



Ratcliffe 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

Radcliffe School is a Local Education Authority provision for young people aged between eight to 16 years of mixed gender, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. At the present time the school provides education and boarding provision for 27 young people, with a further nine young people boarding on a part time basis. In addition, the school provides education for 25 day students and off site education for three young people. The school and five residential boarding houses are all on the same campus. A further boarding house is currently being upgraded. Young people have single occupancy in bedrooms. All boarding areas have kitchenettes, dining and sitting areas. The school has grounds of approximately 10 acres. Young people have use of hard and soft play areas.

Summary

This was an announced inspection, carried out by two inspectors. The purpose has been to undertake a key inspection looking at all National Minimum Standards (NMS). The focus has also been to assess progress in meeting the 39 recommendations made following the last inspection. Overall, good progress has been made in meeting many of the recommendations from the previous inspection. Young people are happy at the school and value the care and support that they receive. Feedback from young people, parents and other professionals is positive. Staff work hard to give young people the opportunity to develop social skills, as well as maximizing their academic potential. Young people are offered a wide range of activities and encouraged to try out new experiences. Staff act as good role models. A recommendation carried forward is that further consideration is given to enabling young people to make telephone calls freely. Currently young people have to ask staff permission to use the telephone. The school's Principal is aware of this issue and reported that arrangements are under review. The school's system of administering medicines has improved with the introduction of a 'monitored dosage system.' Although this system is effective there are still areas of concern. The Principal agreed for Ofsted inspectors to seek further advice from a specialist pharmacist. Two previous recommendations relate to the policies for responding to child protection concerns and their prompt notification. Whilst there are clear reporting protocols in place for recording child protection concerns, not all written records include details of what action has been taken and the outcome of any action. Not all significant events have been reported appropriately. Therefore these two recommendations have not been met and are carried forward.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

A number of improvements have been made in most areas. Recommendations following the last inspection relate to the need to update and refurbish some boarding areas. Good progress has been made and a continued programme of update and refurbishment is in place. A number of toilet and bathroom areas have been updated and sinks fitted to kitchenette areas. Some furniture has been replaced. These improvements have increased the economic wellbeing and comfort of young people who board. Three recommendations following the last inspection relate to health care. These recommendations include the need for expansion of health care plans, training for staff, and the development of intimate care plans. Good progress has been made in these areas. Health care plans contain relevant information and intimate care plans

have been devised. Staff have received additional training to equip them with the skills needed. The school's Principal said that the services of a nurse has been requested. This appointment would be specifically for the school, with the nurse spending regular time on site. The health and wellbeing of young people at the school is further promoted by these measures. Following the last inspection three recommendations were made in relation to the school's complaints procedure. These recommendations have been met. There is now a central record of complaints. The school's policy on complaints has been expanded to include the management of any complaint made about the Principal. The contact telephone number for reporting to Ofsted is prominently displayed. These measures contribute to promoting safety for young people. A recommendation following the last inspection was that all staff, including ancillary staff receive child protection training. All staff at the school now receive child protection training on a regular basis. The majority of staff demonstrate knowledge and awareness of their responsibilities in reporting concerns appropriately. This extension of staff training has increased safety for young people boarding at the school. Recommendations following the last inspection were that placement plans should contain sufficient detail and that contact details should be entered on plans. Plans seen at this inspection contain all relevant information, including contact details. A recommendation following the last inspection was that a risk assessment be devised for those children with complex needs. Risk assessments are now devised before young people with complex needs are admitted to the school. These measures promote the safety and wellbeing of young people. Staff are able to plan care in advance and to consider both individual needs and the needs of other young people who board. Following previous recommendations the procedures for recording sanctions and incidents involving the use of physical intervention now meet National Minimum Standards. The Governing body are proactive and regular monitoring visits are taking place. A reporting protocol is in place for recording the outcome of monitoring visits.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Since the last inspection the school has made further progress with the introduction of a monitored dosage system for the safe management of medications. These arrangements are underpinned by support from a pharmacist who has also provided in house training. Staff report moving towards having this system in place for all boarders. This inspection revealed that several houses had not created safe systems to monitor medications arriving at the school. This resulted in medications not having a clear audit trail. The health care needs of young people are identified with clear records to support actions required. Where intimate health care needs are identified these needs have been recorded separately. Staff are sensitive in supporting young people who need additional help with personal care. A number of staff are trained in first aid. First aid boxes are placed strategically around the school and boarding houses. The school has support from a nurse employed by the local authority. Young people are provided with wholesome nutritious food. The school has achieved national and local awards for their catering arrangements. Meals are well managed and sociable occasions. Where there are individual dietary needs advice is accessed. All boarding houses have a plentiful supply of fresh fruit. The school is aware that stored food should be appropriately covered and labelled. Birthdays and seasonal events are celebrated in a creative style. Hand washing facilities are available in all boarding house kitchen areas.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

There are protocols and policies in place to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of young people boarding at the school. Not all protocols and reporting procedures have been robustly followed. The school has developed policies to promote and develop privacy and confidentiality for young people. Staff were observed following these protocols. Although a significant number of boarders have personal mobile telephones, there are several who do not have this facility. Telephones are made available to young people, but these are only accessed with staff permission. The Principal is aware of this shortfall and reports considering different options to meet this standard. Staff are respectful and sensitive in the management of young people's intimate care needs. Plans are held and staff offer support to young people in a non intrusive manner. Following the last inspection the policy and recording system for managing complaints has been revised. Inspection of these records showed that a range of complaints have been entered in the log. All of these entries had been appropriately monitored. Young people feel able to approach staff if they have an issue or complaint. Staff at the school have all received child protection training during the last year. Staff spoken to demonstrate a good awareness of their responsibilities in reporting concerns appropriately. The school holds records of responses to recent concerns. However, some records do not include the actions taken and the outcomes. Staff and young people report that minor incidents of bullying do occur. Young people said that staff are available to listen to their concerns and take appropriate and effective action when incidents of bullying occur. Staff are diligent in closely monitoring the whereabouts of young people. The school has a reporting procedure for notifying the appropriate authorities of significant events. This inspection has identified some incidents that should have been reported. The school has a clear procedure for identifying and reporting any young person who is absent without authority. The staff team are creative in managing young people's behaviours and use a 'traffic light' system. Care and teaching staff contribute to this system which is maintained on a computer. Acceptable behaviours are recorded and staff comment on achievements or otherwise. Young people spoken with understood the system, and are aware of the positive rewards and sanctions associated with the various traffic light colours. Good behaviours are positively reinforced. Young people are very proud when they achieve success and are rewarded by special trips out. All staff have received training in the 'Team Teach' method of physical intervention. Some staff have received advanced training which enables them to use ground recovery techniques. The school have produced logbooks that are compliant with National Minimum Standards. These records are monitored appropriately. Risk assessments continue to be devised for activities undertaken by young people. These are signed off by the designated person. Individual risk assessments have been devised for each boarding house. These have been shared with the local fire safety department. Checks are taking place of fire alarms and fire fighting equipment. The school acknowledge that fire evacuation procedures need to be practiced during night time hours. The inspectors were told that all first floor windows cannot be restricted on the advice of the Devon fire authority. The majority of staff had received fire awareness training. The member of staff on 'waking' nights had not received fire safety training. There have been no new appointments for staff at boarding houses since the last inspection.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from the support that they receive in attending school. They are encouraged to maximize their academic potential and to enjoy new activities and experiences. Care staff support young people in preparing for school each morning. Breakfast is encouraged and young people are helped to prepare for their school day. Handovers between care staff

and teaching staff are carried out at the beginning and end of each day. Care staff are closely involved in supporting young people and staff within the classroom. All staff have access to individual education plans and care records. Young people benefit from a wide range of purposeful activities. These include football, swimming, beaches, camping and visits to places of interest. Young women report having facial and manicure sessions. Activities are underpinned by risk assessments. The school has its own transport and staff receive training for driving the school mini bus. Where young people achieve success they are rewarded with special treats. Several young people were rewarded with a trip to 'Woodlands,' a popular water park. On site activities include model making, playing in the woods, a youth club, games and numerous televisions and Play Stations. One parent who responded to a pre inspection questionnaire commented that the school engages young people by the use of hobbies and interests. Young people are actively supported by a range of professionals. These include school counsellor, masseur, independent listener and other local authority professionals such as psychological services. Young people at the school are very diverse in their needs. A good deal of thought, preparation and planning is put into ensuring that individual needs are met in a creative and thoughtful manner.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people are encouraged by staff to make decisions about their daily lives and future options. The school's home school coordinator establishes and maintains communication with families. Young people's views are actively sought by the school. Young people represent their peers by attending school council meetings and sub committees. In addition, young people are encouraged to participate in house meetings. Young people spoken to made positive comments about the staff that care for them. Throughout this inspection staff observed were caring and sensitive in meeting individual needs. Boundaries are consistent and young people have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Young people readily approach staff and are listened to. The Principal is involved in all admissions to the school and ensures that the needs of the young person can be met within existing resources. Where this is not practicable additional resources are actively sought. All admissions are planned and pre admission visits take place. Since September 2007 there has been a significant increase in new admissions. All young people are encouraged to develop their self help skills whilst at the school. Those young people about to leave the school are actively encouraged to participate in the development of independence skills. One respondent to a pre inspection questionnaire reported that the school is equipping the young person with the 'life and social skills to survive in the real world.' Young people's case records include placement plans. Plans seen include 'student profiles,' health needs, contact details and management of any behavioural difficulties. Shortened versions of plans, coded to protect confidentiality, are located on the staff room wall. These provide on going information which is easily accessible to all staff. Information is also retained electronically. Young people are supported in maintaining regular contact with families and significant others. Records and plans seen hold clear information on whom and when contact should be made. The school is creative in supporting young people when they are homesick. One young person said that they were able to telephone their family before going to sleep and again first thing in the morning. A parent responding to a pre inspection questionnaire reported 'we are actively encouraged to come to the school....major decisions are put to us.'

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There is a school uniform policy which young people follow. Young people are able to bring their own clothing to school and all of the young people observed were appropriately and fashionably dressed. One boarding house is used to prepare young people for living independently. This involves them in planning, shopping and preparing meals for the whole group. One young person, supported by staff cooked supper. The young person was given a good deal of encouragement and praise for the meal which was nicely served and presented. Each boarding house is monitored by CCTV in the main corridors. These are all displayed on a screen in the night supervisor's room and are recorded. There are systems in place to alert staff should a young person go through any exit. All boarding houses are purpose built and located on one campus. They are all within close proximity of the main school. There is outdoor space for play close to each boarding house. The school has a 'rolling programme' of update and refurbishment in place for boarding houses. The décor of a refurbished house is of a good standard. Houses include a number of personal and homely touches. Young people have put up their own posters and personalised bedrooms. Since the last inspection toilets and bathrooms that did not meet the required standards have been upgraded. This upgrading has increased the range of provision available to young people who board. A significant number of toilet doors can not be accessed from the outside by staff, should there be an emergency.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school has a clear statement of practice and principles for boarding. This is available to parents, staff and placing social workers and is supplemented by a children's guide. The statement is informative and attractively illustrated. There are clear records maintained on all young people. These have been creatively divided between education and care needs Documents are also maintained electronically. Staff are aware of young people's right to confidentiality and records are held securely. The school maintains all of the required records for staff and young people boarding at the school. These include staff personnel records, a register of young people and accident logs. Visitors are requested to sign in on arrival and are given a visitor badge. Staffing levels at the boarding houses are adequate in meeting the needs of the young people. Cover for sickness and other absence is mainly undertaken by existing staff. There is a minimum of two care staff on duty in each boarding house, with one member of staff sleeping in. Senior staff also sleep in on a rotational basis. Records are maintained of staff working on shift. A member of staff is on waking duty throughout the night. Young people are provided with continuity of care. Staff spoken to receive supervision. Records of supervision are retained by supervisors. Staff comment that they work closely with senior staff and receive regular support and advice. All staff are included in training days. Staff also attend additional training according to individual need. A programme of NVQ training is being undertaken by all staff. A number of staff have achieved Level 3 and are currently undertaking Level 4. School records are monitored appropriately. Governors visit the boarding provision and written reports are available.

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 the policy guidance on the administration of medicines is implemented in practice. (NMS 14.17)
- ensure that young people can make and receive telephone calls in private and without staff permission. (NMS 3.5)
- ensure that the school's procedures for responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse to a child include all the requirements of Appendix 1 of the National Minimum Standards. (NMS 5.4)
- ensure that all significant events relating to the protection of children at the school are notified to the appropriate authorities and that a written record is kept detailing the action taken and the outcome of any action or investigation. (NMS 7)
- ensure that all staff receive fire safety training in line with Appendix 2 of the National Minimum Standards. (NMS 26.1)
- ensure that toilet door locks can be opened from the outside in an emergency. (NMS 25.5)

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.