

Edington & Shapwick School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Heather Chaplin
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Date of last inspection	15 January 2007

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Edington and Shapwick School provides educational and boarding facilities for children and young people aged from eight to 19 years who have dyslexia and associated language disorders. Children do not have emotional and behavioural disorders as their primary need. The school occupies two separate sites five miles apart, and is situated in rural village communities on the Somerset Levels. Edington provides for children in the age range of eight to 13 years. They are accommodated in boarding houses close to the school. The older students aged 13 to 19 years are educated at the Shapwick site, and are currently accommodated in The Old Vicarage on the Edington site (Sixth Form boys), The Manor on the Shapwick site, Little Lawns and Greystones Cottage within walking distance of Shapwick, and at The Lakes, which is a short drive from the two school sites. The school changes use of the boarding houses from time to time according to gender balance. The school currently has 143 students on roll. At the time of the inspection there were 21 girls and 66 boys boarding, with 56 students attending during the day.

Summary

A full inspection was carried out in January 2007 and no recommendations were made. On this occasion, a proportionate inspection was carried out, covering the key standards. The school completed self assessment questionnaires. There were 62 questionnaires returned by students. Almost all said that they are satisfied with the school, 'because it gives you all the help you need', and there were many similar comments. All those spoken with during the inspection said that they were happy at the school and were well looked after. The inspector toured the seven boarding houses with students, and spoke with approximately one third of the boarders during the course of the inspection, and met some members of staff. Daily routines, policies and procedures have not changed since the last key inspection, where they met the relevant National Minimum Standards, and they were not re-inspected. The school meets students' educational and emotional needs very well. There is a sensitive approach to boarding welfare. Students can ask for help and support from a range of staff, up to and including the Headmasters, and some said they received help 'from everyone'. Students appear happy, and are courteous, positive, confident and helpful. Many said that they had benefited enormously from being at a specialist school where their learning issues are fully understood. One student said 'I love being in school, I feel happy here and I am safe'. All of the boarding houses are homely and comfortable. Some have been refurbished since the last inspection. The attractive rural situation lends itself to outdoor pursuits and in some houses, the unique environment of the Somerset Levels is utilised to very good effect for activities and relaxation. The school continues to be well managed by the two Headmasters, one taking a lead role for academic issues and developments and the other leading on welfare, which includes the boarding arrangements. The Headmaster leading on welfare is referred to within this report as the Head of Care.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

No recommendations were made at the last inspection, but the school continues to review its own progress and to update and monitor procedures.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Health care and dietary needs are well met at this school. Students' health care needs are recorded prior to admission and parental consent forms for first aid and non-prescribed medicines are on file. All say that they are well cared for when unwell, and this was observed during the inspection. Most of the staff have achieved a basic level first aid qualification. One designated member of staff is the school nurse and official first aid provider, and there is one matron based at each of the two school sites. There is a simple but safe system in place for tracking medicines given to young people, which includes use of a duplicate book in each boarding house, so that a computerised central record can be kept of any medicines given. In some houses, medicines are not separated within the cabinet for each young person, but they are in others. Medicines are in some cases administered by placing them in an individually labelled pot in the kitchen, which staff concerned say is a satisfactory system, but this is not recommended practice. Students confirm that school meals are of a high standard on both Edington and Shapwick sites. Breakfast and some weekend meals are taken in boarding houses, where snacks and drinks can also be prepared, but the school cooks a Sunday roast every week and this is very popular. Fruit is freely available. Food is healthy and attractively presented, providing a good choice including vegetarian options and provision for students who have food sensitivities and allergies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Students are kept safe by well trained and vigilant staff, who follow consistent behavioural guidelines and work in safe premises. The school ensures that all confidential information is kept securely, and continues to promote privacy throughout the school. Some boarders have access to mobile phones, and they also have access to pay phones in each boarding house. Helpline information is available. Most have email accounts, but there have been problems with the school's email system since the last inspection, and this is still being addressed. Students say that they are able to raise any issue with the house parents and that they are confident that it would be addressed. The schools both have a compliments file that includes complaints, but the compliments far outweigh these. The file shows many letters from past students and parents, expressing gratitude for the service provided by the school. There is a satisfactory complaints policy that contains contact details for Ofsted. Staff receive regularly updated training in child protection. The child protection policy is very clear and makes reference to the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures. There have been no referrals to the local authority for child protection enquiries in the past year. The school promotes a strong anti bullying policy and supports this with decisive action when required. Very few students reported being bullied, and those that did referred to this as something that had happened in the past, that had been dealt with. There are clear processes in place for notifying events to Ofsted but this action has not been necessary to date. Absconding has also not been an issue. The school has a clear policy for rewarding positive behaviour and also for sanctions. Students confirm that they understand this system. The restraints log showed no restraints in either school for three years, and serious incidents are very rare. Sanctions are set by staff, and are recorded in a duplicate book. The top sheet is sent to the school office for monitoring purposes and to ensure consistency of approach, and this system appears to work well. The Head of Care monitors all behavioural measures. The school sites and safety practices provide a generally safe environment. Risk assessments are in place for all the boarding houses and these are reviewed and maintained. These are also monitored by the Head of Care. No health and safety issues

were identified during this inspection. The school site is protected by closed circuit TV cameras and alarms on vulnerable buildings; also by high staffing levels and staff vigilance. The seven fire logbooks seen confirm that regular drills take place in each boarding house, especially when new boarders arrive. An outside contractor regularly maintains the fire equipment. The Head of Care has recorded advice to staff in some log books regarding frequency of fire safety checks. All boarding house staff confirmed that they conduct regular drills twice a term, and that they test the fire alarms weekly. Fire safety equipment is in place. Generally the school follows its robust recruitment process and in the majority of cases, all of the required checks are made before staff commence work at the school. Criminal Record Bureau checks are always made on non-employee family members who live at the school. A record of all staff interviews is kept. However, some staff files lack a photograph, although these are stored on computer, and one lacks identity information. In another instance, a member of boarding staff had been started in post before the CRB certificate was received and this person's previous certificate is not current. A recommendation has been made in line with National Minimum Standard 27.7.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Students praise the support they receive from all staff in this specialist school, and say that this has enabled them to achieve their potential. In addition to teaching and boarding staff, the school provides speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, counselling, and day to day support from individual tutors. Young people are clear that they can approach any member of the staff for support if they need it. All students have an Individual Education Plan and an annual review, which house parents attend. There are strong links between teaching and boarding, with some of the boarding house staff also holding teaching posts. Weekly staff meetings are used to help ensure effective communication between the groups of staff. The school has a strong equal opportunities policy, and has plans in place to make the school site more accessible to people with special physical requirements. There is a wide range of activities for boarders, in the evenings and at weekends, largely based around the boarding houses, and they vary according to the house concerned. For example, The Manor has easy access to a large sports hall and an Astroturf pitch, whilst The Lakes lends itself to fishing and walking activities. Young people can engage in a number of indoor activities, for example, karaoke, DVDs, computers, artwork and trips into town at the weekends. They also enjoy time relaxing and chatting to their friends.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people can readily make their views known. They have boarding meetings every night, and regular tutor group meetings. Any suggestions arising from the meetings are put forward to the school Council. Students cite examples of improvements made in response to suggestions, such as the changing facilities for girls in school. The school says that they have provided more playground furniture and improved the games room at Shapwick as a result of students' representations. Parents are invited to meet staff 12 times a year or at any other mutually convenient time to ensure parental involvement. Parents receive school reports twice a year. Students say that they receive plenty of support in small group learning. If there is anything they do not understand they receive rapid assistance. Relationships between staff and students are very good. Students address the staff respectfully, and they are relaxed and confident in talking to them. Individual education plans identify their needs and specify how these will be

met. Students contribute to the review process. Parents can ring the boarding houses at a predetermined time to speak to their children, a system that appears to work effectively. Some students have mobile phones and these are not available to them during the night or the school day.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

There is a school uniform and clear standards of dress which have to be followed by both boys and girls. There were no issues raised about the dress code. Boarders may wear their own clothing outside school time. All laundry is washed at Shapwick School and there are satisfactory arrangements for this. Boarders have access to safe individual storage, which they provide, for their personal possessions. The school and all its boarding houses are situated in an attractive rural area with ready access to country walks and outdoor activities. All seven houses provide safe, secure and homely accommodation for young people. There are some single rooms, but others may be shared with up to four other students. The National Minimum Standards specify a maximum of four to a room but there is plenty of space and no issues were raised with the inspector about the numbers sharing. Students may bring their own duvet and linen, and can personalise their rooms. All rooms are bright and airy. The houses, which are all historic buildings, are subject to an ongoing programme of major refurbishment and the most recently completed house, The Lakes, has been renovated to a high standard. All houses are warm and well designed for their purpose. They are set in attractive grounds and in some instances, adjacent to open countryside. All houses have sufficient baths, showers and toilet facilities to meet the needs of boarders, although some boys at Chapel Hill Farm say that sometimes their showers can run cool. Shower rooms are well designed and have space for students to keep their personal items separately. The physical environment in all the houses is spotlessly clean.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school has a clear Aims and Objectives document that has recently been updated and meets the National Minimum Standards. There are sufficient staff on duty to look after all the boarders to a high standard. The Head of Care monitors every aspect of boarding life and visits boarding houses periodically to check on progress. He is available to staff on call. Most boarding staff do not hold National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in care of children and young people, but many have what the school considers to be equivalent qualifications, and many of the boarding staff are teachers. The school says that it encourages staff to complete this award. Staff confirm that they have received a satisfactory induction training that includes child protection and first aid, and that food hygiene training is arranged soon after starting in post. Staff are clear about their reporting structure and accountabilities. The Head of Care sees all boarding staff daily. He does not hold formal one to one recorded supervision sessions, and is aware that technically this does not meet the National Minimum Standards. However, the level of monitoring is sound. Formal one to one supervision instead of the day to day support that all staff receive, would not necessarily enhance outcomes for students. The school is very well managed and the two Head Masters have well defined areas of responsibility. The Head of Care and the Head of Education see the Chairman of Governors once a week and there are termly Governors' meetings to review budgets and develop ideas. The school has a business plan which is currently being implemented, and this includes the further development of Sixth Form boarding.

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 medicines are stored, recorded and administered in accordance with National Minimum Standard 14.16.
- ensure that members of staff are not started in post until a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau check has been received, in line with National Minimum Standard 27.7.

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.