

Wyre Forest School

COMBERTON ROAD, KIDDERMINSTER, WORCESTERSHIRE, DY10 3DX

Inspection dates 29/06/2015 to 30/06/2015

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

Quality of care and support good

How well children and young people are protected good

Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers good

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Outcomes for children and young people are good. They have an individualised residential experience that enables them to make positive progress in their educational, personal, and social development.
- Children and young people enjoy their residential experience. They have positive relationships with residential staff. A parent stated: 'It must be said that the Russell House team are a cheerful, professional and truly caring bunch! The residents respect their authority and enjoy their enthusiasm for play and creative activities.'
- Parents are positive about the improved outcomes the residential experience gives their child.
- Arrangements for the protection of children and young people are robust and ensure they are safe and prioritised at all times
- Leadership, management, and organisation of the residential provision are good. The head of care, senior management team and board of governors routinely monitor practice and use information gained to raise standards.
- This new service proactively meets the individual needs of children and young people and supports them to make good progress towards achieving their individual potentials.

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?

- Link staff induction and probation to the school's training programme and identify mandatory training to be completed during these periods.
- Ensure night waking staff receive behaviour management and de-escalation training that will equip them with the skills required to best meet the needs of the children and young people.
- Ensure risk assessments identify any use of surveillance does not intrude unreasonably on children's and young people's privacy.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection with three hours' notice. Inspection activities included: observation of residential care practice over two evenings; informal discussion during shared meals; meetings and discussions with residential staff; contact with the statutory safeguarding authority to gather their views, and scrutiny of a wide range of documentation about residence. Parents, children, and young people contributed their written views to the inspection.

Inspection team

Dawn Bennett

Lead 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 generic special school catering for pupils with 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 new 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 young people, between the ages of 8 and 18. There were three young people receiving a service at the time of the inspection. This is the school's first inspection of residential services.

Inspection judgements

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

Children and young people effectively develop and improve their emotional and social skills, independence, self-esteem, and relationships. They achieve this helped by a residential staff team who work proactively with parents and professionals to deliver a seamless service. A teacher stated: 'residential staff have been a fantastic support to us at school to get to know the pupil better and to support us with his behavioural needs. He has made great progress with regards to communication and behaviour and residential staff are always on hand if we need to talk about things or update each other with regard to the pupil.'

Children and young people enjoy the residential service and have formed positive relationships with the staff team. A young person stated: 'Russell House is the best place to be. It has changed my life since I went there. It is a good place to stay. I love the activities and the food. I like the head of care because he is kind and good fun. He is a joker. He is the best guy I have ever had.'

They are valued, active members of the school community and develop positive skills in interacting with others and expressing views and opinions. They benefit from healthy lifestyles. They try new food and are currently growing, picking and tasting vegetables from their own garden. Some children and young people have been successfully supported to establish better patterns of sleep which has enhanced their educational day as well as their home life.

Children and young people experience and develop interests in a wide range of leisure and learning activities. These increase their skills in communication, coordination, socialisation, and independence. They take on fun responsibilities like caring for two chickens which also develops their skills in caring for others. They enjoy art and craft sessions, the results of which are displayed with pride throughout the building. They have access to a diverse range of resources on site, such as football club. They also receive good support from staff to attend regular activities in the local community such as Scouts.

They learn to live alongside others and develop skills to manage their own anxieties. A teacher stated: 'The young person is increasingly willing to listen and has been seen using his strategies to assist him in calming down after a negative incident.' These skills as well as learning more practical skills increase their independence and life skills and improve further education and accommodation choices.

Quality of care and support **good**

The dedication and commitment of the residential staff team results in positive outcomes for children and young people. They support each child and young person and their family to access the service in a smooth and planned way and at each individual's own pace. Staff consider strategies that enhance this experience and improve chances of a positive move. For example, they opened during the summer holidays for transition visits for a young person to start at the beginning of the school term. They took photos of the

young person during these visits to make a personalised welcome book to be shared with his family.

Staff work effectively in partnership with professionals and parents. They met with everyone prior to a young person moving in and then maintain regular contact during and after each weekly stay. A teacher stated: 'I feel there is a very strong line of communication between school and Russell House and any concerns or sharing of information regarding the well-being of the pupil is relayed effectively between all parties involved. I feel it has been a positive experience and a very successful partnership.' They work proactively with specialists to ensure a continuity of practice and support to each child and young person. For example, body awareness exercises in residential, school and at home is successfully increasing a young person's core stability and time out of his wheelchair.

Staff have high expectations of children and young people and support them to do their best. Good quality care planning ensures children and young people learn skills on a one-to-one, and group basis. Targets are set in consultation with the young person, their parents, and school. There is constant focus on learning through meaningful relationships, fun activities, and play. This produces positive outcomes and boosts individual's progress and confidence.

Children and young people learn skills that promote their personal safety and broaden their opportunities. For example, they develop personal care skills such as toileting, showering and dressing and minimise their dependency on others. They complete tasks first with physical prompts, then verbal or pictorial prompts and then independently.

The accommodation and garden areas are outstanding. The environment is safe and furnished to a high standard and very welcoming. Photos and pictures which celebrate events are displayed throughout. This gives young people a real sense of belonging.

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

The staff team ensure the service provides a safe environment where children and young people can relax and develop. There are robust welfare arrangements that protect them from harm and equip them with skills to stay safe. Parents and staff are familiar with the school's policies for safety and wellbeing and all staff are appropriately trained. As a result, they recognise children's and young people's increased levels of vulnerability due to physical disabilities, communication difficulties and lack of understanding of acceptable social relationships. This is reflected in the sensitive and respectful practice they deliver when completing tasks such as intimate care. They promote positive friendships and respectful relationships. Bullying is unknown and children and young people do not go missing.

Parents and carers have access to an established complaints procedure. There have been no formal complaints. Children and young people are able to express their feelings and frustrations to staff knowing that they will listen to them and help them to manage their feelings in an acceptable way. They have regular contact with independent advocates and regular meetings with the head of care. They discuss a range of topics and influence

their care. For example, recent feedback has resulted in evening menus being reviewed and changed.

Children and young people make positive progress in regulating their own behaviour and become more socially able. All staff, bar the two waking night staff are trained in a range of techniques that support young people to make good progress. This omission does not enable effective support to children and young people who are distressed during the night.

Where necessary, individual behaviour support plans guide staff in consistent strategies to reduce inappropriate behaviour. They give clear, yet reassuring support to children and young people. A parent stated: 'My reasons for enrolling my child in this facility are for him to learn to manage his aggression and for assistance in his transition into adult living. In the relatively short time he has been there he has made great strides in both of these areas. I have seen improvement in sleep patterns, toilet routine, mealtime behaviours, respect for others' belongings, responsibility for personal hygiene and tolerance of other residents' behaviours. The staff have achieved this through patience, consistency and balancing discipline with opportunity, as residents are encouraged to participate in calming and constructive activity.'

Staff know how to minimise risks to children and young people's well-being without hindering their opportunities to explore new activities or experiences. Staff vetting is robust. Health and safety procedures protect children and young people through regular tests on fire systems and other electrical equipment. Environmental risk assessments ensure staff are informed about most potential hazards to reduce risks. Risk assessments do not explain the routine use of bedroom door alarms and bedroom door blinds for all children. This might restrict the liberty or privacy of a child or young person who does not require them.

Parents express confidence in the safety and security of the service. One stated: 'While he is in their care, I feel confident that he is safe, and that there is a high level of security in place at all times, on and off site. This is crucial, as my son knows no danger and tends to run off if not well supervised.'

Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

good

The head of care and staff team are all new in post. The head of care is appropriately experienced and qualified. He holds a Level 4 National Vocational Qualification in working with children and young people. He and his deputy are currently completing their Level 5 Diploma in leadership and management.

The service is developing gradually in line with a clear plan. Staff are recruited as children are identified for the service. Placements are not made without appropriate staff numbers in place. As a result, children and young people receive good support from a consistent and professional team of staff. Routines and procedures are clear and provide a safe, sensitive, and motivating environment. There is consistent focus on enjoyment and reward as well as strong emphasis on maintaining meaningful and respectful relationships between staff, young people and families.

The positive staff team achieve the best for young people in their care by continually reviewing and improving their own knowledge and practice. They receive reflective practice-focused supervision and appraisals to promote their learning needs. Regular staff team meetings enhance communication and practice. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of each child and young person and deploy flexible approaches according to individual needs.

Staff recruited so far are already trained, especially with regard to specialised skills required in supporting children and young people with complex learning, communication, and health needs. New staff work through an induction and probation programme. However, this is not yet linked to an established training programme that includes timescales for achievement. This could lead to delays in training for staff to meet the needs of children and young people receiving a service.

Governors, the senior leadership team and head of care have a clear analysis of the residential provision through a quality assurance programme. The needs of children and young people and their families are understood and their views are gathered, listened to, and acted upon as part of this process. The quality assurance system for the residential service includes an additional external independent visit and reports. The strengths and areas for development identified through these processes feed into the service's development plan.

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*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds 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

Unique reference number	135791
Social care unique reference number	SC490122
DfE registration number	8857026

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.

Type of school	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	3
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	8-18
Headteacher	Sue Price (Acting headteacher)
Date of previous boarding inspection	This is the first inspection of boarding
Telephone number	01562 827785
Email address	office@wfs.worcs.sch.uk

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