

Potterspurty Lodge School

Inspection report for residential special school

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| Inspector | Joanne Vyas |
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| Head / Principal | Clive Laidler |
| Date of last inspection | 13 June 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

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| 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

Potterspurpy Lodge offers education with boarding for up to 36 boys of the age range 8 years to 16 years. The school also provides places for day pupils, some of whom take part in evening activities. Founded originally as a Steiner school, the school retains few of the Steiner principles, but the community ethos and healthy living remain strong. Many of the staff live on site, including most care staff. The main house is a large grade 2 listed building and accommodates some of the school classrooms, some boarding areas, the main office and medical room. Further boarding accommodation and school facilities are provided in various buildings adjacent to the main house. The school is set in several acres of land providing a tranquil and spacious setting. A stream running into a small lake filled with various fish, where boys can fish for pleasure, marks the school boundary to one side. Another boundary is marked by a large vegetable garden, orchard and oakery, though these areas are out of bounds to students unless accompanied by an adult. A large field provides a football pitch, running track and large play area including climbing frames and swings. There is a skate park, tennis and basketball courts. Indoor facilities include a large sports hall, pottery and music room, a chapel and other educational facilities that can be used for extra-curricula activities. The boarding accommodation consists of six self-contained units providing accommodation for groups of up to six boys, although only four units are currently in use. This accommodation is homely and comfortable. Boarding is available from Sunday evening to Friday, during term time only.

Summary

The inspector visited this school to complete an announced full inspection where all the key standards were inspected. This school has a highly qualified, competent and caring staff team who are focussed and committed to ensuring the provision for the care of students is good. There are excellent relationships between the students and staff. Students are kept active with an excellent range of sports and activities. Staff are pro-active and dedicated to ensuring the students maintain contact with people who are significant to them. They are committed to work in partnership with the students and their families, social workers and external agencies to promote a child centred approach to care and education. The students are protected by robust recruitment and health and safety procedures. Some areas for improvement were found. There is a lack of evidence that the nutritional intake of students who are known to miss meals regularly is being monitored. Ofsted are not always informed of notifiable incidents. The actions taken in response to issues of concern raised by students are not always currently recorded. Placement plans lack the detail of how a student's needs are to be met by the school. There is no written risk assessment in place for the staffing of hostels overnight.

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 have complied with all recommendations made at the previous inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff are focussed and committed to ensuring the provision for health care is good. All students are registered with doctors, dentists and opticians, either locally to the school or to their home.

They also have access to other healthcare professionals including mental health services. Each student has a health plan as part of their placement plan. However, this does not address how a student's health needs are met although it was clear that staff are concerned about the health of students but monitoring progress and reviewing health needs would be difficult without clear plans. Parents, placing officers and social workers have been involved in formulating the plan. Plans are reviewed each term. The safe handling of medication is good in this school. The school use homely remedies and these have been agreed with a doctor. Staff receive training in the safe handling of medication. Medication is accurately recorded, received and disposed of appropriately. The medication cupboards are secure. Staff are not clear about the differences between controlled drugs and prescribed medication which is not a controlled drug. However, all prescribed medication is mostly treated in line with the guidance for controlled drugs. All accidents are recorded and first aid is given as appropriate. There is always a member of staff on duty who is trained to give first aid. Mealtimes are structured, sociable occasions, where wholesome and nutritious food is served in ample quantities. The school has recently gained a four star rating from the environmental health department for the cleanliness and hygiene of the kitchen and variety of menus and have also won a healthy eating award. Students had mixed views about the meals. The cook welcomes their views and tries to accommodate all tastes. Alternatives are offered but some students will go without a meal regularly, which is not always monitored. All dietary needs are catered for.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The privacy of students is respected by staff. All bathrooms have appropriate locks on the doors. Staff knock on bedroom doors before entering. All records are kept confidentially. Student's issues are not discussed openly. Students are enabled by staff to make complaints. An opportunity exists during the student's hostel meetings and school council meetings to make complaints. Complaints are taken seriously and resolved where possible. It is clear from observation and discussion that the school's management team is responsive to issues raised by the students and their parents and ensures measures put in place to resolve issues are effectively communicated. There were, however, no complaints recorded from parents. Students had made some complaints through their hostel meetings. However, there is no record of the action taken and outcome of the complaints made. Staff are concerned about keeping students safe. They receive annual training on safeguarding children. Staff were competent in their knowledge of the school's child protection procedures. Some students have experienced incidents of bullying but staff are pro-active and responsive to all bullying behaviour. The school has a written procedure for action when students are absent without authority. There are very few incidents of absconding from the school. The school does not notify Ofsted of all significant events that have occurred as listed in standard 7 of The Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. However, placing authorities, social workers and parents are informed about all events where appropriate. Staff view the students positively and there is a good, community atmosphere in the school. Staff are given training during their induction on physical intervention and this is updated annually. Physical intervention is used as a last resort. There is a minimal amount of physical intervention carried out in this school. Permissible sanctions are clearly stated in the school's policies and procedures. However, behaviour management plans and risk assessments lack detail and clarity, therefore staff do not have clear guidance on managing the behaviour of students, which can result in staff carrying out interventions which they believe to be right at the time rather than an agreed strategy. Boundaries between staff and students are clear and relationships are excellent. Recruitment

procedures are robust. Safety checks are completed and staff only commence employment when they have a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure and two satisfactory references. The school has comprehensive risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire. All staff are given fire safety training during their induction. Fire drills are carried out on a regular basis and at different times of the day. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and a detailed record kept. All health and safety procedures are robust. All visitors sign into the building and must show identification.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Students have excellent relationships with staff and are kept active. Activities include school and community activities such as local clubs and facilities including golf, army cadets, the local leisure centre for swimming and the fitness studio, the library, cinema and shopping centres. There are lots of resources within the school such as sports equipment, arts & crafts materials, DVDs, books and games. Facilities within the school include a sports hall, open play areas, a lake for fishing and outdoor play equipment. The student's own individual interests are supported. Students are involved in planning activities, outings and holidays. Staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for students. There is excellent communication between care and teaching staff. Care staff and teaching staff meet at the beginning and end of each day to provide feedback about each student. Care and teaching staff also meet once a fortnight to discuss behaviour management strategies for each student in the different settings. There is a child centred approach to care and education. Individual support is detailed in each student's placement plan and observations and discussions with staff showed that staff ensure each student's individual needs are met.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff are able to provide good care to students and meet their individual needs with the knowledge and understanding they have of them. Placement plans are linked directly to the objectives set out in the Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN). They are reviewed every half term but do not cover comprehensively how the needs of the students will be met, specifically with regard to health and behaviour management. Each student also has an Individual Education and Care Plan, which specifies targets for them to achieve and may include some behaviour management strategies. However, these can be ambiguous. A record is made for each student, documenting their mood, activities, behaviour and so on. This is comprehensive. Staff are pro-active and dedicated to ensuring students maintain contact with parents and everyone else who is significant to a student. They are committed to working in partnership with the students and their families, social workers and external agencies to promote individual care programmes, tailored to the student's needs. House meetings for students are held every week and recorded. Discussions are held about food, bullying, activities, holidays, trips out and complaints. There is also an active school council and each hostel has just elected a representative to speak on their behalf at forthcoming hostel council meetings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Students live in a homely environment, with high quality furnishings. There is a good amount of communal space. The students have very good facilities. Their bedrooms are highly

personalised. The school is clean and tidy and well maintained. Students value their school and their surroundings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of purpose is a comprehensive document, which was last reviewed in May 2006. A comprehensive, child friendly student guide has also been put together in consultation with students. There are good staffing levels, with two staff in each hostel, with senior staff on call. Most hostels are staffed at night by staff sleeping in; one hostel also has a waking night staff. One hostel is not staffed at night, although there are staff in the hostel upstairs, but incidents have occurred during the night. There is not a risk assessment in place for staffing of hostels at night. The staff team are highly qualified, caring, competent and well supported by each other and the senior management team. They are passionate and committed to the work that they do. The school ensures the quality of care through continuous monitoring and evaluation of the service. The Head Teacher and Head of Care carry out internal inspections of each hostel once a term. Student's records are also monitored regularly, with one hostel being looked at each week.

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):

- monitor and record meals for students where there is an identified need as per standard 15.4 and 15.6
- ensure all incidents are notified to the appropriate authority as per standard 7.2
- record action taken and the outcome of any complaints or issues raised by students as per standard 4.3
- ensure the placement plan for each student clearly identifies how their needs will be met as per standard 17.2
- provide a risk assessment for staffing within hostels during the night as per standard 28.8.

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.