

Walton 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

Walton Hall is a residential special school situated in a rural part of Staffordshire. It provides day and residential education to students aged 11 to 19 years who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities which includes aspects of autism, emotional and social behaviours and complex needs. The boarding provision is available for up to four nights per week. The residential units are situated in two buildings placed within the school's grounds. Goldstone House is a purpose-built unit offering accommodation to 10 girls. The Old Hall is a Victorian listed building and provides three residential units: Gainsborough, which offers seven full-time residential placements for senior boys; Broughton, which provides eight places for post 16 female students, and Shugborough, which accommodates nine post 16 male students. The school is situated within its own extensive grounds, which offer a range of facilities including football, tennis and basketball. It has a motorcycle riding and maintenance area, an adventure play area, a small animal farm and a conservation area. These all contribute to the 24-hour curriculum approach.

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 Staying Safe was judged as satisfactory. Being Healthy, Positive Contribution and Organisation was judged as good and Enjoying and Achieving was outstanding. Four recommendations were raised in relation to Being Healthy and Staying Safe.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school was asked as to: undertake an audit of the medical procedures; review access to payphones for young people, and keep a central register of complaints. An audit of the medical procedures has been undertaken and as a result there is now a clear medical process and practice in operation that maximises young people's safety. Young people are now enabled to have access to telephones and the school holds complaints centrally. This promotes young people's welfare and wellbeing as they can seek outside assistance if required and complaints are appropriately identified and resolved. The school was asked to: review young people's risk assessments on absconding; ensure all physical interventions are recorded in a bound book, and ensure behaviour management systems are used consistently between residential units. Good risk assessments are in place for young people regarding absconding. This promotes young people's welfare as risks are appropriately identified and minimised. All physical interventions are recorded in a bound book and senior monitoring ensures that behaviour management systems are consistent between units. This promotes young people's wellbeing. Finally, the school was asked to: ensure senior staff have training on supervision; ensure supervision is provided to all staff; ensure consideration is given by senior staff to what training has been undertaken by individuals when allocating them to units, and ensure each member of staff has a professional development plan. Senior staff have received supervision training which has enabled them to establish a formal supervision process to all staff. Staff feel supported and valued which promotes their wellbeing and thus enables them to appropriately support the young people. The school have devised an excellent monitoring tool which tracks staff

training and prompts senior staff to what individual training needs staff have. This works in tandem with staff's professional development and assists senior staff to ensure all aspects of development are explored.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health needs are well met and their welfare is safeguarded as the school has a range of effective policies and procedures. Records are well maintained by the school's staff team and health professionals. This ensures staff are able to keep track of health appointments and outcomes, and inform placing social workers and relevant family members about young people's health and wellbeing. Young people receive a range of advice and guidance from staff and external professionals about what matters in regard to their health. The promotion of young people's health is taken seriously by the school, although exploring the outcomes of sexual relationships and the wider social issues with young people is not as formally embedded in practice within the residential provision. This potentially compromises the good work being undertaken by the school and nursing staff. Young people's files contain signed medical consent forms. This ensures the school's staff have permission to provide first aid and over the counter medicines. Young people's wellbeing is promoted through staff training in a number of health related areas including first aid. Staff are aware of the appropriate procedures to follow and staff's competence to administer medication is continually assessed. Young people's wellbeing is further promoted because residential staff are supported by a nurse that works at the school for three days a week. This enables the school to meet the ever-changing and complex healthcare needs of its young people.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Overall, the school has a good focus on safeguarding and protection issues with clear guidance that is communicated effectively to promote the safety and welfare of young people. The school has good leadership that consistently promotes an environment where safety is important. Young people's privacy is respected and promoted. Staff are able to demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of this important aspect of care. Young people say staff respect their privacy and always knock on their bedroom's door and wait for an answer before entering. Young people'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 young people and school staff listen and respond appropriately to all issues or concerns. Young people's welfare is positively promoted. There is one physical intervention recorded and young people say that staff do not hold on to them and find other ways of helping them to stay calm. An appropriately bound and page numbered book is maintained to record any physical interventions and this contains a section to record comments made by young people following an incident. This safeguards young people's safety and enhances their welfare. The school has a process for monitoring and reviewing all incidents to assess for any patterns and/or trends. Although, this process does not identify the time of day incidents happen, the staff member involved or where the incident took place. This potentially compromises young people's welfare as the school is not thinking about all the information it has at hand. Therefore, senior staff are not maximising this tool to enable them to influence developments like staff training or the risk assessment process. Young people are kept safe because staff demonstrate a sound grasp of what their key role and responsibilities are in terms of protection. Staff receive training in child

protection and demonstrate a good knowledge of policies and procedures. Staff understand the need to manage behaviour in a way that is fair and consistent, as well as working within the school's child protection procedures and promoting a bullying-free environment. Therefore, young people's wellbeing is given a high priority. Staff ensure that the whereabouts of young people is consistently monitored to ensure everyone is safe. Close supervision and support of young people is a prominent feature of the way in which the school manages the risks and vulnerabilities of each young person. Young people are supported to learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they have regular opportunities to practice the evacuation of the building. Young people's safety is promoted because all of the fire safety checks and fire risk assessments are in place with regular reviews taking place within timescales. All visitors to the school are monitored because they are required to provide evidence of their identity and to sign a visitor's book. Good security is in place as visitors can only gain entrance through the main gate where they have to press a buzzer and speak directly to school staff. The school has perimeter fencing that surrounds the grounds and is working hard to ensure that this fencing is fully in place before any young people with severe learning difficulties are placed at the school. School security promotes young people's welfare and ensures they are appropriately safeguarded. The school operates a satisfactory 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. This includes an appropriate enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check, verification of references and evidence that records of qualifications have been seen. This compromises young people's safety.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from a service where they receive individual support according to their needs and where education is promoted as an important factor in their lives. 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. Activities support young people's development and learning in a range of areas which helps to build confidence and self-esteem. For example, performing arts where young people truly flourish and enjoy providing stunning performances of song and drama. Residential staff are encouraging and positive in their approach to the learning and development needs of young people. Consequently, the care, learning opportunities and activities are outstanding. Individual support to each young person is given a high priority by the residential staff. Young people are benefiting from a service where staff deliver a focused level of individual support that is based on individual needs. Young people freely initiate interaction and seek help with various staff members on duty. Young people's wellbeing is positively promoted as they are each allocated a key person to ensure their continual care needs are met. The school is socially inclusive, all young people are supported to play an active role in the life of each house and the wider community. This socialisation within the community enables young people to develop the social skills needed to survive in the world. Young people benefit from receiving residential care at Walton Hall because staff are focused on their success, needs and achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are superbly supported to make a positive contribution to their placement and future plans whilst living at the school. Young people are happy in the setting's caring

environment and they have positive relationships with staff. Close attention is paid to ensuring that the residential records fully represent the current needs of each young person. Staff are using a range of methods to engage with young people and gain their views. Young people are developing awareness of others as they share and take turns. They are learning to take responsibility as they work together to help prepare and clear away at the end of meals. Young people show pride in their own achievements and are keen to share their experiences with any visitors to the residential provision. Their confidence is a true accolade to the school as young people are able to build on their natural curiosity and to further their own interests. The outstanding staff support is helping the young people to be consistently stimulated and involved in all aspects of school life. There are good communication systems in place between the school and parents. The school places a strong emphasis on developing effective and supportive relationships. The school is sensitive and responsive to the needs of parents regarding information about their children's care and progress. Young people are actively supported by the school to maintain contact with their families and friends. Young people are developing good communication skills. They are able to express their feelings and contribute their ideas freely when working in small groups, for example at Circle Time.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school has a Statement of Purpose that runs alongside their mission statement. The overall mission of the school is to develop students confidence, competence and independence. The school aims to equip all young people with the skills necessary to become valued citizens of the future. The residential units are effectively managed, which contributes to the school having a positive impact on the care and support for young people. Staff know and understand the stated aims and objectives of the school which are consistent with the service's stated purpose. Young people's welfare, safety and developmental progress are strengthened because staff receive a planned induction and a good training programme. As a result, they become sure of their job role and individual level of responsibility very quickly. Young people are receiving good support because staff also receive good support. Managers at the school who are qualified, skilled and experienced provide good leadership to the staff team and young people. Managers are actively involved in the day-to-day operation of the residential units and they have clear expectations that the staff team will achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people in their care. Access to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People is being provided to staff. The proportion of staff within the team who have this qualification is low but the school is working hard to increase the numbers of appropriately qualified staff. Good processes are in place to monitor and audit the quality of the care being provided. Regular monitoring visits are undertaken by external representatives of the organisation. These visits provide excellent additional safeguarding mechanisms for young people 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):

- provide more opportunities for the children to discuss health, social relationships and issues within the residential provision, as laid out in National Minimum Standard (NMS) 14
- develop the monitoring and reviewing process of the records of incidents, sanctions and physical interventions so they robustly identify any patterns and trends occurring (NMS 10)
- ensure all personnel files evidence that direct contact is made with each referee by the school to verify the reference (NMS 27)
- ensure the school's system for recruiting staff who work with children in the school includes all of the elements as laid out in National Minimum Standard 27.2, and that all checks are completed before staff are deployed (NMS 27).

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.