

Wolverdene Special School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Brian Mcquoid
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Date of last inspection	27 September 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

Wolverdene is a local authority school within Hampshire catering for primary age children experiencing behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties. The school provides mainly day placements, but 10 weekly residential placements are available for boys within 'The Lodge', which is a separate unit located within the school grounds. The Lodge accommodation consists of six single and two double rooms with shared facilities.

Summary

The school's residential provision delivers an excellent standard of care for children, and staff work extremely effectively with individual children within the group setting. There are clear and effective referral and admission procedures which identify individual children's needs, and very efficient systems in place for producing, monitoring, and reviewing individual plans. There is excellent individual support provided for children by a skilled and committed staff group who are well qualified and very professional in their approach. Communication and collaboration across the care and education settings is extremely good and children receive excellent support with their education. Children are appropriately consulted and made aware of their rights, and there is successful work being carried out with their families by residential staff. The school's residential provision is extremely well managed, and there is excellent provision for the monitoring of matters relating to children's welfare. Children feel safe in 'The Lodge' and are happy being there.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school has improved in the following areas since the previous inspection: Individual plans are now signed by children to show they have been involved in the process. There are now improved arrangements in place for night time security which alert staff of children's movements and a formal process has been introduced for internal monitoring in accordance with the national minimum standards. The care staff team are now operating more effectively with the introduction of new rotas that detail clearly defined duties. Staff supervision has become more structured, a new induction programme for newly appointed staff is in place and staff files have been created which make provision for training records and for staff development. There is now increased reviewing of individual plans for children, more work being done with children's families, and newly devised individual action plans are being used.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There is excellent provision for addressing the health needs of children resident in 'The Lodge'. Referral and admission procedures are effective in gathering information from parents and professionals relating to the identified needs of children, including those associated with health. Extremely good support and advice in relation to health matters is provided by the school's nurse, an attached GP, the school's therapist who is based on site, and the school's educational psychologist. The school's PSHE curriculum covers the subject of healthy lifestyles and this is fully supported in practice by residential staff within the lodge. Individual plans and programmes are devised to address specific health related needs, for example allergies, and there is effective

monitoring of individual children. Suitable policies and procedures are in place in relation to medication and these provide appropriate safeguards for children. Medication is stored securely, records of administration are maintained appropriately, and there is always a suitably trained first aid person on duty.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's privacy is appropriately respected within the lodge and confidential information is stored suitably securely. Clear guidelines are provided for staff in relation to privacy and confidentiality and these areas are covered within the induction process for new staff. Children and their parents are provided with good written information on how to make a complaint. In addition a display adjacent to the children's phone includes child line posters detailing children's rights and how to make a complaint. This however does not include the contact details for Ofsted. A complaints log is maintained within the lodge and shows a low level of complaints received. This is a reflection of the quality of care provided and the positive relationships that exist between children and staff, whereby children feel able to express concerns to staff who listen and deal effectively with any problems they may have. There is very good provision at the school for protecting children from harm, including a nominated child protection liaison officer who has had training specific to the role. Staff have received relevant child protection training and display a sound awareness and understanding of child protection and the relevant reporting procedures. Staff also have easy access to supporting policy and procedures documents. Records of child protection issues are maintained appropriately and show the school to have acted in accordance with procedures when dealing with child protection related incidents. Children feel safe while staying in the lodge and do not consider bullying to be a problem. Showing respect for others is a principle that is integrated into the way the lodge operates and staff re-enforce this message to children on a regular basis. There is an appropriate anti bullying policy in place within the school but written information provided for children and their parents does not include mention of the school's approach to dealing with bullying. Children benefit from staff who are skilled in managing their behaviour. There are clear expectations of behaviour and clearly defined boundaries that children are made aware of, and which staff apply consistently and in a positive manner. The approach used by staff provides extremely effective external controls for children in a supportive way that assists and encourages the development of positive behaviours. Children feel the rules to be fair and to be fairly applied by staff. The use of sanctions is appropriately recorded and in accord with the school's policy. Staff are appropriately trained in physical intervention techniques, but incidents of the use of physical intervention within the lodge are rare. Such incidents when they do occur are not currently being recorded in a separate bound and numbered book. The overall standard of children's behaviour is extremely good. There is good provision in the lodge for ensuring children enjoy a safe and secure environment. Staff are made aware of their individual responsibility in relation to health and safety and any reported hazards are dealt with appropriately. Effective systems are in place for managing risk, including risk assessments for activities undertaken by children, and for fire safety. The checking and testing of fire safety equipment is carried out and recorded as required, children know the fire evacuation procedures and regular fire drills are held. Personal evacuation plans are also in place indicating which children require supervision during an evacuation. There are appropriate arrangements in place for the security of the building both day and night, and visitors are required to sign in upon entering the building. The hot water outlets accessible to children are not regulated and the temperature exceeds 43 degrees centigrade. This situation is currently being effectively managed by staff. The school's

recruitment procedures are in accord with the National Minimum Standards and provide appropriate safeguards for the welfare of children. Staff are being recruited in line with the procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school's residential staff provide excellent support for children in relation to their education. There is good communication and collaboration between care and education staff which children benefit from, and which is enhanced by some staff working in both settings. Statements of special educational need, individual education plans, and annual review reports are easily accessible to care staff within the lodge. Children receive appropriate help with their homework and care staff also provide support within the classroom for individual children when necessary. Access to a computer is available within the lodge and children are also able to use the local library. Children benefit from extremely good levels of individual support within the school and its residential provision. Clear and concise individual plans are devised to address identified need and there is excellent support which promotes the involvement of all children in the social group within the lodge. All children have identified key workers with whom they spend individual time, and the school's therapist works with children on an individual basis. The school's independent person visits the lodge regularly and is also accessible to individual children.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children benefit from their positive relationships with staff within the lodge, and there are frequent opportunities for them to express their views and opinions. There are monthly children's meetings, regular individual sessions with key workers, daily gatherings of all children at the end of the school day, and a reviewing process that they are able to participate in. Children are able to make appropriate choices as part of their everyday lives in the lodge, and their parents are appropriately informed and consulted. There is a clear and effective process in place for producing, monitoring, and reviewing individual plans for children. Placement plans clearly define the objectives of the placement and additional plans are devised to address specific areas of identified need. These include social plans, behaviour plans, and action plans relating to health needs. All children also have statements of special educational need which are reviewed annually, and individual education plans addressing the needs identified in their statement. Children and their parents are routinely involved in the annual review of a child's statement. Children board at the school on a weekly basis during term time only. They go home on a Friday after school and return on a Monday morning in time to start school. There is excellent provision for children to maintain contact with parents and families during their stay at the lodge. Children have suitable access to a telephone where they can make and receive calls in private, and parents are able to freely visit the lodge. Parents are also able to join their child on group activities, for example bowling, which take place during the evening at a variety of venues within the district. This provides parents with the opportunity to share an enjoyable experience with their child.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school provides excellent written information for children and their parents in relation to 'The Lodge' and how it operates. The information is presented in an accessible format, includes photographs of staff, and is reviewed on an annual basis. Children benefit from a remarkable consistency of staffing, provided by a small staff group who operate extremely effectively as a team. Levels of staffing are excellent, providing appropriate supervision and enabling the needs of children to be well met. Children know which staff are on duty during the day and at night, and they are cared for by both male and female staff. Sickness and absences are well covered from within the staff group and agency staff are not used. The school's residential provision is extremely well managed and delivers a very high standard of care for children. The staff group possess considerable relevant experience, have formal qualifications applicable to the setting and are very professional in their approach to working with the children. The staff rota provides appropriately protected time for staff to attend meetings, complete paperwork tasks, and to spend time with individual children. There is excellent provision for monitoring, both internally and externally, matters relating to the welfare of children. The head of care has an efficient system in place that effectively monitors records and events in accordance with the National Minimum Standards, and there is appropriate external monitoring carried out by the school's governing body.

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 children and their parents with the contact details of Ofsted as part of the relevant complaints procedures. (NMS 4)
- include details of the school's approach to bullying in information provided for children and their parents. (NMS 6)
- record incidents of physical intervention in a separate bound and numbered book. (NMS 10)
- ensure that the hot water temperature at taps accessible to children does not exceed 43 degrees centigrade. (NMS 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.