

Swalcliffe Park School

Swalcliffe, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 5EP

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This residential special school accommodates residential pupils for up to 42 weeks of the year. It provides education and residential care for up to 44 resident pupils, aged from 10 to 19, who are on the autistic spectrum and have broadly average cognitive ability. There are currently 32 pupils, all boys, living in the four houses. The provider is a registered charity.

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 June 2019

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: 10 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: Outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

In an environment where they feel accepted, understood and valued, the pupils who come to reside at this school make substantial progress. For some, this progress is exceptional. This increases opportunities for the pupils to make their mark in the adult world, and to develop a sense of worth and meaning.

The assessments that are undertaken to identify the children who are most likely to benefit from the model of care, help and learning offered by the school are comprehensive and carefully conducted. Great care and diligence are applied in deciding on those who are not suitable. The preparations made for moving in are highly individualised and carefully paced. This helps resident pupils to develop feelings of security and belonging and to start making progress.

The progress that the resident pupils make is supported and accelerated by a skilled team of carers, teachers and therapists, who work closely together to identify and understand the critical areas for each resident pupil's development and to target these in a comprehensive and co-ordinated manner. This includes working in partnership with pupils' families. One parent described the staff and school as, 'Brilliant. I am not on my own anymore - I have support and my son is in a safe place. The school has given him a future and his key worker is very good. The communication is excellent.'

An imaginative and adventurous approach by staff helps the resident pupils to discover and develop their extra-curricular interests. These include mainstream and extreme sports, hobbies and other recreational activities. The Duke of Edinburgh award programme has become an established part of the school, with staff providing the required leadership and assessment. All these activities promote the resident pupils' sense of achievement, confidence and self-worth.

The resident pupils' journey to adulthood is supported by a process of check-listing the key skills and knowledge that they still need to acquire, and the systematic targeting of these by caring and skilled staff. The record of pupils' progress is clearly plotted, and achievements are celebrated. This approach prepares them for the future and increases opportunities to achieve.

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

A confident and experienced staff team, that knows and understands the resident pupils well, provides residents with feelings of security. The resident pupils say that they feel safe and that staff care about them. Parents express great confidence in the staff to keep their children safe.

High levels of communication between teaching and care staff, together with a structured and consistent key-working system, ensure that the well-being of the

resident pupils is closely monitored and that they have at least one adult in whom they can always confide. The resident pupils are able to say who their key workers are and they show attachment to them.

The resident pupils are free to use and explore the extensive and varied outdoor areas that contain many everyday hazards. This happens under the scrutiny and, where necessary, supervision of a vigilant and alert staff team. This freedom enables resident pupils to develop confidence and increase their ability to keep themselves safe. It also allows them to be alone safely when they feel the need for solitude.

The resident pupils have clear plans in place to support them to manage and reduce their identified risks and vulnerabilities. These plans help staff to keep residents safe. When new concerns arise, these are quickly identified and effectively addressed.

Staff use a sophisticated system to monitor the resident pupils' filtered online activities. This enables staff to understand the pupils' needs better, identify individual and group trends, and to be proactive in addressing any areas of concern. This positive and progressive approach embraces the positives of the internet and guards against the negatives. It also provides opportunities for the resident pupils to learn how to identify and deal with hazards and to keep themselves safe online. The teaching of safe internet use includes the known areas of exploitation, as well as online fraud and identity theft.

The sound understanding, knowledge and skills of the staff enable them to deal with extremes in behaviour and emotion of the resident pupils in a positive and supportive way. The need to intervene physically is rare. When these occasions do arise, the response of staff is proportionate and caring and records of these events are very detailed. Managers consistently review these incidents, but their analysis does not always demonstrate that they have fully considered what steps staff should take to prevent a similar incident occurring.

Policy development, training, oversight and awareness with regard to whole-staff safeguarding practice is consistently maintained to a high standard.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

There is a complete integration of the resident pupils' learning and development across the school, care and therapeutic settings. The leadership of the service is similarly integrated, but also has dedicated leadership roles in each of the school, care and therapeutic settings.

The senior management of the whole service is characterised by a diverse range of background and expertise, combining to form a strong team that is committed to maximising the life opportunities of the resident pupils. This is demonstrated through innovation and collaboration with others in the field and substantial investment in developing tools and systems to increase their effectiveness in supporting each pupil to achieve their full potential.

The advances that leaders have made in developing an integrated model of care to

improve outcomes for the resident pupils, that includes their families, are exceptional. Some of these advances are receiving national and international recognition. The model, termed the 'Quality of Life' model, recognises the significance of the family's perspective on improving outcomes and effectively measures progress across targeted areas. Relevant research findings have been used to support this development and the model has been developed in collaboration with respected academic institutions and experts in the field.

This ongoing drive to improve the quality of care is underpinned by the staff team's belief in the valuable contribution that resident pupils with autistic spectrum disorder can make to the world. The team's practice evidences a strong commitment to preparing the pupils for participation as adults in a neurotypical world.

The selection, preparation and support of care staff is meticulous and maintained to a high standard. Investment in the further training and development of staff is strong and all care staff have achieved the required level of training; a number have exceeded this. Staff express strong loyalty to the school and retention levels are high. They show a fierce commitment to the resident pupils doing as well as they possibly can and talk about them with humour and affection.

A hallmark of this service is the firm commitment expressed by leaders and managers to understand the wishes, views and feelings of the resident pupils and to respond to these in a responsible and meaningful way. Further, to use this information to inform improvements to the service. This is reflected in a range of embedded structures and processes that include resident pupils' active involvement in the school council, forums, surveys, governor activities and individual feedback. One benefit of this practice is the leadership taken by the resident pupils in influencing leaders and managers to consider how to reduce the environmental impact of the school.

The building is well maintained and problems that arise are dealt with in good time. However, the process for overseeing ongoing and unexpected maintenance of the building could be further streamlined. The capacity of maintenance staff to respond to specific issues in the event of unplanned staff absence would benefit from a review by managers. These minor shortfalls have not, however, compromised the well-being and safety of the resident pupils.

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: 1266836

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mr Rob Piner

Type of school: Residential Special School

Telephone number: 01295 780302

Email address: khingorani@swalcliffepark.co.uk

Inspectors:

John Pledger, social care inspector (lead)

Liz Driver, social care inspector



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: <http://www.gov.uk/ofsted>

© Crown copyright 2019