

SUNFIELD SPECIAL SCHOOL SHINES BRIGHT FOR OFSTED

Wednesday 3 April, 2013

An independent residential special school and children's home in Stourbridge has been deemed 'outstanding' following a recent Ofsted inspection. Sunfield, in Clent, Stourbridge was commended after a recent visit by inspectors.

The Ofsted care report said: "Young people make exceptional progress. They learn new skills, reduce the risks they take, and make marked progress in coping with the challenges that they face. This means that they come to enjoy experiences in social settings outside of the home."

The report goes on to say "Young people benefit from a range of specialist staff, provided by the home, who come together with care and education staff to form a 'team around the child' (TAC). This illustrates how young people are at the centre of planning and practice throughout the home."

An aligned inspection of the school which was commended as 'good' says "The school provides a good quality of education and successfully meets its aim." "Good teaching, high staff morale, outstanding behavior and an individual curriculum that fulfills the objectives and requirements of pupil's statement of special educational needs, enable pupils achieve well."

The inspections also recognised that "Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding." "A wide range of additional learning activities are provided in school and in the residences. Holidays in Wales, outdoor pursuit trips, sailing and visits to theme parks, restaurants and local places of interest help to broaden pupils' horizons. Visits by potters, break dancers and circus artists enrich learning and increase pupils' enjoyment."

Sunfield's staff were praised for their support and working relationships with the children at the school. "The strengths in teaching lie in the excellent relationships between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves. Behaviour management is outstanding and learning is rarely disrupted."

The reports also highlight Sunfield's recently purpose built school and its vast grounds. "The school is located in 58 acres of beautiful parkland and the grounds are used extremely well for learning activities, play and recreation. The farm is an excellent resource and is very well used, particularly for work-related learning activities."

Head Teacher Caroline Bell was pleased with the outcome of the inspection and took the opportunity to praise staff at the school. She said: "We are delighted with the report. The staff

team here is not only a highly skilled and knowledgeable one but also very committed and extremely hard working. This report is a testament to them. There is a wide variety of special schools throughout the West Midlands but few are working with children with complex learning needs and autism providing the level of care, education and therapeutic approaches Sunfield are able to offer."

Acting Chief Executive of the Charity, Catriona O'Malley says "Ofsted have confirmed how hard every member of staff at Sunfield works to put the children first. Our aim is to ensure each child can achieve their potential and enjoy real quality of life and we are all delighted the inspectors found we are successfully meeting this aim. They commended how the staff work together in a collaborative way in order to share learning and best practice for the benefit of the young people"

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