a strategic part to play in empowering residential pupils to progress in all aspects of their lives. The skills and abilities that they develop from the extra care help them to stay in class, focus more and have a better attitude to learning. Data and information about personal, social and emotional development could be better collated. This does not impact on the individual progress that pupils make. However, a more centralised and fully descriptive account for each pupil would showcase better the immense achievements that they make since their admission to the school.

## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework'.

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceed the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118140
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC466264
<b>DfE registration number</b>	810 7007

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Residential Special School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	19
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	11 to 16
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Davies
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	09/02/2016
<b>Telephone number</b>	01482 854 588
<b>Email address</b>	admin@oakfield.hull.sch.uk

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