

Woodeaton Manor School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Christopher Garrett
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Date of last inspection	29 September 2006

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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

Woodeaton Manor provides education for 40 children and young people aged 11-16 years old, of mixed gender. It is designated as a special school for pupils with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Disorders

(BESD) but has a particular focus on those with emotional and social difficulties. The school is funded by the Local Authority and located in a Grade II listed manor house and grounds. The pupils live within the boundaries of Oxfordshire though this means that some have to travel quite a distance each day.

Woodeaton Manor provides flexible boarding arrangements for up to four nights a week for up to ten pupils. A team of residential staff take responsibility for these pupils after the school day until the following morning.

Summary

The purpose of this visit was to conduct a key inspection. This focused on the Key National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools and to follow up on the recommendations made following the last inspection.

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 has been proactive in addressing all of the recommendations made within the last report. New health records have now been implemented and are included in the pupil's individual placement plans. Significant incidents forms that are used to record physical interventions have been modified to record the duration and location of any restraints. Staff have been reminded about fire precautions. A tour of the Annexe (residential unit) was undertaken and all fire doors were closed or being held open by electronic magnetic catch. All of the windows above the ground floor in the cottages have been risked assessed and copies of these are found in the risk assessment file. The school has implemented a system for checking that it has two written references on file before allowing staff to start to take up their employment. All of the residential staff are in the process of completing their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 and on completion of this the Head of Care will enrol for NVQ Level 4.

There has been extensive refurbishment, redecoration and refurnishing in the Annexe following the damage caused by the storms last year. The main kitchen has been completely upgraded and fitted out, and the dining rooms redecorated and new flooring has been installed. A school council has been set up with a representative from each class and from the residential unit.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The school places a great emphasis on providing all staff and pupils with a good range of healthy and nutritious food. The school day commences with breakfast attended by the whole school. Main meals offer a choice of hot or cold dishes with vegetarian alternatives. Special diets are catered for if required. Birthdays and festivals are celebrated and cultural theme meals are a

regular occurrence. Meals are prepared using fresh meat and vegetables, and fruit is freely available at break times and in the evenings within the Annexe. The pupils are actively discouraged from purchasing sweets, snacks and drinks that are high in sugars and additives. Staff are sensitive to the needs of those pupils with autistic traits who have particular issues about their diet. The pupils are aware of the school's healthy eating policy. Comments made by them include, "we only get healthy food" and, they buy vegetables and give us fruit and staff "encourage us to buy healthy food. Parents who returned questionnaires commented favourably on the food. One parent explained that how my "son tells us what he eats and he loves the veg on offer". Adults provide good role models by having all of their meals with the pupils. Meal times are well managed and social occasions. Meals are prepared in the main school kitchen which has recently been totally renovated and re-equipped. The two dining rooms have also been redecorated and a new floor covering laid. A donation given to the school from a local club has been used to provide an industrial style toaster which is put to good use at breakfast time. The school was awarded a Healthy Schools Award in December 2006.

The health needs for each of the pupils are identified and recorded in their Placement Plan. Where necessary arrangements are in place for pupils to access medical services and agencies. Pre-admission meetings with the parents provides the opportunity for them to give details of their son's medical history and information regarding on going treatment or involvement with other medical services. The pupils normally remain registered with their own family doctor but arrangements are in place for them to be seen at a local surgery in the case of an emergency. Parents have responsibility for arranging dental checks and visits to the opticians. All of the pupils indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaires that they were satisfied with the arrangements in place if they felt unwell. One of the pupils explained that staff "let you rest on your seat and if really ill try and get you home". Care staff are fully aware of the medical needs of the pupils who stay at the Annexe.

Most of the care staff have received training in first aid and the manner in which the staff rota is organised ensures that pupils have access to a qualified first aider at all times.

There are good systems in place for administering and monitoring stocks of medication which work in practice. All current medication is stored in a lockable cabinet. Care staff have received training in the administration of medication from the school nurse and two of the senior care workers have received additional training. A number of care staff have received guidance and instruction on the use of pervasive medical procedures but this level of care is currently not required for any of the pupils staying in the Annexe. Pupils are encouraged to take Omega 3 capsules daily. These are supplied freely by the school and distributed with a main meal.

Pupils are given the opportunity to experience what it is like to bring up a baby. The school has an electronic baby mannequin that is programmed to cry and require attention at intervals during the day. The pupils became fully engaged in this experience. Pupils who are directly responsible for the care of the "baby" are helped by staff and pupils, who provide assistance in carrying the baby's pram up the stairs and offering to baby sit whilst the pupils shower and get ready for bed.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Woodeaton Manor School has implemented practices and procedures and issued guidance to staff that help to ensure that the pupils living there are kept safe and protected from harm.

All of the staff spoken to demonstrate an informed awareness of their responsibilities in safeguarding young people. Whilst some procedures are rarely used, all of the staff spoken to were aware of the guidance in place, how this can be accessed and were confident about using them if required. Some associated records need to be reviewed.

Care staff show a respect for the privacy of the pupils and for maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality. Staff are conscious of gender issues and arrange the supervision of the pupils at sensitive times accordingly. Pupils' files and confidential information are kept secure. Staff advise that they have only had one recent occasion when they have had to conduct a search of one of the pupil's bed areas. The record kept at the time shows that staff are aware of the need for these to be conducted sensitively and if possible with the full knowledge of the pupil.

The young people have open access to a payphone located in a cubicle on the ground floor, to make and receive phone calls. However a number have their own mobile phones which they can have free access to in the evenings. Consideration has not been given to the potential infringement of privacy caused by any misuse of mobile phones with audio and video recording facilities. A recently refurbished room is available for pupils to use to meet with any visitors in private.

Staff listen to any concerns or issues raised by the pupils and the pupils say that they know that these will be addressed. The majority of the pupils, who completed pre-inspection questionnaires, indicate which member of staff they would discuss any concerns with. One pupil explained that he would "talk to a teacher, LSA (learning support assistant), RCW (residential care worker) or anyone". The whole school meet for circle time twice a day and a similar meeting takes place with the boarding pupils and care staff at night. The school actively encourages the pupils to use these forums as an opportunity to raise any concerns as well as express any opinions. There is an expectancy amongst the care staff that most concerns can be dealt with in these forums or in an informal manner. Systems exist for pupils to raise more formal complaints but these have rarely been used and records of these occasions are incomplete. Guidance on the management of complaints is available for all staff. Information of the school complaints procedure is provided to parents and significant others in the school prospectus. Parents who submitted pre-inspection questionnaires and data collated from the school's own parental questionnaires indicate the parents' satisfaction in being able to raise concerns with the school and confidence that these would be dealt with.

The school has a very clear and established procedure for responding to child protection concerns. Response to child protection issues is co-ordinated by the designated person who is a senior member of the educational team. Attendance at child protection meetings is shared between the designated person and the head teacher. Separate records relating to child protection issues are kept within a secure cabinet in the head teacher's office. The designated person is responsible for sending out notifications concerning any allegations of abuse to the appropriate agencies. An examination of training records shows that the designated person has received training specific to her role. Child protection training is provided to all staff working at the school and this is routinely updated. This is also a module undertaken by all of the care team during their National Vocational Qualification Level 3 training. All of the care staff spoken to are fully aware of their individual responsibilities in responding to any potential child protection concerns or allegations.

Pupils indicate that there are low levels of bullying within school and that staff act immediately and effectively to any information that bullying might be taking place. The message that bullying is not acceptable is consistently given and reinforced between the school and the Annexe. One pupil explained that he had been bullied on occasions but "staff had sorted this out". Staff acknowledge that low level bullying occurs and have developed strategies to manage this. For example, care staff are aware of potential "hot spots" and difficult periods of time during the evening and organise activities and the supervision of the pupils accordingly. A current target in all of the pupils care plans relates to being able to show empathy to others. The school has produced an anti-bullying policy and an anti-bullying charter. The acknowledgment by staff that bullying can take place and the way that this is managed is a contributory factor in providing a safe and secure environment in which the pupils can live.

Information on the school's response to pupils leaving the premises or the supervision of staff without permission is included in the staff handbook. Care staff spoken to explain that this is not an issue for those pupils boarding at the school. However, they are aware of the procedures that they will follow if it were to occur. Information concerning potential risks including pupils going absent without authority is collected during the pre-admission interviews. Reports are compiled and are shared with the care staff who use them to compile individual behavioural risk assessments for each pupil.

The school places a great emphasis on encouraging appropriate behaviour by recognising, rewarding and celebrating acceptable behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to respect and help each other. This is a consistent feature throughout the school day and care time. The school has set out a code of conduct for everyone at the school to follow. One pupil commented in his questionnaire that the school is good at helping us "being kind to each other".

Staff have developed a number of systems to reward and record positive behaviour. Data is collated from these and this is shared with parents. Circle time provides the opportunity for staff to publicly praise good behaviour and attitude.

Significant incidents are recorded on loose leaf forms which are then stored in ring binders. Any sanctions that are given for misbehaviour are recorded on these forms. Information is collated from the significant incidents forms, reviewed by senior staff and used to monitor trends or patterns of behaviour. The data is used to help develop individual behavioural strategies within the school or to support referrals to external agencies. An examination of the significant records for the boarders showed that only five had been recorded this term and not all incidents had led to a sanction having to be given. There are spaces on the form for the pupils to add their own comments but this is not routinely filled in. The sanctions used by the care staff were seen to be fair and proportionate. A majority of the pupils who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that they felt that the rules in the school are "fair". The majority of pupils (day and resident) who completed a questionnaire issued by the school last year indicate that they think that behaviour within the school is getting better. Parents indicate that they are satisfied with the school's management of behaviour.

An examination of the training records showed that all of the care staff had received training in PRICE

(Protecting Rights in a Caring Environment), physical intervention methods. Incidents of physical intervention are recorded on a specific significant incident form. This has been modified

in line with recommendation made following the last inspection. An examination of the records showed that there has not been any recent use of physical intervention during the care time. The security of the physical intervention forms is unsatisfactory.

The home takes steps on a day-to-day basis to ensure that pupils, staff and visitors are safe from the risk of fire and other hazards. Records show that regular testing checking and servicing of the fire safety equipment is taking place and that practice evacuations are routinely being held. An examination of records show that care staff have not received any training in Fire Awareness and there is not a designated Fire Marshall .

Checks and servicing are routinely undertaken on other areas including the water tanks, boilers and portable electrical appliances . The school owns a number of cars and mini buses. A examination of a sample of files showed that each vehicle has the appropriate documentation in place .

The care staff complete individual risk assessments for each of the pupils. These identify potential difficult and dangerous behaviours that may be displayed by the pupils and how these are best managed. A number of the assessments advise that consideration should be given to whether the pupil should have access to " certain activities and experiences" but do not indicate what these are. All off site activities that are routinely accessed by the boarders have been assessed whilst those undertaken at the school have not been. The school recently successfully entered a Health and Safety competition and was awarded a certificate ,dated April 2007, for being one of the top 24 schools that had entered The letter accompanying the certificate states that the " school demonstrated an excellent level of health and safety compliance" .

Visitors to the school are required to sign in at the main office and to wear a badge during their visit .

Following recommendations made during the last inspection the school has reviewed its recruitment and vetting procedures. An examination of the files for the most recently recruited members of staff shows that all of the application material has been verified by the school and that written references had been obtained . Records show that there are Criminal Record Bureau(CRB) checks in place for all of the residential care staff. The safety of the pupils is enhanced further by the decision made by the school to conduct retrospective CRB checks on all of its staff . However the records show that a number of the CRB checks were obtained over three years ago.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff give practical and emotional support to the pupils , who all have a statements of special educational needs. Staff talk of the school as a community and each of its members being their to help and support each other. Contributions are valued from all staff. Systems are in place for regular communication to take place between the school and the Annexe. Breakfast is attended by all staff and this and the circle time that follows it provide opportunities for the care team and the education staff to exchange information . There are regular evening meetings held after school which a member of the care team attends. Care staff offer support to those pupils who have been given any homework to complete. All of pupils commented in their

questionnaires that they get help with their school work and that there is sufficient space in the Annexe for them to be able to do any homework. Care staff contribute to and attend annual reviews of the pupil's educational statements. Care Files contain copies of the pupils Individual Education Programmes.

One of the Assistant Heads has a special responsibility for liaising with external services and agencies. This arrangement helps to ensure that the pupils are able to access external services in line with their needs and wishes. The school is also able to access services from the school nurse, speech therapist and from an educational psychologist. Each of the pupils have an allocated a key worker whose responsibilities include liaising with other agencies, keeping in contact with parents and supporting the pupils in statutory reviews. There are currently no arrangements for the pupils to identify someone independent of the home who they can contact with any concerns or personal issues.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff demonstrate that they place great value on the views and opinions of the pupils. There are a number of forums that have been implemented and developed by the school through which the pupils are able to express their thoughts and air their views about major life decisions and the day to day running of the school and the residential unit. Circle time provides regular opportunities for the pupils to review the day and to be informed about events. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to circle time and staff listen to their views. Pupils have been consulted about the refurbishment and refurnishing of the Annexe after the damage caused by storm damage last year. At the time of the inspection pupils were actively involved in selecting and purchasing a replacement vehicle. The Annexe has its own representative on the school council this and an examination of minutes of these meetings show that issues relating to boarding are discussed. Pupils are encouraged attend annual reviews and are supported in these by their key workers. All of the pupils give examples in their pre-inspection questionnaires of the issues that they have recently been consulted about. A number give examples of their involvement in the refurbishment of the Annexe. All of the pupils also comment on how they are involved in meetings about their progress and give examples as being annual reviews, looked after child reviews and interviews with Connexion services. The school routinely seeks the views of parents and pupils through an annual questionnaire. Data collected from this is used to review current practice and inform the School's Improvement Plan. Visitors to the school are asked to complete feedback forms after their visit.

Each pupils boarding in the Annexe has a clear, easily understandable placement plan that has been drawn up using information collected during the pre-placement meeting held between the Head Teacher, the school Educational Psychologist and parents. The plans details how the pupils needs are to be addressed and any specific roles and responsibilities for other agencies. The plan is tied in with a number of the objectives included in the pupils' Statement of Special Educational Needs. Each pupil has a care plan. This sets out personal targets for the term, which have been identified following a self assessment completed by the pupils. Care staff have access to a number of work sheets to use with the pupils in addressing the targets that are set. Care plans are monitored by the pupils key workers who also produce reports to present at annual reviews.

The school provides weekly and flexible boarding arrangements. All of the pupils return home at weekends and are able to have regular contact with their parents, families or significant others. There are currently no restrictions on contact for any of the pupils staying at the Annexe. A number of pupils have mobile phones which they are able to use in the evenings and their is payphone located within the Annexe . Care staff use a Home/school Diary as one means of maintaining regular contact with the pupils parents. Parents commented on the good communication between the school and home. One explained that " we are phoned weekly to report on how the work ect has gone during the week "

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

This inspection is primarily focussed on the key standards for residential special school and consequently standards in this outcome area were not inspected on this occasion. However following a tour of the building it is evident that considerable refurbishment , redecoration and refurnishing has taken place in the Annexe following the storm damage last year. The games room has been redecorated , re-carpeted and has some pieces of new equipment installed . Pupils have been involved in the programme and are proud and pleased with what has been achieved. The emergency work has had an impact on planned development in the Annexe and upgrading to some toilet and bathrooms areas is being rescheduled .Major repair work to the roof of the Annexe has yet to take place. The main kitchen in the Manor has been completely upgraded and the dining room has been redecorated and provided with new lift which delivers food , cutlery and crockery from the kitchen below. Accommodation that had been taken over during the refurbishment programme has now been returned to its previous use .

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Information on the boarding arrangements are found in the school prospectus and a document titled " Residential Information 2007 ." These are given to parents during the referral and admission process . Pupils are given a copy of the " Pupil Information booklet" which contains information on the school and the Annex . This is presented in a format that is accessible to the pupils. Collectively these documents they provide sufficient information to enable pupils , parents and other interested parties to determine the purpose and aims of the school and the Annexe and how these are staffed and managed . They also give an indication of the standard of care that the pupils can expect to receive.

Woodeaton Manor School provides flexible boarding arrangements for up to four nights a week for up to ten pupils . A team of residential care staff take responsibility for these pupils after the school day until the following morning . An examination of the staff duty rota indicates that there are four care staff on duty all of the time that the Annexe is in use. At the time of the inspection numbers of pupils boarding were lower than normal . The staffing /pupil ratio at this time allowed for a number of different activities to be organised in the evening and the opportunity for pupils to receive individual attention. The care team is led by an experienced Head Of Care . All of the care staff sleep in the Annexe every night . The current staffing arrangements provide the pupils with a good level consistency and security . Good relationships exist between care staff and pupils .

All of the care team are currently in the process of undertaking NVQ Level 3 which, the Head of Care anticipates, they will complete by September 2007. On completion of this the Head of Care has advised that she be enrolling for NVQ Level 4.

The responsibility for monitoring records held by the school is shared by a number of the senior management team . It is acknowledged that some records are not in place as they relate to matters that are currently not issues within the school An examination those centralised records in place shows that they are routinely being checked and action is being taken to address any patterns or trends. However the absence of some records makes it difficult to determine and evidence the overall effectiveness of the monitoring procedures within the school

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):

- Review the use of mobile phones with audio and video recording faciities. NMS 3
- Review the pupils formal complaint procedure. NMS 4
- Review the security of the restraint and sanctions logbooks. NMS 10
- Ensure that all care staff have received suitable training in fire prevention. NMS 26
- Conduct an audit and review of individual and on site activity risk assessments. NMS 26
- Update all Criminal Record Bureau checks every three years. NMS 27
- Ensure that the pupils are able to raise concerns with someone independent of the school. NMS 4
- Conduct an audit of records and the systems in place for these to be monitored by the Head or senior members of staff . NMS 32