

Loxley Hall

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
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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

Loxley Hall School is a residential/day special school providing education for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is situated in a rural setting a few miles outside the town of Uttoxeter. The main building is a large, two storey country house. Rooms on the ground floor are used as offices, a main kitchen with a dining hall off and communal rooms for all pupils. The residential provision is located on the second floor and consists of two mini-kitchens, dining areas and a sitting room. There is also a private meeting room, bedrooms, and shower and bathing facilities. The young people have access to the units kitchens and the domestic style laundry as part of their life skills training. The School caters for boys only between the ages of 11 to 16 years. Normally the school will not accommodate a young person in the boarding provision during his last two years at school. At the time of the inspection there were 11 boarding pupils on roll. The residential provision operates Monday to Friday each week during term time. The school offers a flexible boarding arrangement with young people being able to stay between one to four nights a week. The maximum numbers of boarders currently staying at anytime is in the region of four. The majority of these stay one night a week with a minority staying two nights

Summary

This inspection was announced and took place over a two day period. On the first day the inspector arrived at 09:00 and stayed until 20:00. The second day of the inspection was from 07:45 and until 14:30. On the evening of the first day of the inspection there were 3 young people staying at school and the inspector joined the pupils on their evening activities. Prior to the inspection the Head Teacher provided a pre-inspection questionnaire, self-assessment, and a copy of the Residential Policies and Guidance handbook. Seven young people completed a questionnaire and the inspector received two parent/carer questionnaires. The inspector made continued direct observations throughout the inspection of the children and staff interactions. The observations made by the inspector confirmed that the young people were calm and relaxed in the company of staff and positive interactions were seen taking place. All of the above contributed to the overall inspection and assisted the inspector to form judgements about the residential provision of the school.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the school was asked to review how it can provide more opportunities for young people to be consulted about the day to day running of the school. The processes for consulting with the young people has been extended and improved, for example, more regular young people's meetings are run. The school also operates a young person's questionnaire system and 1:1 key worker meetings. This enables young people to actively participate in decisions about their lives. The school was asked to give staff medication training and monitor all medication records. Staff are about to receive medication training and all medical records are now monitored by senior staff. This further safeguards and promotes young people's welfare. It was recommended that all care staff have personal development plans. This is now in place which enables staff to identify specific training needs and improve their knowledge base. The school was asked to devise a specific crisis plan. This plan now enables management

and staff to manage and quickly respond to foreseeable crises in a planned and proactive way, thus keeping the young people safe.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Basic information regarding the health and medical histories of each student is gained as part of the schools' admission process. Parents retain responsibility for ensuring their child's health care needs are met. The school has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that includes intimate and personal care guidance for staff working with the young people. The young people learn about major risks to health including substance abuse and sexual health through the schools Personal, Social and Health Education Programme (PSHE). The young people receive care that actively promotes their well-being and health. Staff demonstrate a full understanding of the medication procedures and all staff are trained in basic first aid. Accident books are maintained and enhanced by a detailed monthly audit. This effective monitoring system informs risk assessments and reduces the likelihood of repetitive accidents so helping to ensure young people's safety. The young people learn about the principles of healthy eating as they enjoy an interesting and varied range of snacks and main meals. Children regularly choose between a hot meal and a cold alternative. In addition, fresh fruit is always available. Meal times are orderly, social occasions where they sit with their friends, and staff members to happily discuss a wide range of topics. They help to prepare supper and drinks by setting and clearing the tables. The young people as part of their life skill programmes cook basic meals or foods which helps them to adopt a positive attitude towards food.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Young peoples privacy is respected because the school has clear guidance on how to work with them at intimate and personal care times. Staff assist the young people with personal care tasks in a quiet, sensitive manner and there is good gender mix on every shift. This enables young people to choose when and who helps them with any personal care aspects. Young people spoken to felt that their privacy was respected. Loxley Hall has a complaints procedure in place, which contains all the elements required by the National Minimum Standards for residential schools. Parents and carers are aware of the complaints process. The school has received no complaints since the last inspection. The young people understand the correct process to follow should they have a complaint. However, staff are not fully knowledgeable about how to appropriately respond to, record and process complaints. Young people's welfare is fully safeguarded because the school has excellent, robust child protection policies and procedures. These policies are well established and understood by staff. The school refers all possible child protection matters to the appropriate social work team, if only for information. The establishment has forged links with the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). These links include training on children's rights and in sexually harmful behaviour. The school trains all staff in child protection including ancillary and domestic staff. The school's governors also receive specific child protection training and there is a named governor with responsibility for child protection matters. The school takes an assertive stance when dealing with bullies and bullying incidents. It is acknowledged that in an establishment of this size and structure, combined with the behaviour patterns of some of the pupils accommodated, bullying is likely to occur. Risk assessments relating to bullying are in place and are regularly reviewed when incidents occur or circumstances change. Risk assessments are the predominant tool used to

address concerns about potential bullying behaviour. Once identified that an individual is more likely to be either a perpetrator or a victim of bullying, a risk assessment is completed. This assessment focuses on the individual in the context of their accommodation, immediate peer group, activities, and supervision levels. The risk assessment process tries to minimise the risk of bullying re-occurring. Young people acknowledged that bullying does some times happen however, they do not consider it to be a big issue within the school and all stated that they knew whom to approach if they are unhappy or being bullied. The school's behaviour management policy and strategies have, as their prime objective, the creation of a safe, supportive learning environment. The policy aims to gain achievement of a successful learning outcome for the young person in recognizing and responding to their individuality. These policies are positive in tone, and warn against the provision of negative responses to young people, while emphasising the need for positive relationships and mutual respect. All staff are trained in Strategic Crisis Intervention Procedures (SCIP). Which, advocates diversionary techniques be employed with children to avoid the need for any physical intervention, or restraint as it is commonly known. None of the sanctions recorded were excessive or unreasonable, typically they involved a brief loss of privilege. Arrangements for behaviour management are applied in a safe, child centred and dignified manner. Therefore, young people's welfare is truly promoted. Young people learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they regularly practise the emergency escape drill and staff receive Fire Marshall training. Safe procedures are in place to protect children with tests on the fire systems and other electrical equipment taking place at the appropriate intervals. Young people are cared for by suitable staff. Staff recruitment files were examined. All files seen with the exception of one had appropriate evidence of an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check having been received prior to staff being deployed. However, the file for a member contained a CRB check which was undertaken at their last place of employment and was dated 2004. In discussion with the staff member with responsibility for staff recruitment checks it was common practice for Staffordshire Local Authority to accept and transfer current employees CRB's. The school checks referees and renews all staff's CRB checks every three years which is commendable practice that promotes young people's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people receive a high and excellent degree of support. The school values, promotes and encourages all of their young people to make the best of their educational opportunities. Pupils explore their potential and develop their personal interests because staff work in a very encouraging and supportive manner. Consequently the care, learning opportunities and activities are good. Young people freely initiate interaction and seek help with various staff members on duty. They are each allocated to a key person to ensure their continual care needs are met. Young people receive individualised assistance, with the appropriate assessments and plans in place. Considerable effort is put into combining social, education, care and health needs into a package which, will not only meet identified needs but promote development. This enables many of the young people to overcome some of their presenting problems and allow them to stay within their own family home. Young people access an adequate supply of age appropriate games, toys and reading material. Staff guide and support young peoples access to the internet to ensure they have free and yet safe access to suitable sites. The young people are confident, lively and friendly. They are eager to take part in group discussions and show real enthusiasm to share their personal experiences and knowledge with both staff and visitors. Staff create a positive environment where learning and taking part is fun.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from excellent continuity of care when they start in residence because staff take time to talk to parents and carers about their child's needs. The school's systems gain students' views about matters affecting their daily lives and the general running of the school. This helps young people to feel ownership of the setting. They receive consistent and measured care because staff have a positive approach to understanding and meeting each child's personal targets. Staff have a very good understanding on how the young people's placement plans should cross reference with other information such as their education targets. The school's records respect the need to value diversity, for example, the cultural and religious needs of all pupils. Written plans demonstrate that young people receive appropriate external support as the school has a pro-active approach to working with other professionals.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The standard of accommodation is satisfactory, providing a comfortable environment for pupils, which assists them with domestic style living. However, the young people's bathroom does not promote or safeguard young people's privacy. The rooms are adequately equipped with suitable storage for the boys' clothes and toiletries. Young people learn about the importance of dress and personal hygiene as staff are both sensitive and helpful when supporting the boys. The school building is located in the rural setting of Loxley, a few minutes drive to the town of Uttoxeter. The school has their own transport so as to enable the young people to access the wider community. Young people develop life skills that prepares them for adulthood and independence. Staff undertake specific risk assessments for each activity and complete written placement plans for the boy's resident at school. The grounds that surround both the main house and the school are beautifully maintained and offer the young people a lovely calming environment in which to relax.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Loxley Hall school has a stated purpose which is clear and concise. The young persons guide gives all required information to young people and their families on the services available. This includes the philosophy of care and the expectations of the school. The establishment's staffing policy is included in its statement of purpose and is broken down to reflect the minimum staffing expectations in the school. The school is extremely well managed. The staff are experienced and well qualified to appropriately support and safeguard the young people's welfare. Records show that all staff receive individual supervision in line with frequencies required by regulation. Detailed policies and procedures are in place and these are implemented successfully by staff into consistent working practices. New members of staff take part in a full induction process. As a result, they become sure of their job role and individual level of responsibility very quickly. Staff stated that they felt 'supported and competent in their roles'. Young people benefit greatly from this positive managerial approach as they are cared for by highly motivated, suitable and knowledgeable staff. Loxley Hall, as an organisation has delegated the responsibility for its monthly review of welfare to an independent person from the local authority. These visits are supplemented with visits by other special schools' Heads of Care. Records indicate that these visits take place with appropriate regularity, some are unannounced. The visits provide

excellent additional safeguarding mechanisms for the young people by looking at staff and management practices .They also supply the Head of Care with additional managerial support. These monitoring visits cover all the standards and are organised under the Every Child Matters headings. The reports promote good quality and robustly ensure that minor shortfalls in practice are quickly resolved, thus improving practice. The Head of Care and Head Teacher have both established a pattern of management monitoring records, through which they monitor the performance of the unit staff in meeting their requirements. A central record of significant events is compiled. This audits significant areas such as restraints, incidents and accidents. This then forms a useful baseline for monitoring future patterns and trends and ensures that the monitoring of these issues surpasses that required in minimum standards and safeguards young people's welfare. It is clear that Loxley Hall is an extremely well managed school, where the young people residing within the residential units enjoy the stability of a well maintained and appropriately supported care environment.

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.

Standard	Action	Due date
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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):

- promote young people's safety further by considering accessing training for staff in complaints procedures covering all of the areas detailed in Standard 4.4
- ensure young people's welfare is safeguarded by undertaking criminal records bureau checks before all staff begin employment (standard 27)
- improve young people's privacy by giving consideration to reviewing the levels of privacy in bathrooms and toilets (Standard 24).

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.