

# Southfield School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Merryl Wahogo
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<b>Registered person</b>	Wokingham District Council
<b>Head of care</b>	Nick Harvey
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Michael Pedley
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	25 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**

Southfield school is a purpose built secondary school for boys and girls who have experienced behavioural and emotional difficulties. It accommodates up to 68 pupils at any one time, 16 of whom may be resident in the hostel. Southfield school has its own grounds and is situated in a residential area not far from the Wokingham town centre.

### **Summary**

This is the Southfield School hostel's annual inspection. As it has a good record, this inspection did not go deeply into all areas. In particular recruitment records were not looked at since there has been no recruitment of staff since 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**

Staff and boarders are proud of the developments in the garden, which has been a joint effort, and which is visible from the dining room. The Head is now monitoring all necessary records regularly, which means he is aware of trends in behaviour and achievements. Staff are now receiving regular supervision from their seniors. Children now receive all their medicines in the first aid room which means that the medicines are not being carried around the site. Sanctions are now seen to be used appropriately and are thoroughly recorded.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

All areas of the residential accommodation are kept spotlessly clean and hygienic, by a dedicated team of cleaners. They report good support from the care taker as well as care staff. Health plans are in place on children's files, as are copies of all necessary correspondence and consent forms from parents. Medicines are kept securely and now administered safely in all respects, including the recording of any medicines administered. There is currently no refrigerated medicines cabinet available. Those medicines needing refrigeration are kept in a staffroom fridge, away from the first aid room. Children's intimate care needs are dealt with sensitively and appropriately. Children are now offered more substantial quantities of food but, despite a new company being awarded the contract for the school meals, these are still not satisfactory. This is because the company's interpretation of healthy eating has led to unattractive and unappetising meals being presented. One boy said 'The food is usually pretty horrible' and 'The fish always smells like burnt tin foil'. This means that children sometimes eat so little that they are left hungry after a meal.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are treated respectfully by staff, including staff knocking on their bedroom doors before entering. Children are kept safe in a number of ways. Bullying is kept down to a minimum by having notices giving examples of what bullying is, displayed clearly around the hostel. Boys are also very clear about sanctions for bullying and other misbehaviour. More importantly, it is clear that there is a good relationship between most boys and most staff, so the boys said if

they had a problem they would talk to a member of the care staff. Where boys do complain of bullying this is recorded thoroughly, responded to appropriately and monitored by the head teacher. Childline information notices are posted around the boarding area. The boys are also kept safe by good communication between staff, parents and social workers. Staff receive child protection training when places are available on Wokingham Borough Council courses, and regular updates from the head of care. The Council courses are, however, only annual, and if a new member of staff misses one of these, as one member of staff has, it can result in their going far too long without this training, which could put children at risk. Also, there is no policy about when and how children may be touched (for example whether and how a member of staff can physically comfort a boy who is distressed) which can lead to doubts and concerns. Ofsted is informed promptly by the school of any serious illness or incident. Also the records of children being absent without good reason are kept thoroughly and monitored by the head teacher. There are regular checks on fire equipment and regular fire drills, and the boys are able to explain clearly where the nearest fire exits are. Records show that the hostel is normally cleared within two minutes of the beginning of any fire drill. No new staff have been recruited since the last inspection, when recruitment records were found to be in good order and so this standard was not looked into on this occasion. It is, however, a mark of the high morale within the school, that no staff have left recently.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Since the head teacher has his office in the hostel building, close to the office of the head of care, there is every opportunity for the hostel to support children's educational progress, and vice versa. Relations between the two are good and this benefits the boys in many ways, including their having access to school recreational facilities out of school hours. School and hostel staff exchange information about how the boys have been getting on both at the beginning and end of the school day. Also all staff and children eat together at lunchtime, allowing further discussions if necessary. Both the hostel staff and the school as a whole are very proud of the fact that four of the pupils have artwork exhibited in a Wokingham borough council schools art exhibition, which three of them visited on the opening evening. The boys particularly like the off-site activities offered out of school hours, especially swimming. The school's recreational facilities are also available out of school hours so that children can make use of the gym, the music room, computer room and so on.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The boys are allowed to make choices about how they make their rooms feel homely and in particular can choose duvet covers. They are not, however, allowed to choose the colour of the paint in their rooms, which creates a feeling more of an institution than of a home. Staff are warm and friendly to the boys but also assertive when necessary. There is a lot of good-natured joking between boys and the staff. Children have access to at least two independent visitors to the school. They can speak to the school's counsellor when she visits and this is very well supported by the staff. Also the Wokingham Children's Rights Officer visits regularly and advocates for the children where necessary. A recent example is that boys complained to her about the lack of salt available at meals, which the school had instituted as part of their healthy eating campaign. In response she has explained to staff that children will only learn how to judge the amount of salt they use if it is available to them and they are able to receive guidance.

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Improvements have been made to the garden by staff and pupils together making the garden both attractive and productive. The décor is somewhat institutional with homely touches, such as paintings or artwork on the walls, lacking in the lounges and bedrooms, although children do put up their own posters and photographs in their bedrooms. Children enjoy the additional facilities provided by the new games rooms.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a very close and positive relationship between the Head, administrative staff and care staff, which benefits the boys. A program of emotional literacy training, for all staff, is said to have been the reason why there are fewer serious problems with the children and no permanent exclusions. Whilst, theoretically, the hostel could accommodate 18 children, two beds are kept free for emergencies (like family bereavements or illnesses) which do occur from time to time. Also, only 14 children can be accommodated in single bedrooms and this is the strong preference of the care staff. Parents are called on a weekly basis to inform them of their child's progress and wherever possible senior staff visit parents at home, three times a year to further build the relationship. The statement of purpose for the hostel is out-of-date and does not specify the numbers or age range of children who can be accommodated which could lead to confusion amongst placing authorities. The Head does take care to monitor all necessary records which keeps him up-to-date with both improvements and problems.

## 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 a refrigerated medicines cabinet is installed in the first aid room.
- ensure that meals are sufficiently attractive, varied and nutritious.
- create a new system for rewarding good behaviours.
- ensure that the statement of purpose for the hostel is updated.

## 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)

Annex A

**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.**