

# Furness School

Inspection report for residential special school

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC041787
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 July 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Alison Spreadbridge
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Address</b>	Furness School Rowhill Road SWANLEY Kent BR8 7RP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01322 662937
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Doug Dawson
<b>Head of care</b>	Doug Dawson
<b>Head / Principal</b>	
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	26 September 2006

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

## 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**

Furness School is a residential / day special school for 70 secondary aged boys experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties; it is maintained by Kent Education Authority. The school is situated in semi-rural surroundings on the outskirts of Swanley, Kent. The buildings are mostly Victorian and were built as a 'home for little boys' for the children of deprived London families in the mid 19th Century. In 1955 Furness School was established to take children with learning disabilities and since 1986 has been a school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is undergoing some major refurbishment, which has necessitated the closure of one of the school houses. It's closure has enabled the school to move the children more easily around the site while the building work progresses. Part of the refurbishment will take place during the summer holidays when the school is closed. In the last year a new school building has been added which provides the children with a modern learning environment. The refurbishment programme for the three houses will provide the boys with single en-suite rooms or single rooms with their own adjacent bathrooms. Green House which was used by the day boys before classes has been closed and a new breakfast club is provided in the school dining room. The children have access to a large playing field, swimming pool, and conservation garden in the grounds.

### **Summary**

The inspection was made over a two day period. The visit was spent talking directly with the pupils privately and collectively, some parents, care staff, ancillary staff, Head of Care, the Principle and administrative staff. At the time of the inspection there were 16 children boarding at the school. Additional information was obtained from the children's questionnaires, a tour of the premises and looking at documentation. Twelve children's surveys were returned prior to the inspection, and two parents were spoken to on the parents and carers open day. The children's families and the pupils are very satisfied with the service and care the school provides. The inspection took into account the information received prior to the inspection. The information was received in the pre-inspection questionnaire completed by the school, together with responses from the children and parents. Since the last inspection the new school building has been completed and two of the houses have been refurbished to a very high standard. Each child has their own room with either en-suite facilities or a personal bathroom close to their bedrooms. At the time of the inspection Blue and Red House had been completed and Yellow house was closed for refurbishment. Due to some additional work being required in Red House the staff were preparing to vacate the building at the end of term so the work can be done during the summer holidays. It is hoped all of the work will be completed by October 2007.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

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

Since the last inspection the new school building and refurbishment to the boarding houses has been completed. The children now have their own en-suite rooms and newly decorated communal areas. The schools filing system has been revamped and despite being in temporary accommodation while the offices are completed staff are managing very well.

## Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

A tour of the new school building and residential houses was made during the inspection. Placement plans and risk assessments were seen. The school is committed to the children benefiting from excellent accommodation and a healthy lifestyle. The new school building is providing the children with a nice, bright learning environment. All of the temporary buildings on the site are now to be vacated and the classes moved to the new building. There are currently 16 boys boarding in the school from Monday morning until Friday afternoon. The school houses offer the boys a warm and welcoming place to live in while they are at school. All of the school houses have now been refurbished to a very high standard, offering the children single en-suite bedrooms or a single room with an adjacent bathroom. Yellow House is the last of the houses to be refurbished and is due for completion in the next week. Red house has been refurbished but unfortunately has had some problems with the plumbing system which will require some work to be carried out over the summer holidays. All of the houses will be in use for the beginning of the new school year. All of the houses have good sized communal areas and a large games room. The children have access to computers, games, a snooker table as well as other indoor box games. The children also have access to the school grounds, gymnasium, and swimming pool after school hours. Due to a water leak in red House the snooker table was damaged and is in need of recovering. The care staff support the boarders with their homework with access to additional books and work sheets provided by their school teachers. The Head of care said that from September the children will have access to the new library in the evening. The school has introduced a new menu plan in line with the governments health guidelines. The children boarding at the school have all of their meals cooked in their houses. All of the children spoken to say how much they 'liked the food and there is always plenty to eat'. They have a special breakfast on Fridays which includes bacon and sausages, and a roast dinner each week, both are real favourites with the children. The children help to choose the menus at the weekly house meetings. They also help to choose after their after school activities. The red house has their own domestic staff and a cook. During the inspection interviews were taking place to appoint cooks to the two other houses where currently food is prepared by the care staff. Green House which was used by the day boys on their arrival at school each morning has been closed and the new breakfast club takes place in the school dining room. The schools kitchen were replaced last year. Since the last inspection the majority of the care staff have received training in the safe storage and administration of medication. The houses are storing and recording the administration of the children's medication correctly. The head of Care is responsible for ensuring all staff receive updated training including the annual 'child protection' training. The school has been involved with a medical trial which has looked into the effects of the absorption of 'fatty acids' on children with a learning disability. This work has been overseen by doctors from the Maudsley hospital and is now complete. The school is awaiting the results which will be published in one of the medical journals later this year. All protocols were followed, recorded, The consent of parents and the children's general practitioners was sought prior to starting the trial.

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

The provision is good.

Furness school is able to provide the children with a safe, secure and stable environment in which to grow and develop. The school has robust policies and procedures in place supported by sound recruitment practices. Since the last inspection the school has reviewed its policies

and procedures around the opportunities for work experience. The work experience takes place once a week at two local further education colleges. The last inspection highlighted the need to undertake suitable risk assessments around the activities the children are involved in. The local colleges have risk assessments in place for the activities on their premises, however the school needs to ensure that suitable risk assessments are made around travelling between the sites and any additional care support supplied by the school is in line with the children's placement plans. Following the refurbishment to the boarding houses the children now have individual rooms with washing facilities which ensures their privacy is maintained. The children spoken to said they are aware of the schools complaints procedure and would be happy to speak to any member of staff if they had any concerns. They can also raise any concerns or issues at the school forum meetings or the weekly house meetings. Minutes of these meetings are made available to the children and were seen during the inspection. The school has clear anti-bullying policy in place. The children have been told what action they should take if they felt they were being bullied. They also receive information about bullying as part of their PHSE classes. The school keeps close links with the children's family and any concerns are raised with the boys and their parents. All the residential children are supported by link workers. The parents spoken to during the inspection said they felt their children were well looked after and they felt very much involved with the children's ongoing care. The school and houses use a behaviour management programme which enables the children to see how they are doing. There are three levels and each one offers the children some additional activities in the house. The school provides an effective support team who are available throughout the school day and ensure any child who leaves their classroom without permission is quickly returned. The school follows a robust recruitment policy. All staff are required to have a CRB check and provide two references prior to taking up their employment. Since the last inspection the staff filing system has been upgraded and provides the management team with a quick reference system. All of the children's files are kept securely at all times.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The quality and the quantity of the activities offered to the children is excellent. The school ensures that the children have access to a wide variety of after school activities which includes swimming, football, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, canoeing, conservation garden, outings to the cinema, shopping, the theatre, as well as attending the local kick boxing club, army cadets and the very popular on site music club. The children spoken with said they had been involved in the planning of the nature garden. The children are fully supported both educationally and socially through the use of a behaviour monitoring programme which the boys respond to very well. The boys are able to see their progress and they are helped to understand the reasons why they may go up or down a level. The boys are given access to a wider range of activities as their behaviour improves. Parents say they like the programme and some have adapted it for home use so the children have some continuity. Each child has a placement plan and risk assessments in place to ensure there are sufficient staff on duty so all of the activities can take place. Staff are trained in life saving, first aid, and behaviour management. One of the managers who lives in has a pet dog which the children like to take for walks around the grounds. They were seen to be very responsible and enjoyed playing ball with him. Some of the boys are undertaking work with animals as part of this year's work experience. Some hope to make it their careers when they leave school. The most popular activity seems to be the music club. The boys were very pleased to talk about it and the proposed new music programme 'weapons of sound'. The children were clearly enjoying practising their guitars

together. The children are achieving both academically and socially. The children are well supported by the care staff and their behaviour is continually monitored and they are encouraged to achieve and increase their self esteem. The boys in Red House are encouraged to learn life skills. Some like to help staff in the kitchen and around the house. All of the boys are encouraged to clean and tidy their own rooms.

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

The provision is good.

The children have a full assessment prior to coming to the school. Their progress is monitored and their placement plans are updated once a term or more often if needed. The link workers are responsible for ensuring the daily logs are completed and weekly progress sheets are sent home at the end of the week. The children are encouraged to join in the decision making process wherever possible. The school forum meets once a term. Each house is represented at the meetings. The children also have access to weekly house meeting where they can discuss how they are, possible activities for the week and any changes to the menus. The children each have a link worker who will help them with any problems, personal shopping or liaising with their families or carers. The children now have single en-suite rooms, and they are expected to help keep their rooms clean and tidy. The school employs domestic staff as well as a cook in each house thereby leaving the care staff free to be with the children. The children obviously had a good relationship with the staff which appeared comfortable and respectful. The children clearly liked the staff on duty and spoke to them in a relaxed way. All of the children boarding are in contact with their parents or carers on a regular basis. The parents say they are encouraged to contact the school whenever they wish to. Contact books are used to help keep families informed of their children's life at school.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The children have a nice home environment in which to live. Since the last inspection the school building has been completed and is now in daily use. The only outstanding work in the school is to complete the offices. The three boarding houses have been refurbished to a very high standard. They are in the process of hanging pictures and personalising the bedrooms. The accommodation is bright and cheerful with each boy having their own bedroom with en-suite facilities. Good sized communal rooms and a games room in each house. The children are encouraged to wear their own clothes after school. They bring in their clothes on a Monday each week. The older boys are encouraged to undertake a day a weeks work experience, this may rise to two days next year. The range of activities available to the boys and access pints have increased since last year. On one of the days of the inspection some of the boys had been to a local college for their work experience. The work included car maintenance training, decorating and carpentry, while others who wanted to work with animals had been to work at the local kennels and stable. The college has risk assessments in place while the boys are in their care. The school must ensure the risk assessments include all of the assessed needs identified in the placement plans and the correct staffing ratio is maintained. The children's pocket money is brought into school on a Monday morning and kept safely for them until they require it. They can ask for their money if they want to attend an activity or go to the shops. At the last inspection the procedure for recording and storing the pocket money was discussed. It is not possible to audit the children's pocket money record sheets against their remaining

money as the money is being kept communally. The school must ensure the children's finances are kept separately and are available for inspection.

## Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The children benefit from an excellently run school. The children say they like being at the school and their behaviour has improved. They say 'they know staff will be there for them even if they get it wrong'. There will be one change to the staff team. The Principle is retiring. The Board of Trustees has ensured that in the interim the schools will continue to be managed by the Deputy Principle and the Head of Care. The Principle has been retained on a consultancy basis while the interviews for the new school Head takes place. The principle said he hope to retire from the school by next Easter. The children's guide and statement of purpose is to be updated in line with the changes to the school, staff, and refurbished accommodation. The staff were disappointed that Red House will require some work during the summer holidays but it will be completed in time for the new term. The staff filing system has been updated and documents put into sections for ease of use. At present the office staff are in temporary accommodation while the building work is completed.

## 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
16	ensure the children's finances are kept correctly and are available for inspection.	3 September 2007

### Recommendations

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

- suitable risk assessments are in place when students are moving between sites and staffing meets the children's assessed needs.



## 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.**