

Loxley Hall

Loxley Hall School, Stafford Road, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 8RS

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Loxley Hall School is part of Manor Hall Academy Trust. The school offers day and residential places to boys aged 11 to 16 years with social, emotional and mental health needs. Many of the pupils have additional needs such as autistic spectrum conditions, speech, language and communication needs and learning and cognition needs.

Some pupils attending Loxley Hall have been permanently excluded from their previous school. All of them have an education, health and care plan relating to their social, emotional and mental health needs.

There are 104 pupils on roll, of whom 36 access the residential provision and 28 have overnight stays each week.

The school is situated in a rural setting a few miles outside the town of Uttoxeter. The main building is a large, three-storey country house in which classrooms, offices, a main kitchen and a dining hall are situated. There are two residential houses on the school site, one provides overnight stays for up to seven boys at any one time and the other has a games room.

The head of care oversees the residential provision and is suitably qualified and experienced.

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

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 February 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
---	------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 10 December 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy their residential experience. They are making exceptional progress, and are well cared for by their dedicated staff.

Children live in a comfortable, homely environment with plenty of space both inside and outside. They have an extensive range of activities to choose from each evening. This could be going to the cinema, playing golf or watching a live football match with their favourite team playing. Activities are paid for by the school to ensure that all children, no matter what their circumstances are, can participate.

Children have positive relationships with the staff, and children's views, wishes and feelings, needs and aspirations are well understood. Children are relaxed around staff and chat to them about their day. They can see the progress they have made. One child said that their confidence has increased since staying in the residential provision. Children said that they like staff and would be able to talk to them about any worries they have. Children also have access to other adults who they can share concerns with, including some who are external to their school.

Staff understand that children's mental and emotional health is pivotal to children's safety and wellbeing. Leaders have worked tirelessly to promote children's mental and emotional wellbeing. Research-informed practice is a fundamental part of this work.

Children like the food provided. Alternative food is available if they do not want what is on the menu. Children chat with staff around the table while eating their meal. They eat their evening meal early, so they have more time out and about, doing activities. They say that they like this arrangement. Children are also offered supper later, after activities. This means they can spend longer doing the activities they enjoy.

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

Keeping children safe is central to the work of the school. Safeguarding matters are taken seriously including low-level concerns. A committed, knowledgeable and skilled team of designated safeguarding staff supports children and their families. They work closely with external professionals as well as parents and other family members. For example, the head of care attends regular external meetings about children who are struggling, particularly with their mental health.

Children are polite, helpful and considerate. They are supported well by staff to manage their own behaviour. Staff know the children well and, as a result, physical intervention is a last resort. A senior educational psychologist who works with the school said: 'There has been a consistent decrease in the number and level of

restriction of interventions used at Loxley over time, which I believe is a reflection of the proactive and active work (de-escalation) at the setting.'

When allegations are made against staff, these are taken seriously and usually recorded well. A referral is made to the appropriate external safeguarding agencies. However, on one occasion, allegations were made, and appropriate safeguarding processes were not followed. Although managers spoke to both staff and children and concluded that the allegation was 'false', records are not detailed and do not demonstrate that managers have been professionally curious, thereby not promoting an open culture.

Health and safety matters are regularly discussed in weekly team meetings and with the children. Children know what to do if the fire alarm sounds. The residential provision is a safe environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are committed to improving the lives of children. They continually strive to improve the service. They implement and embed research-informed practice. They work closely with an external psychologist about mental health. The work leaders and managers have done around mental health has been recognised and they have achieved a 'gold mark', being the first school in the country to receive this award. This work has helped staff to gain a good understanding of trauma and, therefore, has supported children with their mental health and wellbeing.

Furthermore, practice is so well regarded within the sector that staff are asked to share best practice with other schools and newly qualified teachers, supporting teaching staff to have a better understanding of children with social, emotional and mental health conditions.

Staff are knowledgeable and skilled in their approach to children. They understand that building relationships with children is the best way to support them when they are anxious or upset. Staff all have different skills that they bring to residence. This provides children with a variety of activities that they can participate in. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding processes and how to keep children safe. They understand the whistleblowing policy.

Staff have access to good training opportunities. The school is a learning environment in which staff are accessing training regularly. The head of care has a good understanding of staff training needs and ensures that staff receive the training they need. Staff say they are supported well, and regular supervision meetings help with this.

Leaders and managers generally demonstrate excellent oversight of the residential provision. However, weaknesses in the oversight of a small number of safeguarding

incident records do not demonstrate a consistently curious and open culture or a wholly transparent safeguarding process.

The governors have a long-term understanding of the residential provision and safeguarding practices. They regularly visit the school and talk to staff and children. They understand what the school does well and some of the areas that challenge.

Independent visitor reports are detailed and informative. Recommendations are made to further improve practice. However, the independent visitor does not evaluate the quality of the provision and effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether children are safeguarded.

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

- Review recording systems to ensure that staff make accurate records regarding incidents that can withstand scrutiny as well as considering the child who might read the record in later life.
- Ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed when allegations are made, and staff have and adhere to guidance and children's plans about how to keep children and themselves safe.
- Provide better oversight of records to ensure that they demonstrate an open culture and transparent safeguarding process.
- Ensure that the independent visitor evaluates the quality of the provision and effectiveness of the care provided to children, and whether children are safeguarded within their reports.
- Ensure that records demonstrate how children and staff are kept safe during incidents, including recording conversations with staff and children about incidents.

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: SC038729

Headteacher/teacher in charge: David Bownds

Type of school: Residential Special School

Telephone number: 01889 723050

Email address: headteacher@loxley.mhat.org.uk

Inspector

Joanne Vyas, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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 looked after children, 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 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://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 2026