

Holbrook Centre for Autism

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic
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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

The Holbrook Centre for Autism is run by Derbyshire County Council and provides specialist education and care for students with autism, severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour aged between five and 19 years old. The school is situated in the small village of Holbrook. The residential provision can be accessed by students for up to two nights a week in term-time dependent on the individual's assessed needs. There are seven bedrooms and a total of 20 students use the residential facility throughout the week. There are two units, Acorn unit is on the first floor and has its own lounge, dining room, small kitchen and bathing and toilet facilities. Oak unit is situated on the second floor and has a kitchen, lounge, dining room, bathroom and toilet facilities. Students have their meals, except lunch, in the units. All bedrooms are single. There is a sensory room, library and other activity rooms/areas. Students use community resources in the nearby town of Belper and the city of Derby. The school has its own transport. There are three staff on each unit and an additional member of staff who is supernumerary during the waking hours. There are three waking night staff and one staff sleeping in on duty each night.

Summary

This was a key announced inspection. The purpose of this inspection was to meet the statutory requirement of one announced inspection visit each year and to check on the progress made in meeting the recommendations made in the last inspection report for 25 September 2006. The recommendations made were as follows: 1. Information regarding a student's medical/health needs should be obtained from parents/carers prior to students using the residential provision. 2. Details of gaps in employment should be explored and written records kept. 3. All care staff including night staff should receive regular supervision in line with National Minimum Standards. All key standards were inspected. Standards 7, 11, 19, 21 and 23 were not inspected. Since the last inspection the school has been extended with new classrooms and a gym being built. At the time of this inspection final works to car parking areas were taking place. This inspection identified that staff remain committed to raising standards and improving the quality of care to students using the residential provision. Staff continue to work with patience and determination in enabling students to achieve their full potential despite the difficulties they face. An excellent standard of care is provided for students based on their assessed needs. Students are cared for in a safe and secure environment by a highly skilled staff team who work hard to meet the complex and challenging needs of the students. Staff are skilled at communicating with students and various forms of communication are used. Staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure students' needs are met.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Staff at the school have continued to work hard to raise standards and improve the quality of lives for students. Significant improvements have been made which have enabled students to make a more positive contribution to their lives on a daily basis. All relevant medical and health information is obtained from parents/carers and used to formulate health care plans. The school has been accredited with the National Healthy Schools status. Students now choose their own meals in residential, shop for the ingredients and help with the preparation of meals. This gives

students meaningful experiences and enables them to learn independence skills wherever possible. Dishwashers have been provided for both residential units. Thermostatic mixer valves have been fitted to all hot water outlets used by the students which reduces the risk of scalding. The school's management team have provided training for taxi drivers and escorts in child protection, behaviour management and the handling of medication since the last inspection which has resulted in greater safeguards for the students. Gaps in employment history are now explored and written details kept when recruiting new staff. Students are being supported to contribute to their annual reviews by using alternative methods of communication such as 'photo story'. A wider range of activities has been provided based on individual needs and interests giving students more opportunities for enjoyment and to build up their confidence. Students using the residential provision have set up their own business and enterprise scheme which has given them valuable experiences in preparing for adulthood. These experiences include being part of a company, working together as a team, making decisions, learning about health and safety considerations and money management. Significant improvements have been made to the residential accommodation since the last inspection which has created a more homely and pleasant environment for students to stay in. Residential staff have raised funds to decorate the residential accommodation and provide additional leisure items such as televisions and DVD players for students' bedrooms. Communal areas have been decorated and new furniture provided making the environment more comfortable. Each student has been involved in choosing the décor for their bedrooms resulting in them being more personalised and reflecting the student's interests and hobbies. All care staff including night staff now receive regular supervision in line with National Minimum Standards. The local authority has an 'advisory and inspection service' and a link advisor from this team meets with the head teacher regularly as part of the Quality Development Dialogue (QDD) programme. This is based on self-evaluation including an evaluation of the residential provision and forms part of the school's monitoring and quality assurance system.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Students live with their parents/carers, who have overall responsibility for their child's health needs. Staff are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle ensuring the health needs of students are met whilst staying in the residential unit. Due to the nature of the students' disabilities and challenging behaviours, it is of paramount importance that staff work closely with parents and other professionals to ensure health needs are met. Parents are confident that staff are competent in meeting the needs of their children and confirm that staff work closely with them. Care records give clear details of health needs and what actions to take to meet them which enables staff to meet the students' health needs. Due to the communication difficulties some students are not able to verbally express pain or when they feel unwell. Staff have developed a Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS) strip for students to use when they are not well. Staff take appropriate action when a student is unwell or has an accident. Procedures are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately handled and stored to safeguard students' welfare. Staff receive training on the administration of medication. Medicines are stored appropriately. Medication Administration Record (MAR) sheets are kept. The recording of medication is good and records and practice is monitored by members of the school's management team. All staff receive first aid training. Students have lunch in the school dining hall which is provided by the school's catering staff. Meals provided are varied and nutritionally well-balanced ensuring students' dietary needs are met. The school has a gold award from Derbyshire County Council in recognition of the high standard of meals provided. Fresh fruit

and vegetables are used for all meals therefore promoting a healthy lifestyle. Catering staff communicate well with students. Students have breakfast and tea on the residential unit. Staff are committed to enabling students to make choices and support them to acquire independence skills as much as possible. This involves risks and staff take appropriate actions to reduce levels of risk to ensure students can develop and achieve in a safe environment. Students are supported to choose their meals, are involved in shopping and the preparation of meals. Meals are varied based on students' needs and likes. Mealtimes are relaxed and staff support students where necessary. Students are happy with the meals they receive. Staff receive training in basic food hygiene.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Safeguarding students remains at the forefront of the school's philosophy and practice. Students are cared for in a safe and secure environment, by a skilled and experienced staff team which helps to promote and protect the well-being of students. Students at the school have communication difficulties and many of the students present challenging behaviours. Staff are highly skilled in communicating with students and managing this behaviour resulting in students being able to live and develop in a safe environment. Staff work with students in a sensitive manner ensuring privacy and dignity is maintained. Staff understand the need for confidentiality and records are kept securely. The school has its own internal complaints procedure and also the Derbyshire County Council complaints procedure. No complaints have been received since the last inspection in September 2006. The complaints procedure which is in pictorial form is on display in both residential units. There are various ways in which students are supported to access the complaints procedure which take into account their communication difficulties. These include close observation of behaviours, the use of different communication systems such as PECS and working closely with parents and other professionals. Students also meet each week with their key workers for 'reflection time' where they are supported to communicate their views about staying in residential. All staff and other people who have direct involvement with the students receive child protection training/instruction and are clear about their responsibilities to report any concerns. There are clear safeguarding policies in place. However, the school's child protection policy does not reflect changes resulting from the 'Working together to safeguard children 2006' guidance, for example, it refers to the Area Child Protection Committee and does not include all the points of Appendix 1 of the National Minimum Standards. The school's management team has provided a training programme for taxi drivers and escorts based on safeguarding and protecting students from the risk of harm. The school has an anti-bullying policy which gives clear details on how the risk of bullying is minimised. This includes providing clear structures and routines for students, high staffing ratios and the use of appropriate communication methods. There is a policy on 'absence without authority'. However, due to high staffing and supervision levels and security systems within the school students have little opportunity to go missing. Risk assessments are in place for each individual student for trips out of the school. Staff are extremely skilled in managing students' behaviours and work with students in a calm and sensitive manner, ensuring individual's dignity and privacy are not compromised. Individual behaviour management plans are in place where needed. Students are enabled to routinely access community facilities despite the behavioural difficulties that they can present. All staff including ancillary staff receive TEAM TEACH (Techniques that are Effective with Anger, Aggression Management utilising Therapeutic Educational Awareness Communication Handling strategies) training. Physical intervention is not used often. The management of health and safety is good which helps to protect students and staff from the

risk of harm or injury. Equipment is serviced as required. Regular fire safety tests are carried out although the fire safety risk assessment has not been completed. Staff receive health and safety training. There are clear procedures for the recruitment of staff and effective and safe recruitment practices help to protect students from the risk of harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Students receive a high level of individualised support based on their assessed needs and likes. Staff ensure that students are given every opportunity for enjoyment and achieving by provision of educational support and a range of activities. Staff have an in-depth knowledge of students' needs and know how to support them. Staff work hard to enable students to become as independent as possible and reach their full potential. There are good communication links between education and care staff who work consistently with students. Residential staff have handovers with education staff twice a day. Care staff attend students' Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings and annual review meetings. The head of care has adopted systems used in education to monitor care provided in residential as part of the internal quality assurance systems. Students are provided with a range of activities both in-house and in the community based on their individual needs and preferences. Students are given opportunities to learn new skills and try out new activities including accessing community activities/resources. The challenging behaviours often presented by students does not prohibit them from using community leisure facilities. Individual risk assessments for activities are in place. Students receive different therapies where a need has been identified, for example, speech and language therapy and music therapy.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff work hard to empower students and make every effort to enable students to make choices and decisions about their day to day life wherever possible. There are some excellent examples of work undertaken by staff to enable students to communicate. For example, the student surveys sent out by Ofsted were adapted by staff to enable students to give their comments about life at the school. Students are supported to learn about and respect different faiths and cultures. There are wall displays made by students about different faiths which include photographs of different places of worship they have visited. Staff communicate and consult effectively with parents and other relevant professionals to ensure students' needs are met and that they receive the best possible care. All students have home-school link books and parents appreciate being kept informed about their child's well-being and progress. Students are supported by staff to contact parents/carers where appropriate. Excellent relationships exist between staff and students. Staff work with patience, determination and sensitivity in trying to enable and empower students to reach their full potential and to get the best out of life. Staffing levels and the deployment of staff enable staff to provide high levels of consistent support to meet students' needs. Students at the school need clear structures and routines to ensure their safety, well-being and development. Routines are based on individual needs and are adhered to, which makes life easier for students and enables them to achieve and develop. Care plans are of a very good standard and give clear details of students' assessed needs, likes and preferences and these inform staff how to work with an individual. Students' daily routines and preferences are also included. Targets are set from the care plans, which also reflect educational targets set in students' IEPs. There are systems in place for monitoring students'

progress in achieving the targets. Care plans are updated as and when required. Risk assessments are also in place and students are supported to take controlled risks, appropriate to their abilities and levels of understanding.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Staff work hard to provide a homely and pleasant environment for students to live in. Students are supported to maintain their individuality and personal preferences in terms of clothing and personal requisites. Students are helped to look after their own money wherever possible. Each student has a pocket money book which is used to record income and money spent. Pictures of different coins and notes are used. Students are given the opportunity to acquire various independence skills including planning, budgeting, shopping, cooking and laundry skills in preparation for adulthood. A number of these opportunities have arisen through the business enterprise schemes that students are involved in at the school. Students work enthusiastically in running these schemes and have acquired different skills and increased their self-confidence. Students enjoy accommodation that is decorated, furnished and maintained to a satisfactory standard. Students are supported to personalise their rooms. The majority of bedrooms have DVD players and televisions. Sound monitors are used in some students' bedrooms to monitor their well-being. Written consent for their use is obtained from parents. There are sufficient bathrooms and toilets to meet the needs of the students. Bathing facilities allow students' privacy to be respected.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school's management team provide clear direction and leadership which results in a well-motivated staff team. The staff team are experienced and highly skilled in meeting the complex needs of the students, helping students to feel safe and valued. Parents are very happy with the education and care their children receive at the school and are full of praise for staff. Parents appreciate the support they as families get from staff. The school provides training for parents in behaviour management. The school has a clear statement of purpose which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for students and how they will meet the needs of the students. Care files are well organised and indexed and contain the information required in Standard 18. Students are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently. Photographs of staff on duty are displayed on each of the residential units to inform students who will be working with them. Some staff have left recently and the posts have been advertised. Vacancies and sickness are being covered by agency staff. Appropriate safeguards and systems are in place to ensure the well-being of students and that they receive consistent care. Agency staff receive an induction and are not allowed to work alone with students including providing personal care. Systems for the induction of new staff help protect and safeguard students. New staff receive an induction which includes spending time shadowing experienced staff. New staff are not allowed to work alone with students including providing personal care until they have successfully completed their probationary period. The school is committed to providing staff with appropriate training and staff are encouraged and supported to attend training courses. Staff training needs are discussed and identified in supervision and also form part of the school's 'continuing professional development plan'. All care staff have the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Staff receive regular supervision and find this useful, giving them

time to discuss their workload, reflect on practice and identify any training and development needs. Appropriate records are kept. Staff feel valued and supported by the school's management team who are approachable. Staff are consulted on different issues and are included in the development and day to day running of the school. Their views and suggestions are considered and acted upon where appropriate. Some systems are in place to monitor records and practices. A representative from the local authority visits the school every half term as required by this Standard. A report is produced for each visit.

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 school's child protection policy to ensure it reflects the changes resulting from the 'Working together to safeguard children 2006' guidance and that it includes all the points in Appendix 1 of the National Minimum Standards. NMS 5
- complete the fire safety risk assessment. 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.