

Wargrave House School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Trevor Shirley
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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

Wargrave House School is a non-maintained special school that was established in 1971 for pupils who have an autistic spectrum disorder. During 2004 the school was officially granted status as a registered charity. A Board of Trustees, which has delegated powers to the Wargrave House Governing Body, manages the school; this is an independently elected body, which includes both staff and parental representation. This body is responsible for the day to day running of the school. The Board of Trustees has the ultimate responsibility for the strategic management of Wargrave House Ltd, the charitable company that owns the school. The school is approved by the DCSF for a total of 75 pupils, with 69 places currently taken. The whole school presents as a bright and modern facility. Classrooms cater for seven or eight pupils and lessons are structured on the Key Stage age-related attainment programme. Each class has a minimum of one teacher and two or three teaching support assistants. Residential provision exists for 18 pupils on a weekly board basis, with part weekly boarding, respite and teatime care arrangements being considered according to need and individual circumstance. Residential facilities are divided between the main building with ten bedrooms, eight single and two double, for 12 young people and the Lakeside Unit that provides five single bedrooms and one double bedroom, for six young people. The Lakeside Unit operates as the school's Post-16 leaver's department and has additional day student classroom, kitchen and toilet facilities. The staffing structure of the school's residential facility provides a head of care and deputy head of care, two team leaders, one senior residential care officer and 14 residential care workers. Waking night cover is provided in both Lakeside and the main school building. Direct support to families and carers is maintained by the school's full time Family Support Worker. The Head of Care and Deputy Principals' provide the out of hours managerial duty cover service.

Summary

This was a key announced inspection. The school was inspected against all the residential special schools national minimum standards and against the every child matters outcome areas of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, achieving economic well-being and organisation. The health, care and safety of the young people is actively promoted and safeguarded. Individual communication programmes are well established and regularly reviewed, with all staff contributing to the care and welfare process. Significant young person development has been achieved and continues to be recorded. Staff are thoughtful and sensitive in their interactions and clearly recognise individual needs and interest. The school is enthusiastically managed with clear reporting and organisational procedures. The school ethos is well established and outstandingly supported by the shared values of all members of the care team, teaching staff and support personnel. Observations and recorded opinion from parents and carers are extremely positive.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Young person transitional and leaving arrangements have benefited from managerial attention and continued review. The school's maintenance and physical improvement continues, with for example new windows now installed in the main school bedroom areas and new items of bedroom furniture and fittings also being introduced. This assists in maintaining a good standard of

accommodation for children. The funding arrangements for the development of the play area adjacent to the Lakeside Unit has been approved, with works now scheduled for the coming spring and early summer.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The school meal arrangements are very well organised and enjoyable sociable occasions that promote young person interaction and discussion. Evening meals are taken within separate small group situations and provide effective opportunity for each young person to take part in the serving and washing up routines. All meal times illustrated staff providing encouragement and awareness of individual capability and support requirements. The evening meal arrangements within the Lakeside Unit can provide further opportunity for the older and more independent young people to work alongside staff in all aspects of the meal preparation routine. The school mid-day meal is taken in the central dining area and again provides a purposeful opportunity for communication and direct discussion with each young person. All dining areas are well decorated, warm and comfortable with good quality furniture and furnishings. School menu records show that healthy and nutritious meals are provided, with several choices available for each meal. Young person choice is further encouraged with discussion and agreement on the menu content in the school council meetings. However, one young person suggested that choice of meat dishes could be extended and two young people would welcome an increase in the vegetable options. Staff are fully informed of the benefits of healthy eating, diet and exercise routines. Two young people also agreed that staff will regularly discuss food and diet interests. The current menu is based on detailed understanding of young people's health and dietary needs. Information from parents and carers is used to form the basis for each young person's diet and all young people are encouraged to experience different foods. Cultural and religious dietary needs are observed whenever requested. The cook meets regularly with the children, care staff and parents in order to discuss the menu content. The young people's current concerns are being discussed and certain additions are now being considered. Detailed health plans are maintained and the records reviewed provided comprehensive information on all health care needs, extent of sensory impairment, treatments and medication programmes. Parental agreement is recorded for all medical treatments and also when staff assistance with intimate and personal care, bathing and toileting routines is required. Dental, optical and hearing tests are routinely recorded and the school Special Education Needs Co-ordinating Officer is regularly involved in the health monitoring process. All staff have completed first aid and health and safety awareness and induction training and are fully aware of the recording and reporting procedures. Health training includes the administering of intimate treatment programmes and all staff are encouraged to provide feedback on the content of training events and programmes. Intimate personal care routines were conducted with full regard to individual privacy and dignity. The school policies on health care issues are available to all staff and are further informed by the recent Every Child Matters policy review and a series of health training events. Policy information provides well-documented direction and advice on all health and first aid issues and procedures. The storage arrangements for medicines are well organised and secure and all records were up to date and accurate. The dispensing arrangements are sensitively and individually maintained and are routinely administered by two senior members of staff.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Discussion with staff agreed the young people's right to privacy and confidentiality. The right to privacy and confidentiality is clearly at the forefront of all communications. Staff are fully aware of the requirements surrounding the recording and sharing of confidential information. The school provides up to date policy and procedural information that directs staff in all their contacts with the young people. The school's complaints procedures are well established and forms are readily available. Staff are fully informed of a young person's right to complain and underlined their support and detailed understanding of their advocacy responsibility.

Communication and sensory awareness is a priority of the school and this ensures that all young person issues are managed consistently and with understanding. The young people's complaint and information handbooks are presented in a user friendly style that compliments the school's child centred communication system. The information pamphlets also list the telephone numbers of external organisation, who can be contacted in the event of a concern. Directions for electronic communication with the Children's Rights Web Site are also provided. The school policy statement on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults is comprehensive and gives detailed and informed advice. The policy is subject to annual review and senior staff are in regular contact with the Local Authority Safeguarding Officer in order to up date policy and training issues. The young people have regular contact with their key workers and can also be assisted to discuss concerns directly with parents and carers. The school complaint record shows that attention is paid to the necessary timescales and all outcomes are recorded and dated. All staff have completed safeguarding protection training programmes. Discussion with care, catering and domestic staff illustrated that staff know what action to take in the event of an abuse allegation being made or suspected. Staff are fully informed of the school's whistle blowing policy and the internal and external reporting arrangements. The safeguarding record shows that all agencies are suitably notified and that outcomes are recorded. All policy documents are kept within the school and are readily available. The school ethos and application of the 24 hour curriculum ensures that young people are not bullied and that positive interaction is encouraged. The Statement of Purpose gives clear outline to a culture that is based on tolerance and respect. The school's use of questionnaires, surveys and bullying awareness campaigns is proactive and reinforces mature and acceptable behaviours. The majority of recently completed questionnaires agree that the school is safe environment and that staff will stop any bullying behaviour. Discussion with several young people also confirmed that bullying behaviour is not acceptable at the school. There has been no circumstances of unauthorised absences and so none have been recorded. However, staff are fully informed of the arrangements for agency notification and the action that is to be taken in the event of a young person being absent from the school. Key work sessions are used to stress the importance of young people keeping themselves safe and out of dangerous situations. The school's policy documents on approved measures of control are kept within the school and are available for staff, parents and professionals involved. All incidents of restraint and unacceptable behaviour are suitably recorded. The school ethos and Statement of Purpose confirm that punishments are not applied to young people with autistic spectrum disorder. Parental questionnaires illustrate that punishments are not used and that understanding and awareness of individual communication programmes are used to promote improved behaviour and social functioning. One questionnaire states that 'we work together if there is a problem' and another states that 'punishments are not appropriate'. The school denial of rights record shows that certain activities have not been attended due to safety concerns. All incidents are signed and dated and are clearly discussed with parents, careers and the placing authority. Staff were observed supporting and encouraging the young people in their interactions and were clearly aware and responsive to individual behaviours and sensory communication issues. Staff were adept and responsive in certain

instances that required physical contact, comfort and attention. All observed interactions were relaxed, friendly and caring. A number of young people agreed that staff cared for them and were also clear in their completed questionnaires, that they would know who to speak with if they had a concern or were unhappy. Discussion with staff agreed the young peoples progress and development. The school fire safety records confirm the testing of all equipment. Regular fire drills are also recorded and all young people and staff are aware of the evacuation procedures. The fire, gas and electrical safety check certificates are kept within the school and all safety information is readily available. Risk assessment documentation on a number of young people was reviewed. All information was appropriately detailed, up to date and efficiently maintained. The recording process clearly provides a useful framework for all staff to identify behaviour and communication issues, external difficulties and certain high risk behaviours. The recording process is well established and overseen by the senior staff concerned. Discussion with a number of young people agreed that staff gave regular advice on keeping safe and were protective and concerned for their wellbeing. The school's recruitment records show that all Criminal Records Bureau, identity and reference checks are completed prior to employment being confirmed. Any advertised vacancy is supported by an up to date job description and copy of the school Statement of Purpose document. All visitors for the young people are agreed with the family and placing authority. The identity of all visitors is confirmed by a formal signing in procedure and the wearing of an identification pass badge. All personnel information is stored with full regard to privacy and confidentiality.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

For all young people, school attendance is encouraged and effectively supported. Care staff described positive working relationships with the teaching department colleagues and a regular and valuable daily exchange of information and assessment forms an essential part of the school routine. The detailed communication process is seamlessly maintained by the application of the '24 hour' curriculum and the shared views of care and teaching staff teams. Significant developmental progress and achievement is being recorded for the young people. Staff were observed supporting and sensitively preparing the young people for the start and the end of the school day. Individual behaviour and personal care routines are well recognised and regular attendance is constantly supported and recorded. School break and play time periods are appropriately supervised and clearly enjoyed by the young people. During the course of the inspection programme no disruption to the school timetable was evident or recorded. All young person movement throughout the school is both calmly and purposefully managed. Regular contact with placing authorities is maintained and care and educational plans are regularly reviewed. Each young person is in receipt of a up to date Personal Education Plan that identifies areas of attainment and issues for attention and development. Care staff and key worker attend individual annual review meetings and will regularly contribute to the planning agenda. Purposeful contact is maintained with local colleges and an extensive range of vocational and work placement providers. A number of the young were enjoying and benefiting from these placements and spoke positively of their experiences. Review of the care records confirmed that regular and individual support sessions are available to each young person. Key work and daily log records are completed and confirm individual support with all welfare and personal care routines. Discussion with the majority of young people in Lakeside gave a definite response to future welfare arrangements and confirmed attendance at school forum meetings. Additional and responsive individual support is also regularly provided by the school's speech and language therapy team and sensory well being co-ordinator. Further psychological and specialist advice

is provided by the placing authority CAMHS team. All contacts are by arrangement and agreement with the placing authority and the relatives concerned. The school leisure and activity programme is comprehensive, stimulating and varied. All young people are encouraged to try new activities and develop new interests. Teaching and care staff work closely together to develop the evening activity programme and a number of productive and interesting activities were observed. The local leisure and activity centres are well used and regular visits are made to places of interest. All school activities are subject to detailed consideration and risk assessment. The school clearly provides good levels of financial support for the continued development of the activity programme.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

A number of care and review plans were considered. The majority of review documents show that the young people's needs are comprehensively assessed and well considered by educational, care and other specialist staff involved. The young people's attendance and contribution to planning and review meetings is encouraged and supported by the respective key worker and senior care staff involved. Parents and carers regularly attend these meetings and are included in all aspects of the planning process. The review information supplied by some placing authorities was limited and did not clearly inform the case file records. For each young person individual placement planning information is comprehensively informed and maintained by separate risk assessment and personal development and communication documents. These documents are now being collated under separate placement plan headings. All staff are enthusiastic in developing the contributions of the young people. A representative group of young people meet regularly with senior staff at the school forum meeting. These meetings are held every Thursday and provide opportunity for the young people to comment on all aspects of the care and educational provision. The minutes from these meetings record agreed outcomes and also list the staff and young people in attendance. Consultation with the young people is further enhanced by a regular sequence of school questionnaires that inform a number of different organisational inspection programmes. The questionnaires for this inspection were essentially very positive on all aspects of the care provision. However, one young person requested 'less paper work' and stated that 'loads of paper work' and 'loads of inspections' is all 'depressing, restrictive, boring and unnatural'. Individual communication and behaviour programmes are underpinned by the application of training and education of autistic children with communication handicaps (TEACCH) programme, and a well established picture exchange communication system (PECS). The school specialist speech and language team (SALT) ensure that each young person's communication programme is consistently maintained and developed. In discussion a number of young people appeared particularly well informed on personal care issues and certain of their right to contribute to the welfare programme. Young person information is presented in a user friendly format and every young person can bring personal and special items with them on admission and at the start of the weekly boarding placement arrangement. Pre-placement visits are encouraged and regular home contacts and advisory visits are conducted by the family support worker (FSW). Young person communication systems are further enhanced by electronic access to the school's web site and information on contact to approved external advisory organisations. Additionally, all young people can view the Wargrave House news and information publications. All information is available to parents, carers and the placing authorities. Parental questionnaires are outstanding in their comments on the school. 'The school is excellent in many ways, its staff demonstrate a 100% commitment to the care and education of its pupils'. Wargrave House offers an excellent standard of care at all

times'. 'Staff have a very high level of knowledge on autism'. 'The school is well led with excellent teachers and support staff'. 'Visits are always encouraged with an open door policy'. 'I believe they do an outstanding job with great commitment and effect' Parent and family evenings are organised on a regular basis and the home-school information book provides additional opportunity for regular communication on day to day issues and events. Parental questionnaires were especially appreciative of the contact with the FSW and clearly valued the availability of staff on all levels. Review and planning meetings discuss the extent of contact arrangements and agree any change in circumstance. Facilities for private discussion and meetings are available and can include the use of a separate telephone area. Staff were well informed of all contact and visiting arrangements. There was much illustration of sensitive and responsive interactions with the young people. The observed relationships and communications reflected mutual respect and understanding, with a clear observance of the professional and socially acceptable boundaries for interaction. Staff are responsive to individual need and behaviours and promote the young people's welfare and development. All staff are supported and encouraged to attend training events that focus on the development of positive interventions, care and communication techniques. Occasions that required staff intervention were managed calmly and with good regard to individuality and consistency.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Discussion with staff agreed that transitional and Pathway Planning arrangements are being maintained and positive levels of communication with adult care teams and local Connexions Service are recorded. The school Family Support Worker remains actively involved and both supports and assists in the visiting arrangements to further adult placements and college provisions. The Lakeside Post 16 provision makes good use of local colleges and vocational placement provision. All aspects of self-reliance and development are encouraged within an atmosphere of warm and purposeful support. Several young people made positive comment and observation on the content of their vocational and personal care development programmes. A number of this older group of young people agreed that staff discuss and talk with them about their maturity, self-reliance and progress. Individual self-care and communication programmes are established and focus on promoting communication, independence with cooking, finance, leisure interests, self care and domestic routines. The school's residential facilities present as modern, spacious and comfortably furnished settings. The decoration programme is being well co-ordinated and all areas are well maintained, bright and homely. Further physical developments have been introduced and improve the warm nature of the facilities. The layout of the facilities ensure for the privacy and dignity of the young people. The school games, play and activity areas, sensory facilities, library, IT room and classrooms are extensively used and valued by the young people. The school provides sufficient space for personal study and homework tasks. The play areas are being further developed and the gardens and grounds are very well maintained and compliment the care facilities. The area is well served with local shops, public transport and leisure facilities. The town centre shopping area is within reasonable travel distance.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school's Statement of Purpose is readily available for all staff, visiting professionals, relatives and the young people. This document is regularly reviewed by the school principal and the

head of care, the governing body and trustees. The main document and accompanying policy information has been recently improved and reflects the school ethos and care arrangements and the extent of the service provision. The school principal and head of care also meet regularly to discuss the content of independent visiting and conduct reports that are regularly produced by a representative of the managing organisation. These reports are available within the school and include all conduct concerns and maintenance issues. The independent visitor is also available to meet individually with staff or young people. Discussion with staff agreed positive levels of managerial and senior staff support and advice. The supervision records are well maintained and provide staff with the opportunity for discussion on all personal development and young person care issues. Staff also provided positive comment and support for the school's multidisciplinary and problem solving approach and agreed that there was regular and focused discussion on all care practice issues. The school staffing ratios are consistently maintained, with good level of stability and continuity. A calm and settled atmosphere is evident in all areas of the main school and Lakeside area. Staff sickness and health related absences are covered with the minimum of disruption and again with good regard to continuity and stability. National Vocational Qualification level 3 training is extremely well organised and supported. The majority of staff are in receipt of this award and are continuing with additional training and development. The training arrangements include the night staff care team members. The annual training programme provides comprehensive and stimulating development opportunities, with new sensory training events established. Additional autism specific events are also included alongside essential safeguarding and communication programmes and events. Recently appointed staff agreed that their progress is regularly discussed and that their development is recorded in the annual appraisal programme. All staff have completed induction training programmes. This has included first aid, health and safety, food hygiene, managing challenging behaviours, child protection and safeguarding events and introduction to the school recording and reporting procedures. Staff are enthusiastic, confident and competent in their approach to their duties and there are sufficient staff on duty for each shift period. Staff meeting records are maintained and staff illustrated that these meetings presented good opportunity for discussion and contribution to the 'Whole School' performance and function. The agenda allows for a wide ranging discussion on the young person welfare, planning issues, behaviours and practice concerns. The school records are monitored accordingly and regular planning and conduct meetings are held with the governing body, principal, head of care and the Registered Provider. The school's young person records show individuality, development and progress. The records are kept securely with full regard to privacy and the essential recording arrangements. Discussion with staff and review of organisational records and policy information confirm that all required standards are met or exceeded.

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 placing authority care planning documentation is monitored accordingly (NMS17)

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.