

# 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 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 years. 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:** 4 to 6 June 2019

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

**Date of previous inspection:** 12 September 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

The pupils enjoy their time in the residential provision. The pupils learn how to maintain positive relationships with others and they make friends with their peers. For some pupils, being able to make friends is a first-time achievement. One parent commented: 'He loves residential, it's given him independence and he's made friends there for the first time.'

The pupils enjoy excellent relationships with the staff. The staff help the pupils to gain trust in adults and they help the pupils to believe that they can achieve. As a result, the pupils' social confidence and life experiences significantly improve. As the pupils' self-esteem grows, some pupils who were previously isolated start to join social groups in the community. Some of the pupils make positive friendships for the first time outside of school.

The emotional health of pupils is exceptionally well supported through the school's emotional well-being team. The well-being team continually strives to develop its services for the pupils. The addition of the school nurse and input from specialist mental health services is ensuring that the pupils receive the complex support that they need.

The pupils' physical health improves because they learn how to keep themselves healthy. The pupils are developing an understanding of healthy eating. The pupils have achieved a nationally recognised bronze award for healthy food choices and they are working towards a silver award. Focused work delivered by specialist services around maintaining a healthy weight has helped 60 per cent of pupils who took part to lose weight. As the pupils' physical fitness improves, some of the pupils start to make positive lifestyle choices and they take up sports such as rugby and running.

The pupils' learning is continually reinforced across the 24-hour curriculum. The pupils benefit tremendously from the seamless approach between the school and the residential provision. The leadership team has introduced a 'leading by walkabout' system. This is supported by school and residential staff and is a behaviour management tool. This is having a significant positive impact on the pupils' behaviour, learning and engagement in lessons.

The pupils' life experiences are enhanced from the range of activities that they undertake. The staff meticulously plan activities to make sure that they maximise every learning opportunity for each pupil. The pupils learn how to spend their leisure time positively. The pupils' favourite activities include camping, football, beach trips, horse riding, swimming and games.

The pupils' strengths and areas for development are well understood by the staff. Individualised social learning targets help pupils to focus their social learning and build essential skills which will help them to be as independent as possible in later

life. The skills that pupils learn include using public transport, cooking and managing their own time effectively for when they leave the school.

The pupils and their families benefit greatly from the parent support group. The parents' group continues to evolve, offering an excellent source of support to pupils and their families. The support that families' access includes regular group meetings, family days out, parenting courses, links in with family support and health agencies. One parent commented: 'The best part of the group is other parents listening and offering advice, or just being able to share your views without judgement.'

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

The pupils' behaviour improves, and they develop coping strategies to manage their emotions positively. The pupils use their coping strategies when they go home, and this has a significant positive impact on family life. One parent commented: 'His behaviour has improved massively. This has really helped me as a mum. He has stopped lashing out. He can control his anger now from the work they have done. The staff I cannot fault them.'

The predictable routine and the clear boundaries both in school and in the residential setting reduce pupils' anxieties. The pupils understand exactly what is expected of them. The use of physical intervention is low. The staff use their strong relationships and in-depth knowledge of each pupil to avoid crisis and quickly redirect any challenges.

The safety of the pupils is highly prioritised. Effective systems for sharing information ensure that concerns for pupils are quickly identified and addressed. The arrangements for dealing with safeguarding issues are clear. There is always staff with expertise available to ensure that any child protection issues are dealt with appropriately.

The designated safeguarding lead is dedicated to continually improving safeguarding practice. She uses innovative ways to assess staff knowledge. From this, she identifies areas for development and provides focused training for staff.

Risks to the pupils are well managed and reduce overtime. The staff follow up-to-date risk assessments which provide staff with clear strategies to reduce the likelihood of harm. The staff undertake regular safeguarding training and they are aware of wider risks to children such as county lines, radicalisation and child sexual exploitation.

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

The head of care is extremely focused on continually improving the quality of care. The head of care researches new ideas to ensure that the service continually develops for the pupils and their families. The head of care's unquestionable ambition for the pupils to achieve is mirrored throughout the staff team and the

school's leadership team. As a result, the pupils make exceptional progress in all areas of their development.

The head of care is a key part of the school's leadership team. The school's leadership team is dedicated to ensuring that pupils receive the right support to meet their very complex needs. The leadership team continually seeks to improve services for the pupils. The leadership team commissions other specialist services in the school to create a complete package of care for each pupil. The services include nurses and specialist mental health professionals.

The head of care is quick to identify and respond to any issues robustly. The head of care is clear where their strengths are and the areas they wish to develop. The independent visitor has high expectations and appropriately challenges the head of care and the leadership team to develop the quality of care that they offer. The board of governors' focused oversight of the school supports the head of care to continue to make positive service developments.

The motivated staff team is empowered to continue to develop its roles to help the pupils reach their maximum potential. The staff continually research new ways to improve their practice and opportunities for the pupils to achieve. The staff feel very well supported by the head of care and the leadership team. The staff feel confident to undertake the challenges in their work because they receive regular and reflective supervision.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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:** Mrs Rachel Davies

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

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## **Inspector**

Jamie Richardson, social care inspector



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