

# LVS Oxford

Spring Hill Road, Begbroke, Oxfordshire OX5 1RX

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

This independent school is owned and managed by a charity. It provides day and residential provision for young people between 11 and 18 years of age who have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder.

The residential provision offers weekly boarding or flexi-boarding from Monday to Friday. The school is located in a rural location on the outskirts of Oxford. It can accommodate 20 young people on a residential basis.

**Inspection dates:** 5 to 7 February 2018

**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:** 22 February 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Young people make good progress and develop their ability and strategies to self-regulate and manage their anxiety and behaviour.
- Staff support, plan and prepare pupils to transition into and out of the school. Young people have the opportunity to stay overnight and visit the school prior to formally enrolling here.
- The knowledgeable residential staff are caring and nurturing in their approach.
- Young people engage in a wide variety of on- and off-site activities. Staff plan special celebrations, events and activities, which young people enjoy.
- Staff maintain regular contact with families ensuring that they are fully involved in every aspect of each young person's education and care.
- Young people are encouraged to develop independence skills through the completion of daily chores, including basic food preparation and personal care tasks.
- Staff and young people have very good relationships with each other. This enables staff to support and assist young people to overcome anxieties.
- The coordinated and collective approach that staff follow ensures that young people transition positively between education and care.

The residential special school's areas for development:

- Systems used to assess progress show up-to-date achievements and abilities, but staff do not have access to historic baseline assessments to enable them to compare progress made while at the school.
- There is no designated area to use if a student becomes unwell. Staff do have a contingency if the need should arise, but this is not formalised. There is a medical centre but it does not have access to bathing facilities.
- Records and evidence for safeguarding concerns should provide a clearer and more concise evidence trail from instigation to outcome.
- Individual risk assessments do not contain all of the strategies and methods used to minimise and manage risk.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Leaders and managers should consider improving systems that provide evidence about the progress students make while attending the residential provision.
- Arrangements and facilities for when a child becomes unwell should include access to toilet and bathing facilities.
- The quality and detail of records and review systems for safeguarding concerns, incidents and accidents should provide an explicit evidence trail of actions and outcomes from instigation to conclusion.
- Leaders and managers should formalise plans and assessments that staff follow to support young people in crisis. These should provide practical guidance and strategies that support staff to manage incidents.
- A clear action and support plan for staff who do not possess the required qualification should be developed.
- Leaders and managers should scrutinise, critically evaluate and review incidents and concerns to explore effectiveness of the intervention and support method.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people who reside at the school have made good progress since their arrival. Those who have arrived recently have settled in very well. They enjoy very supportive, open and honest relationships with staff. Young people develop their personal, social and life skills.

The skilled, stable and knowledgeable staff are caring, supportive and child focused in their approach with young people.

The residential area is welcoming, warm and comfortable. Young people and staff take pride in their house area, and this is reflected in its presentation. There is a wide variety of helpful information and advice on display. This provides young people with guidance about topics which include how to stay safe when on social media.

Staff encourage young people to lead healthy lifestyles. They offer a well-balanced nutritious diet, and encourage young people to exercise. The food on offer to young people is of a high standard, and a great deal of thought, planning and preparation ensures that there is lots of choice and variety. The theme days are a great success, and all students enjoy these. During the inspection 'Chinese New Year' was celebrated, and young people received invitations to the banquet.

Young people have very good relationships of trust with staff. They seek support, guidance, comfort and reassurance from staff when anxious or worried. Those who access the residential facility develop positive strategies which enable them to self-regulate and manage their anxiety and behaviour.

Young people are happy and at ease in the residential houses. Staff facilitate a variety of on- and off-site activities which have a positive impact on young people's social and life-skill development. Some of the favourite pastimes are board games, table football, film nights, bowling, shopping, walks and cooking.

Staff form positive relationships with families, carers and others outside of the school. They engage all relevant stakeholders, and this has a positive impact on the support and care offered to young people.

Young people's views are sought regularly through student voice and the school council. The weekly residential meeting encourages young people to make choices about menus and planning activities, and to talk about concerns and worries. Staff encourage young people to review the progress they make through the one-to-one sessions and short care plan reviews.

Staff prepare and support young people to transition into and on from the school. Prospective young people visit the home and have sleepovers to help them prepare for moving in. Those preparing for life after the school are supported to explore options for

further education and care. Staff set clear, small-step targets for young people to develop essential life skills. They monitor achievements and then formulate new goals to work towards. Leaders and managers have not yet developed a system to create a baseline assessment of young people's skills.

Young people attend education with staff, providing a seamless handover of information between educational and residential staff.

Staff support young people to address and manage their health needs, including referral to specialists when needed. The onsite therapist also provides helpful insight and guidance to staff, with key areas of focus filtering into care plans. The residential area offers each young person a bedroom with their own washing facilities. There is no designated area with a toilet and washing facilities if and when a child is sick.

Staff encourage and support young people to maintain contact with family and friends. The payphone with a free token system enables young people to contact family when they wish.

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

A robust culture of and approach to safeguarding are clearly evident in the school. Staff demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding of risk factors, and what is required to manage and minimise these. The training, information and education provided to staff and young people support this approach, and promote the culture and ethos of the school.

Young people state that they feel safe and happy while at school and know who to speak to if they are concerned or worried.

Leaders responsible for managing safeguarding concerns possess the required knowledge and understanding, and work with the local safeguarding board to maintain their knowledge and understanding. Records evidence concerns with information about referral and actions. Some records require additional detail and information about tasks completed to ensure that they provide a robust record of events, actions and outcomes. A record viewed did not provide clarity and information to explain what had occurred, and so it was misinterpreted.

Staff implement clear boundaries for the expected behaviour of young people. Young people feel that these boundaries are fair and that they help them to learn and understand what is required of them. Staff positively manage behaviour, and they encourage young people to use a variety of de-escalation and calming strategies. Detailed behaviour support plans provide guidance about triggers, behaviours and how to support young people when they are in crisis. One support plan did not provide detail of all of the strategies used. Trained staff avoid the use of physical intervention. Staff prefer to reward students for achievements and positive behaviour. Records do not provide all of the required information to enable staff to review and consider the impact and

effectiveness of measures and strategies used. Staff offer young people an opportunity to voice their views about measures used, but records lack details of this.

Staff conduct searches of possessions and bedrooms, but records do not detail the rationale or decision-making regarding these searches. Evidence of why this action was necessary to manage risk is lacking.

Staff have a wealth of knowledge about young people's needs and risks. However, they have not detailed this information in all risk assessments and plans; a plan viewed lacked detail and clarity to support a consistent management approach. Plans do not detail the specific approach or required actions to support students in times of crisis.

Young people have access to a wide variety of practical education, advice and guidance to help them learn about societal risks, for example internet use and substance misuse, among other current topics.

Leaders and managers investigate and respond to complaints with a detailed evidence trail of the outcome. Young people know how to make a complaint, although to date no young person has done so.

The school has instigated thorough medication procedures, with staff trained, assessed and observed in their competency. The systems and procedures followed are safe and secure.

The environment is well maintained, well managed and well presented, with all required checks completed within expected timescales.

Safer recruitment processes and procedures are followed, and records meet the expected and required standard.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The residential manager is effective in her leadership of the residential house. The staff team is an established, stable and secure team whose members work well together to support those in their care. Staff practice evidences the aims and objectives of the school as described in its prospectus.

Staff have a positive impact on the young people, who benefit from residing at the school. Their support enables young people to develop positive social and life skills while becoming independent. Leaders have clear knowledge and understanding of the needs, plans and goals set for each young person. They request reviews when concerns arise, and ensure that young people's needs are met.

Leaders have a clear understanding and knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, with clear plans in place to address any areas for development. They implement development plans to address and improve areas of weakness. Leaders and

managers regularly review the quality of care offered through the regular independent visits to the residential house.

Staff have very good and effective relationships with parents, stakeholders, professionals and voluntary organisations. This collaborative approach is evident in young people's plans, and the strategies used by staff. Staff form positive relationships with others outside of the school. They provide training to other services to educate and promote awareness of the needs of those in their care. Managers advocate on behalf of those in their care to ensure that they gain access to services to which they are entitled.

Staff access a wide variety of training specific to their role. This has included safeguarding, emergency care, first aid and fire safety. Staff have effective termly supervision, with their practice appraised at least annually. Staff are encouraged to set development and training goals through this process. Staff are either qualified or enrolled on the required qualification, except for one person who does not have a clear support action plan which evidences their equivalent qualifications or experiences.

The current governance arrangements of the school are in their first year of existence, with an additional sub-group of governors with specific areas of focus. The governors apply regular and effective oversight and scrutiny of the school. Governors all attend and engage in training opportunities offered.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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:** SC479872

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Louisa Allison-Bergin

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspector(s)**

Amanda Maxwell, social care inspector (lead)



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