

# Wyre Forest School

COMBERTON ROAD, KIDDERMINSTER, WORCESTERSHIRE DY10 3DX

<b>Inspection dates</b>	11/01/2017 to 13/01/2017	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of care and support	Good	2
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is good because

- Children and young people enjoy staying in the residential provision.
- Children and young people have daily opportunities to participate in activities that support their personal development, talent and abilities, including accessing a variety of structured activities each evening. Even the smallest of achievements is consistently celebrated.
- Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the children and young people's individual needs and vulnerabilities.
- Children and young people experience genuine care from a consistent, stable and trusting care staff team.
- Children and young people enjoy positive relationships with residential care staff. This enables them to express their views and to have their voices listened to.
- The leadership team shares a clear vision, in which the children and young people's welfare and wellbeing is their top priority. This includes working closely with partner agencies.
- Bespoke transitional plans ensure that children and young people are able to transfer into the residential provision at a pace that suits them.
- Staff work collaboratively with other professionals and families for the benefit of the children and young people.
- Children and young people achieve high standards of good behaviour, because of the trust and sense of security they get from having a stable and consistent staff

team, who know their individual needs extremely well.

- Recordings of physical intervention do not always reflect the good practice of the staff. There is a lack of recording regarding whether medical assistance was offered, and if children and young people were given the opportunity to discuss the incident afterwards.
- Not all staff have received training which relates to the specialised needs of the children and young people in their care. For example, staff have not undergone manual handling training, and not all staff have received training in working with children or and young people with autistic spectrum disorder.

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

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

- All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) within 24 hours of an incident of restraint, including reasonable force, they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by. (National minimum standard 12.5)
- 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. (National minimum standard 19.1)

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

- Ensure that children and young people with physical needs have access to all the facilities they require or may choose to use, such as the bath.
- Ensure a night-time drill is undertaken when staffing is at a minimum.
- Ensure staff and managers regularly challenge and review practice and records that might result in over-risk management.
- Ensure that swift action is taken when risk assessments require updating.
- Ensure all records of physical interventions are detailed and accurately reflect actions of staff, the leadership team and outcomes for children and young people.
- To use case studies to quality assure safeguarding with the aim of improving and developing future practice.

## Information about this inspection

This residential inspection took place following the appropriate notice period for this type of visit. Two inspectors carried out the inspection and reviewed the policies, documentation, residential provision and organisation over a period of three days. The inspectors spoke to the headteacher, the residential leadership team, residential staff, governors, and children and young people. One evening was spent in the residential accommodation observing staff and children and young people's interactions and activities. The inspectors also joined the children and young people for an evening meal. In addition, the inspectors sought feedback from parents and professionals.

## Inspection team

Louise Battersby

Lead social care inspector

Dawn Bennett

Social care inspector

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

The school is a local authority service and is directly responsible to a governing body. Wyre Forest School is a special school catering for children and young people who have a broad range of complex and challenging physical, social, emotional and learning difficulties.

Wyre Forest School moved to a new purpose-built site in April 2015. This site includes a residential aspect of the school called Russell House. This opened in September 2014 prior to the whole school move. It operates from Monday to Friday. It can accommodate up to 16 children and young people, between the ages of 8 and 19. There were 12 children and young people receiving a service at the time of the inspection. This is the school's second inspection of residential services.

## Inspection judgements

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

**Good**

Children and young people make good social, emotional and physical progress that supports their continual learning and educational achievements. The progress made in meeting targets is monitored and achievements are constantly celebrated and rewarded. As a result, children and young people engage fully in their time at Russell House and have a positive experience of their residential life.

Relationships between staff and children and young people are extremely positive. These relationships are based on mutual understanding and respect. Staff have an excellent understanding of the needs of each individual child and young person and are skilled at meeting their diverse needs. As a result, incidents do not escalate and the need for physical restraint is low.

Parents are enthusiastic about the care their children receive. Staff have excellent relationships with parents. This includes having regular contact and dialogue. Parents feel that their views matter and feel able to discuss any areas of concern, and are confident that these will be taken seriously. Parents are able to see at home the benefits of the residential provision. For example, a parent told the inspector, '[My son] has made amazing progress. Family life was very difficult. He has two sisters and their whole lives revolved around [him]. He always had to be first. He is now more tolerant of his sisters, also music in the car and at home. He is much better at taking turns, which used to be a major issue.' Another parent commented, '[Staff] have an open door policy. I can drop in or send them a message at any time, they are very responsive. I am always welcomed. Whenever I have a suggestion I am listened to.'

Consultation with children and young people is embedded in the daily practice and routines of the residential provision. Children and young people are encouraged to express their views and ideas. This is central to the arrangements of activities and menu choices. Staff listen to the children and young people and ensure that all their views are gathered and, when possible, acted on. This is further supported by visits made by the independent person and two independent listeners. The governors also provide a proactive role. The governors visit and spend time in Russell House with the children, young people and staff. They complete a report of their findings for the leadership team to consider. This helps to improve standards for the children and young people.

Children and young people embrace the opportunity to participate in a wide and varied range of stimulating activities. Activities are age appropriate and inclusive. All children and young people, regardless of their skills and abilities, are encouraged to take part. The residential provision is well resourced, with a games room, art room, cinema room and on-site swimming pool. Children and young people are also encouraged to develop their interests in the community, such as taking part in clubs. Children and young people develop their social interaction skills and form appropriate emotional connections and relationships with their peers through these shared experiences. This supports their personal growth and development. A parent told the inspector, '[My son] is always busy doing activities. He looks forward to going.'

The residential provision is very much part of everyday life of the school model. This is discussed during governors' meetings and subcommittees that

focus on the residential aspect of the school. Children and young people who do not stay at the residential provision still help to improve the service. For example, Russell House recently held a sponsored 24-hour go-kart event to raise money for a trampoline. Staff, children and young people from the school took part and thoroughly enjoyed the activity.

## **The quality of care and support**

**Good**

Children and young people experience a high standard of care, which meets their needs and individual circumstances. Staff are committed and motivated. Children and young people receive care and activities, which are tailored to meet their personal needs. Information is shared between care and education staff, developing a consistent level of care. Verbal systems help staff to examine the children's and young people's day in school and possible evening issues, and help the staff to plan for any difficulties or to celebrate particular achievements.

There are excellent transitional arrangements in place, which take into consideration each child's or young person's needs. Other professionals are also involved in the transitional planning to ensure that the best possible outcomes for the children and young people are secured. Social stories and other aids are used to help make sure that transitions are positive and as smooth as possible. However, the absence of a thorough environmental risk assessment for each child or young person means that there have been missed opportunities to examine practice. This has resulted in a missed opportunity to identify that the children and young people who have physical needs might want access to all the facilities, such as a bath.

Mealtimes are relaxed and sociable occasions. Children and young people are consistently encouraged to display socially acceptable behaviours. This can include encouraging children and young people to lay the table and load the dishwasher. Staff are forward thinking about young people's transitions to adulthood. This includes encouraging young people to begin developing essential life skills. For example, young people develop skills such as putting out the recycling and participating in gardening. Staff also help young people to acquire skills associated with managing money, cooking and purchasing food.

Staff ensure that healthcare arrangements consistently respond to the differing needs of the children and young people. Staff support parents when visiting the doctor with their child. A parent reflected on a time when a member of staff accompanied her and her son to see the doctor and how beneficial she found this.

The residential accommodation is of an excellent standard. Children and young people enjoy the purpose-built accommodation. It is clean, safe, homely and inviting. Each young person has their own bedroom, which they can personalise to their own taste during their stay. This is further enhanced by a safe outdoor play area, which the children and young people can access independently.

## How well children and young people are protected

Good

Behaviour seen during the inspection was excellent. Incidents that do occur are managed well. Staff have an excellent knowledge and understanding of the children and young people's complexities, including any behavioural and communication needs. This understanding means that staff promote positive behaviours through direction and praise. This replaces the need for sanctions. This has also meant that the use of physical intervention is low.

Staff's approach to behaviour is good. However, the records do not reflect this good practice. Records lack information, for example if medical assistance was offered, or if children and young people were given the opportunity to discuss the incident, and there is a lack of clarity regarding the timings of some physical restraints.

Partnership work with families and other professionals such as the police, social workers and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) are seen as vitally important by staff. The school benefits from having social workers on site. A social worker commented that she has a very good relationship with the staff. She found them to be, 'Approachable and proactive – they will do anything that I ask of them.'

Staff implement effective health and safety procedures that promote everyone's safety. These include a safe recruitment procedure, regular daytime fire drills and effective medication procedures. However, the leadership team has not yet ensured that a night-time drill is undertaken when staffing is at a minimum to fully inform their practice.

The school has a designated safeguarding lead. She meets with care staff to discuss any emerging concern. However, the senior leadership team, designated person and governors do not use internal or external case studies to quality assure their safeguarding procedures. As a result, leaders are not rigorously challenging current practice or continually improving and developing future practice.

## The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

There have been changes at the school since the last inspection. These include a new headteacher being appointed. There has been an increased number of children and young people transitioning into the residential provision. In addition, the care staff have ensured that targets for children and young people are now more consistent. The leadership team has also improved the induction process for staff, and the environment has been enhanced with photos and artwork.

The new headteacher is passionate and dynamic. She knows all of the children and young people well. The residential aspect of the school is highly thought of by governors, managers, staff, external professionals, children, young people and parents. Everyone works in partnership to meet the needs of the children and young people. There is a consistent expectation that children and young people's experiences of their residential stay should be positive and, thus, enable them to progress in aspects of their behaviour, learning and social skills.

The staff at Russell House have a positive impact on the children and young people's development, and this is regularly monitored and reviewed by the leadership team and

governing body. All staff have completed a level 3 qualification in residential childcare or are working towards the award. However, not all staff have received training which relates to the specialised needs of the children and young people in their care. For example, staff have not undergone manual handling training, and not all staff have received training in working with children and/or young people with autistic spectrum disorder. Care staff have also not been afforded the opportunity to link in with the school's training packages that would aid them in keeping up to date with professional practice.

Staffing is consistent. There is low sickness and all staff work well together. Teaching staff will cover shifts to ensure that there are no shortfalls in staffing levels and that agency staff are not required. Good links are in place with teaching staff to ensure that sharing information is achieved for every child and young person staying at the residential provision.

Good arrangements are in place to respond to complaints that are received by the school. One complaint has been received since the school's last inspection. This was promptly addressed.

Although there is a procedure for monitoring all risk assessments for the residential provision, some were out of date on the first day of the inspection. Managers took the necessary action to bring them up to date by the end of the inspection.



## 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 the 'Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework'.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceed the standard of good and result 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>	135791
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC490122
<b>DfE registration number</b>	

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>	12
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	8 to 19
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Rebecca Garratt
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	30/06/2015
<b>Telephone number</b>	01562 827785
<b>Email address</b>	office@wfs.worcs.sch.uk

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