

St John's School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Paul Taylor
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Date of last inspection	19 June 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

St John's School is situated in Seaford and caters for pupils between the ages of seven and 16 years who have a learning disability. The school is co-educational and provides a service to both day and boarding pupils. Boarding is available during term times and this includes weekends. There are three main boarding areas, one of which is used by female boarders. Facilities on site include a swimming pool, youth club, hard play area, play field, medical suite and classrooms. There is a college based in Brighton for older pupils. The Principal manages both the school and college and there is a Head of Care Services who provides oversight for the management of care on both sites. The college is the subject of a separate inspection.

Summary

The inspection of St John's School took place over three days. The inspector met with the Principal, the Head of Care Services, the Head of Care, teaching staff, care staff, nursing staff, maintenance staff, Chair of Governors and young people. Additionally a number of policies and written records were examined. The school is well managed and offers good levels of care and support to young people who are vulnerable and have complex needs. The staff team works hard to ensure that the young people have individualised support in a caring and nurturing environment. The care offered to the young people is supported by access to various specialists who work for the school. The multi-disciplinary co-operation between the departments ensures that the young people receive consistent and well co-ordinated care.

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 carried out in June 2006 it was recommended that sanctions be recorded in bound books. This now takes place and is underpinned by including young people's input that they understand what agreed sanctions will be imposed in the event that they misbehave.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Each young person has an individual health care plan which outlines their health and medical needs as well as medical histories. Health information is compiled by the nursing staff and young people's parents. The health care plans are not always endorsed when they are updated. It is therefore difficult in some cases, to judge when they were last updated to ensure that they are accurate. The nursing staff keep a record of accidents and treatment of illness or injury. These are generally accurate and up to date and tally with incident reports completed by other members of staff. Not all accidents have been recorded promptly and there was one incident in which there was no accident or incident report available. There is a thorough and well organised system in place for the administration and recording of medication operated by the nursing staff. Members of care staff receive training in medication issues from the nursing staff and this training is available on a rolling basis. Additionally the staff team are trained regularly in first aid. The recording of medication administered by members of care staff is not always accurate. There was one incident where a member of Night Care staff had administered some non prescribed medication to a young person but there was no record as to why this had been administered or at what time. There are a number of specialists available for the care and

guidance of the young people. Examples of specialists are Speech and Language Therapists, Art Therapist, Psychotherapist, Sensory Therapist, and Physiotherapist. This group of professionals are managed by the Nursing Manager. The young people have access to regular appointments with a doctor, optician and dentist. A healthy lifestyle is encouraged within the school curriculum with particular emphasis on the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. The young people are positive about the quality of food that they eat. There are meetings between catering, teaching, nursing and care staff when issues relating to individuals' diet need to be discussed. As a result of this, there is very good dissemination of important information made available to every one necessary.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There is a written policy in place for the staff to follow with regards to privacy and confidentiality. Records are kept secure in locked cabinets. Staff knock on doors before entering rooms. Guidance on assistance in personal care is clear and provided on a same sex basis. There is a complaints process in place for the young people and parents to follow in the event of dissatisfaction with any aspects of care. Records are kept of any complaints. There is clear guidance in place for the staff to follow with regard to child protection issues. Members of staff know what to do in the event that they have concerns about a young person's welfare. There is no process or policy in place to follow in the event that a referral has to be made using the Protection of Children Act List if a member of staff is dismissed for gross misconduct. The staff are aware of the different dynamics in the young people's group and are therefore aware of any bullying issues. There is guidance for the staff to follow as well as a Students and Young Person's Charter which outlines the expectations of the school with regards to managing bullying behaviours. There is a written process in place for the staff to follow in the event that they have to report a significant event to an external agency. This is followed when the need arises. The vulnerability of the young people who live at the school is very well understood by the staff who care for them. There are individual processes to follow in the event that a young person goes missing. This has been followed promptly when needed. There are individual management plans for each young person. These outline the responses for staff when dealing with both negative and positive behaviour. Each young person has an individual plan to record good behaviour and achievements. This often takes the form of charts where young people earn stickers and points for good behaviour and exchange these for outings or treats such as DVDs. In some cases, the young people have signed that they understand what the agreed sanctions for their behaviour are. Sanctions are recorded clearly in bound books. Any incidents which require the imposition of physical control on any young person are recorded on forms developed for this purpose. Not all the details are completed in the forms when they are completed. Examples include not recording if parents or guardians have been informed of the incident, the young person's comments or when the body maps have been completed. Fire drills occur on a regular basis. Fire equipment and detection devices are checked on a regular basis both by staff who work in the school and external contractors. Electrical equipment bought into the school is not always tested to ensure that it is safe. The member of staff responsible for maintenance has over 800 items to test on an annual basis and this is not being achieved. Some items have not been tested for over 18 months.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All the young people are the subject of Statements of Educational Need (SEN) and these are reviewed on an annual basis. Individual Education Plans (IEP) are formulated for each young person. Targets are outlined in each young person's IEP. The staff record each young person's progress with regards to achieving their targets. The care staff meet with the teaching staff on a daily basis to ensure that they are up to date with each young person's behaviour and participation in education. Meetings between the care staff, teaching staff and nursing staff are called when it is identified that a young person is experiencing particular difficulties or is in need of extra support. These meetings identify strategies to be used and these are shared across all areas of the school. This ensures that staffing is available to support the young people especially during times of crisis. Each young person is made aware of their targets to be achieved. Rewards are identified on an individual basis and in a manner which ensures that the young person sees the process as relevant to them. Rewards are based on what each young person is interested in and so ensures a degree of personal investment in the process. Staffing levels are sufficient to ensure that each young person receives the support, guidance and supervision that they need. Support offered to the young people is sensitive and good humoured. The structure and routine for each young person both in education and in activities in the afternoon and evenings, ensures that each young person has the opportunity to enjoy a full and constructive day.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are offered numerous opportunities to voice their views and opinions. Examples of forums available include the school council, key work sessions, house meetings and circle time during the school day. Each young person's communication methods are known by the staff. Examples of different communication methods used include the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), makaton, time lines and verbal communication. Each young person's point of view is listened to and valued. Staff interactions with the young people are relaxed and supportive. The staff are aware of the idiosyncratic needs of each young person and care plans outline what degree of support is needed and in what manner this should be delivered. Care planning and support is well planned and detailed and structured under Every Child Matters headings. Young people are encouraged to make comments about their care plans and agreed targets. This also includes involvement in agreeing what sanctions are appropriate in the event of poor behaviour. The structure of the care plans ensures that staff approaches are consistent and the young people know what to expect on a daily basis. Although most of the young people go home at weekends, communication with home is regular and important. The staff ensure that all communication and messages from home are recorded and the young people are able to telephone home if they wish. Visits from parents and guardians are welcomed and there is plenty of space around the site to ensure that these can happen in private if needed. The support and guidance given to the young people is very well delivered and it is clear that the young people are encouraged to voice their opinions in whatever method they are able.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The school is kept tidy and clean. The young people's rooms are spacious and in good condition. Young people are able to personalise their rooms with pictures and posters and are able to bring in items such as sound systems and games consoles. The member of staff responsible for

overseeing maintenance issues works very hard over a large site. Not all records of maintenance are dated when they have been completed. The environment is comfortable and well maintained.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school has a prospectus which outlines what services students and their parents will receive. The staff receive regular and varied training. Mandatory training such as child protection, first aid, health and safety, managing violence and aggression and food hygiene is attended by all staff during their induction and probationary period. Staff are expected to undertake a qualification at Level 3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) training in Working with Children and Young People once they have passed their probation. Senior members of staff have the opportunity to undertake training at Level 4 NVQ. The NVQ department is very well organised and efficient and offers staff the opportunity to develop their skills and training in a well structured manner. There are sufficient numbers of staff on duty to ensure that the young people receive the support and supervision that they need. The staff who work in the school are skilled and trained to meet the complex needs of the young people. They are well supported by senior staff who provide regular supervision and appraisals. The Head of Care is a well respected member of staff. 'She provides stability' is a comment that was made. She has appropriate qualifications to carry out her role and this is underpinned by her experience of working in the school for a number of years. The quality of leadership she provides is supportive to all the staff and young people and is of a good standard. The school has a well organised management team which takes on the strategic planning for the future. There is a five year plan in place which is called 'Thrive or Survive.' This outlines plans for the school to expand the services at the school which will lead to the admission of older pupils. There are specific members of staff who have delegated responsibility for certain areas such as health and safety, human resources, financial management and overall head of care services. The governing body has undertaken some changes in recent months. The chair of governors is enthusiastic and has plans to improve the input of the governing body in the running and monitoring of the school. The governing body is organised into different groups which monitor different aspects of the functioning of the school such as the 'Every Child Matters' working group, 'The Resources Working Group', and 'The Quality and Standards and Health and Safety Working Group.' Whilst there is good ongoing contact with the day to day functioning of the school from the governors and a good level of communication, monitoring visits have not been recorded on a consistent basis. The structure of the management system in the school ensures that there is good ongoing communication between the different disciplines.

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 health care plans are endorsed when they are updated.
- ensure that accidents to young people are promptly recorded.
- ensure that non prescribed medication given to young people by members of the care staff are recorded accurately.
- ensure that all members of staff who have responsibility to liaise with external agencies in child protection matters, are aware of their obligations outlined in the Protection of Children Act.
- ensure that all the details required in the forms which record incidents of physical restraint, are included.
- ensure that all electrical items bought into the residential part of the school are tested to ensure that they are safe.
- ensure that records of maintenance are dated when repairs have been completed.
- ensure that records of visits undertaken by governors are the subject of written reports that are made available to the school management's team promptly.

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.