

Walworth School

Bluebell Way, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 7LP,

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Adequate	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The majority of pupils make good progress in their behaviour and in their learning in English and mathematics. Some pupils make outstanding progress.
- The majority of teaching is good. Very positive staff relationships support good behaviour and good learning.
- Consistent approaches help pupils to develop independence and they learn to manage their own good behaviour.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe.
- There is good leadership and governance with a clear and ambitious drive to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.
- Residential pupils feel safe and are confident in the knowledge that they can share any concerns they may have with staff.
- Residential staff have very good relationships with pupils, which helps to create a supportive and nurturing environment.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching and a minority requires improvement.
- Middle leaders are not fully involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Support staff are not always well deployed.
- The school must ensure that it meets those national minimum standards for residential special schools which have not been met.

Information about this inspection

- This was an integrated inspection with one social care inspector who judged the quality of the school's residential provision. Joint working arrangements took place between the inspection teams and the school staff. The findings of the residential inspection are included in this report.
- Inspectors observed all eight teachers, some more than once. Three lessons were jointly observed, two with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. Short visits to classrooms and other learning activities also took place.
- Inspectors held discussions with senior and middle leaders, with groups of pupils and members of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The social care inspector met with staff including the headteacher, the senior residential child care officer, care staff and a parent. He spent time with pupils in residence. A wide range of documents was scrutinised by inspectors, including care plans, behaviour logs, pupils' progress data, improvement planning and safeguarding documents.
- The inspectors took account of 12 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), as well as the school's own analysis of parent surveys. Inspectors also considered the 33 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Michele Crichton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Ann Muxworthy	Additional Inspector
Nicholas Murphy	Social Care Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a day and residential school for pupils aged from four to 11 years.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The very large majority of pupils are boys.
- All pupils are of White British Heritage.
- There is a high number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the start of the school year in September.
- There are currently nine pupils in the residential provision.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school offers residential provision for pupils during term time only, ranging from one to two nights per week.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching is at least consistently good and more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that work is always well matched to all pupils' needs, regardless of their ability or age
 - the selective and sensitive deployment of support assistants to where they will be most effective for consistent behaviour management and helping to developing pupils' independent learning.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of middle leaders in accurately checking the quality of teaching
 - regular checks on teachers' planning and pupils' work books and files by middle leaders.
- Ensure that the following National minimum standards are fully met:
 - 2.2 The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the residential and teaching staff, who children may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. The school ensures that children know who this person is, and how to contact them. Children are also provided with one or more appropriate helpline(s) or outside contact numbers, including the Children's Rights Director, to ring in case of problems or distress.
 - 3.6 The school has, and implements, appropriate policies for the care of children who are unwell. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, administration of medicines and dealing with medical emergencies.
 - 15.7 The school's procedures are compatible with the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols and procedures applicable to the area where the school is located. Where children placed out of authority go missing, the Head of Care follows the local RMFHC protocol and complies with and makes staff aware of any other processes required by the placing authority.
 - 21.1 The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan there is appropriate consultation. Where

applicable the plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Where feasible children in the school are aware of the content of their placement plans, and confirm that the school is providing care for them that is consistent with the plans.

- Revise the physical restraint policy to describe the different criteria for the use of restraint in the school and residential settings.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the school with different levels of attainment but the majority are significantly below those expected for their age due to the nature of their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- From their individual starting points, pupils' progress in their behaviour, English and mathematics is good. For some it is outstanding and the school's own records show this. Pupils' progress in mathematics is improved effectively through games and practical activities. Links made in subjects across the curriculum also help to improve pupils' writing skills in relevant ways.
- Activities and strategies to improve behaviour are consistent across the school. Staff are persistent in expecting and receiving an appropriate response to questions or in discussions. The high quality relationships between staff and pupils are evident and this underpins the good and at times better behaviour that takes place.
- Progress in reading is good because there is a focus on reading throughout the school and it is practised in some form every day. For example, younger pupils are taught how to recognise sounds and letters and to begin to write and form letter to represent sounds. Older pupils are supported through interventions or their reading is listened to by staff.
- There is no difference in the attainment of different groups of pupils including the small numbers of girls that attend. Those who are known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium also make good and some outstanding progress. This is due to the overall good quality teaching, care and additional support given to these pupils as well as a strong commitment of all staff to promote equality of opportunity. Consequently, they are catching up with other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- A variety of teaching methods are used to enable each individual pupil to make their own best progress. For example, some work in mixed-aged groups or some pupils work one-to-one adult for highly tailored support. These methods, along with good use of praise, means that even pupils with challenging behaviour stay in class, take turns with others and complete the work that is set.
- The curriculum is good and has a positive effective on teaching and is supported well by teachers with good subject knowledge. Pupils benefit from a wide range of visits out to museums, places of interest and artists who come into the school and make their writing activities interesting.
- Reading is taught well, and there is a good focus on improving writing skills, starting with the youngest children who mould letter shapes in dough. The teaching of mathematics is frequently practical which also makes it more meaningful. For example, in a good mathematics lesson pupils worked out the accurate price of shopping bills using real supermarket receipts and real groceries.
- The highest quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good, although school records show outstanding teaching on occasions. In the lessons observed, there were well-planned, interesting and enjoyable tasks that suitably met the individual needs of pupils and support staff were well deployed. Teachers used questioning effectively and pupils learnt quickly. There was just enough recapping of information to refresh but not repeat what pupils had learned. In good lessons, support staff knew the needs of the pupils well. They questioned them about their answers, supported their understanding, developed their writing skills and listened to pupils read.
- In a small number of lessons, support staff were not well deployed because teachers' planning showed a focus on behaviour support rather than on developing pupils' learning. While this might be needed for some pupils at times, there are also pupils who do not need this type of intervention because of the success of the school's good behaviour systems. Support for their learning did not, therefore, meet their needs specifically enough.
- In a small number of lessons, teaching is not as strong because activities were not well matched to pupils' needs, age or ability level. Consequently, pupils' behaviour deteriorated from its usually good standard. There were also some examples of this mismatch between pupils' abilities and the work

set in pupils' work books and files.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Each pupil is known as an individual and is cared for well by all the adults.
- Many pupils lack confidence, have low self-esteem and are reluctant learners because of previous negative educational experiences in other schools. Staff form secure relationships and use praise well to let pupils know they are now successful in their learning and behaviour and this gradually changes poor attitudes.
- Pupils in school say they feel safe and that they can turn to any member of staff for help. They also say how much they now enjoy learning. Pupils who knew each other at other schools readily say how much their own and their friends' behaviour has improved. As one older pupil said, 'I don't get so angry any more. I know I'm doing well, I'm an independent reader'.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown in their attendance, which is above average when compared with other special schools of this type. The need for fixed-term has significantly reduced from previous years and is declining further.
- Some pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour but this is helped by consistent management of pupils' behaviour by all members of staff. The impact of any less-acceptable behaviour on other pupils' learning is kept to a minimum. Occasionally, learning activities are not well matched to pupils' needs. At these times, pupils are less involved or become distracted during their learning and this slows their rate of progress.
- Although there are some petty disagreements between residential pupils from time to time, staff deal with these promptly and effectively. As a result, there is no bullying.
- Residential staff have very good relationships with pupils. As a result, behaviour within the residential provision is extremely good. Staff deal effectively with any minor difficulties before they escalate into major issues. Consequently, there are few restraints within the residential provision. However, the policy on restraint is not sufficiently clear.

The leadership and management are good

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because pupils are given numerous opportunities, both planned and spontaneous to talk about their personal experiences and feelings. Assemblies promote self-confidence and respect for others regardless of faith, culture or ability. A mealtime observation demonstrates pupils' developing maturity well as all pupils are very respectful in response to saying Grace before eating.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school. Training for the governors instigated by the school has proven beneficial.
- Leaders and managers ensure there is equality of opportunity and no discrimination within the school because each pupil's achievements are tracked individually. Close working partnerships with a range of agencies, including health professionals and social care agencies ensure each pupil's personal needs are well met.
- Parents are very positive about the school. School surveys support this and there are many letters and cards from parents praising staff for their personal and individual approach given to their child. Responses on Parent View also show their great support for the school.
- In the residential setting, home to school diaries, and other written communications, are used to provide consistency of approach and regular communication between parents and staff. In addition, work to achieve targets for a particular child can be carried out in both the school and the residential setting.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are focused on wanting nothing less than excellence for pupils. To this end, staff appointments are made with a critical eye on raising achievement. However, self-evaluation is generous and not consistently accurate.

- Despite mainly good teaching and some that is outstanding, there remains some that requires improvement. The school’s own documents show a record of usually good and only some outstanding lessons. This year, and for the first time, a small number pupils are reaching higher attainment levels than ever.
- Analysis of the school’s development plan shows that all senior leaders and managers are accountable for improving learning and pupils’ progress. There is also frequent checking on teaching and learning to raise the quality of teaching and any underperformance is met with focused actions for improvement. However, middle leaders are not given enough responsibility for also developing the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
- The management of the residential provision is adequate. A key policy, in relation to missing children, does not meet national minimum standards. This shortfall was identified at the previous inspection and indicates a weakness in monitoring within this provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the last inspection and is now good. This has been achieved, for example, through additional training and a greater focus to their visits into school. Governors understand that there is a link between the performance management of staff and the links to school improvement and progress up the pay scale. They ensure safeguarding is secure, monitor spending and the impact of the pupil premium funding. They are particularly pleased about the progress pupils made in reading this year as a result of this funding. Their range of skills means they are fully able to scrutinise data about pupils’ progress and to challenge senior leaders.

Outcomes for residential pupils	are good
Quality of residential provision and care	is adequate
Residential pupils’ safety	is good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	is adequate

- The school does not meet all national minimum standards for residential special schools.
- Staff have excellent relationships with residential pupils, and have a thorough knowledge of the background and circumstances of each one. This ensures that staff are consistent in following programmes of care which meet each pupil’s individual needs. However, planning documentation for residential pupils who are looked after is not always held by the school. This means that staff cannot be assured that the residential plan is compatible with the local authority’s plan for the child.
- The residential provision is welcoming and comfortable. Pupils enjoy their time in residence and take full advantage of the activities on offer. Staff give residential pupils as much choice as possible, for example, over menus and how to spend their leisure time.
- Residential pupils have a range of people they can talk to if they have any concerns. This includes people outside the school. However, residential pupils do not know how to contact the Children’s Rights Director.
- The residential provision is clearly helping pupils to develop better social skills, emotional resilience, and confidence. They also become more considerate of others, benefiting from the routines which operate in the residential provision.
- There is a close working relationship between residential and teaching staff which is important in supporting the progress of residential pupils. Parents report that the improvements they see in their children are sustained when they return home.
- Residential pupils are in good health. They enjoy excellent food and staff encourage healthy lifestyles. The activity programme provides physical exercise as well as mental stimulation. The school has good links with health professionals to ensure that both general and more complex health needs can be met. However, arrangements for the administration of medication are not fully robust and do not comply with good practice guidance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

Boarding/Residential provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	114341
Social care unique reference number	SC040510
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	401427

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision 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	Special
School category	Community Special
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Number of boarders on roll	10
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dorothy Bowman
Headteacher	Peter Wallbanks
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2009
Telephone number	01325 300194
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