

King's Mill School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Marcia Mackey / Sarah Urding
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Date of last inspection	26 February 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

King's Mill School is a local education authority provision which provides specialist teaching to 70 children of nursery, primary and secondary school age. The residential unit is on two floors and accommodates a maximum of 16 children and young people who all attend the school. Bedroom accommodation is available on each floor and consists of eight double and three single bedrooms. There are three bathrooms on the ground floor and two bathrooms and a shower on the upper floor. An outside play area is available for the use of children who stay at the residence.

Summary

This was an announced inspection which involved an assessment of the school's performance in all outcome areas. The inspection also included a review of recommendations made at the previous visit. A number of the previous recommendations have not been met and these recommendations have been reissued as a result of this inspection. Overall, King's Mill School provides a satisfactory quality of care to children and young people with disabilities. The school is well managed and children and young people are cared for by a highly caring and committed staff team. The school provides good and outstanding provision in some areas, including promoting children and young people's health, enabling them to enjoy and achieve and helping them to make a positive contribution. However, the school demonstrates weaknesses in some aspects of its safeguarding practice and there continues to be major shortfalls in the quality of the physical environment. These shortfalls impact negatively on the care provided to children and young people and significantly undermine the stronger aspects of provision.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the previous inspection, staff have undertaken training in the safe administration of medications. This helps to ensure that children and young people are protected from errors in administration. Staff now have individual training plans. This means that the head of care can monitor their training requirements and ensure that they are suitably qualified to care for children and young people with disabilities. All staff have received safeguarding training which is specific to children and young people with disabilities. This has improved their response to safeguarding concerns. Staff have also received more training in the management of challenging behaviour which helps them to respond safely and proportionately to children's behaviour. The school ensures that rigorous recruitment checks are undertaken for each new member of staff so that children and young people are cared for by safe adults.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are offered good quality health care which is based on a thorough assessment of their needs. Staff are knowledgeable about the health needs of all children in their care and have access to clear, written documentation to support their good practice. Each child and young person has an individual healthcare plan which contains detailed information about how staff should care for them. They feel that they are well looked after and this is confirmed by their parents who are very satisfied with the quality of health care provided. Children and young

people enjoy a nutritious diet while in school. Menus are varied and imaginative and include fresh fruit and vegetables with every meal. Children and young people are actively involved in developing new recipes and they demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet. Children and young people said, 'you get looked after if you're poorly', 'they are really nice to you if you don't feel well' and 'I like the food at school because it's really nice'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and young people feel safe in school and are protected by staff's robust response to safeguarding issues. All staff receive safeguarding training which is specific to the needs of children and young people with disabilities. They have good links with the wider professional community and they respond promptly and appropriately to child protection concerns. Children and young people feel that they can approach any member of staff for guidance and parents are confident about entrusting their children's safety to the school. Children and young people report that bullying is rare and that it is dealt with appropriately. The school undertakes a regular review of the school's bullying risk assessment to ensure that it is relevant to the needs of all children. Children and young people's privacy is not sufficiently protected by the bathroom facilities in the residential provision. One bathing area is separated by a curtain, rather than a door, and this does not give children and young people sufficient privacy. Children's confidentiality is not protected by the current practice of displaying written information about their intimate care needs on the bathroom walls. The school has developed good quality risk assessments for children and young people and there are very few reports of accidents and injuries. However, children are not sufficiently safeguarded by the school's practice of leaving the door to the residential provision unlocked during the day. The school has a clear complaints policy which is available to children and young people and their families. The school responds promptly to concerns and complaints but does not consistently record the outcome in writing. This makes it difficult to assess whether they respond appropriately, and whether children and young people and their families are satisfied with the outcome. Children and young people said, 'if you're worried you can talk to staff' and 'the staff keep you safe and help you if you're upset about anything'.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children and young people's personal and educational development are enhanced by the school's broad learning programme. They are actively encouraged to take part in a wide range of enjoyable and rewarding activities and are fully supported in experiencing new and challenging pursuits. The school makes excellent use of community facilities, including sporting and social venues, and this ensures that children and young people feel included in their local community. Staff have done some very good work in helping young people to gain Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) qualifications, which assist in developing their academic and life skills. They have produced some impressive project work which they are very proud of and they feel supported by staff, who take pride in their achievements. Children and young people receive a high level of individual support which is tailored to their needs and to any special requirements or wishes they may have. They have access to individual support whenever they need it and are cared for by a committed and knowledgeable staff team. Children and young people said 'I like being at school and in the residence because you make friends and have good activities' and 'they really help you to do your best in everything'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are skilled in caring for individuals with communication difficulties and have done some excellent work in producing Communication Passports for those children with profound communication difficulties. These are visually appealing documents which record important information, including individual children's likes and dislikes and how they might demonstrate these through non verbal communication. Children and young people derive a great deal of pleasure from sharing these documents with staff and their parents. Staff have also developed creative ways to encourage and enable children to contribute their views about King's Mill School and about the care they receive. They are consulted about all aspects of their care, including day to day routines, meals and activities. Staff demonstrate that children and young people's opinions and suggestions are considered central to the development of residential provision. The majority of children and young people do not take part in their statutory reviews, although they are encouraged to do so by staff at the school. Staff are currently undertaking training in person-centred reviewing. This will ensure that children and young people's views are taken into account in decision-making processes which affect their lives, even when they are unable to attend reviews. Children and young people said, 'you can talk about things if you don't like them' and 'people ask you what you think'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is inadequate.

There are major weaknesses in the residential accommodation offered by the school. Externally, the residential block appears very unkempt. Window frames are unpainted and are consequently weather-damaged. Staff regularly have to seal gaps in the bedroom windows with foam and tape in order to protect children and young people from cold drafts during the night. Outdoor play areas for older children are stark and un-stimulating and the playground area is uneven, which makes it potentially hazardous for children and young people with motor impairment. Internally, there is no lift from the ground floor, which means that children who use wheelchairs are excluded from spending time with their peers during the evening and early morning. Staff are required to share bathroom facilities when they are on night duty because there is no separate provision for them. In addition, there is very limited space for manoeuvring the bath hoist in the ground-floor bathroom. Children and young people often become uncomfortable because of the length of time taken to move the hoist safely. Staff ensure that children and young people continue to receive a good quality of care in spite of these limitations and they are highly resourceful in making use of external venues for activities. However, the ongoing lack of maintenance to the building does not demonstrate to children and young people, their families or staff that the residential provision is valued by the local authority. Parents and carers said, 'this is an essential, first rate service but it needs to have money spent on it', and 'budgets and finances limit what the school can offer'.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The head teacher and head of care provide good leadership of the school and are highly supportive of the staff team. However, the governing body does not undertake regular monitoring visits and does not provide written feedback regarding the quality of care offered by the residential provision. This means that the school cannot complete the quality assurance

measures necessary to consolidate and improve the residential care. Staff feel supported and valued by senior managers and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They have access to training which is relevant to their role and are encouraged to improve their skills and knowledge. They receive regular, informal support from senior management and from their colleagues, but do not receive a sufficient level of formal, one to one supervision. This means that they do not have the opportunity to discuss their professional development or any issues which may impact on their practice.

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 written record is maintained of the outcome of any complaint (National Minimum Standard 4).
- ensure that positive steps are taken to protect children and young people from the risk of intruder access (National Minimum Standard 26).
- ensure that children and young people receive privacy and confidentiality in relation to their intimate needs (National Minimum Standard 3).
- ensure that children with disabilities have access to all parts of the building they need to use (National Minimum Standard 23).
- ensure that the interior and exterior of the school is maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair (National Minimum Standard 24).
- ensure that staff use separate toilet and bathroom or shower facilities to those used by children (National Minimum Standard 25).
- ensure that all staff receive supervision (National Minimum Standard 31).
- ensure that a representative of the governing body visits the school once every half term and completes a written report on the conduct of the school (National Minimum Standard 33).