

# Starhurst School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspection date</b>	9 May 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	John Chivers / Kerry Fell
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	13 June 2006

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

Starhurst School is a Local Education Authority maintained school providing day places, weekly boarding and part boarding for boys aged 11 to 16 years who have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils attending the school have complex and challenging needs. Many will have experienced breakdowns of previous educational placements and have had periods out of formal education, prior to attending Starhurst. Currently the school has two of its three boarding lodges in operation and at the time of the inspection fourteen boarders were accommodated at the school.

### Summary

This is the school's first social care inspection under the regulatory authority of 'Ofsted'. All of the National Minimum Standards 'Key' Standards for Residential Special Schools were inspected on this occasion. The inspection was announced and was undertaken on 9th and 10th May 2007. The duration of the inspection over the two day period was fourteen hours. The inspection was conducted by Mr J A Chivers and Mrs K Fell. The inspection process included discussion with the Head Teacher, Head of Care and other senior/departmental staff. Formal interviews/discussion with the care staff team and group/individual discussion with boarders were also held. . Samples of the school's policies, procedures and records were inspected. A full inspection of the premises was not undertaken on this occasion as this section does not fall within the remit of the National Minimum Standards 'Key' Standards for Residential Special Schools; however certain areas of the premises were accessed for 'Health and Safety' purposes. The findings of the inspection are positive with many examples of sound management and boarding/pastoral care practice. The school has clear regard for health and medical matters concerning the boarders and ensures that such areas are reviewed and monitored as appropriate. Boarders' health and medical records are well kept and medication is securely held. The school takes active steps to keep boarders safe in a homely, well ordered and 'bullying free' environment where sound working relationships between staff and boarders have been developed and maintained. Any complaints received are clearly recorded and detail action taken and outcomes of investigations. The school has an effective behaviour management programme, which facilitates mutual trust between staff and boarders and encourages and achieves a positive living experience for some difficult and challenging young people who have experienced trauma in their lives. None of the boarders were observed to be a problem in terms of behaviour management or control during the period of the inspection. Child Protection and safeguarding boarders is taken seriously and all staff have undertaken training in this area. Child Protection issues are clearly recorded and evidence actions taken and outcomes of any investigations. Sanctions and restraint records are well kept and evidenced required information. Boarders confirmed that bullying is not an issue in the school and the school's anti-bullying co-ordinator and care staff have made significant inputs into this area. The boarders have adequate degrees of autonomy and privacy consistent with their age and level of development and subject to risk assessments as appropriate. Confidential information and records are securely held. The school has regard for health and safety matters and appropriate policies, procedures and monitoring systems are in place. No safety hazards were evident at this inspection. Staff recruitment and vetting procedures are sound; however there are inconsistencies in what is required by the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools regarding Criminal Record Bureau checks and the flexibility that the external company responsible for such checks has interpreted into the requirements of this standard. (this is currently the subject of discussion

between Ofsted and the external company responsible for the vetting of staff). Boarding staff make a positive contribution to boarders' education and encourage and assist them in education and learning activities. The school has an effective key worker system and key workers and other staff provide a range of forums where boarders can communicate their views and opinions. Boarders interviewed were clear that staff listen to their viewpoints and encourage them to become actively involved in their individual care plans and take responsibility for their actions. The school is staffed consistent to Standards and has an experienced, competent and committed staff team, which has a good balance in terms of gender and ethnicity. Staff and boarders thought the school had regard for equal opportunity and diversity issues and no discriminatory attitudes or practices were evident at the time of the inspection. Staff attend a range of relevant training courses and they are of the opinion that the school's management is supportive at enabling appropriate training opportunities for them. Formal individual staff supervision is frequently held and staff interviewed were satisfied regarding the content of supervision sessions. The school is managed and organised in a sound and professional manner and has effective internal quality assurance mechanisms in order to monitor and scrutinise the conduct of the service. Staff interviewed were very supportive of the school's management and ethos. There are no actions or recommendations as a result of this inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

The school has also made significant developments regarding its anti-bullying strategies and behaviour management systems. Substantial inputs have occurred regarding raising cultural awareness and diversity matters. The school had addressed the three recommendations set at the last inspection and will continue to improve on its already existing areas of sound management and boarding/pastoral practice.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The school has a dedicated medication room on the lodges, where boarders go to collect and have their medication administered. Medication is stored securely in a tamperproof medication cabinet. The medication cupboard is neat and orderly, and boarders medication can be easily identified. A clear auditable medication administration record is maintained by the staff, which includes an audit of medication received, administered and returned by the school. Controlled drug medication was stored appropriately. The recording of the controlled drug medication administered did not follow best practice guidelines in that it was not recorded in a bound controlled drugs log, but recorded on the school's main medication administration record with only the signature of the member of staff administering the medication. However, it was noted that the school's recording procedures were thorough and included a clear audit trail and weekly stock check. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is mainly covered within the normal school curriculum. Where boarders have home work on specific topics or where they wish to discuss sexual or personal health issues, staff will actively promote discussions and support the pupils to get the answers and access to health professionals they may need. The inspectors were also advised that the nurse comes into the school regularly to run sexual health sessions with the boarders. Where boarders are identified as needing support with personal care or personal hygiene this is managed sensitively. All boarders, unless a request is made, are registered with the local GP and local optician. The inspectors were advised that in the main,

dental appointments are attended from home, however, where emergency appointments were required or where appointments could not be attended from home, these could be arranged locally.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

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### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Actions from review of special educational need statements include tasks and support to be provided by both care staff and school staff. Staff met during the inspection confirmed that they would be involved in the boarder's annual review, and where necessary would liaise with the teaching assistants and teaching staff. Boarders have homework sessions each evening after tea, and these are arranged either as a group session with staff support, often based in the kitchen area of the lodges or boarders are encouraged to work independently in their bedrooms, with staff assistance being available as required. It was evident from key worker files and conversations with staff that they took an active interest in the specific support needs of the boarders. Transition plans on boarders' files and action points from family meeting records identified areas such as the development of curriculum vitas and making applications to colleges as goals and targets to be worked upon with both education and care staff. A range of support services can be accessed by boarders and this includes a Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) worker and partnership social workers attached to the school, as well as access to external support. The inspector met with the CAMHS worker during the inspection, and they spoke positively about their role within the school. Staff were able to make referrals directly to them, and then sessions could be arranged with the boarder with the agreement of the boarder's parent or carer. The inspector was also advised that a family therapist

would attend the school once per month to run a support session with the staff and also a case study clinic, that staff could attend to discuss, confidentially, specific needs or concerns about boarders. Specialist training was also provided to staff during in service training (INSET) days. If the CAMHS worker believed that a boarder needed further support they could be referred on to specialist community based services. Some boarders also attend acupuncture sessions at the school, and speech and language therapy was available by referral. Records evidenced that where boarders required support to attend meetings and appointments outside of school, staff would support them to attend. Boarders also confirmed that staff would offer them support and talk to them following traumatic incidents. Boarders are able to talk with any member of staff, and they were observed interacting openly and positively with staff during the inspection. Boarders met, spoke highly about the support that they received from both the staff and their peers.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders were aware of how to make complaints or raise concerns, and they talked about the complaints boxes where they could leave messages for the head of care. Boarders have a welcome to boarding booklet which contains information about how they can make their feelings known. This included the contact details for the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS). Boarders are able to attend lodge meetings and raise their views via the school council. Boards within the lodges displayed a range of posters that gave contact details for external organisations that the boarders may wish to contact. Details were available of what to do if boarders were being bullied or were a bully. The lodges have listening and responding sheets that are used to consult the boarders about the evening activities that they want to occur, with a focus on activities that can be done either on dark nights or light nights depending on the time of the year. Evidence was available within records of family meetings and reviews that the boarder was consulted about their views on decisions being made. Boarders were observed making choices throughout the evening. Each boarder had a key worker. Boarders views were taken into account when choosing a key worker, and examples of how requests for a change of key worker were managed was available. Boarders spoke positively about their key workers and felt supported by them. They were aware that a key worker file was kept and confirmed that they were able to view this file if they wished to. Boarders also advised inspectors that their key workers sent weekly reports home and they were able to read these with their parents, and key workers maintained good contact with the parents and carers. The boarders were all white British, and following on from good practice observed at the last inspection, a member of staff at the school had continued the diversity events introduced to the school in 2006. A celebrations book of photographs is kept to evidence these events and posters and photographs are displayed around the lodges. These events have included a drumming session with a Ghanaian drummer, a Scots evening where they had a porridge making competition and a Japanese evening where the boarders could try sushi and make origami. Further events are planned for later this term. Boarders had not made any specific requests to be supported to follow a particular religion. However, the inspector was advised that staff promote sharing of information about different religions. An example given was of how a boarder had been working on the internet to look up information about Buddhism and that other boarders had shown an interest in the work that the boarder was undertaking. The relevant information as detailed within National Minimum Standard 17 was held by the school either within the main school record which included the original application for admission, the boarder's Statement of Educational Need and any subsequent reviews, and a range of other correspondence and contact information. Key worker

files contained information about goals/tasks, a record of the week, and a record of contact with relatives/carers and other important people. Health information was held in the medical room. Although this information was available for each boarder, it was evident that there could be some improvement in the review of some of the information in these documents. Staff confirmed that they contributed to statutory reviews. Contact with parents, carers and other important people is promoted within the boarders booklet. Boarders confirmed that they were able to maintain contact with parents as they wished. Many had mobile telephones, and were observed 'texting' friends throughout the evening. Boarders confirmed that they still had to ask staff for access to the school telephone, but that they were not too concerned by this. They did sometimes have to wait for a member of staff to open the room up. This could be managed more effectively.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is not judged.

This section does not form part of the National Minimum Standards 'key' Standards for Residential Special Schools and was therefore not assessed on this occasion. However certain areas of the premises and grounds were accessed for Health and Safety purposes. The areas accessed evidenced good standards of cleanliness and hygiene and no safety hazards were evident in the areas accessed

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

A Statement of Purpose, which provided information in regard to the care principles and boarding practices of the school was available and included a 'Mission Statement' and a 'Residential Statement of Intent'. Boarders are supported by a dedicated, and enthusiastic staff team. Most of the care staff had worked at the school for several years, and four new members of staff had been appointed since the last inspection. The inspectors observed that these members of staff had already become an integral part of the team. Staff spoke highly of the Head of Care and senior staff and the manner in which they offered support and direction to the team. Staff were also confident that they received good levels of support and training, all staff advising the inspectors about training they had received in the past year, including updates in positive options, first aid, and child protection and planned updates in food handling. The Head of Care completed the National Vocational Qualification 'NVQ' level 4 in June 2006, and two other members of staff had completed the NVQ level 3 qualification. The inspectors were advised that three other members of staff had commenced the NVQ level 3 course in September 2006, and any remaining staff could join the course at the next intake in September 2007. The inspectors were provided with a copy of the duty rota, and it evidenced suitable staffing arrangements. Observations of routines and activities in the evening supported this. Staff were available in both lodges for activities. Staff were found to be enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the needs of the boarders, and the boarders spoke positively about the staff, which was evident in their interactions during the evening. Observations demonstrated that there was a focus on the 'boy' as an individual rather than their specific need, and conversations with staff demonstrated a keen awareness of privacy and dignity, and safety and security. Staff talked about "sleeping in" duties and boarders were aware that both waking night staff and "sleeping in" staff were available. Time was rostered for staff meetings and hand over, and staff confirmed that they continued to have time available on Friday afternoons to update their key worker records and meet with staff to discuss the boarders. The school provided the inspectors with

a copy of the 'Major Incident' procedures. Evidence was seen throughout the inspection that senior staff of the school monitored appropriate records on a half term and termly basis.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Statutory requirements**

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Due date</b>
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### **Recommendations**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for residential special school

#### Being healthy

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted (NMS 14)
- children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs (NMS 15)

**Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.**

#### Staying safe

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled (NMS 3)
- children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration (NMS 4)
- the welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse (NMS 5)
- children are protected from bullying (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (NMS 7)
- children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return (NMS 8)
- children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour (NMS 10)
- children live in schools that provide physical safety and security (NMS 26)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

**Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Enjoying and achieving

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- the school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school (NMS 12)
- children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

**Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Making a positive contribution

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run; no child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views (NMS 2)
- children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect (NMS 9)
- children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes (NMS 11)

- children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school (NMS 17)
- in accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while at school (NMS 20)

**Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **Achieving economic well-being**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money (NMS 16)
- children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- children live in well designed and pleasant premises, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use (NMS 24)
- children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity (NMS 25)

**Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.**

## **Organisation**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils (NMS 1)
- children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of the staff and child groups of the school (NMS 19)
- children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently (NMS 28)
- children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs (NMS 29)
- children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare (NMS 30)
- children receive the care and services they need from competent staff (NMS 31)
- children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools (NMS 32)
- the governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school (NMS 33)

**Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**