

# Bowden House School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Angela Gunning
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	9 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**

Bowden House is a residential special school maintained by the London borough of Tower Hamlets. It is currently providing education, care and accommodation for 26 boys, with an educational statement for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, between the ages of 10 and 16. The school appointed a new Headteacher from September 2007 who has overall management, with the support of the Head of Education and two Heads of Care. The school and residential accommodation is on one site situated in large grounds on the outskirts of Seaford. The boarding facilities are located on the upper three floors. The school is a weekly boarding establishment, with several residential weekends to offer special activities and events.

### **Summary**

This was a short notice key inspection and included a two day visit to Bowden House. This inspection looked at outcomes for the key National Minimum Standards for children and young people receiving education and care in Residential Special Schools and five recommended actions made at the previous inspection with CSCI in October 2006. Four of these have been fully complied with. This inspection found that Bowden House continues to provide a very good level of care and support to assist young people in their educational, personal, social and emotional development.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

The school was asked to replace shower curtains in the shower cubicles with appropriate doors. All shower cubicles have now been fitted with doors. The school was asked to consider ways in which the anti-bullying ethos could be further explored with the young people. There are many strategies that have been put in place to ensure that bullying is monitored and dealt with appropriately. The school was asked to maintain a separate record of any sanctions or restraints used in the behaviour management of the young people. There are now separate books to record and cross reference any incidents where sanctions or restraints have been used.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The young people's physical and emotional health is well promoted, with good systems in place to ensure health needs are met. For example, an outdoors bounds instructor has recently been recruited to further improve the healthy living programme across the 24 hour curriculum. Also, some staff have been trained in smoking cessation, which has resulted in a good reduction of young people smoking. Each young person has a healthcare plan that identifies and assesses their healthcare needs. There is good liaison between various healthcare professionals and staff are fully aware of the young people's healthcare needs. The school has an effective medication policy and procedure. Staff have medication training, although this is not updated annually. The young people's healthcare plans provide staff with the necessary information to ensure the young people's medication needs are met. The school provides each young person with a healthy balanced diet that meets their dietary needs and choices. Mealtimes are relaxed, sociable occasions and cultural and religious dietary needs are catered for well. The young people are encouraged and supported to make healthy food choices and to plan and prepare food. The

young people said that 'they are given menu choices', 'provided with fruit' and 'healthy snacks', 'cook after school' and 'make breakfast'. The school recently won a gold award in the school nutrition awards operated by the London borough of Tower Hamlets.

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

The provision is good.

The school has a clear complaints procedure which is made available to the young people, their relatives and representatives. The young people confirm they are aware of the complaints procedure and can talk to people if they are unhappy. Records show the young people have clear behaviour management strategies. Staff are aware of these and confirm that the behaviour management system works well. The young people are aware of the behaviour management system and say that the rules are fair. However, the school's behaviour management policy does not clearly outline current policy and practice to ensure new staff and young people know exactly how it works across the whole school. The use of sanctions and restraint in the management of behaviour is appropriate and fully recorded, although the young people's comments are not added to the record. The young people's safety within the school is protected by various systems such as careful use of the visitors book, effective absconding procedures and regular health and safety checks. There are satisfactory systems in place to safeguard and protect the young people from abuse, although, the school does not have the new local child protection and safeguarding procedures. Staff receive training in child protection, however, this is not updated annually. Records indicate recruitment procedures are generally satisfactory, although there are some gaps in the procedure, such as ensuring written references are followed up by telephone; a written record is maintained of all interviews and involve the young people in the recruiting of new staff where appropriate. Records indicate that incidents of bullying are monitored and addressed appropriately. The young people confirm that the school deals with bullying effectively. The school has good health and safety policies and procedures to ensure the safety of the young people and staff. Regular fire safety checks and risk assessments are carried out, although there is not an up to date full fire risk assessment of the premises.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The residential contribution to the educational achievement of the young people is a strength of the school. The sharing of information between education and care staff ensures young people are given the practical and emotional support they need to reach their educational potential. Records indicate the young people have an Individual Learning Plan (ILP), which identifies educational and social targets. The young people confirm they are aware of these and are involved in setting these targets, although a record is not maintained to state that they have agreed to them. One parent said that her son "is doing really well in school. It is amazing, they have changed him around completely, he is a different child". The young people are given appropriate and individualised support. Staff demonstrate that they know the young people well and are aware of individual needs. One social worker commented that one boy 'has had tremendous support, particularly around his emotional development'. The school seeks advice and assistance from specialist external services in order to meet the needs of the young people. The young people confirm they are given help to follow their interests and hobbies, such as biking, weight training, fishing, football and ICT. The school does offer the young people an independent visitor who they can talk to, although there is limited awareness and accessibility.

## Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Listening, consulting and discussing with the young people is part of the ethos of the school and the new Headteacher intends to further improve this. Staff demonstrate that they value the views and opinions of the young people. The young people confirm they are able to communicate their views in various ways, such as school council meetings, weekly boarding group meetings, school magazine, 1:1 sessions with keyworkers and six monthly reviews. The assessed needs of each young person are well known by staff and there are plans of care to ensure these needs are met and kept under review. For example, each young person has an Individual Learning Plan that is targeted at their specific needs. The young people are given appropriate support and encouragement to keep in contact with their family and friends. The young people confirm they can call home and can meet up with friends.

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There are on going improvements to ensure that Bowden House is maintained, decorated and furnished to a good standard. The young people respect their accommodation and confirm they are consulted on decoration plans.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of the school's purpose is clear in setting out the care and facilities the school will provide. However, this needs to be updated to reflect the changes in staffing and current policies and practices. The Children's Guide is an attractive and well presented child friendly document. There is a stable, competent and caring staff team at Bowden House. Records indicate that there are good staffing levels that reflect the individual needs of the young people as well as the overall needs of the group. Staff confirm training provision is good, although the recording of induction and ongoing training is not fully effective in identifying and monitoring training needs.

## 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):

- carry out a full fire risk assessment in line with current fire safety legislation.
- ensure that the required recruitment procedures are followed.
- obtain a copy of the local child protection and safeguarding procedures.

- ensure all staff receive regular child protection training.
- consider ways of making the behaviour management policy clearer to ensure new staff and young people know exactly how it works across the whole school.
- ensure the young people's comments are added to the record of sanctions and restraint.
- maintain a record of the young person's agreement to the educational and social targets that have been agreed.
- ensure that awareness and accessibility to the independent visitor is improved.
- maintain a record of the action taken following issues raised at school council meetings.
- consider ways of recording training so that needs can be clearly identified and monitored.
- update the school's statement of purpose to reflect the changes in staffing and current policies and practices.

## 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.**