

# Rowdeford School

Rowde, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2QQ

## Inspection dates

28–29 September 2016

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | <b>Good</b>        |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Good</b>        |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment   | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Outcomes for pupils  | <b>Outstanding</b> |
| Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision | <b>Good</b>        |
| Quality of care and support in the residential provision                                   | <b>Good</b>        |
| How well children and young people are protected in the residential provision              | <b>Good</b>        |
| Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision              | <b>Good</b>        |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection   | Outstanding        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Pupils' achievements throughout the school are outstanding, particularly those who are disadvantaged, the most able and those stay in the residential provision.
- High-quality phonics teaching has significantly helped pupils in all year groups to improve their reading.
- Outstanding teaching and support enables all pupils to make great strides in their learning in a wide range of subjects including writing and mathematics.
- Older pupils leave school with a wide range of suitable externally accredited qualifications.
- Pupils learn how to improve, and manage, their behaviour and to keep safe. Their attendance is consistently high.
- All staff have high aspirations for pupils. They take good care of them and help pupils to do their very best. Close collaboration between education and care staff is a strong feature of this school.
- Pupils enjoy staying in the residential provision where they experience new activities and learn new skills. As a result, they develop in confidence and achieve exceptionally well.
- Leaders and managers, including governors have secured outstanding teaching and outcomes for pupils and ensured that these aspects continuously improve. However, they have not robustly monitored records relating to behaviour. Nor have they ensured that all of the required minimum standards for residential special schools are consistently met.

### Compliance with national minimum standards for residential special schools

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the checks leaders and managers make on the quality of school provision by ensuring that:
  - all of the national minimum standards for residential schools are consistently met
  - the systems to record pupils' behaviour are made more manageable and are regularly and robustly checked by the senior team
  - the information displayed for staff does not detract from creating a homely environment in the residential accommodation.

### The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools

- The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who is independent of the management of the school, to visit the school six times spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the headteacher (or school equivalent). (NMS 20.1)

## Inspection judgements

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Effectiveness of leadership and management</b>                                    | <b>Good</b> |
| <b>Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision</b> | <b>Good</b> |
| <b>How well children and young people are protected in the residential provision</b> | <b>Good</b> |

- There is a strong, determined leadership team. Roles and responsibilities are carefully allocated to exploit the greatest strengths and expertise of individuals. The team has an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and where further improvements can be made.
- The school leaders ensure that the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding, and the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, are used extremely well. Leaders and the governing body have made sure that the high quality of teaching and outstanding outcomes for all pupils have been sustained since the previous inspection. To avoid complacency they regularly check their work with external experts and other schools. This helps them to effectively moderate their own work, to develop staff skills through pertinent training and to initiate new provisions. A key example of this is the current, and planned, use of the school grounds to enhance pupils' learning experiences.
- The school provides excellent support for other schools through training courses and through its consultancy service. The school also provides specialist BTEC National Diploma and alternative programmes for pupils from other local schools. Because the pupils do so well on these courses which meet their individual needs they are fully subscribed and highly valued by those who work in partnership with the school.
- The school provides a good balance between national curriculum subjects, vocational work and life skills. The subjects taught and the excellent staff role models enable pupils to successfully develop their spiritual, moral and social understanding and their appreciation of life in modern Britain.
- The extensive school grounds and local community are used to provide pupils with a wide range of activities during the school day, and as extra-curricular activities. These put pupils' academic and social learning into real-life contexts. Pigs, chickens, the horticultural Victorian garden and wooded areas are fundamental parts of the learning experience for pupils. This helps them to understand and take care of the world around them. In addition, the pupils' use of the outdoor trim trail provides challenging physical activities, helping to keep them fit.
- The residential provision is managed well and successfully supported by an experienced team of enthusiastic residential staff. Collaboration and effective communication across the school brings all staff together with the shared commitment to providing the best opportunities for pupils and their learning.
- The recording in some of the schools' documentation, in particular that relating to pupils' behaviour, lacks clarity and is over-complex. These factors hinder the checking of standards of behaviour by the senior team and mask the excellent work that the school is doing to promote good behaviour. The day-to-day behaviour logging systems are relatively new. The school is aware of the need to make recording more

manageable and that the checking by the senior team should be more regular and robust.

- Along with the governing body, the senior leaders have not helped to ensure that all of the national minimum standards for residential special schools are consistently met. This and the weaknesses in the recording and checking of behaviour represent good rather than outstanding leadership and management.

### **Governance of the school**

- Following a review of its own processes and procedures the governing body made changes to the committees. These changes are working well and are enabling them to keep their strategic focus for the future of the school. Some members of the governing body have changed since the previous inspection. New members have undertaken appropriate training and are getting good induction and mentoring by more experienced governors.
- Governors are kept regularly informed about the performance of the school. This information is presented by senior leaders and other school staff. The appropriate committees and full governing body challenge the information presented to them to ensure that it is robust and accurate. In particular, performance management systems are used very effectively to sustain and improve the outcomes for pupils. However, governors have not fulfilled their duties in monitoring the residential provision as frequently as required due to absences. Arrangements have now been secured to perform visits six times a year and to report on the quality of care provided.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The senior leaders and governors have created a school culture in which safeguarding and the welfare of pupils are perceived by all as of overriding importance.
- The school has thorough procedures to check that pupils are well looked after while they are at school. The school works closely with other agencies and the local authority to ensure that pupils have high-quality expert support when they need it.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Outstanding**

- The skilled and experienced teaching staff know the pupils very well. They work very closely with other adults in the school to ensure that pupils' learning opportunities are maximised. For example, excellent use is made of specialist staff such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and the school nurse. They provide expert one-to-one support for pupils as well as providing guidance and advice to staff. This ensures that communication issues and/or medical needs that could potentially be a barrier to pupils' learning are minimised.
- A small group of pupils were identified as potentially underachieving last year. Intensive high-quality expert support has ensured that these pupils are making the progress that they should. It has enabled pupils who were previously school refusers to attend full time and for others to take greater pride in their work and enjoy school work more.
- The new reading scheme, and the expert teaching of it, has significantly improved the quality of pupils' reading. Pupils enjoy reading more now at a deeper and higher level. Teachers make sure that there are regular opportunities for pupils to read aloud in class and to build upon their ability to listen to each other and share their views.

- The personal, social and health education curriculum also covers citizenship, sex and relationships. Through this part of curriculum in particular, pupils are helped to work out problems for themselves and learn not to accept statements at face value. This helps them to understand where advertising or media may be misleading or easily misinterpreted. This in turn enables them to be better protected against potential radicalisation, extremism or other types of exploitation.
- Assessment of pupils' work is accurate. Staff have excellent subject knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of the pupils that they teach. They are not complacent. Staff work together to identify where improvements in teaching and support for pupils can be improved so that pupils can make even better progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. When pupils are attending different schools or undertaking activities off the school's site they are well cared for. Their personal development and welfare are promoted equally well as they are in school.
- The school's core values of 'responsibility, happiness, cooperation, resilience, respect and caring' lie at the heart of all that it does. As a result, pupils grow in self-confidence. They learn to overcome any barriers that are part of their initial communication and interaction difficulties.
- Each individual in the school is respected and valued for the contribution they make to the life of the school. The pupil council members act as great ambassadors. They ensure that pupils can help improve the provision in the school, for example by suggesting and choosing outdoor play equipment. They also take responsibility for pupils to develop compassion and to help others through the Fairtrade 'shop' and by raising funds for charities.
- Pupils enjoy their learning, particularly when out of doors or engaged in practical activities. They are keen to do their best and are rightly proud of their work. Through good-quality careers guidance and support they are well prepared for the next stage in their education or training.
- The school has adult champions for the protected characteristics as part of the Equalities Act. The champions and the school curriculum help pupils to, for example, understand differences in sexuality, race, and religion, so that they are tolerant, reflecting and following the school's – and British – values.
- Attendance is high. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils particularly enjoy their residential experiences, both in school and when on school trips and activities.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding, including when engaging in activities that are delivered beyond the school site. Pupils are extremely well prepared for life after they leave the school.
- During the day, pupils are polite, helpful and courteous. Nevertheless, some pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour because of their special needs. Staff are suitably trained to manage pupils' behaviour. Staff ensure that when pupils become anxious or upset they are supported until they are composed. Over the last year the school has

designated specific spaces in the school to help pupils calm down and be ready to learn. These areas are used very effectively by staff and pupils. The use of these areas significantly reduces any potential disruption to their own or other pupils' learning.

- Pupils are kept safe and say they feel safe. They feel confident that staff will resolve any unkindness or bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe on the internet and who to go to if they have any concerns. They increasingly learn how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- The residential provision provides a good routine to the extended day. Residential pupils respond well to the boundaries in place for group living, showing kindness and respect to each other. Behavioural incidents are minimal during residential time as pupils respond well to the effective and timely interventions and guidance from staff.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Outstanding

- There is a strong culture throughout the school, held by all staff, for the pupils to do the best they can in all aspects of their learning and development. As a result, pupils continue to attain an ever-increasing wide range of externally accredited qualifications by the time they leave the school. Of particular note are pupils' achievements in mathematics and, for the most able pupils, French. The standards that they reach represent at least good and generally excellent achievement from the pupils' various starting points. Pupils use these qualifications to gain access to further education and training courses at an appropriate level, in areas that they are interested in, where they continue to succeed.
- In all year groups pupils continue to excel in a wide range of subjects, including writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils do extremely well in all year groups. The carefully targeted work, particularly for the most able in the school, enables them to be sufficiently challenged and supported to do their best. This also applies to disadvantaged pupils, particularly so for pupils entitled to free school meals, who, along with the residential pupils, make the most progress from their starting points.
- Pupils respond most willingly and easily to practical work in physical education, art, design and technology, cooking and outdoor activities. Through these they gain subject knowledge as well as developing life skills such as teamwork, caring for animals, healthy eating and the valuing of exercise.
- A relative weakness in the past has been the standards that pupils reach in their reading, particularly in Years 10 and 11. This is no longer the case. The school has introduced a new reading scheme, for all year groups, with a greater emphasis on the teaching of phonics. Over the last year the difference in reading standards has significantly increased for almost all pupils. They are now reading more widely, deeply and with increased intonation and understanding.

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision

### Good

- Pupils enjoy their residential experience and have fun. They benefit from the structure provided through the extended day as well as the support from staff. As a result, many residential pupils perform better academically than day pupils, particularly in English and reading.

- The procedures for securing the safety and well-being of residential pupils are well known and carefully followed. Staff regularly discuss the pupils and their compatibility as a residential group to address any friendship difficulties or incidents of bullying. A risk assessment process occurs to consider the sharing of bedrooms and the proximity of pupils to staff during the night. There are strategies in place to separate residential accommodation used by the boys and girls.
- Residential pupils are encouraged to take measured risks through activities such as camping, swimming and off-site visits. From this, pupils learn how to keep safe when not in school, for example learning how to independently cross the road safely. With staff support, pupils develop personal skills and grow in confidence. Their social and emotional development is strongly supported by the consistent implementation of known routines.
- Residential pupils develop important life skills in personal care, cleaning and cooking. This is in addition to opportunities for work experience and attendance at local colleges. These skills can be formally recognised through externally accredited awards, equipping pupils for their next stage of learning after this school.
- Residential matters are regularly discussed with pupils at group meetings and individually with a key worker. The views of pupils are highly valued, for example, they are encouraged to make suggestions towards improving their residential experience.
- One of the national minimum standards for residential special schools is not met. There are not sufficient opportunities for residential staff or pupils to speak formally, six times a year, with an independent visitor, such as a governor or someone who is independent of the management of the school.

### **Quality of care and support in the residential provision Good**

- Residential staff deliver strong pastoral support, enabling each pupil to make at least good progress in their academic and personal achievement. The experienced and long-standing team know the pupils exceptionally well and how to meet their individual needs.
- The introduction to the residential provision is set at a pace to suit each pupil. A gradual development of visits before an overnight stay enables the pupil to feel comfortable and safe while away from home and reassures their families.
- The health and medical needs of residential pupils are met very well by trained staff. Pupils are taught how to manage their health issues by taking appropriate medicines and knowing the importance of healthy eating and exercise.
- The residential accommodation is clean, warm and comfortable. However, there are too many signs on the communal walls about organisational issues that detract from creating a homely feel. In addition, the challenges of a listed building, and financial constraints, impinge on the speedy delivery of the maintenance programme. Consequently, there are several areas in need of maintenance and redecoration. For example, there are damp patches on the walls and ceilings awaiting decoration, and a stained carpet requiring replacement.

## School details

|                                     |           |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Unique reference number             | 126546    |
| Social care unique reference number | SC039099  |
| Local authority                     | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number                   | 10019476  |

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                 | 11 to 16   |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 130  |
| Number of boarders on roll          | 16   |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body   |
| Chair                               | Nigel Halkes   |
| Headteacher                         | Ingrid Sidmouth  |
| Telephone number                    | 01380850309  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.rowdeford.wilts.sch.uk">www.rowdeford.wilts.sch.uk</a>   |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:head@rowdeford.wilts.sch.uk">head@rowdeford.wilts.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 27–28 November 2013  |

## Information about this school

- Rowdeford School provides education for pupils with complex learning needs. Some have additional sensory impairment, physical disabilities or medical needs. Others are identified as being on the autism spectrum.
- The school provides education for up to 130 pupils who either have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- All pupils in Year 7 are entitled to the literacy and numeracy catch-up funding. Almost half the pupils are disadvantaged.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

- A few older pupils attend half-day courses off-site during the week at Springfield Academy. All pupils in Year 11 are provided with workplace experiences.
- The school includes a 16-bed residential provision, separated for girls and boys. Residence for pupils is available Monday to Thursday each week during term time. Most pupils reside for the four nights and others vary their overnight stay while undertaking phased introduction into residential provision.
- The school supports other schools through providing alternative provision, training courses and its consultancy service.
- The education of the school was previously inspected in November 2013, and the residential provision in December 2015.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Meetings and reviews of school documentation were conducted with the members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders, the head of care and other staff, including the site and business managers. Telephone conversations were held with the Wiltshire designated officer for allegations, an external consultant working with the school, the chair of the governing body and parents. In addition, the social care inspector met with the independent listener and a parent. Discussions were held both formally and informally with pupils, where they talked about their experiences in school.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including information about pupils' performance and progress, procedures for safeguarding and for monitoring attendance.
- The education inspectors observed pupils throughout the school day. They visited classes and carried out joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at pupils' written work.
- The social care inspector visited the residential provision during and after the school day to speak with pupils and staff. This inspector joined residential pupils for an evening meal and observed activities of judo, football, camping for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and games played in the social lounges.
- The inspectors took account of the views from the 21 completed staff questionnaires, 19 pupil questionnaire responses and the 19 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).

## Inspection team

|                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Steffi Penny, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Rowena Green                 | Ofsted Inspector        |
| Clare Davies                 | Social Care Inspector   |

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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