

# Oakfield

Oakfield, Hopewell Road, Hull HU9 4HD

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Oakfield School opened in January 2013. It 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 34 pupils. 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 their individual needs.

**Inspection dates:** 12 to 14 September 2018

**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:** 25 September 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- The young people make excellent progress in every area of their development because residential activities are individualised and planned around the young people's learning needs.
- The young people flourish in an environment which promotes diversity and builds on individuals' strengths.
- The young people are taught value and respect. The young people use these skills to help others in the community.
- The young people's anxiety reduces, and they thrive in a highly structured environment where boundaries are consistent and clear.
- The procedures to keep the young people safe are effective. Consequently, the young people are kept safe and they feel safe.
- The senior leaders and managers have high expectations and aspirations for the young people. The staff team follows this approach.
- The head of care meticulously monitors the young people's progress and the service. He is well supported by the independent visitor and the board of governors.
- The head of care has a continuous drive for improvement. He has an accurate evaluation of the strengths of the service and future areas of development.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- To consider revising the oversight and auditing of controlled drugs. This will strengthen the managers' monitoring of medication and it will help the managers to identify any recording or administration errors.

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

### **Recommendations**

- To consider revising the oversight and auditing of controlled drugs to avoid errors in practice. (Residential special schools national minimum standards, page 9, paragraph 3.6)

## Inspection judgements

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

The young people enjoy their time in the residential provision. One young person said: 'I would stay five nights if I could.' The young people have exceptional relationships with staff. The young people's self-esteem significantly improves because the staff treat each young person with value and respect. The staff demonstrate great empathy and understand each young person's complex needs.

The children and young people benefit from the seamless approach between the residential provision and the school. Shared targets between the school and the residential provision ensure that the young people's learning is consistently reinforced in both settings. As a result, every experience that the young people are involved in enhances their learning.

The young people's emotional well-being significantly improves. The young people's emotional well-being is constantly monitored through the school's specialist emotional well-being team. The well-being team provides a bespoke service which supports the young people and their families.

The young people's physical health is promoted through healthy eating and exercise. The young people receive the medication that they need safely because staff are trained to administer medication. The recording and auditing of controlled drugs is not always consistent. If an administration error is made, this could lead to a delay before it is identified.

The young people develop confidence, their communication improves and their social skills develop. They undertake a wide range of well-planned social activities tailored to individual learning needs. Activities include football, science and craft clubs.

The young people learn to transfer their social skills into the community. As a result, the young people start to broaden their views of the wider world. This is outstanding progress for some young people who struggle with this notion because of their own complex needs. The young people are proud of the community work that they undertake, which includes helping elderly people in a local care home. The young people have also recently won a national award for their exceptionally designed community allotment. The young people run a local farmers' market with produce from the allotment and crafts made by the young people.

The young people and their families are benefiting tremendously from whole family support. The introduction of a parents' group, facilitated by the staff, is enabling parents to access professional and peer support. The group also helps parents to access support from other specialist agencies. One parent said: 'The parent group is a godsend. It is nice to talk to parents. It is like a lifeline.'

The young people learn a range of life skills which are accredited. This provides them with skills and a qualification for later life. The young people take small steps which lead to big achievements. For example, some of the young people have recently completed a fundraising event which enabled them to plan and undertake a night away independently.

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

The young people thrive because their day is highly structured. The young people respond well to the enthusiasm and positivity of the skilled staff. The staff have high expectations of the young people's behaviour. The staff help the young people to learn strategies to manage their emotions. As a result, the young people's behaviour improves. The young people are proud of their achievements when they receive rewards for good behaviour.

Physical intervention is a last resort. The staff know each young person extremely well. The staff proactively use their knowledge of each young person and their relationship with them to manage challenging behaviour positively.

The management of risk is effective. Staff are skilled in monitoring the reduction of risk. They help the young people to learn how to manage risk safely. This is allowing the young people to increase their independence as their risks reduce.

Safeguarding procedures are effective. The school's designated safeguarding lead works closely with the staff, who are committed to ensuring that the young people in their care are kept safe. When safeguarding concerns are raised, quick action is taken to protect the young people. Concerns are shared immediately with other agencies when appropriate.

Improvements to employment practice are providing a robust system for ensuring that the staff are safe to work with the young people.

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

The leadership team is highly ambitious and aspirational for the young people to achieve. The attitude of the staff team reflects this in everyday care practice. Consequently, the young people continue to enjoy an exceptional experience in residential care.

New monitoring systems are now embedded in practice. The systems allow the managers and senior leaders to accurately track the young people's progress and to target areas for development.

The leadership team ensures that the young people's voice is central to care planning. The leadership team is eager to respond to the ideas voiced by the

residential young people's council. The residential young people's council recently requested a recreational room, which has now been created.

The dedicated staff team feels extremely well supported by the leadership team. The staff are motivated to maintain high standards of care. The staff consistently follow the leaders' example, seeking to make innovative improvements to care practice and learning for the young people. The staff receive regular supervision in line with the school's policy.

The head of care's accurate self-evaluation clearly demonstrates a continuous drive for improvement. The head of care understands the areas of strength and future areas that he would like to develop. The head of care is supported by a strong board of governors. The independent visitor provides robust oversight and quality reports, which enable the senior management team to monitor progress and to continue to make developments in practice.

## **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:** SC466264

**Headteacher/Teacher in charge:** Rachel Davis

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Jamie Richardson, social care inspector (lead)



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