

The Priory School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Jon Swift / Heather Chaplin
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Date of last inspection	2 October 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

Priory school is a Local Authority provision for boys who are subject to an Educational Statement of Need, within the category of behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). The school is located on the outskirts of Taunton within a housing development. The boarding house is attached to the school and operates as a separate provision. The boarding provision is used flexibly to meet individual needs, which includes after school activities for a small number of pupils. At the time of inspection the school had 47 boys on roll of whom seven were using the boarding facility. Ages of the boys attending the school range from 11 to 16 years. Major building works are planned to begin for the whole school site in January 2008 this will include a complete refurbishment and upgrade of the boarding provision.

Summary

This inspection was announced. All key standards were assessed.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection 14 recommendations were made. This inspection has confirmed that 12 of these have been met and are commented upon in this report. The recommendations still needing further work are the schools prospectus and written reports following a governors visit. Both of these items are being progressed by the school and are included in the recommendations of this report.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Since the last inspection the school have introduced a system for recording the health needs of young people. Parents are closely involved in creating and maintaining these records. In some cases these lacked detail. Consents for medical treatment have been obtained. The home has safe systems for the management of medicines. Medicines are kept in a locked cabinet and young people do not have access to these. Staff have received training on the safe handling and management of medication. First aid boxes are regularly monitored and the majority of staff have received first aid training. Arrangements have been made for the remaining staff to undertake this training. The school provides varied and nutritious meals and encourages healthy eating. Young people stated that the food is good and that they can have alternative meals if so wished. There is access to refreshments and healthy snacks, including fruit, during the waking day.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The school has policies and procedures in relation to the promotion of privacy and confidentiality. Staff are clear about privacy protocols. Young people have keys to their bedrooms and confirmed that staff knock on bedroom doors. Bathing and toilet facilities promote privacy and have appropriate locks fitted. Young people state that they are familiar with the complaint procedures. Parents and young people consider that staff respond quickly and appropriately to any issues

raised. Complaint procedures are detailed in the young person's guide and the information provided to parents. The details of how to complain directly to Ofsted need amendment. Since the last inspection there has been one recorded complaint. The school has clear policies and procedures in relation to child protection. All staff involved in the boarding provision have received training in matters relating to child protection. Staff demonstrate sound awareness of safeguarding procedures. There are policies and procedures in relation to countering bullying. Staff are aware of the potential for bullying to occur and challenge bullying whenever they are aware of it. A system of restorative justice is used at the school. During the inspection young people followed these principles without any prompts from staff. The school has policies and procedures in relation to sanctions, behaviour management and the use of physical intervention. Records are kept of restraints, sanctions and rewards. All staff have received training in the use of physical intervention. However, copies of the policy signed by staff were not available on individual personnel files. Young people believe the sanctions imposed are fair. The restraint log shows that the entries are being regularly audited. However, it is not possible to verify when these audits took place. Comments on the appropriateness of individual actions with any subsequent action taken are not shown. The staff team are committed in managing young people's behaviours in a professional manner. Behaviour management plans are in place. A daily routine with clear expectations are agreed between young people and staff. These expectations are used creatively within the boarding area to support young people. Environmental risk assessments are in place and reviewed monthly. However, these have not been completed for all areas of the boarding house or all activities involving young people. The risk assessments do not have sufficient detail recorded on how identified risks may be reduced. Records show that the school has worked closely with the fire and rescue service and have fulfilled all of the recommendations made. However, the records of drills and fire safety checks did not confirm that these have been taking place at the intervals recommended by the fire and rescue service. During this inspection there were several episodes of the alarms being activated and evidenced that staff and young people knew the procedures to follow. Young people's safety is protected by staff verifying visitors identity on arrival at the school and the use of visitors' badges. A record is also maintained to demonstrate who has visited the school. Staff recruitment records show that the school are completing all of the required checks for new staff appointed to the boarding house.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people who board at the school are supported in attending education. Daily meetings are held between care and teaching staff at the beginning and end of the school day. This enables clear information to be shared about individual young people. Communication between staff in the boarding provision, school staff and parents works effectively. Relationships between young people and staff are good. These arrangements are further supported by a key worker system. Young people consider that they are well supported. Each young person has facilities in their bedroom to complete homework or hobbies. They also have individual televisions, DVD players and music playing facilities in their bedrooms. There is a range of books, board games and other educational facilities available to young people within the boarding accommodation. There is a good range of purposeful and enjoyable activities available for young people in their leisure time. Staff are proactive in encouraging young people's involvement. Some activities utilise the school facilities and others involve the local and wider community. Parents say that a number of activities provided for the young people are reasonably priced or have no cost which enables them to continue enjoying the activity when they return home.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The staff team encourage and support the young people to make decisions about their lives and the manner in which the home is run. Young people and parents are positive about the arrangements for sharing their views and opinions with staff. All of the young people spoke positively about the staff team and professional interaction was observed during this inspection. There are clear admission arrangements in place and the newly developed recording systems underpin these practices. Placement plans have recently been revised and the system provides for clear plans to be recorded. Parents and young people are fully involved in the preparation and revision of these plans. The records sampled identified that significant information and actions to follow are not completed in a consistent style. An effective key worker system is in place. All young people are aware of their key worker and valued their involvement. Contact arrangements are detailed in each young person's individual plan. The school encourages regular contact with parents and provide suitable arrangements for this to take place. Most young people have personal mobile telephones which are used to maintain contact with family members and friends. Parents commented positively about the regular support they received from the care staff. The school is part of the County Council pilot project in developing support to parents and two dedicated staff have been employed as Parental Support Advisors.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The school continues to support young people in developing their skills for the transition into independent living. Personal independence programme booklets contain a helpful checklist and record the progress made by the young people. Plans are in place for the boarding house to be modernised and refurbished and work is planned to commence in January 2008. The head teacher and the head of care are developing a strategy for providing support and consistency for the boarders and their families whilst this work is taking place. The boarders and their families are aware of the impending work and plans are displayed in the school for everyone to view. The boarding accommodation is decorated and furnished to an acceptable standard whilst the refurbishment is awaited. Maintenance of the premises is taking place to ensure that the facilities are appropriate to meet the needs of the young people.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The statement of purpose has recently been updated and is awaiting approval from the school governors before being implemented. The young persons' Welcome Pack and information for parents are comprehensive and user friendly. The recording of staff recruitment processes demonstrates that all of the necessary checks and documents are in place. There are sufficient staff to meet the needs of the young people which includes waking staff on duty during the night. Two members of the care team have achieved a relevant NVQ 3 qualification and the other staff are working towards gaining this qualification. The head of boarding is undertaking the registered managers' award. The school shows a high level of commitment to the training and development of the staff team and demonstrates a commitment to the home having a well qualified workforce. The school ensures that all staff receive a comprehensive induction. Individual training needs are identified with good records kept. The head of care audits the training needs of the staff team. The head of care has good systems in place for monitoring

the performance of the home. The head teacher of the school is preparing a report for the governors on the welfare provision for boarding pupils. A school governor monitors the boarding provision and is a regular visitor to the school. A verbal report was provided to the governors at their last meeting.

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):

- arrange for surplus medication to be returned to parents
- devise a recording system to promote confidentiality on the recording of medication received from parents
- ensure that all health care plans contain detailed information on all aspects of health
- ensure that the details of how to contact Ofsted is included in all relevant documents
- ensure that all records are adequately monitored and comments on the appropriateness of each action are recorded and dated
- ensure that signed copies of the school's policies, as detailed in National Minimum Standard 10.19, are maintained
- ensure that any hazards in the environment have been clearly identified and state clearly what action is required to reduce risk
- ensure that fire safety checks and fire drills are completed at the intervals recommended by the Somerset Fire and Rescue Service.
- ensure that the good progress made with developing the young people's care plans is continued.
- ensure that the planned work to improve the environment continues
- provide written reports following the welfare monitoring visits made by a school governor

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.