

# Hebden Green Special School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Head of care</b>	Andrew Farren
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Joan Feenan
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	16 January 2007

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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**

Hebden Green Community Special School is a Cheshire County Council maintained special school for children with physical disabilities and associated medical and sensory needs. It educates children aged between two and 19 years. The residential provision caters only for those from 11 years-of-age. Different groups stay overnight each week day evening. Although the residential unit can accommodate up to 19 young people the maximum staying on any one night is 12. The residential unit is staffed by care associates employed by Cheshire County Council and a team of qualified nurses employed by the primary care health trust. Hebden Green is situated in Winsford, Cheshire, on a small campus of health, educational and residential provision.

### **Summary**

Hebden Green provides high standards of care to children and young people. The school demonstrates considerable commitment to promoting the potential of every young person for whom it cares. Care and education practices are well integrated and designed to recognise the worth and maximise the potential of every young person. All aspects of the school's operation are continually monitored and evaluated to ensure young people are safe and well cared for at all times. Staff are trained and managed to provide high levels of support to young people who clearly enjoy and respond to the experience that the school offers.

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 continues to be committed to constant self evaluation and improvement. Clarification has been obtained over the obtaining of medical consent for medication and treatment for young people. The role of the independent listener has been updated to ensure it involves even the most vulnerable young people. Telephone checks are now made on the references for all members of staff to ensure the appropriate appointment of staff. Files and records have been re-organised to implement more effective and efficient recording practices

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children and young people's health and intimate care needs are identified and assessed at an early stage. Information from parents and other health professionals enables clear and specific health care plans to be produced. These detail how health care issues are to be dealt with. Young people are involved in ways that are appropriate to their age and understanding in compiling the plan and seeking the appropriate advice and treatment. Staff actively promote young people to take an interest in looking after their health and promote healthy ways of living. Staff make sure that young people have access to and information about health and social issues and support them in using that advice. The school has effective arrangements to secure specialist medical services including psychological and psychiatric advice, treatment and care to children needing these services. The school nursing team provides an effective health care resource and operates a highly developed and reliable medication policy to ensure young people and residential staff have support on hand at all times and that medication is properly managed and administered. The method of administering medication with meals could be

reviewed to ensure it continues to promote the dignity and independence of young people at all times. The food provided for the young people shows that staff have a very good understanding of what makes up a healthy balanced diet. Young people see meal times as enjoyable social occasions and accept good standards of behaviour as being normal.

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

The provision is good.

The school systems and procedures show a very high regard for the privacy of young people and for maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality about all aspects of young people's lives and care. Young people are very confident that their concerns will be addressed and that they understand the procedure for making any complaint or raising any concern. The children's guide does not make any reference to the school's policy on the use of mobile phones nor to the policy for when it may be necessary to search a young person's possessions. The school has very clear procedures for responding to child protection concerns and has very good links with the local safeguarding board. The anti bullying policy and plan for young people missing from the school are clear and robust. Training for staff is regularly updated and young people and their parents confirm that staff give a high priority to keeping young people safe. Young people are actively encouraged to maintain and develop acceptable behaviour to staff and their peers. The management of young people is based on the promotion of positive behaviour. The use of sanctions and restraints is virtually non-existent. The support young people provide for one another, according to their needs and abilities, is a significant feature of the school ethos. Training for staff in safe and appropriate physical intervention techniques is at a relatively low level. The school has robust and effective systems for ensuring the health and safety of young people, staff and visitors. The policies and procedures cover activities both in and outside of the school. The vetting of staff and visitors is comprehensive and thorough and ensures that all staff are safe to work with young people.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The school's residential provision and activities actively promote and contribute to young people's educational achievement. There is close liaison between care and education staff and this is fully recognised as supporting individual educational progress. Residential staff give active practical and emotional support to all young people irrespective of their level of abilities and needs. Young people are actively encouraged to take part in leisure activities both inside the school and in the wider community. Young people's own interests and hobbies are enthusiastically promoted and encouraged. Young people are given every opportunity to develop social skills and are encouraged to achieve to the best of their abilities and develop their feelings of self-worth by committed staff. The school has explicitly identified how to support individual young people's needs. Staff are fully open to addressing a wide range of possible needs including race, disability, language and the need to protect oneself from exploitation. Young people are clearly very comfortable with staff and demonstrate high levels of trust in them, and enjoyment with them, when in the residential accommodation.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's opinions, and those of their families, are central to the work of the school. Consulting with young people, discussing decisions affecting their welfare and involving them

how the school is run is fully integrated into all the practices of the school. Young people, for example, have influenced the way in which mealtimes are organised on the residential unit. Staff demonstrate that they place great value on the views and opinions of young people who themselves confirm that this is the case. The school's quality assurance system is based on the experiences of young people. Their families clearly demonstrate a confidence in the extent and quality of the ways in which the school communicates with and involves them in all aspects of their children's care. There is a very evident warmth in the relationship between staff and young people. Young people are clearly valued by staff and recognise and value the work that staff do on their behalf. Those young people who are very dependent on staff for all of their care needs are demonstrably relaxed and comfortable in their care. Each young person has a detailed placement plan that sets out their needs and how they will be met. Parents and carers are central to the drawing up of the plan and are involved at all stages of its implementation. Contact with families is encouraged at all times. Parents are able to meet with school and care staff at any time and visit their children whilst they are in the school. Parents are very comfortable in visiting the school and feel valued and welcomed by all staff. Care plans are not always clear about the formal basis for any stated restrictions of contact between young people and family members, neither is it always clear on the residential records as to who has parental responsibility for each young person.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given every opportunity and considerable support to take pride in their appearance and develop a sense of self-esteem and self worth. Developing each young person's potential and promoting self care skills is central to the care practices. The school staff work together as a team to ensure a consistent co-ordinated approach to recognising each young person's needs and maximising their potential. Parents and carers are central to the development of skills and work with the school staff at all times. The accommodation is well furnished and decorated and equipped to the highest standard. Although most young people share a bedroom it is only for the one night and is clearly part of the positive experience enjoyed by young people when they stay at the school. Care staff are sensitive to the needs of young people at all times, particularly for those who are in the initial stages of the overnight stays at the school. Young people clearly and demonstrably look forward to their stays at the school as part of an enjoyable and socialising experience.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The school provides information to parents and other professionals about what it provides and the values and principles upon which its care and education is based. The head of school recognises that the children's guide needs some updating. Some information for young people on the residential unit is out of date. Young people's files are well organised and comprehensive. The system and organisation of young people's records is based on the maintaining of confidentiality of information. This results in a number of different files, stored in different places, containing information relating to young people. The files used by the residential staff do not contain reference to people who hold parental responsibility for young people and other information about young people's background and family. The number of staff on duty is always enough to meet the needs of young people, including those with extremely high levels of need. There are no male residential staff members. Staff are well supported and supervised and there

are high levels of training, regularly updated, to ensure they have the specialist skills and knowledge to carry out their role. The school places a high value on the importance of monitoring and evaluating its practices through every level of its operation. The management team is committed to constant improvement and innovation and involves all members of staff, young people and parents as a standard part of its functioning. Monitoring visits by the governing body have not been carried out every half term.

## 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 the school provides clear guidance to staff and young people on when it may be necessary to search a young person's possessions (NMS 3)
- review the provision of training for staff in safe and appropriate physical intervention techniques with young people, and the circumstances in which they may be used (NMS 10)
- clarify the legal basis for any restriction of contact with parents, family members or other persons with parental responsibility (NMS 20)
- ensure monitoring visits on behalf of the governing body take place each half term. (NMS 33)

## 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.**