

Wilds Lodge School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Caroline Brailsford
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Date of last inspection	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

Wilds Lodge school is a residential and day school for boys aged between eight and 16 years with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It provides care to a maximum of 40 boys. The school is set in 16 acres of woods, ponds formal gardens and paddocks. It is surrounded on all sides by farmland. The town of Stamford is three miles away and Corby is approximately a 20 minute drive away. The boarding accommodation is divided into three areas within the main house. The bungalow, the lodge and the loft. The boys are divided up into groups according to their age. The school's boarding provision sets out to offer a 24 hour curriculum. It provides a safe, structured environment away from the distractions of difficulties that may exist within the family and the community.

Summary

This inspection was the first boarding welfare inspection to the school which was registered in January 2007. The inspection was announced and was a key inspection that covered all the key standards. In addition three other standards were inspected. Standard 14 is the key standard that was inspected in the outcome area 'Being Healthy'. In addition standard 15 was inspected. Standards 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 are the key standards that were inspected from 'Staying Safe'. Standards 12 and 22 are the key standards that were inspected from 'Enjoying and Achieving.' Standards 2,9,17 and 20 are the key standards that were inspected from 'Positive Contribution'. In addition standard 9 was inspected. There are no key standards in the outcome area 'Economic Wellbeing'. However standards 23, 24 and 25 were inspected. Standards 1,28, 30, 31 and 32 are the key standards in the outcome area 'Organisation'. In addition standard 29 was inspected.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children enjoy a healthy diet with a varied menu. The menu consists of fresh foods incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables. The food is well presented. All foods are homemade including puddings, cakes and biscuits. Children are seen to treat mealtimes as enjoyable social occasions and accept good standards of behaviour as the norm. The kitchen staff are well trained in what constitutes a balanced diet and hygiene standards. Staff were observed by the inspector to help the children make informed choices about their diet. There are health plans in place for the children and the staff understand what their individual needs are. Children with particular health needs are provided with appropriate support. The approach in the school is sensitive and ensures that children maintain their dignity at all times. Staff actively encourage children to take an interest in looking after their health and promote healthy ways of living. Staff make sure that children have access to, and information about health and social issues and support them in using such advice. When children are ill, appropriate arrangements are made for them to access a doctor in a timely way and the staff and children receive first aid from trained staff when they need it. The management of medicines in the school is a complex

task due to some of the health needs of the children. However staff have access to this policy and show that they understand their roles and responsibilities in this area. Staff are aware of the importance of medication records and records checked were found to be up to date. The staff are aware of the school's procedures for the storage and administration of medicines. This includes the procedure for the safe-keeping and disposal of controlled drugs which works well. There is a front sheet in the medicines file indicating all the medicines to be given that day which works well to ensure that no medicine is forgotten. There was one 'as- required' medicine which requires staff training and although the staff said they would follow the instructions on the box, they had not received the required training. There were no instructions on the label for this medicine other than 'as directed' and there was no protocol in the school for the administration. There was another 'as- required' medicine where the instructions were not as clear as they could be. There is a basic procedure in place for what should happen in the event of an error although more detail in this would be beneficial in ensuring that there is a step by step guide for staff. The head agreed to add more detail.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

There is a policy on privacy and confidentiality in the school which works well and the young people confirm that they enjoy the privacy they need. The staff are well aware that not all information passed to them by the children can be kept confidential. There have been no complaints about the school since its opening in January 2007. The young people know how to complain and there is a clear policy which is available to parents and other professionals. There is also an independent listener who regularly comes to the school to establish the feelings from the children about their care. Staff at all levels are aware of their responsibilities and are very knowledgeable about safeguarding. They have all received training so that child protection situations can be identified by any staff member should they arise. This includes all domestic staff. The school has a very clear procedure for responding to child protection concerns and has very good links with the local safeguarding board. Children confirm that they feel safe at the school. Children confirm that there are very low levels of bullying within the school and that staff act immediately and effectively to any information that bullying might be taking place. Children and staff are very clear what the school's policy on bullying is. The high staff ratio in the school ensures that bullying can be seen and dealt with quickly and effectively. Children are actively encouraged by the staff to discuss any problems with their relationships with other young people. There are clear procedures on what to do if a child becomes absent without authority. The high staff ratio allows staff to know the whereabouts of the children they are responsible for. Staff responsible for pastoral care would be involved in discussion with the child after such an incident. The management of behaviour is managed very well in the school. Any measures of control are based on active encouragement of acceptable behaviour. All staff work together to an twenty-four hour curriculum. Regular formal and informal staff meetings allow for discussion and the utilization of the skills which each staff member brings to the school. There is a wealth of knowledge and expertise in this area in the staff group. There are also therapists employed by the school and all staff work very hard to ensure that there is a consistent approach with firm, fair boundaries. The school's philosophy of a therapeutic approach ensures that there is a real positive emphasis on good behaviour and the school have had some very good results with young people. Given the nature of the children at the school and their behavioural difficulties, no negative behaviour was observed, for example there was no swearing and the young people were all polite and helpful. There are numerous examples of how children have developed and really improved with their behaviour. The staff believe

that these improvements are as a direct result of the positive intervention techniques that are used. Staff see the children in a very positive light. The children and staff confirmed that the use of physical intervention is as a last resort and staff at all levels are trained. This includes domestic staff with the aim being, that should the care staff not adhere to trained methods, that they can identify this and pass on concerns. Physical intervention is always well recorded but the bound book required by the National Minimum Standards does not have the required detail. Sanctions are rarely used and there is more of an emphasis on positive re-enforcement and rewards. Children and young people say that the way staff manage their behaviour is fair. Children are encouraged to add their comments to the records. The head monitors records in this area well. There are some risk assessments in the school but these should be extended to all areas of risk in the building, for example legionnaires and COSHH (Control Of Substances that are Hazardous to Health). Other areas of the children's lives are well risk assessed for example outings and activities. The children all know what to do in the event of a fire and all children asked by the inspector have actually practised a drill. There have been regular tests on the fire alarm system which have been documented. Other tests have taken place regularly on emergency lights and fire doors, however these have not been documented. The school have now received a recording book from the fire officer and the head assured the inspector that tests will now be recorded. The fire officer has recently visited the school and made several recommendations that the school are achieving in a timely way. The environment is safe for the children and checks that have taken place on the gas, boilers and electrics in the building. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) has also taken place and is well documented. The vetting of staff and visitors is comprehensive and thorough and exceeds minimum requirements, for example, verification and interviewing of referees.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The residential contribution to education is very well established involving close liaison with the teaching staff and this is fully recognised as contributing to the educational achievement of the children. Residential staff, therapists, teaching staff and the management team work together to ensure that children reach their maximum potential. This approach also ensures consistency for the children and has produced some excellent results for them individually. The staff know the children well and good relationships have been forged. The children have said that the best thing about the school is the staff and that they support them well with any problems that they may have. There are formal times when individual support is delivered, for example one to one meetings with children and house meetings. Also informal support is offered by staff to children. For example quality time is spent with them individually doing an activity, where a high level of support and guidance can be given. The therapists also deliver support sessions with the young people according to their placement plan and with the permission of parents and placing authorities. The children know that they can receive support from people outside of the school for example the independent listener.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The children feel involved in their daily lives and are asked for their opinions about what is happening to them. The staff formalise this with the use of questionnaires several times each year to establish the wishes and feelings of the children. There is open communication between the staff and the environment is frank, open and honest. For those children who have more of

a difficulty communicating their views, time is spent with those children, and they are given time to think about their responses. Staff demonstrate that they place great value on the views and opinions of the children. Children themselves confirm this is the case. There is a very evident warmth in the relationship between the staff and children. Children confirm that they feel valued by the staff and value the work done by staff on their behalf. Staff are very comfortable with their role and have worked hard to ensure that good relationships have been developed. Boundaries for the children's behaviour are evident and this is achieved whilst maintaining a high quality of relationship between staff and the children. Children say that the best thing about the school is the staff. Each child has a placement plan. This plan gives information on how the child's needs are to be addressed and is based upon an assessment. Children are aware of their placement plan. Progress made by the children is monitored and documented by the staff and achievements are celebrated. Children say that they can contact their parents and carers whenever they want and there are telephones for their use. Liaison between the parent and carers and the staff is very regular and there is a sense that staff are working with the parents. The parents or carers are allowed to ring the school regularly and the staff spend time before and after a weekend home discussing aspects that have or have not gone so well.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The location of the school in which the children and young people live is very well suited to the purpose of the school. Its size and the arrangement of the rooms "fits" very well to the needs of the children and much thought has gone into the design. The accommodation is very homely. All areas are decorated, maintained and furnished to an exceptionally high standard. Each boarding house is spotlessly clean. Children openly show their pride in the quality of the accommodation and given the complex needs and the behaviour of the young people there is little or no damage to property at this school.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

There is a statement of purpose relating to the school which meets the requirements of the National Minimum Standards. This is also presented in a format which is easily understood by the children. The number of staff on duty are always enough to meet the needs of the children and to support them in their activities, visits and appointments. Children report that they always know who will be on duty when and that arrangements for their care are never disrupted by a change in staff. The staff team has a balanced mix of male and female staff. The staff numbers are kept to a minimum and the staff group work split shifts to ensure continuity for the children. All staff sickness and annual leave is covered by staff employed at the school and this works well. Staff are very clear about who they are accountable to. They confirm that they receive one to one supervision at least once each half term and time is specifically dedicated to this. Staff at all levels said their supervision is of a high quality and that there are discussions about individual children and about the personal learning needs. Appraisal of staff performance is included in supervision. In addition to supervision there is specialist guidance for staff in all the roles including that of the head. The staff team are very competent, with a large amount and range of experience among its members. The skills within the team are very well matched to the group of children accommodated. The staff are highly motivated in their work and enjoy their jobs. Training has a very high profile and there is evidence of mandatory training being completed, but also of other areas of training which would improve the quality of care, for

example canoeing and mountaineering instructor course and Diploma in Social Work. Staff at all levels and the children speak very highly of the management team and feel that the school is very well managed by them. The head monitors the records regularly and knows what is happening in the school. There is a high level of enthusiasm in the management team and this is reflected in their management style.

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 a record of any physical intervention on a child is kept in a separate bound and numbered book and includes all the elements of standard 10.14 (STD 10)
- ensure that children are given medication as prescribed for them. In particular relation to protocols for 'as- required' medicines (STD 14)
- ensure that where staff carry out medical or nursing procedures, these are only carried out on the written authorisation of the prescribing doctor or the responsible nurse in relation to the individual child concerned, and by staff authorised and trained to do so. This is in particular relation to training for some 'as- required' medicines (STD 14)
- ensure that risk assessments are carried out, recorded in writing and regularly reviewed. Such risk assessments are carried out with regard to the school premises and grounds (including windows which present a risk to children or offer intruder access; safe car parking etc) (STD 26).

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.