

# Kite Ridge Education Unit

Verney Avenue, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP12 3NE

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b> <b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience	Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school because:

- Teaching is consistently good and occasionally outstanding whether by teachers, or by 'key workers' (support assistants) working on an individual basis with pupils.
- Teachers and other adults are skilled in overcoming the substantial barriers to learning caused by the pupils' severe and complex learning difficulties.
- Adults have an exceptional knowledge of their pupils and their disabilities. They plan and teach lessons which are well adapted for the needs of their pupils.
- The adults manage the pupils' behaviour very well. They skilfully reinforce positive behaviour and over time, considering the pupils' complex needs, make a substantial contribution to helping the pupils to understand and control their own behaviour.
- The pupils feel safe and the school makes outstanding provision for their safety and well-being
- The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools. The standards of care are consistently excellent and the pupils make outstanding progress in their personal and social development.
- The headteacher has led the school effectively since its opening in 2012. He has been well supported by his senior teachers. Together they have rigorously monitored and improved standards of teaching, which has had a significant impact on the pupils' progress.
- The management committee has several new members but has demonstrated convincingly that it offers strong support and consistent challenge to the school's leadership.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable outstanding achievement.
- On occasions adults do not evaluate pupils' work and set targets with sufficient precision. This makes it more difficult to plan the next step and slows down the pace of learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in 12 lessons or sessions where individual pupils were taught by their key worker. Many of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with key workers, teachers and the headteacher, with representatives of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), the chair of the management committee and with local authority officers.
- The inspector took into account the seven returned parent questionnaires and 13 completed staff questionnaires. There were too few responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View, to be counted.
- The inspector observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documentation including self-evaluation summaries and development planning. Records of pupils’ progress, attendance, behaviour and well-being since the provision opened were analysed, as well as monitoring reports on teaching and the curriculum. The school’s policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils were also checked.
- The social care inspector observed the work of boarding provision staff, met with managers, staff and pupils and looked at a wide range of documents relating to the safety and care of the pupils.
- This is the first inspection of the school by Ofsted since its opening in 2012.

## Inspection team

Melvyn Blackband, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Wendy Anderson

Social Care Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Kite Ridge Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) was opened in September 2012 and provides education and part-time boarding for boys and girls aged from 11 to 19 years who have complex learning difficulties accompanied by challenging behaviour. In most cases they have been permanently excluded or are at risk of permanent exclusion from other special schools. Three pupils are of sixth form age although the school does not operate specific sixth form provision because of the pupils' particular learning difficulties.
- A small number of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium funding, which is extra funding given for those pupils eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority. At the time of the inspection, there were no pupils in the care of the local authority. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups but there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Most have autistic spectrum disorders. There are three main schools which refer their pupils for places at the unit. These are the group of Buckinghamshire maintained special schools for severe learning disability: Maplewood School in High Wycombe, Heritage House School in Chesham, and the Vale Federation of Schools (Stocklake Park and Booker Park Schools) in Aylesbury. A minority of pupils come from other local authority special schools.
- The boarding provision provides part-time boarding and is situated in a purpose-built unit located to the rear of Kite Ridge Education Unit. There are six beds in the boarding unit and no young person will be resident for more than 295 days per year. As boarding places are part time, there are a maximum of 12 young people accessing the boarding provision, most of whom are not pupils at the PRU. Currently the provision caters for four Kite Ridge pupils. The local authority has contracted Action for Children to run the boarding on its behalf.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - sharpening the pupils' targets so that teachers and other adults have a clear understanding of the next small steps in the pupils' learning
  - ensuring that adults consistently assess each pupil's work with sufficient precision to enable the pupils to maintain and improve on their rate of progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- While the attainment of pupils remains low, the overwhelming majority make progress which is as good as or better than that expected nationally in similar schools. The pupils on entry, typically have limited speech, but over time they make good progress in communication, in developing early reading and writing skills and in learning to identify and use numbers. The rate of pupils' progress has risen steadily since the school opened.
- A very few older pupils have made exceptional progress. They read and write confidently and are due to be entered for GCSE mathematics. The small handful of pupils who have already left the school made sufficient progress to be accepted onto college courses, and two of the older pupils have college places in the summer. The older pupils, who are of sixth form age, follow courses which are having a positive impact on their basic skills, their independence and their vocational skills, which prepares them well for their college experiences.
- Through patient teaching, the pupils learn to communicate appropriately, initially through signs and symbols and then by exchanging and using a series of symbols to construct sentences. In most cases, this leads to simple speech patterns by which pupils express their needs and wishes. The use of symbols attached to words is used well and adults consistently and successfully encourage pupils in lessons and individual sessions to recognise these symbols, letters and words and so build up their early literacy skills.
- A very small number have little understanding of the necessary interaction with others in order to communicate. They are supported through carefully devised sensory programmes. For example, they are helped to express their likes and dislikes through the use of colours and textures.
- The school has used Year 7 catch-up premium and pupil premium funding effectively to provide extra speech and language therapy and to buy specific electronic aids to communication. The pupils who receive the funding make progress at the same rate as other pupils. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups have made good progress. The school ensures through carefully tailored programmes that each pupil has an equal opportunity to achieve well and that there is no discrimination.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching by all the adults is consistently good and occasionally outstanding. This is because of regular and rigorous monitoring by the senior team accompanied by high levels of tailored further training and support. New staff receive comprehensive training to ensure standards are maintained.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' progress. They plan carefully for every pupil. The pupils benefit from a very high level of individual tuition from key workers. The pupils enjoy this support and they respond well. Adults skilfully use communication aids, such as symbols, and their own speech in explanation and in questions to help pupils to develop understanding and to share in communication.
- Where pupils take part in group lessons they are always supported individually. This helps them gain confidence and has a significant impact on their progress. For instance in a group lesson the pupils were asked to create sentences from their symbol books relating to fruits and animals. By patient teaching and modelling of answers by the teacher and each key worker, the pupils successfully made sentences and achieved well in describing what they could see on the whiteboard.
- The careful assessment of each pupil's abilities and needs is a strength of the school.

Teachers have a very good grasp of the specific communication skills relevant to overcoming barriers to learning caused by the pupils' complex learning needs. Teachers ensure that they focus on each pupil's carefully constructed targets. They are adept at reshaping and adapting their lessons to take account of each pupil's ability and progress within the lesson.

- On occasion pupils' individual targets are not written as clearly and sharply as they could be. As a result, key workers sometimes are not able to teach the next step effectively and this can slow down learning. There are also some occasions when adults do not record enough detail about pupils' progress in lessons and this leads to less precise planning for subsequent sessions.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- The pupils' behaviour is outstanding. As pupils progress through the school, they learn to communicate their needs and wishes and to interact in productive ways very successfully. This helps to diminish their frustration, and their behaviour constantly improves. Over time they develop positive attitudes to other pupils and adults and they enjoy taking part in lessons and in sessions of individual support. As a result, they make increasingly better progress.
- There is a warm atmosphere to the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Staff smile often and exude care and concern for the pupils and their well-being. The pupils respond well to this ethos. In general, they are calm and relaxed and they enjoy school. This is confirmed by parents and carers and by the pupils' attendance which is high in comparison with similar schools. Parents and carers have a high regard for the school's work, particularly in the support they are given and the levels of communication with the school staff. All pupils are treated equally and there is no discrimination.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding and this has a positive impact on their behaviour. Pupils are individually supervised at all times. Pupils learn through example and patient teaching how to keep themselves safe in situations such as crossing the road or at the shops. Bullying in any form is almost unheard of.
- The school manages the pupils' behaviour effectively. The school's detailed records show that incidents of unacceptable behaviour have decreased significantly since the school opened. The school has a policy of not excluding pupils at any time. Staff are well trained in techniques to calm pupils when they are agitated and have regular training in restraint should a child become physically aggressive or a danger to themselves. Restraint is used as a last resort and when employed is always done calmly and professionally with the pupil's well-being and safety as the prime purpose of the procedure. Incidents where restraint is used have diminished significantly since the opening of the school. These incidents are recorded appropriately and parents and carers are always informed.
- Each pupil has a comprehensive behaviour plan linked to a risk assessment of the pupil's safety and all staff follow this consistently. Daily briefings ensure that all staff are aware of potential problems and every incident is recorded in detail. Pupils gradually learn how to behave in acceptable ways through consistent modelling by adults, particularly the pupil's own key worker. The school policy of ignoring poor behaviour and rewarding good behaviour is proving increasingly successful in teaching pupils the differences between positive and unacceptable behaviour and how to control their own actions more successfully. Pupils are prepared very well to take up college courses and their place in society.
- The behaviour of pupils who are boarding has improved significantly since they began boarding. This is because consistent strategies for behaviour management are applied across the school and boarding facility. Boarding pupils receive an outstanding quality of care and the work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The expertise and experience of the headteacher have enabled him to lead the provision effectively since it opened in 2012 and with a clear vision as to the direction the school needs to take. He is well supported by his senior teachers. All staff are fully committed to the school's ethos. There is high morale and staff are proud of their contribution to the pupils' achievements.
- Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. It has shown consistent improvement as a result of monitoring and the well-planned and robust arrangements for the management of the performance of teachers and other staff. Rates of pay are clearly linked to performance and staff benefit from high levels of training and opportunities to undertake advance qualifications such as honours degrees in autism.
- Senior staff robustly self-evaluate standards of teaching and pupils' progress. The pupils' achievement and personal development, for example, are tracked on a daily basis. Leaders quickly adapt or supplement changes to the curriculum or devote extra support to pupils who are at danger of not meeting their targets. For instance, leaders are aware of occasional inconsistencies in target-setting and assessment and are working to improve standards.
- The benefits of additional funding such as pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up premium are measured regularly by the impact on the pupils' progress. The school's development planning is realistic and detailed and has set challenging goals for the future.
- A range of outside health and education professionals are involved with the school, primarily to support the pupils' development and the school has benefited from ongoing support from the local authority. There is a good capacity to maintain the school's development.
- The curriculum emphasises the development of communication and the application of basic skills of literacy and numeracy across a range of topics linked to appropriate National Curriculum programmes. Learning activities are adapted in great detail to match the needs of each individual pupil. Much of the pupils' learning is devoted to helping them develop social and interaction skills and to understanding how to manage their own behaviour in a range of situations. There are regular whole-school assemblies where pupils learn to reflect on issues and pupils are involved in the local community, for example in walking to local shops or amenities. This teaches them how to conduct themselves outside the school and prepares them well for life after school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Management of the boarding provision is good. Senior staff self-review their work rigorously and have a good grasp of strengths and areas for further development.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The management committee members are well informed about pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and the salary arrangements for staff. They are involved in the decision-making process in rewarding staff for good performance and in managing any underperformance. Individual members are attached to curriculum areas. All have visited the school recently and prepared evaluations of their visit. They maintain clear supervision of the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding and its impact on pupils' progress and well-being. Although there are several new members, the committee self-evaluates its own effectiveness and takes part in relevant training events, for instance in child protection. Members are well informed and up to date regarding the recruitment of staff and safeguarding arrangements for children.

<b>Outcomes for boarders</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Quality of boarding provision and care</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Boarders' safety</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Leadership and management of boarding provision</b>	<b>Good</b>

- The boarding provision enables young people to make outstanding progress in their personal and social development. With excellent staff support, they live in an inclusive, supportive and happy environment where highly individualised care is provided to meet their identified needs.
- The staff team ensures that the pupils receive extremely individualised and consistent care. The relationships between the staff, the young people and their families are a real strength of the school. It is these relationships which form the basis of all work undertaken.
- The safety of the young people is central to the boarding provision due to their vulnerabilities. Robust safeguarding procedures are in place and adhered to in practice. However, it is not outstanding because there are some minor shortfalls in the records maintained in staff personnel files.
- Behaviour in boarding by the young people has dramatically improved from their starting points. The main focus is on positive reinforcement. Records of behavioural issues are well maintained and robustly monitored by management.
- Boarders have access to a wide range of activities both on and off site. These enable them not only to have fun but also to develop their social skills and confidence. The activities also link in with enabling young people to be active and to improve their health and well-being.
- Staff are exceptionally good at enabling young people to make the transition between different parts of their day. This is an area that a number of the young people find very difficult. Through consistency and the use of procedures such as social stories, members of staff work with young people to enable them to do this successfully. This is especially so in the admissions process into boarding.
- Health care is well managed and appropriate records are maintained. Staff receive a very good level of training in this area especially in relation to procedures involved in complex care needs.
- Management of the boarding provision is good, rather than outstanding, because managers have not ensured that all of the required administrative files have been kept fully up to date. Managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement required. Managers are proactive in their approach and have high expectations for the young people placed there as well as of the staff team.
- The staff team places boarders' well-being at the heart of its practice. Team members are very supportive of each other and receive regular formal supervision. This is further enhanced by the daily debrief which takes place at the end of each shift.
- There is strong evidence that young people are making outstanding progress in their boarding experience. Parents and carers supported this view during a recent consultation carried out by the staff.

## What inspection judgements mean

<b>School</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

<b>Boarding provision</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138102
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC474566
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	428914

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of boarding 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 boarding schools.

<b>Type of school</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>School category</b>	Pupil referral unit
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	10
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	3
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	4
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Management Committee
<b>Chair</b>	Susie Burrage
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stuart Gordon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 448497
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