

Muntham House School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Date of last inspection	9 November 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

Muntham House is a non maintained Residential Special School for boys aged between eight and 18 years. It is a designated school for pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties who may in addition have Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (AD(H)D). All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The school buildings are set in extensive grounds at Barnes Green, near Horsham, West Sussex. Accommodation is located in the main building and in a separate building for the older boys. The main building has accommodation divided into three units, Hever, Bodiam and Arundel. The separate accommodation for older boys is called The Bothy and is centrally located in the school grounds. There are sufficient outdoor areas for the boys to enjoy games.

Summary

The announced inspection was carried out over two days by two inspectors. The inspectors spent time with the Principal and the Head of Care. Discussion groups with key workers and team leaders plus other significant staff were also carried out. A sample of boys' case files were viewed together with written records, logs, policies and procedures. The boys showed the inspectors around the boarding accommodation. Discussion groups with the boys were held plus representations from the school council. Questionnaires were completed by the boys pre inspection. The care programme at Muntham House is of a consistently high quality achieving good outcomes for the boys. The care curriculum is structured around the five outcomes identified in "Every Child Matters" which creates a clear and meaningful framework for care and teaching staff to work closely together to meet the needs of the boys. Areas that have been recommended for the school to review and address were fed back to the Principal and Head of Care at the end of the inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection resulted in a recommendation regarding staff recruitment records. National Minimum Standard 27.2 recommends that all checks be completed before newly recruited staff begin work. Staff records viewed during inspection show this has been addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health needs are supported by comprehensive health information gained pre admission. Health care plans, in general, are well structured and informative covering physical, emotional and mental health needs. Children with specific health needs are provided with appropriate support and help from suitably trained and experienced staff. The school employs two health and welfare bursars who are organised, trained to a very good standard and experienced in dealing with the health needs of children. They liaise directly with parents/carers and care staff to decide how the needs of unwell boarders are to be managed. Clear information is in place for staff to follow for children with specific health needs. Arrangements are in place for children to access medical, optical and dental treatment if appropriate. Children are protected by staff who are suitably trained to administer medication and first aid. This is supported by sound policies and procedures. Consents for the administration of non prescribed medication

and accessing medical, optical or dental treatment are in place but not for the administration of first aid. Medication administration is supported by excellent record keeping and monitoring. Recent changes to the system used to order, store, administer and dispose of medication has increased the safety and compliance for children to a very high standard. Young people receive a nutritious and varied diet delivered by a catering department that has recently had an Environmental Health inspection. The two recommendations identified in that inspection have both been addressed. Changes to the boarding system means children now have the opportunity to eat supper in house in a more family like environment rather than in a canteen style environment as they do at lunch time. Close monitoring of children with specific dietary needs or concerns is in place with regular measuring of height and weight if appropriate. Currently there are no break time snacks on offer and water only as a drink. Boys fed back to inspectors that they would like a snack at break time plus juice as an alternative to water.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The boys benefit from being in a school where staff respect privacy and confidentiality. Despite close supervision of the boys staff do embrace the need for privacy. All records are stored safely and securely. The school has a complaints policy in place that staff and children are well informed of. Feedback from the boys is that the school acts quickly to resolve any complaints made. Complaints are recorded well. The current complaints policy does not include all the areas recommended in the National Minimum Standards. The boys are protected by staff who are suitably trained and experienced in dealing with child protection issues. The Principal is the designated lead for child protection and responds to allegations or suspicions quickly and in accordance with local procedures. The school is confident in making referrals to other agencies and in liaising with those agencies following the referral. The current child protection policy does not reflect the changes from West Sussex Child Protection procedures to the new Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures. The school's policy also refers to a child as being up to the age of 17 and not 18 years. Bullying and the school's stance on bullying is made very clear to the boys on admission. Boys have a variety of avenues they can use to voice their concerns if they are being bullied, in practise incidents are low. The boys are confident that the school responds to any bullying issue quickly and effectively. Any serious incident is recorded with very good monitoring by senior management. In general language used to record is good although some staff descriptions of incidents are confusing. The school follows the correct procedures in notifying Ofsted regarding any serious incident. A policy with clear procedures for missing boys is in place. Records show no incidents of missing boys. The high levels and good quality of supervision prevents boys from going missing. Behaviour is excellent with all boys having clear knowledge of what is expected of them. A clear policy for staff informs them of permitted disciplinary measures. Behavioural plans identify individual intervention techniques to be used. Physical interventions are carried out by trained and competent staff whose practice in de-escalation techniques, rather than physical intervention, is impressive. Recordings of rewards and sanctions are good with one comment seen in a record of physical intervention that needs to have more detail. Records are closely monitored by senior management and Governors. Rewards are important to the boys and they take on board the different incentives offered very seriously. Clear guidance is in place to assist staff in delivering rewards, however, practice is not consistent across all the boarding units. Boys board in accommodation that is risk assessed and in general safe. A radiator in one dorm was felt to be excessively hot and possibly in excess of the recommended 43 degrees centigrade. Boys are well informed of fire evacuation procedures with drills occurring regularly. All fire checks are carried out in accordance

with the fire service recommendations. Boys are protected by the school's robust recruitment process and by the vetting of visitors to the school.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Boys at Muntham House benefit from having support from both education and care staff who work closely together to provide excellent standards of education. The last Ofsted education inspection reported the education provision as being outstanding. All boys have statements of special educational needs that are reviewed regularly with input from care staff as well as education staff. Their progress is very closely monitored. It is the communication between the care staff and education staff that helps to provide a seamless transition from education time to after school time for all the boys. Feedback from boys indicates they are happy with the support they receive in relation to the education provision. All records are of a very high standard with clear goals and outcomes for education achievements. Recent changes to homework supervision after school has enhanced the excellent support already provided. The leisure activities on offer at Muntham House school are vast with boys able to voice choices. Each boy has an individual activity plan. The high quality provision of activities is greatly appreciated by the boys at Muntham House. Access to offsite leisure venues is good with activities every day after school. Supervision of activities is excellent with risk assessments in place. Boys are cared for by staff who show a great understanding of individual needs. The individual support needed is identified at the referral process and followed through to the day to day lives of each individual boy. It is clear from discussion with pupils, observation and documents seen that the support provided for individual boys at Muntham House lies at the heart of the school's approach. A designated team of staff, the "Family and Induction Team" work very closely with all staff, families and carers plus other agencies to ensure the individual needs of the boys are met.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Questionnaires completed by the boys before the inspection evidenced the wide range of avenues the boys have to voice their opinions and views about their welfare. Formal procedures involve boarding floor meetings and the school council. Both are seen as very positive with boys stating that suggestions they raise are listened to and actioned. Currently there is no formal feedback process from the school council meeting and the boys raised this as an area they would like to see in happen. Staff/pupil relationships are excellent with staff practice seen as very confident and professional. Feedback from boys indicate they feel staff care about them and keep them focused and safe. Boys enjoy time spent with staff and engage with them in a respectful way. Staff are confident in their roles and practice which enables them to engage with boys in a friendly but professional manner. Clear boundaries are in place for both boys and staff. Each boy has a written placement plan that identifies needs and informs staff how needs will be met. Plans are very comprehensive and well written. Placement plans are reviewed regularly with all boys encouraged to participate in them. Each boy has a key worker who has formal sessions with the boys every three to four weeks, plus informal daily contact. Records of key worker sessions are very good. The Family and Induction Team are a designated team of staff who visit every new entrant at home as part of the admissions process in order to ensure that they and their families/carers are fully informed and involved in all decisions made. They also contribute to all statutory reviews including placement reviews and work closely with placing authorities and local education authorities to ensure the best outcomes for each boy.

Records show that all assessments and planning are consistently carried out to a commendably high standard with individual targets clearly identified and regularly reviewed. Contact details are clearly written for each boy, with restrictions on contact also documented. The boys have a long weekend every three weeks that enables them to keep in regular contact with their families. The Family and Induction Team also maintain close contact throughout the time each boy spends at the school. Boys have access to telephones and are able to use mobile phones during specified times.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The boys live in accommodation that is divided into "floors" that are separate units with separate staffing. The floors have benefited from recent work to upgrade their provision and to make them more homely. A continuing programme of refurbishment and redecoration is in place. The windows are subject to an on going programme of replacement, however, one window in a dorm that did not close was seen as requiring immediate replacement to provide a warm and draft free room for boys to sleep in. Recent changes to the ages of boys accommodated on each separate floor has enhanced the family feel to the boarding provision. The fire service inspection carried out in August 2007 and a revisit in November 2007 resulted in no action needed by the school. Fire regulations were seen not to be adhered to during the inspection as some fire doors were seen propped open. The school's Standard 33 visitors identify specific areas of the boarding accommodation that need attention in order to maintain a good standard.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school's care principles are clearly laid out in a brochure and electronically for staff, boys and parents to access. The school's web site has a wealth of information for people to view. Boys are cared for by sufficient numbers of staff who are trained and competent in their roles. Staffing levels are increased if necessary to provide added protection or to meet individual needs. The staff group is stable, skilled and committed to the boys' welfare. They receive training that equips them to meet the needs of the boys in their care. A designated member of staff responsible for training and inclusion implements a programme that provides opportunity for the ongoing professional development of the care staff team. Staff benefit from receiving regular good quality supervision and were very positive about the high level of support they receive from senior management. The lines of responsibility are clear with good monitoring of records and practices in place. Standard 33 visitors, the Governors, visit the school very regularly unannounced, and complete a written report. Although in practice all areas of the standard are met the written report does not reflect this. The school is run efficiently and the management team continues to be focused upon achieving best practice in all areas.

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 all identified health needs are transferred to individual health plans with clear follow up and with outcomes (NMS 14.3)
- ensure consents for the administration of first aid are in place (NMS14.10)
- consider introducing break time snacks and juice as well as water, as requested by the boys (NMS 15)
- ensure the school's complaint procedure includes all areas recommended in National Minimum Standard 4 (NMS 4.3)
- update the school's Child Protection policy to reflect the Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and to review the age definition of a child as currently stated in the schools policy (NMS 5)
- revisit record keeping and language used with staff to ensure no misinterpretation relating to the recording of physical interventions (NMS 7)
- ensure rewards and sanctions are consistent across all boarding units (NMS 10)
- ensure radiators and hot water pipes accessible to children do not exceed 43 degrees centigrade. (NMS 26.8)
- consider posting the minutes of school council meetings with outcomes relating to the questions raised by the council in a central area for boys to access (NMS 2)
- ensure all fire doors are not propped open (NMS 32)
- continue with the programme of replacing windows in the boarding units taking into account any windows that following risk assessment need replacing as a matter of urgency (NMS 24.14) (relates to a dorm in Bodiam)
- ensure Governors who carry out random visits resulting in a written report do so incorporating all the recommendations of Standard 33 (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)

Annex A

- 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.