

Farleigh College

Inspection report for residential special school

Unique reference number	SC033016
Inspection date	29 October 2007
Inspector	Paul Clark
Type of Inspection	Key

Address	Newbury Manor Newbury Frome Somerset BA11 3RG
Telephone number	01373 814980
Email	
Registered person	Priory Education Group
Head of care	Tony Mulcahy
Head / Principal	Tony Mulcahy
Date of last inspection	4 December 2006

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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

Farleigh College is a co-educational, residential and day school providing education and specialist care for young people who have a statement of Special Educational Need with a core diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome or other related disorders. Placing authorities are generally Local Education Authorities (LEA's). The school accommodates young people between the ages of 11 to 17. At the time of the inspection there were 32 boarders and seven day pupils. The school has four residential units within the school campus. Ridgeway for younger pupils, Avebury and Silbury for older boys and Avalon, which is for girls only. The school also has a separate house located in a nearby village which provides accommodation for those young people who have been assessed as having the appropriate living skills to reside outside the immediate school campus with the support of staff. Farleigh college is part of the Priory Group, a large national agency providing health, social and children's residential care across a range of care services.

Summary

The school has systems in place which ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people accommodated. Its care planning and recording systems are of an exceptional standard. Its well managed and highly trained and well motivated staff group provide a unique and highly specialised level of care.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school has given thoughtful consideration to the provision of a greater number of single bedrooms for young people and have arrived at the view that although the current balance of single and shared bedrooms meets the needs and preferences of the current group of young people this is not desirable in the long. The school have identified a budget necessary to update the shower facilities in the four residential units within the school. The school's progress in this area will be a focus of the next annual inspection. All care and ancillary staff now receive at least one and a half hours one to one supervision every half term.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The inspector observed that adequate quantities of food are available at mealtimes, and that menu plans are in place which indicate that a balanced and nutritious diet is provided. Special diets are also catered for. Milk, juice, biscuits and fruit is available in the boarding houses during the evenings. Filtered water is also available in boarding houses during the evenings. Young people are able to influence food choices by expressing their preferences to their representatives at School Council meetings and there was evidence seen that the school had acted upon these preferences in the past. Due to their complex medical histories the young people tend to remain registered with their home GP. However, the school has a contract arrangement with the local GP surgery for a doctor to attend to the needs of any young person at the school who may become ill. The GP also conducts the initial medicals on young people admitted to the school. Routine dental and optician check ups are arranged by parents, although emergency dental care can be accessed through the emergency dental service. Psychiatric and Psychologist assessments can be requested from the Local Child and Adolescent, Mental Health Services

(CAMHS) teams and the school has also accessed private psychiatric services in collaboration with parents. Care staff support children who bedwet in a discreet and caring manner and there is a written policy for the laundering of soiled linen. The school has a Therapy Team comprising of a Speech and Language Therapist, an Occupational Therapist, and a Trained Counsellor. The Priory Group have a free counselling service available for its staff. There are lockable medication cabinets in each of the boarding houses suitable for the storage of both prescribed and controlled drugs. All of those staff who administer medication had received training in this area. There is a policy that two staff are present during the administration of medication and both must sign the administration record. The person responsible for providing in house training in the administration of medication should update their training and validate their training methodology with an approved pharmacist. There are fully stocked first aid boxes in all key places throughout the school. All care staff have been trained in first aid and the school has a bring forward system in place to ensure that this training is regularly updated. There are adequate numbers of toilets and bathroom facilities in each of the boarding houses to meet the needs of boarders. The shower facilities in each boarding house require refurbishment and the school has identified this as an area to be developed in the coming year. A responsible officer ensures that a comprehensive annual Health and Safety Check is conducted for all internal and external parts of the premises. It would not be possible for a wheelchair user to board at the school without major adaptations being made to the boarding houses. The school has a programme of evening and weekend activities for boarders to ensure that they have adequate exercise. This includes visits to a local gym and swimming pool. Several young people attend local sports clubs. For example, football and horse riding clubs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The Head of School is the designated Child Protection Officer and the Head of Care acts as his Deputy. Both have had training in Child Protection from the local 'Safeguarding Children' panel within the past year. The school has a copy of the local authority 'Safeguarding Children' procedures available for staff guidance. All care staff spoken to were aware that any disclosure of abuse must be immediately made known to the Head of School. All care staff have received child protection training as part of their induction and have also received in-house training as part of the Priory Group's in-house, online training programme 'Foundations For Growth'. The school had referred four instances of child protection concerns to the appropriate authorities and notified the necessary agencies within the past year, and appropriate policies and procedures had been followed. The school has clearly written policies on Child Protection, Complaints, Bullying and Absconding (Missing Persons). These are contained in the Staff Handbook and in the Student Handbook. The Student Handbook does not contain the contact details of Ofsted. The school's policy on dealing with bullying involves keeping a record of the incident including statements from the victim and the perpetrator and any witnesses, together with a record of the action taken. The parents of both victim and perpetrator are informed. These records were seen to show that appropriate actions and sanctions take place. There is a designated Sanctions Book recording all sanctions applied. All children spoken with told the Inspector that they felt safe at the school and that they felt that any bullying that occurs is always dealt with effectively by staff. This is an example of outstanding practice. All staff receive training in the use of necessary physical intervention within their first term following their appointment. This training is renewed every two years. The training is provided by a member of staff who is an accredited British Association of Learning Disabilities (BILD) Trainer. All incidents of physical intervention are recorded in a dedicated record book. The school has

a clearly written complaint's procedure and the records of complaints received showed that they had been acted upon and appropriate action taken. All staff vetting and recruitment policies ensure that appropriate checks are made on staff who come into contact with children on the school premises, including ancillary workers and contractors. The school operates an effective system of behaviour management. Individualised Behaviour Plans (IBPs) are in place for each young person which is designed to address their needs and particular behaviours resulting from their Asperger's condition. The inspector witnessed good staff/pupil relationships. All staff address young people in a courteous and respectful manner and were seen to respect their privacy. Staff knock before entering bedrooms and all young people have their own bedroom door key. Bedrooms can be accessed by staff in an emergency. The school has a leasing arrangement for three mini-buses, three people carriers and two saloon cars. All staff who drive must submit their driving licences for inspection and inform the school if they accrue any driving convictions/penalty points. Drivers have to undertake training from an approved training school and have to conduct a vehicle safety checklist when using these vehicles.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All young people are placed at the school following a Statement of Special Educational Needs with a core diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome or related condition. Following their admission, the school prepares for each young person a 'Placement Plan' which comprises of an Individual Education Plan (IEP), an Individual Care Plan (ICP) and an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP). To support the application of these plans each young person has an identified Key Care Worker and a Key Tutor and an identified Teaching Assistant. The Therapy Team also constructs a Personal Development Plan (PDP) for each young person. All of these plans are reviewed each term or more regularly if required. The young people may access the School Counsellor at any time for emotional support. There are weekly staff meetings of care and teaching staff where information is exchanged about educational and pastoral care issues affecting individual young people. Communication Books ensure that there is effective collaboration between the professional groups within the school. The school's primary educational focus is on addressing the educational needs of young people with Asperger's Syndrome and in improving their self confidence and self esteem. Care staff demonstrated a good awareness of this condition and of the needs of young people. Class sizes are a maximum of eight and a teacher is supported by teaching assistants in the classroom. The school has the valuable resource of a satellite house in a nearby village which can accommodate and support up to six young people who have the ability to live more independently. Every year 11 young person is linked to a Personal Advisor from the Connexions Service to help prepare them for their further education and training. All young people may access the school's IT equipment to contact families. This system is appropriately safeguarded. Young people may use their mobile phones outside of school times. The boarding houses have mobile pay phones which may be used to phone parents and which can be taken to a place of privacy. The school holds and administers age related weekly pocket money on behalf of parents. The young people may also acquire further money which rewards good behaviour as part of the Individual Behaviour Plan. The young people were seen to enjoy a range of appropriate recreational and leisure activities. This included a trip to an animal welfare sanctuary.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are regular School Council meetings where young people's representatives meet with the Head of School and Head of Care to decide about issues of day to day living at the school. These meetings are agenda focused and are recorded in a proper manner. Young people spoken to felt that this was a fair and appropriate forum for consultation and that their views were respected and acted upon. The school's admissions policy includes a three day period with overnight stays which is assessed by the school. If successful, a three month probationary period takes place after which the placement is reviewed. The school has a written policy on supporting young people with homesickness. The school will also contact parents by email or telephone to make them aware of any matters arising with individual young people. Young people's contact arrangements with their families have been discussed earlier in this report. It was noted that one young woman had a single room with en suite in Ridgeway which was otherwise an all male boarding house. The school explained the reasons for this arrangement to the Inspector and it was agreed that this would be reviewed on a weekly basis.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people wear school uniforms during the school day and change into their casual clothing during the evenings. An effective laundry system was seen to be in place. Towels and bed linen are changed weekly or more often if required. Staff deal with bedwetting in a way that preserved the young person's dignity and the school has a soiled linen policy to advise staff. Parents supply young people with toiletries but the school keeps a supply for young people should these run out. As previously stated, parents provide young people with pocket money which is held by the school who allocate it according to an agreed age related scale. They may also accrue financial rewards as part of the schools individualised behaviour management system. All of the living areas in the boarding houses had adequate space and were bright and airy and furnished and decorated to a good standard. The school has a development plan for improvements to the buildings and an appointed maintenance worker attends to smaller repairs. The showers in all of the four boarding houses within the campus have small cubicles and have a somewhat tired appearance. The Senior Management Team stated that a budget has been set aside to update the shower facilities within the school during 2008 and this will be a focus of the next inspection. Staff are trained in fire safety as part of the Foundations for Growth training programme. The school carries out whole school fire drills and evacuations every fortnight. A fire record book shows that fire alarm tests and equipment checks are carried out regularly. The girl's boarding house Avalon is situated in converted loft area of the main house of the school which has only one exit/entrance. It was noted that a fire authority inspection has not been carried out since 2005 and an Environmental Health Officer Inspection has not been carried out since 2004.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school does have a distinct 'Statement of Purpose' as defined in Standard 1 of the National Minimum Standards (NMS), it also has an array of information documents for children, parents and stakeholders, including a prospectus and a student handbook, which meet these requirements. The school has a clearly written Placement Plan for each young person attending the school and this contains an assessment of their educational, behavioural and social needs and records their progress in this regard. These confidential files are kept under secure conditions. The school has a personnel file in place for each member of staff which records

their application, recruitment and vetting. This also records their qualifications, experience and training undertaken. These files were seen to be up to date and clearly written. Each member of staff has a clearly written job description that fully describes their role. There is a comprehensive induction checklist which staff must sign and date when items have been completed. This includes the need for staff to familiarise themselves with the schools comprehensive list of policies and procedures. There is a ongoing, online training programme for staff 'Foundations for Growth' which trains staff in all of their necessary core skills and in their understanding of these policies and procedures. There is a clearly written and budgeted development plan for the school. The Head of Care is part of the school's Senior Management Team and oversees care staff to ensure the wellbeing of boarders and the high standards of the living environment. All care and ancillary staff receive at least one and a half hours one to one supervision from a line manager at least once every half term. There was evidence of a high level of pastoral care and good collaboration between educational and care staff. The Head of Care has many years experience in child care management and has a professional social work qualification. At least 80% of the care staff have a NVQ Level 3 Qualification in Child care with several of them having NVQ Level 4. There are two qualified NVQ Assessors who are part of the staff group. Boarding house staff keep a daily record of events occurring in the boarding houses. The school has an 'Independent Listener' whose contacted details are displayed around the school and who young people may contact and use as an advocate. Farleigh college is part of the Priory Group, a large national agency providing health, social and children's residential care across a range of services. The Priory Group appoint responsible individuals to conduct the NMS 33 monitoring visits monthly and a written report is made to the Head Teacher who provides an action plan in response. The school have set up a Board of Governors with a number of Parent Governors. Its function is attended by members of the Senior Management team comprising of the Head Teacher and the Head of Care .

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
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the shower facilities within the school boarding houses will be updated during the coming year as was stated by the Head of School. (NMS 25).
- ensure that the person responsible for providing in house training in the administration of medication updates their training and validates their training methodology with an approved pharmacist. (NMS 14)
- ensure that young people are made aware of the contact details of Ofsted by including these in the Student's Handbook. (NMS 4)

- keep under weekly review the arrangement whereby a single young woman is placed in an otherwise all male boarding house. (NMS 2)
- put in writing to the fire authority and the Environmental Health Office requests for inspections of the safety of the whole premises and in particular the safety of the girl's boarding house. (NMS 26)
- continue to ensure that young people are always given the choice of a single room.

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)

Annex A

- 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.