

West Kirby Residential School

West Kirby Residential School, 107-119 Meols Drive, West Kirby, WIRRAL, Merseyside, CH48 5DH

Inspection dates	10/02/2016 to 12/02/2016	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Outstanding	1
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

- The school provides outstanding levels of care and support for children and young people. Staff across the school work closely and collaboratively and are aware of the individual needs of pupils. Relationships between staff and young people are strong and respectful.
- The children and young people make sustained progress, both academically and personally during their time at the school. They make effective use of the wide ranging opportunities offered to develop their skills and interests. As a result, they build their self-esteem and grow in confidence.
- Safeguarding policies and practice operate effectively to keep children and young people safe. The school has a robust training programme and works closely with other authorities to ensure that children and young people are safe. To improve further, the school should review the content of safeguarding plans to ensure that they are sufficiently detailed and reflect the actions taken.
- The senior leadership team, governors and staff are all committed to improving the lives of the children and young people in their care. Staff feel well supported in their role through a wide range of training events. Formal supervision sessions take place but the frequency of these arrangements are in need of review.
- Relationships with parents and carers are strong. Parents are positive about the care they receive with one saying 'The boarding experience my son gets is excellent, the staff are wonderful and go above and beyond to help him.'

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?

- Review safeguarding plans to ensure that they contain sufficient detail.
- Review the frequency of staff supervision.
- Ensure that the sanctions used in the residential provision are included in the schools policy on managing behaviour.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out unannounced due to a recent safeguarding incident at the school which was being investigated by the appropriate authorities at the time of the inspection. Inspection activities included: observation of boarding practice over two evenings; formal and informal meetings with residential pupils; meetings and discussions with the principal, head of care, assistant head of care, designated safeguarding lead, family liaison worker, school nurse and healthcare assistant, school business manager, head of pastoral care team, a number of residential staff. Before the inspection, feedback was obtained from the local safeguarding authority. All the four boarding houses were visited and there was scrutiny of a wide range of policies and records. Responses on Parent View were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Lucy Martin

Lead social care HMI

Full Report

Information about this school

West Kirby Residential School is a non-maintained residential special educational needs school for young people aged five to 19 years, many of whom are on the Autistic Spectrum and others with complex and significant emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. Many young people also have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides flexible residential arrangements depending on the needs of the child, ranging from one to four nights each week. The residential accommodation is provided within four areas; two residential areas within the main school building and in two houses in the local community. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2015.

The residential provision accommodates a maximum of 22 children and young people and at the time of this inspection there were 15 resident.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

The children and young people make sustained academic and personal progress at the school. Young people are able to describe the difference this school has made to their lives, for example, in helping them manage their behaviour, increase their social skills, confidence and independence. Pupils value the trusted and secure relationships they have with the staff team and feel that they are listened to. Parents are positive regarding the changes they see in their children with one describing the school as 'transformational.'

The children and young people enjoy residential life and the varied range of activities on offer. Staff and young people enjoy each other's company and have fun together. Records such as care plans are well maintained with clear targets set and monitored through regular key work sessions. Residential staff are committed and enthusiastic and are keen to develop new ideas, such as, how best to monitor the progress and achievements of the young people.

The safety of children and young people is given high priority. Safeguarding procedures are effective and concerns are acted upon and shared with the appropriate agencies. As a result, children and young people feel safe and valued.

All staff work collaboratively across the school to provide good levels of consistency. Effective strategies are in place to manage behaviour. Incidents requiring sanctions or physical restraint are rare in residential time and are well monitored. Young people say that issues of bullying are addressed quickly and effectively by staff.

Senior leaders recognise the importance of the residential provision and are committed to improvement. Despite the positive outcomes and the outstanding levels of care and support given to the young people, there are a few areas for further improvement to ensure best practice in all areas.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Children and young people receive high levels of individual support from staff who have time to listen to them and who know them well. Keyworker sessions take place on a very regular basis and young people said they feel able to talk to a number of different staff, both within the school and externally, if they have concerns or worries. One young person described her keyworker as a 'third grandma' due to the high levels of individual care and support they receive from her. Staff at the school work closely and collaboratively and the effective handover processes ensure that relevant information is shared. A number of the residential staff also work during the day in school which ensures high levels of consistency and continuity. The introduction of the pastoral care team will further develop the well-established holistic ways of working throughout the

school.

Children and young people and parents give outstanding feedback about the quality of the care, support and guidance provided. One parent said 'this is the only school my child has attended who fully understand her needs and meet them in an excellent way in all areas'. Another said 'we are very impressed with this school and the excellent communication it has between parents/carers and staff'.

The residential care plans are detailed and comprehensive and are of high quality. They outline the support needs of the young people and include targets for further developments which are regularly evaluated. The regular keywork sessions provide opportunities for discussion and ensure that the young people are involved in the planning and review of their care. Celebrations of achievements take place and certificates kept on file.

Arrangements for healthcare are outstanding. Children and young people's health needs are very well supported by the nursing team. There are effective procedures for safely managing medication, with well established procedures for bringing medication in and out of school which are carefully monitored. Medication administration records are up to date and there are detailed laminated cards which clearly set out the type of medication, what it is for and any possible side-effects. These are useful reference tools for both staff and young people. Health care plans are of high quality and include records of contact with parents and medical professionals. There are close links with a local surgery ensuring that doctor's appointments can be made quickly if necessary.

The accommodation for the children and young people is comfortable and well maintained so that the young people feel relaxed and safe. The two community houses, in particular, provide high quality accommodation which is homely and non-institutional in appearance. All accommodation areas have single bedrooms which are personalised.

The children and young people enjoy the food provided. Lunch is eaten in the school dining room, whereas breakfast and the evening meal are eaten in the residential houses. The food provided is of good quality with a salad bar available as well as hot food choices at lunchtime. The young people particularly enjoy the evening meals eaten in the houses, which they choose and some help to shop and prepare. The meals are sociable occasions where staff and young people sit together enjoying each other's company.

There is an excellent range and choice of activities provided for the children and young people, which they enjoy enormously. There are a variety of creative, active, social, physical and cultural activities on and off the school site such as watching DVDs and playing computer games, spending time in the gym, swimming, walking in the local park and visiting an indoor climbing wall in Liverpool. All are appropriately risk assessed according to the individual young people taking part. For example, an extra car and member of staff was taken to one activity during the inspection when it was felt that one young person might find it difficult and need to leave early. The young people choose the activities which also include clubs in the community, such as karate, football and a local youth club, which facilitate social interaction with peers outside of school. The activities help the young people to acquire new skills and build social skills and confidence.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Safeguarding procedures at the school are effective in ensuring that children and young people are kept safe from harm. Staff working at the school use their understanding of pupils' specific needs and vulnerabilities well to ensure their practice effectively promotes children and young people's safety.

Causes for concern are picked up at an early stage and any safeguarding issues are appropriately referred to the local authority in accordance with local procedures. Clear and well-maintained records demonstrate that concerns are discussed and actions taken. There is evidence that risks to children and young people are minimised, but the school's safeguarding policies sometimes lack preciseness and lag behind the school's practices. For example, there is insufficient detail recorded in safeguarding plans. This did not impact on the safety of the young people but is an area for further improvement.

All staff receive a comprehensive induction regarding safeguarding and the training for all staff in how to keep children and young people safe is wide ranging. In the last year training has included areas such as e-safety, child sexual exploitation and radicalisation. Governors and senior leaders have undertaken safer recruitment training. Children and young people say that they feel safe at the school and parents feel their children are safe.

The staff recruitment processes are robust and ensure that only suitable people are employed to work at the school.

Children and young people behave well and positive behaviour is recognised and rewarded. All staff are trained in behaviour management and seek to understand the triggers for children and young people's behaviour. Incidents involving the use of restraint are rare in residential time and are appropriately recorded and monitored to ensure that trends and patterns are highlighted. Training has taken place regarding the completion of incident forms to improve the quality of these forms. The new pastoral care team works across the whole school to ensure that interventions are focussed and effective. Sanctions are rarely applied in residential time but the details of residential sanctions are not currently included in the school's behaviour management policy. This is a point for improvement.

The school site and accommodation provides children and young people with a safe and secure environment. Health and safety is taken seriously with routine checks regarding fire, electrical and gas safety which are well recorded. Regular fire drills take place in residential time and environmental risk assessments are undertaken. A policy document has been developed outlining all the routine maintenance checks undertaken, of which there are 50. This demonstrates a strong commitment to ensuring a safe environment for the children and young people.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

Senior leaders at the school value the contribution that the residential team makes and

are supportive of continued development and improvement across the whole school. Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new Principal and feedback was positive regarding the smooth transition and the changes made.

The residential provision is led and managed by an experienced staff team. The culture of the residential provision is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all children and young people. The development plan is suitably ambitious and there is regular monitoring of records. Team meetings take place weekly and provide an opportunity for the staff team to come together to discuss practice. The residential staff are committed and enthusiastic in their work and are keen to improve the outcomes for the children and young people in their care.

Staff work collaboratively across the whole school to ensure good levels of consistency and stability. Residential staff spend time in education and are fully integrated within the school.

There are sufficient numbers of staff on duty during the evenings and overnight. Staff numbers are currently low so the school is actively recruiting to appoint two new residential staff.

New staff receive a thorough induction process with a strong emphasis on safeguarding procedures. Residential staff feel well supported in their work and formal staff supervision takes place termly. There are a few occasions when termly supervisions have not taken place which means that there are gaps of up to six months between some sessions. This is an area for further improvement, to ensure that all staff consistently receive formal supervision on a more regular basis.

There are regular training and development sessions for staff which include areas such as behaviour management, safeguarding and team building as well as more specialist areas such as TEACCH, incident report writing and self-harm and anxiety. This training equips staff with the specific skills and knowledge they need to effectively work with the children and young people at the school.

Governors are active in their monitoring of the residential provision. The reports are linked to the national minimum standards and are suitably detailed in content. This helps to raise standards within 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*.

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	105137
Social care unique reference number	SC018958
DfE registration number	344/7015

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	22
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	5 to19
Principal	Iain Sim
Date of previous boarding inspection	16/03/2015
Telephone number	0151 632 3201
Email address	iainsim@wkrs.co.uk

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