

Maplewell Hall

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Jacqueline Barry
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Address	Maplewell Hall School Maplewell Road Woodhouse Eaves LOUGHBOROUGH Leicestershire LE12 8QY
Telephone number	01509 890237
Email	
Registered person	Leicestershire County Council
Head of care	Susan Yarnall
Head / Principal	Susan Yarnall
Date of last inspection	26 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

Maplewell Hall provides for secondary aged students with moderate learning disabilities. The school is situated around two miles from the small village of Woodhouse Eaves. The age range of the school is 11 to 16 years, apart from in the specialist autism unit where provision can extend to 19 years. All residential accommodation is in the main building of the school and is organised on two floors with boy's accommodation on the first floor and girl's accommodation on the second floor. Each area has a TV lounge and in addition there is a pool table, a computer room and an arts and crafts area.

Summary

The inspection was carried out over two days. Key members of staff, including the Head Teacher and Head of Care were interviewed and discussions were held with a number of students. There was a tour of the residential provision and two meals were taken with students. A range of records and student files were also examined. Inspection findings were fed back to the Head Teacher and Head of Care at the end of the inspection.

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, three recommendations were made in respect of medication. The practice seen during this inspection confirms that medicines only are stored in the medication cabinet. Controlled drugs are stored in a non-portable locked container inside a locked medical cabinet and a running balance is kept and checked for all administered controlled drugs.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Students benefit from a residential experience that actively promotes their health. Outdoor sports and games happen in the good weather to ensure that students have an opportunity to exercise and be active. Inspection of records confirmed that information about student's health needs are recorded and accessible to the staff. Staff are trained to safely administer medication to students and medical consent forms are present on students' files. Students benefit from healthy and nutritious meals provided by an enthusiastic and innovative catering team. Students enjoy a variety of dishes that reflect the diversity, health needs and preferences of the group.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Students feel that they receive the right amount of privacy, particularly at sensitive times of day such as getting changed after school. Staff are mindful of students' right to dignity and ensure that their rights are upheld. Formal systems are in place to deal with complaints, but students tend to approach staff informally about any concerns. Students enjoy the residential experience and see it as an opportunity to spend time outside of the classroom with their friends. Staff are clear about their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and have access to child protection guidance. Good staffing ratios mean that students are well supervised and this minimises opportunities for bullying to go undetected. Inspection of records indicate that

unacceptable behaviours, for example, that may put others at risk, are dealt with appropriately. Other less risky or threatening situations are managed in a balanced and non-confrontational way. The evening routine is organised in such a way that ensures all students are accounted for and their whereabouts are known at all times. Staff are security conscious, but as a large building with various entry points, consideration should be given to securing the residential provision from unauthorised visitors. Students are clear about the fire evacuation procedures and test alarms are tested weekly. During the last inspection, a recommendation was made that fire doors are not propped open. This recommendation had not been satisfactorily addressed. Fire drills are tested regularly. It is recommended that risk assessments for the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) are updated regularly as guidance may have changed in the last five years. Staff recruitment procedures are not consistently robust and this potentially places students at risk. As a result, it is strongly recommended that gaps in information on recent recruitment files are addressed and future recruitment practices are consistent to ensure that students welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The residential provision makes an excellent contribution to student's educational progress. Homework is greatly supported by both the teaching and residential staff and cross curricular links are strong. Activities support student's development and learning, whilst at the same time being fun. Residential staff are highly skilled and achieve a balance of working with students in a focussed, yet relaxed way, creating a calm environment. As well as a positive group living experience, students benefit from receiving individual support. Staff recognise and respond to students who require extra help and one student said he had help from the staff when he was being bullied. Students receive specific support for their individual needs by external professionals and some students who require it, benefit from work on their social communication skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Formal systems such as school council meetings are in place to ensure that students have a say in the way the school is run. Students report that things had changed as a result of their comments such as the purchasing of some sports equipment, making consultation meaningful. Questionnaires are sent out to students at the end of each stay to learn about their residential experience and for the Head of Care to consider what might need to change as a result of feedback. It is recommended that any review as a result of student's feedback be recorded for self assessment and evaluation purposes. Due to the nature of residential provision used as a residential experience for students on a rotational basis, residents' meetings do not take place. Students are however, consulted informally about the activities they take part in, how to spend free time during the evenings and about the food. Students' needs are recorded and plans are in place to provide staff with information about how the assessed needs are to be met. Students know their individual targets and understand that learning new skills when in residence helps them to do develop an appropriate level of independence. Students live with their families or carers and use the residential provision two nights a week for half a term. As a result, contact issues are not the same as if students were looked after full-time. However, students state that they can use the telephone to ring their families on request.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Students benefit from immaculately clean and well maintained accommodation. Investment continues to be made over areas of the building, which helps to maintain a good standard of residential provision for students.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Written information, describing the care principles and practice for students in residence is available to parents and carers. Students have their own guide, with useful information about what to expect from the residential experience. Students benefit from a staff group who have a role within the school as well as the residential provision, creating good continuity. Staffing levels are satisfactory to ensure that safe care and supervision are provided to students. The national target of 80% of staff having National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 had not been achieved. However, as an NVQ Assessor, the Head of Care is keen for more staff to undertake the qualification. Staff are well trained to carry out their role and between them bring a variety of experience, skills and some other qualifications to work with students. All staff training, including topics covered on INSET days should be recorded on staff training files. On the whole, students using the residential provision enjoy good relationships among one another and with staff. Self assessment is a priority for the Head Teacher with issues such as incidents, accidents are racial abuse continually monitored. Governors also monitor the residential provision, providing a different perspective in seeking students' views and making suggestions. The Governors are regularly present within the school and are known to the students.

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 that staff training including topics covered on INSET days is recorded NMS 29
- ensure that more staff are supported to undertake National Vocational Qualification Level 3 NMS 31
- ensure that results from student questionnaires are documented, with evidence of what has changed as a result of the feedback NMS 2
- ensure risk assessments for the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health be updated and reviewed regularly NMS 26
- ensure that recruitment and selection processes are robust to safeguard students NMS 27

- ensure additional security to prevent unauthorised access to residential provision. NMS 26

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.