

# Wells Park

Wells Park School, Lambourne Road, Chigwell, Essex IG7 6NN

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this residential special school**

Wells Park School is a residential primary school which is part of the Beckmead Trust. The school caters for children aged between five and 11 who experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The residential accommodation is provided in four integrated houses located on the school site.

At the time of the inspection, there were 56 children on roll, 40 of whom board up to four nights a week.

The head of care has been in post since September 2021 and has a relevant qualification.

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

### **Inspection dates: 4 to 6 November 2025**

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **outstanding**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

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 last inspection:** 3 December 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

The inspector spent time with several children. Children are extremely happy in residence and enjoy spending time with each other and staff. Staff know children extremely well and have a comprehensive understanding of their individual needs. They confidently use a research-informed model of support based on solid relationships. Staff build a strong rapport with children and provide individualised care. Children make excellent progress from their starting points. Their overall experiences are highly fulfilling.

Children thrive on the routine and structure provided by staff. The school day, evening activities and mealtimes are meticulously planned. This provides children with consistency and predictability. A wide range of high-quality resources keeps children engaged and stimulated. This highly organised approach gives children a strong sense of security and stability.

School leaders ensure there is a comprehensive and systematic approach to the monitoring, review and analysis of the support provided to children. Children make significant progress in their learning and build important social skills. Many children exceed expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Some children who previously experienced challenges in education achieve remarkable success in a short space of time. Rigorous oversight by school leaders, combined with individualised support from staff, has been instrumental in securing these outstanding outcomes.

All children have enjoyed exciting outings. Carefully planned sporting, cooking and youth club activities promote healthy lifestyles and nurture children's individual interests. Children actively contribute to the wider community through initiatives such as a local garden project and the preparation of weekly food parcels for disadvantaged families. The wide variety of opportunities available to children greatly improves their well-being and broadens their experiences.

Children and their families receive inclusive support throughout the introduction period at the school. Staff visit children in their family homes to develop a clear understanding of their needs. Placement plans are highly detailed and regularly reviewed to reflect each child's experiences and emerging needs.

Staff work exceptionally well with children to improve their social confidence, self-esteem and sense of community. Children strive for incentive badges that celebrate achievements in health, communication and independence. This bespoke scheme is highly motivating, and children take great pride in their successes.

Feedback from families is overwhelmingly positive. One parent described how they can enjoy everyday activities like visiting the supermarket with their child, which was

not possible before. All parents were extremely complimentary about the success of the positive impact staying in residential school has had on their child and family life.

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

Children receive support where their safety and well-being are prioritised. Children say that they feel safe. Parents and social workers are unequivocal in feeling assured that staff place children's welfare at the centre of all practice.

Staff have a clear understanding of their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. An established, highly individualised recording system ensures that safeguarding concerns are monitored effectively, emerging trends are identified and proactive action is taken to further protect children.

The designated safeguarding lead works in close partnership with school leaders and demonstrates exceptional tenacity in her role. She challenges external professionals when actions do not align with children's best interests. The local authority designated officer praised school leaders for going above and beyond when advocating for one child in particularly difficult circumstances.

All staff receive high-quality training to provide therapeutic support to children. Staff are empathetic to children's past experiences and are extremely skilled in de-escalation techniques when responding to children's emotions. Risks in residence are minimised because of the staff's skills and strong understanding of children's needs.

Children are incredibly motivated by an innovative incentive scheme in residence and the wider school. Children's progress is regularly recognised, and they receive a variety of rewards and privileges. The effectiveness of this approach means that children greatly improve their self-determination and emotional resilience from their starting points.

When physical intervention is used, it is necessary and proportionate. School leaders ensure that thorough monitoring and analysis take place to review interventions. This has ensured swift learning and adaptations to children's behaviour management strategies when required.

School leaders maintain excellent management of health and safety arrangements across residence. Regular, comprehensive audits and prompt remedial work ensure that the decor is maintained to a consistently high standard. Children also benefit from practical learning opportunities about health and safety, including recent sessions with a fire officer to further their understanding of fire risks.

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

A qualified and experienced head of care manages the staff team exceptionally well alongside a skilled deputy head of care. They work seamlessly with other school

leaders to provide the best experiences for children in residence. School leaders are meticulous, highly energised and completely focused on improving the future outcomes for children. Their commitment to enhancing children's experiences is evident in the quality of the care provided by staff.

Staff value school leaders' expertise and commitment and feel exceptionally well supported. Most staff have worked in residence for many years, and staff retention is excellent, providing strong continuity of care and stability for children.

There are established arrangements for sharing information and for reflection, feedback and learning with staff. Staff receive frequent supervision and regularly attend well-planned team meetings. High-quality training equips staff with the skills to meet the children's individual needs.

School leaders have a highly secure understanding of the school's strengths and are committed to driving continuous improvements. Development plans include upgrading residential bathroom facilities, strengthening risk assessment processes and responding to children's feedback by introducing football coaching and investing in new recreational resources.

School governors have effective oversight of the residential provision. They visit residence regularly and consider children's views. An independent visitor provides robust external monitoring. Any recommendations made are swiftly responded to by school leaders.

All national minimum standards are met.

## **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:** 2747505

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Matthew Surman

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Mark Anderton, Social Care Inspector

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