

Lakeside School

Lakeside School, Winchester Road, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO53 2DW

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Lakeside School is a maintained local authority day and residential special school for boys aged between 10 and 16 who experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Many students have additional needs such as autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

At the time of the inspection, there were 97 pupils on roll, including 15 residential pupils.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 October 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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: 19 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Students' life opportunities are enhanced because of their time at this school. Consistent staff support and excellent use of researched-informed practice are making an exceptional difference to students' experiences and progress.

Students benefit immensely from an inclusive education approach that promotes equal opportunities and embodies a mindset of acceptance, understanding and respect. Students choose to stay in the boarding house and often increase their time flexibly to suit a wide range of interests and needs. One student said, 'Boarding is unreal, staff are great, and the activities are brilliant.'

All boarding students have significantly exceeded expected targets and goals. This is beautifully captured in students' transition folders and reflects the skilled work carried out by staff in helping students achieve their successes. Students can confidently explain the goals that they are working towards and are motivated with incremental steps and incentives. This approach helps students adapt to positive change at a pace suited to their needs.

Boarding staff receive training to improve students' literacy and numeracy skills. This whole-school approach means staff can continue to support students' learning needs outside of the classroom. Staff sensitively apply a 'stealth' learning approach that includes student awareness evenings, workshops, reflections and student-led presentations. This, combined with age-appropriate board games, reading materials and creative quizzes, means boarding students are gaining a strong and confident base for learning.

The school's occupational therapist has assessed and collaboratively written sensory profiles for students. As a result, staff have clear guidance and strategies to support students' additional vestibular (balance related) and sensory needs. For one student, this has had a particularly significant and positive impact because their needs are fully understood by staff and other students who board at the same time. An inclusive approach means that students feel valued, and their strengths are recognised and celebrated.

Staff spend time talking with students about their views, wishes and feelings. They encourage students to share their thoughts and feelings using various methods, including poetry. Some boarding students' poetry and powerful reflections have been published. This approach is inspiring a passion for English literacy.

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

Through exceptional support and consistent care, staff have developed trusting relationships with students. Students are very clear that their residential experiences are helping them to grow and develop into positive male role models.

Students behave impeccably in the boarding house, and they appropriately role model positive and helpful behaviours to younger students. Students understand how important they are to staff and leaders and flourish in this knowledge. This is testimony to the positive relationships staff have built with students. One child said, 'Boarding has helped me to feel safe to sleep on my own and be away from my parents.'

The speech and language therapist works closely with boarding staff to help them support students to develop positive ways to express their emotions and learn problem-solving skills. The breaking down of language and exploring feelings and facts are helping students think about their own and other people's thoughts and actions. One student said, 'Staff have helped me a lot, and now I can help others.'

Students who are ready to learn independence skills are given careful support by staff. Targets are reviewed alongside students' abilities to cope with self-management skills and responsibilities. The process is monitored closely, and decisions taken involve the student, parents, staff and schoolteachers. This ensures cohesive planning and a strong sense of collaboration to improve on positive outcomes for students.

Staff offer students chances to develop their leadership and communication skills. Student ambassadors write and deliver impressive presentations on staying safe online and anti-bullying. This highly effective approach is helping to manage and minimise risks inside and outside of the school.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The head of care demonstrates a strong sense of ambition and has high expectations of his staff and the students who board. Students and staff feel valued, and there is a shared ethos of togetherness and respect. Students speak highly of the adults who care for them, and they benefit immensely from their care and guidance.

Staff receive good-quality training. Staff say that it helps them to meet the needs of the students they are looking after and that leaders 'go above and beyond' to support their personal and professional development. The routine and systematic application of staff supervision means staff are supported to continually develop and hone their skills and interests. This approach endorses and encourages a learning culture.

Staff benefit from structured induction and development processes that allow them to settle into their new roles confidently. Existing team members provide an added layer of guidance and support to new staff. This inclusive and welcoming environment means that staff retention is excellent. Students benefit greatly from the stability and permanence this brings. A new member of staff said, 'The support and supervision I have received since being here has been second to none.'

Since the last full inspection, there has been a change in the student's independent visitor. This has been communicated well, and students are clear on the visitor's role and how to contact them. The independent visitor is taking the time to build relationships with students and staff, and reports reflect this. Leaders are reviewing the quality of these reports and working with the independent visitor to ensure all aspects of the standards are monitored and regularly reviewed.

Staff talk to students about what is most important to them, and finances are used accordingly. For example, students have benefited from the purchase of a games console, trips to theme parks, water parks, fishing trips, go-karting and many more life-enriching activities and opportunities. There is some wear and tear that has naturally and inevitably occurred in the students' boarding house. Although this does not impact negatively on the quality of care that students receive, it does detract from the overall homely feel.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Point for improvement

- School leaders should be supported by the proprietor to create a stimulating, safe and homely environment that is accessible to boarding students.

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: SC012456

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Gareth Evans

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 02380 266 633

Email address: gareth.evans@lakeside.hants.sch.uk

Inspector

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector

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