

Shenstone Lodge School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
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Date of last inspection	16 January 2007

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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

Shenstone Lodge School is a residential special school catering for boys who are experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties and may display behaviour associated with the Autistic Spectrum. There are currently 18 pupils on roll, 12 boarders and six day pupils. The school is owned by Sandwell's Department of Long Life Learning and is situated in the village of Shenstone, which is within Staffordshire. The location of the school provides good access to local community services and facilities. The school is set in its own grounds. This consists of play areas in which a range of static play equipment has been installed, an animal enclosure, swimming pool and sports field. The residential provision is situated in a large country house and is spread over its three floors. The building has been extended in the past to provide staff rooms, offices, medical room and resource areas. The purpose built school is detached from the residential facilities.

Summary

This was an announced full inspection undertaken by one Ofsted inspector. The inspection looked at the key Residential Special School National Minimum Standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcome groups. All outcome areas were inspected with the exception of Economic Wellbeing. At this inspection Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Positive Contribution and Organisation was judged as good. Enjoying and Achieving was outstanding. Four recommendations were raised in relation to Staying Safe and Organisation.

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, to improve the standards of care, the school was asked to: revise the missing pupil procedures; review its use of the time out area; provide guidance on when the use of reflection time becomes a sanction; ensure children's health problems are included in their care plan and care plans should identify a child's assessed needs; ensure identified risks are assessed through risk assessments; review the security of toilet locks; ensure all health and safety issues are addressed; implement a management monitoring system; provide an assessment on time allocation for senior care staff to complete their administrative role. The school have revised the missing pupil procedure and reviewed the use of the time out area. As a result children's well-being is safeguarded as staff now follow clear guidance. Care plans detail children's health problems and assessed needs, and these are now thoroughly assessed through the risk assessment process. This means staff are fully informed on all aspects of children's needs. Reflection time is clearly defined within the school's behaviour management policy to ensure staff are guided as to when it becomes a sanction. Toilet door locks have been replaced or repaired and all health and safety issues raised in the last inspection report have been addressed. A new management monitoring system has been implemented. The management team have become skilled in observing the care provision and recording their observation to inform future development. As a result, children are actively engaged and enjoy their time at the setting. Senior staff have allotted time every week to undertake the administrative aspects of their role.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's welfare is promoted because a record is kept of the outcomes of all medical appointments to ensure any ongoing concerns are addressed. Basic information regarding the health and medical histories of each child 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 children. The children learn about major risks to health from the schools Personal, Social and Health Education Programme (PSHE). This means the children receive care that actively promotes their well-being and health. Policies and procedures are in place for the safe storage and administration of medication. Children's health and welfare is safeguarded because staff are aware of the appropriate procedures to follow. Children's well-being is further promoted as staff receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication, and all staff are trained in basic first aid. Children are consistently provided with an excellent and well balanced diet. Children's choices mean that they receive the range of nutrients required for healthy growth and nutrition. Staff are keen to promote healthy eating and encourage children to eat fruit or try new foods at meal times. This helps them to adopt a positive attitude towards food. Meal times are very social occasions where they sit with their friends, and staff members to happily discuss a wide range of topics.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's privacy is respected because the school has clear guidance on how to work with them at intimate and personal care times. Staff assist the children with personal care tasks in a quiet, sensitive manner and there is good gender mix on every shift. This enables children to choose when and who helps them with any personal care aspects. Children's welfare is further promoted because they are clear about how to make a complaint. There is an effective system in place to record any concerns made known by children. Children's welfare is protected because staff receive training in child protection and demonstrate a good knowledge of policies and procedures. Children's welfare is further promoted as the school refers all possible child protection matters to the appropriate social work team, if only for information. There are policies and procedures in place with regards to bullying and high adult to child ratios are maintained. The school takes an assertive stance when dealing with bullies and bullying incidents. It is acknowledged that in an establishment of this structure, combined with the behaviour patterns of some of the pupils accommodated, bullying is likely to occur. Children acknowledge 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. Therefore, children's well-being is given a high priority. The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance. 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 child in recognising and responding to their individuality. These policies are positive in tone, and warn against the provision of negative responses to children, while emphasising the need for positive relationships and mutual respect. All staff are trained in Team Teach, which advocates diversionary techniques be employed with children to avoid the need for any physical intervention. None of the sanctions recorded were excessive or unreasonable, typically they involved a brief time away from the

group. Arrangements for behaviour management are applied in a safe, child centred and dignified manner. Therefore, the children's welfare is truly promoted. Pupils 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. However, a fire door self-close mechanism is broken on a bedroom door. The school are proactively pursuing the contractual agency to fix this door. Nevertheless, the poor response from contractors is placing the children at significant risk from fire. The school operates a good staff vetting procedure and staff demonstrate awareness of the need to safeguard pupils. Although, not all files hold evidence of recruitment checks having taken place prior to staff being deployed, which includes an appropriate enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. The local authority renew staff's CRB's every three years. Although, in practice this does not happen consistently and the school do not always receive written confirmation of clearance. This compromises the school's current good recruitment practice and potentially places the children at risk.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children receive a high and excellent degree of support. The school values, promotes and encourages all of their children to make the best of their educational opportunities. Children 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 excellent. Children 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 children to overcome some of their presenting problems and gives them confidence to re-integrate back into mainstream schooling. Children freely initiate interaction and seek help with various staff members on duty. Children's well-being is positively promoted as they are each allocated to a key person to ensure their continual care needs are met. Thus, children benefit from receiving residential care because staff are focused on their success, needs and achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are developing awareness of others as they share and take turns. They are learning to take responsibility as they help to tidy up at the end of play sessions. Children are extremely well consulted about life at Shenstone. Their views and preferences are sought, including menu content, furnishings and activities. The school has an independent advocate, who has a diverse background and good experience with working with children with disabilities. This enables the children's well-being to be truly promoted as the advocate and staff are able to offer a wide and varying degree of support, empathy and understanding. This increases children's welfare by ensuring exceptional safeguards are in place. Staff have a good understanding on how the children'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 children. Written plans demonstrate that children receive appropriate external support as the school has a pro-active approach to working with other professionals. Children are supported to have appropriate contact with friends and family. The school

understands the value and importance of communication and contact with parents. None of the pupils appear to be, or report being, isolated. They form friendships quickly with others in the school. Significant time is taken to build relationships and share information with families. Parents are actively encouraged and supported to attend the school so the children see that they are all working together. This good working partnership promotes children's welfare as they get consistent messages from both home and school.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Shenstone Lodge school has a Statement of Purpose which is clear and concise. The children's guide gives all required information to children and their families on the services available. This includes the philosophy of care and the expectations of the school. The school has also produced a delightful digital video disc (DVD), which accompanies the written guidance. 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. Children are kept safe and provided with good care as they have sufficient numbers of staff to look after them. Children are making good progress because staffing in the school is well organised and effectively managed. Children's welfare, safety and developmental progress are strengthened because staff receive a planned induction and an extensive and outstanding training programme. As a result, they become sure of their job role and individual level of responsibility very quickly. Children benefit greatly from this positive approach as they are cared for by highly motivated, suitable and knowledgeable staff. However, staff supervisions do not take place within the required frequency and staff do not have a copy of any agreed actions following a supervision. This significantly compromises the current excellent practice in all other areas of professional development. Shenstone Lodge, as an organisation, has delegated the responsibility for its monthly review of welfare to an independent person. Records indicate that these visits take place with appropriate regularity, some are unannounced. The visits provide additional safeguarding mechanisms for the children by looking at staff and management practices.

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):

- ensure all CRB checks are undertaken and written verification is held on file before all staff including volunteers begin at the school (NMS 27.2)

- ensure any deficiency identified from fire drills or other tests is noted and action taken quickly by the external contractors to remedy the deficiency (NMS 26.6)
- ensure all staff receive at least one and half hours one to one supervision from a senior member of staff each half term (NMS 30.2)
- ensure records are kept of agreed action required, by both the supervisor and the staff member following supervision meetings (NMS 30.4).

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.