

Waterside School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	David Coulter
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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

Waterside is a public sector Secondary Special School that provides education for boys between 11 and 16 years of age. The school is situated by the sea in a relatively isolated geographical location on the outskirts of the city of Portsmouth. There is no public transport to the school site. The school operates Mondays to Fridays, term time only. Most of the young people attending the school come from within the city of Portsmouth. At the time of the inspection six of the young people attending the school were being accommodated in the school's hostel. The hostel, which is a self-contained unit attached to the main school building, can accommodate up to ten pupils.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The hostel continues to offer a good service and a number of young people have successfully moved on. It was good to note that young people are now encouraged to pursue their own personal interests or hobbies in the local community and are supported in doing so by staff. A new male member of staff has been appointed and appears to have settled in well. While the hostel has had no major structural changes, a new shower unit has been installed on the ground-floor. The school is due to close in its present form in July. It is being incorporated into a new 'federation' of special educational facilities within Portsmouth. Its role within special educational provision within the city has still to be finalised. However, it would appear the hostel will remain as a residential resource for all the members of the 'federation'. A new Statement of Purpose will need to be drawn up to reflect the new changes.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The health and well-being of each young person is assessed prior to admission to the hostel and regularly monitored during their stay. Young people reside within the hostel on a Monday to Friday basis and return home each weekend. As a consequence, all the young people remain registered with their own General Practitioners and dentists. Individuals return home if they are ill or require regular treatment. The hostel's daily routine aims to ensure that each young person develops good personal hygiene, receives nutritious food and undertakes a period of physical activity. Hostel staff are pro-active in promoting health education and information leaflets relating to health issues, such as drug and alcohol misuse, are prominently placed on a number of the hostel's notice boards. There is a personal health and social education programme in school and issues of relationships, sexuality, contraception and sexual identity are, according to staff, often discussed informally within the hostel. The placement plans of all six hostel residents were examined and found to contain key health information including signed consent forms relating to the dispensing of prescribed medication and medical intervention. The arrangements for the storage and administration of medication were assessed as being appropriate. While all the hostel staff have, in the past, undertaken First Aid training, only one has a current certificate. It is therefore a recommendation that all staff acquire certification.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Working practices within the hostel have developed within a risk assessment framework that aims to ensure the safety and well-being of each young person. The hostel has a number of areas that can be used for private meetings and it was noted that staff deal with issues relating to individual young people separately and in private. Confidential information relating to each young person is kept in a locked cupboard in the staff office. Each young person is allocated a bedroom of their own. Individuals can personalise their rooms by installing pictures, posters etc. Hostel rules aim to ensure that each young person respects the space of others by not entering their rooms. On admission each young person is provided with a locker where they can securely store personal items. During a tour of the premises it was noted that the toilets and bathrooms could be locked. The hostel has a telephone in the staff office with a moveable handset that young people can access on request. Prior to admission all young people are provided with a copy of the 'Waterside Hostel Pupil' brochure that contains a range of information about life within the hostel including daily routines, leisure activities and home contact. The brochure also contains information on how, and to whom, complaints or concerns should be directed. Staff are pro-active in seeking out the views of young people on all aspects of their lives within the hostel and meal time discussions provide an informal forum for discussing any problems and planning activities. Staff explained that they tried to address any concerns before they developed into complaints. If a complaint was to be made from an individual outside of the school it would be directed to the Head Teacher. The school adheres to Portsmouth City Council's child protection policies and procedures and all staff have undertaken child protection training provided by Portsmouth Social Care. Hostel staff spoken with were aware of their responsibilities in regard to the reporting of child protection concerns. The school has a policy and procedure for reporting young people if they go missing. Staff confirmed they liaised with the local police if a young person had a history of absconding and putting themselves at risk. The school has an anti-bullying policy. Aware of the opportunities that can arise for bullying within a residential setting, hostel staff have developed working practices aimed at minimising the risk of such events occurring and, for example, the movement of young people around the hostel is carefully monitored. It was noted that the hostel's structured daily programme provides a range of individual and group activities. The placement of play stations etc in the same areas allows individuals to spend leisure time together rather than in the isolation of their own rooms. Young people spoken with did not cite bullying as being a problem within the hostel and it was evident that staff were operating a regime based on mutual respect. During the inspection it was possible to observe the young people as they returned from school, had a snack and participated in leisure activities. The atmosphere remained relaxed throughout and the interaction between the young people and staff appeared both spontaneous and warm. Staff were observed to engage with young people in a respectful manner and provide clear guidance on what was and was not acceptable behaviour. The young people appeared to respond positively to the hostel's clear and unambiguous boundaries. The hostel's approach to behaviour management is based on positive reinforcement and though sanctions are used, reparation can be achieved. Sanctions can include having a short period of time deducted from participation in a leisure activity. As the school is situated in a geographically isolated location, a fence surrounds its perimeter. Access to the school premises is via the main entrance and all visitors are expected to report to reception and sign in. The school, being a Portsmouth City Council provision, complies with the authority's Health and Safety policies and procedures. Risk assessments are carried out in relation to both the environment and activities. The hostel has

recruited one new member of staff since the last inspection. Records demonstrated that he had completed a comprehensive recruitment process that included undertaking an interview and an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau check. During discussions he reported that his induction had been thorough and set at a pace that allowed him to understand how policies and procedures were translated into working practices and daily routines.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Evidence indicated that staff are actively engaged in providing a range of opportunities for the personal development of each young person. Hostel and teaching staff work together to promote regular attendance, avoid exclusion and support young people with their studies. The school has, since the last inspection, introduced a new behaviour management scheme that focuses on key areas such as safety, enjoyment, achievement and respect. The performance of each young person are recorded in a daily diary that they carry with them. While the system provides opportunities for individuals to gain rewards for positive behaviour it also contributes to greater consistency in the approaches to the delivery of both education and care. The Head of Care also meets regularly with other senior staff to discuss the progress of all the young people in the hostel. Hostel staff confirmed that they maintained regular contact with young people's families. Through discussions with a number of young people it was evident that life within the school and hostel provides them with opportunities to develop a range of social and life skills including washing, cooking budgeting etc. Each young person's social and educational needs are identified through a process of assessment. It was noted that all young people's files contain education and social care plans, that had been subject to regular review. As the young people reside in the hostel four nights a week, there is time for individuals to participate in a range of social and recreational activities both within the environs of the school and in the local community. Young people are now supported in undertaking activities in the local community that they can continue both in the holidays and when they leave school. Young people spoken with confirmed that they were able to participate in a range of both individual and group activities including football, gardening, computer games, table tennis, pool, music, art and craft, bowling, reading, videos, swimming, cinema, skating, board games, play-zone, shopping and trips to the cyber café. During the inspection young people were observed playing football and computer games and one young person was preparing to go to his karate club. While the school does not have extensive outdoor facilities, it has a designated playground for football and a gym that can be used during the evening. The staff and young people undertake an annual holiday and at the time of the inspection had just returned from Sussex. During the inspection it was possible to meet with three hostel staff. From the discussions it clear they were conversant with the specific care needs of each young person. While the hostel had a key-worker system it operates flexibly and staff are expected to use their wide and varied skills as and when required. If it is felt that a young person needs additional support to address a difficulty a referral for specialist assistance is made. Records indicated that therapeutic support has, at different times, been sought from members of the Child and Family Therapy, Educational Psychology and Adolescent Mental Health Teams.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Evidence indicated that all the young people are appropriately placed and are regularly consulted about all aspects of life within the hostel. The relationships between the young people appeared

to be based on mutual respect. Referrals to the hostel come from within the main school and the criteria for admission is determined on the basis of need. If it is felt that a young person's education will be enhanced by a residential placement and they are willing to abide by the rules of the hostel, and have the support of their parents/guardians, consideration will be given. The admissions criteria is clearly flexible and geared to addressing individual need. Prior to admission to the hostel an assessment is carried out by the Head of Care. Records demonstrate that this is a comprehensive process that focuses on, amongst other things, each individual's physical, social, emotional and educational needs. All prospective new residents normally complete a number of visits and short stays before being admitted full-time. Information obtained through the assessment process is used to develop placement plans that provide guidance for staff on how each individual's needs could best be met within the hostel. Placement plans examined were 'user friendly' and provided easy access to key information. Reports within the files were concise and written in clear unambiguous language. Specific targets and proposed strategies to effect change were clearly stated. Emergency placements are only considered if they are not going to impact negatively on the existing group. Staff explained that placements are generally open ended and usually come to a natural end. Most young people undertake work experience as part of their transition to post-school life. As the majority of young people return home on completing their residential placements the number of nights they reside in the hostel is gradually lowered. The interaction between young people and staff was observed to be both spontaneous and warm and there was much playful banter between all parties. The young people appeared to be relaxed and at ease in their surroundings. Relationships appeared to operate on a mutual respect basis. Young people appeared to appreciate the structure and security provided by the hostels regime. When appropriate young people are encouraged to maintain regular contact with their parents and families. The unit has a phone and young people can both make and receive calls. Staff explained that while many of the young people have mobile phones their use is negotiated. While family visits are normally confined to review meetings, care staff often communicate regularly with parents to discuss the progress of their child. Staff explained that if any young person wanted their family to visit a room would be made available so they could have some privacy.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Evidence indicated that the accommodation was appropriate to meeting the needs of the young people. The facilities provided many opportunities for individuals to develop their social and life skills. During the course of the inspection a full tour of the premises was undertaken. The hostel was found to be clean, tidy and in generally good decorative order. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms by putting posters up. There are sufficient WC, bath and shower facilities to meet the needs of the number of young people being accommodated. Since the last inspection a new shower unit has been installed on the ground-floor. This facility is, according to staff, proving extremely popular. Though the overall structure of the building appears sound, staff reported that the flat-roof still leaks in a number of areas. Water stains are clearly visible in a number of ceilings. Being situated on an exposed coastal site the building is subject to regular buffeting winds. While double-glazing has improved insulation of the building, staff reported that the heating system is inefficient. Conversely, high temperatures experienced during the summer can render the building very uncomfortable. If the building is to remain residential accommodation for the foreseeable future it is recommended that some remedial work is carried out on the flat roof above the bedrooms. The hostel has facilities and equipment for social and recreational activities. For example those interested in music can

access a number of instruments including pianos, an organ and guitar. An art and craft room offers opportunities to develop artistic skills and an outside garden area has been successfully implemented by the Head of Care to introduce a number of individuals to gardening. The large kitchen area is also used for teaching young people to cook. Staff also explained that hostel residents can, under supervision, access other areas of the school. The gym area and computer room are particularly popular during winter evenings. The school has a caretaker who has overall responsibility for maintenance of the building and fire safety.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

From the evidence obtained during the inspection, including comments from young people, it was clear that the hostel is providing good quality care within an appropriately structured setting. The school has developed a Statement of Purpose specifically for the hostel that accurately describes the nature of the provision as it presently exists. However, through discussions with the Acting Head, it was apparent that the special education sector within Portsmouth is in the process of being re-organised. While the proposals recognise the importance of the hostel, they are still being finalised. It is, however, clear that the composition of the hostel's population is likely to change as future residents will, in future, be drawn from special educational facilities across the city. The newly appointed head is aware that if such changes are to take place they will need to be reflected in a revised statement of purpose and young persons guide. Observations within the hostel indicate staff operate a 'hands on' approach and spend the majority of their working time in the company of the young people. Since the last inspection a new member of staff has been appointed and has settled in well. Due to changes within the school, the Head of Care has, in recent times, had to spend more time within the main school. Staff spoken with felt that while this had increased pressure on the remaining staff, as a team they had managed to maintain appropriate staffing levels to undertake both one-to-one and small group activities. It is clear that the staff team provide continuity in the delivery of care. It is apparent that the hostel benefits from a well motivated staff team that is keen to further develop their knowledge and skills. All staff are involved in the development of their own training plans, through their individual performance management reviews. There is an expectation that new staff will attain Residential Grade B, within 12 months of commencing employment and to achieve an National Vocational Qualification level 3 in Child Care within a maximum of 24 months. The Head of Care, a qualified teacher, also holds a Diploma in Social Work and a National Vocational Qualification level 4. She is also a qualified National Vocational Qualification assessor. Staff are expected to undertake regular training in key areas such as Child Protection, Team Teach, Managing Conflict and Aggressive Behaviour. Hostel staff confirmed that they were well supported and received regular formal and informal supervision from the Head of Care. Evidence indicated that the hostel is well managed, staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and there are clear lines of accountability. Sufficient financial resources are available for staff to operate the hostel effectively and budgetary systems in place to ensure financial accountability.

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):

- enable all staff to acquire a current certificate in First Aid.
- regularly inspect and repair the roofs above the bedrooms.

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)

Annex A

- 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.