

# Vale of Evesham School

Inspection report for residential special school

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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 Vale of Evesham School provides education for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Learning Disabilities. The majority of children receive day education but there is provision for boarding, always described as the boarding school, which can accommodate 15 children and young people up to the age of 19 years, as weekly boarders. The boarding accommodation is placed on the first floor and consists of three suites, one of which is very separate from the other two. Each of the suites is staffed with its own team of care staff under a care officer, all of whom are responsible to the Head of Care. The school is maintained by the local education authority, Worcestershire County Council Department of Education, and is directly responsible to a governing body.

### **Summary**

This was an announced inspection that concentrated on the 18 key National Minimum Standards. The inspection visit was carried out by one inspector over two days. The school completed a self-assessment and pre-inspection questionnaire. The inspection focused on health needs, individual support and keeping children and young people safe. The inspection also concentrated on how staff interact with children and young people. Over the course of the inspection, all of the residential accommodation was visited and time was spent with children and young people, care staff, day care officers and managers. This inspection did not look at the admission or leaving processes for the young people or how the home prepares young people for adulthood. The inspection did not assess the environmental standards of accommodation. The overall quality rating for this setting is good with outstanding features. Children and young people are being extremely well cared for and are calm and relaxed in the company of staff. The school sets out a clear ethos for caring and educating children and young people. They are encouraged to be sociable and help each other. There is integrated approach that takes place between the residential provision and the educational setting. Children benefit from this culture and belief, that supports their continual development and progress. Excellent resources are in place for out of school recreational activities and this is a strong feature of the school. The school has formed positive relationships with families, carers and other significant stakeholders.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

The setting continues to demonstrate commitment to ensuring the service meets National Minimum Standards. Since the last inspection the school was asked to give staff medication training and this has been implemented. The complaints procedure has been improved and child-friendly leaflets have been introduced. Senior staff were asked to review the child protection policy and implement good practice models to help strengthen the protective strategies in the school setting. The school has completed this and this further safeguards and promotes children's welfare. Staff are ensuring that culture, ethnicity and religious needs are being clearly identified in the care plans. These areas are being addressed and planned for in terms of advice and resources being available.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health is exceptionally well promoted as the setting takes positive steps to address children's good health. Young people are encouraged to maintain a healthy diet and are provided with excellent opportunities to develop a clear awareness of what foods are good for them, for example, nutritious home cooking and baking features predominantly in the menus. Staff are paying strong attention to the likes and dislikes of children related to food and have used resourceful communication tools to gain this information. The school provides a varied menu plan that is in line with the Government's health guidelines. Staff are working hard to effectively consult with students about healthy meal planning. The children boarding have their food prepared by a cook. The kitchen area is of an exceptional high quality and is well maintained. Young people's health needs are identified and assessed prior to admission. Parents and carers hold primary responsibility for meeting children's health care needs and are encouraged to keep the school informed of any changes. Staff take effective steps to gather all relevant information about children in order to maintain a holistic overview of the young people's wellbeing. Staff are excellent at monitoring the health care needs and careful records are maintained of any dramatic changes. Young people are provided with a comprehensive health plan and staff are supportive with all matters relating to health. Staff are monitoring their height and weight gains as well as their dietary needs. There is a policy that addresses how health care and planning is monitored and reviewed. As a result, young people's needs are successfully met. Young people are receiving advice and guidance from staff about a range of health and social issues. Staff are able to create situations in which young people can develop their independent skills with hygiene and personal care. Children and young people are well acquainted with morning and evening routines. Children's health is further promoted because the setting has effective policies and procedures about how medication is administered and managed. Staff are able to follow good practices with the safe handling and storage of medication. Senior staff have the designated role of administering medicines and are responsible for the monitoring of the daily records. All medications are stored in a separate, locked cabinet and suitable arrangements are in place for storing and administering controlled drugs. The Head of Care monitors the arrangements for medication, record keeping and training. Young people's health needs are further promoted as the school employs a school nurse. Any child who has a specific medical need, for example, diabetes, are supported by staff to follow the effective advice provided by the school nurse. The medication policy has been reviewed and is comprehensive but it does not refer to the Administration and Control of Medicines in Care Homes and Children's Services. The setting responds to accidents appropriately as suitable arrangements are in place because designated staff hold current first aid certificates. First aid boxes are well maintained in the school. All accidents are effectively recorded in an accident book and these records are monitored by the Head of Care.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The school has a strong focus on safeguarding and protecting children and young people. There are robust operational policies and procedures in place to promote the safety, protection and welfare of young people. Children are protected because staff have a thorough understanding about their role in child protection. They understand the signs and symptoms of child abuse and they know what action to take if they have concerns about a child. The role of the designated child protection staff is well promoted in the school and staff are able to report concerns, swiftly. The setting is able to act on and refer child protection matters appropriately. All staff receive training with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. In addition, senior staff have attended further training. Staff provide close supervision for children and

young people. The residential provision is electronically alarmed and appropriate permissions have been sought. Children's risk management includes a clear assessment of their road safety awareness and if they are likely to run away. There are clear procedures in place for unauthorised absences from the school. This ensures that children's vulnerability is properly protected. Young people learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they have excellent opportunities to practise the evacuation procedures and staff keep a record of the practice. All of the fire safety checks, drills and risk assessments are up to date. Young people's privacy is protected and staff understand when they may share confidential information. Children and young people are encouraged to develop their independent skills to manage their hygiene. Staff are provided with clear guidance about how to provide personal support and this ensures clear safe care practices are being adopted. The school provides a clear policy on responding to complaints raised but it does not include the role of Ofsted and contact details. The school has worked hard to raise the profile of how complaints and compliments can be made. Child-friendly leaflets in a user-friendly format are available. The Regulator has received no complaints about the setting. Children and young people learn to positively interact with their peers and staff. Counteracting bullying is fully addressed in the procedures. Staff pay particular attention to compatibility and the mix of children and young people. They have been clearly told what action they should take if they feel they have been bullied. The school has an integrated approach through the use of the personal, social and citizenship classes. Children discuss and use a variety of material to develop their understanding and awareness around bullying behaviours. Staff are highly skilled at encouraging positive behaviours from children and young people. Children's behaviours are assessed, monitored and reviewed. Clear strategies are recorded in the behaviour management plans and the staff work hard to achieve successful outcomes with children. Staff are able to work cohesively and effectively to manage behaviours by providing clear, consistent approaches with structured boundaries and routines. All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention. Senior management are proactive and have developed a sophisticated monitoring tool to examine patterns and trends of behaviours across the school and boarding provision. This enables staff to have a clear understanding of the holistic needs of children and young people. The young people are protected by the organisation's recruitment systems and these records are held at the school and were available during the inspection visit.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Children and young people are receiving excellent support to meet their individual educational needs. The setting provides its own on-site educational facilities and the education policy sets out the principles of the provision. The provision provides a 24-hour school curriculum. Children and young people's educational targets are exceptionally well devised, recorded and progress is easily tracked. The care staff team work closely with the teaching staff and this is especially evident with the use of a wide range of augmentative communications used to support children's needs. Children and young people are encouraged to develop positive relationships with staff. Support for the young people is individualised and opportunities are created for them to learn and develop. The school's records demonstrate that young people are engaged in a variety of activities that is evaluated and assessed for their outcomes and effectiveness. In the dormitories there is an excellent range of books, toys and games for children to use. They are encouraged to use these resources and frequently do so. Staff provide time for role play and the value of play time is clearly understood by staff. Similarly, children have lots of opportunities to participate in a wide range of out of school activities including youth club, music group, rambling,

gym workouts, sailing and local outdoor activities centre. Young people also participate in shopping trips and learn about money management skills. Staff are extremely skilled at creating opportunities to develop and extend young people's abilities. During the inspection, children were seen clearly enjoying the music session after school. With the range and quantity of activities offered, staff plan carefully and ensure that risks are effectively managed. The school has an effective policy and provides training on valuing diversity. The remit of the school is to provide a good quality service for children and young people with autism. Information about young people's identity is addressed at the placement plan.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's welfare and self-esteem is promoted with positive strategies in place to encourage their development. Staff have an excellent attitude towards meeting the needs of children and young people. Through praise and encouragement, children are provided with a learning environment that is having a positive outcome on their growth and development. Young people benefit from a comprehensive support plan which sets out how the school will meet their assessed needs. The plans were coherent, well structured and accessible. Staff ensure that the records fully represent the current needs of children. At regular intervals, staff up date these records. The key worker and class tutor meet and set the termly targets and these are evaluated to reflect progress. The key worker role is pivotal with helping children with any problems and liaising with their families or carers. Children and young people are able to retain contact with their parents or carers and are encouraged to contact the school whenever they wish to. Staff provide a written record to families of their child's stay during the week at the school. Staff pay good attention to how children and young people are consulted. Staff use informal discussions to elicit their preferences about day-to-day matters related to the running of the school. Young people are active members in the school council. Children are provided with opportunities to exercise their choice, for example, about clothing, food and activities.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is not judged.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The school is effectively managed, which contributes to having a positive impact on the care and support of young people. Parents and carers are provided with clear and accurate information about the service provision and facilities on offer. Staff have a clear awareness of the principles and ethos of the school. Children are provided with information about the school that is successfully conveyed in a child-friendly format. The school is extremely well managed and staff are positive and enthusiastic about their work in relation to what the boarding provision can offer to children and young people. Staff feel well supported by the senior management who provide effective leadership and a clear strategic oversight of the quality of the boarding provision. The Head of Care is skilled and experienced and complements the senior team very well and is currently undertaking a professional qualification. She has clear vision about the quality of care that children and young people receive which is shared by the staff group. Staff are secure and confident with their care practices. The majority of staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Children benefit because staff manage their time well and staff are well deployed. The rotas are well

organised to meet the demands of the children and young people. Additional resources are in place for night waking staff and teaching staff who support the morning and evening routines. Good systems are in place to monitor and audit the quality of the care being provided. Considerable effort has been made to develop a quality assurance function tool to reflect the Every Child Matters agenda. This process is still in its infancy.

## 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):

- provide a copy of 'The Administration and Control of Medicines in Care Homes and Children's Services' published by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, to the school nurse. National Minimum Standard 14
- ensure the complaints procedure includes Ofsted contact details. National Minimum Standard 16
- ensure the Head of Care has a professional qualification that demonstrates competencies at Level 4 of the NVQ. National Minimum Standard 31
- continue to develop and improve the quality assurance function of the school's internal monitoring system related to the experiences of children. National Minimum Standard 31.



## 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.**