

Lindsworth School

Inspection report for residential special school

Unique reference number	SC017171
Inspection date	29 January 2008
Inspector	Andrew Hewston
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	9 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

Lindsworth is a special school providing day, extended day and residential places. It provides up to 14 residential places if two bedrooms are shared, or twelve places if all bedrooms are single. Residential pupils board at the school for four nights a week, Monday to Thursday inclusive. At the time of the inspection all the residential pupils were boys and there were three being accommodated. All the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and their predominant difficulties are social, emotional and behavioural [SEBD]. The school operates on two sites, but the residential provision is wholly on only one of these, the Lindsworth 'South' site, in Kings Norton, Birmingham.

Summary

This inspection was completed over two days and included the examination of records and discussions with staff and young people. Although the school has employed the previous school nurse on a full-time basis the planning and records of health care issues has not improved within the residential unit and the records that are available highlight some possible poor practice being completed by the staff team. Young people are generally kept safe within the residential unit and school although again some recording issues could have a detrimental effect on the outcomes of young people. Young people enjoy effective and productive communication between school and the residential unit and activities in the evening are well staffed. Recorded planning for young people is weak although staff have a very high awareness of young people's needs and how the school and its systems can help young people to develop. The residential unit is appropriately staffed although it is also used as a base for day and extended day provision effecting some recording. The residential units recording systems still do not fully ensure that sufficient information is kept within young people's files. Staff receive supervision from senior staff in a range of ways but the more formal of these has been ineffectively recorded.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school has developed a number of resources around the site to support security for the young people and staff including a new fence to the rear of the residential unit and a refurbished reception area including toilets that are accessible for people with disabilities. An additional path into the school and specified parking spaces also support those people with physical disabilities. A new telephone is available for young people within the residential unit. There is an effective system in place for notifying Ofsted of incidents that occur within the school and these are recorded. All staff have received appraisals to examine their working practice with proposals for training and development.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

The previous school nurse is now employed as a health care coordinator within the school on a full-time basis. This is to offer ongoing support with relation to health planning and medication to both resident and non resident units as well as within the school environment. The education authority provides a nurse on a time limited basis and they are due to start visiting the school

on a regular basis from February. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools standard. Support offered through the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is reported to have improved, with plans underway for meetings to take place within a designated area of the school rather than parents and young people having to visit an additional venue. Young people are also due to receive information from Help Is At Hand (HIAH) with regard to drugs awareness. Health plans for young people are weak, with little information regarding medication and how the school is supporting young people with specific health needs. Permission forms for medication administration are not fully completed including permissions for controlled medication, whereby parents have signed forms yet medication to be administered is not recorded. Medication Administration Records are not fully recorded, with a large number of unaccountable gaps being seen in previous months. Records show that at least one young person did not appear to be given prescribed controlled medication and had not for the month prior to the inspection, although there is no evidence to show why this was the case and the health care coordinator was not aware that this was not being administered. The health care coordinator states that audits of medication have highlighted issues of poor recording and training has been given to staff in this area. Staff are trained in first aid. When accidents occur these are recorded on a designated report format, one accident report was seen to have taken three weeks to be completed from the original accident.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy is respected by the staff team and each young person has their own bedroom that they are able to access. The unit has a new telephone that is freely available within a semi private area and young people also have access to a cordless phone that is available through staff. Young people's files are stored within a locked office. The school has recently taken possession of metal detecting 'wands' to improve safety on site for all young people, this is assessed as a positive step for young people although may be seen as an invasion of privacy. Specific guidance has not been developed regarding their use and no recording system is in place to show if these have been used. The school has a policy and procedure regarding complaints and information is available within the residential unit regarding this. Young people are confident in the school's system and state that they feel that concerns are dealt with, although they do not sometimes know how. The school's complaints record is completed within two systems, a bound book and an electronic record. Information is inconsistent however between these and one complaint examined did not have a clear outcome recorded. Appropriate procedures are in place relating to safeguarding issues within the school. Recordings are stored within a dedicated computerised system that only the head of care and the head teacher have access to. The head of care is the designated child protection officer and has a range of experience in this area. The head teacher has recently completed computer based training in safeguarding issues. Staff are aware of the expectation to report child protection concerns to the designated person and have received appropriate refresher training in this area. The school has a policy in relation to anti-bullying. Staff and pupils are aware of the system within school and residential unit to report any concerns regarding bullying behaviour. The system allows for young people to report incidents of bullying behaviour on an anonymous basis within designated boxes around the school or to staff. This system is reported in a simplistic form within the children's guide for the residential unit. Records relating to bullying are kept and consultation with both the bully and the victim are reported to take place. There are specific systems in place within the school contract system to allow for bullying behaviour to be closely monitored. The Head of Care notifies Ofsted with relation to events and concerns regarding the residential

young people. There is not a clear recording system with regard to these notifications including how events have been resolved or responded to. The school has an appropriate absence without authority policy which has been developed alongside the local authority and police procedures. Staff are aware of the expectations of how to respond when this occurs. Risk assessments for high risk absconders had been completed although these are basic. Recordings of events relating to absconding behaviour are within the home's log book and are not sufficiently in line with the expectations of the standard. Young people within the school all have a Statement of Educational need stating that they have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has a behaviour management plan that is in place within the residential provision and school environment. Individual behaviour management plans for the young people are assessed as being basic and there is a difficulty to assess progress in some areas. Staff are trained in a system of behaviour management that has been developed from the previous system, with some staff having completed training in facilitating this system. The system for recording physical interventions is through a bound whole school log book, additional recording sheets and the need for the Head of Care to examine and sign these prior to their inclusion within the young people's files. Some records are not copied sufficiently within the young people's files although are available within the school's system. Recordings of sanctions that are completed within the home have not been updated since the end of November. These recordings are insufficient and do not include all areas as stated within Standard NMS 10.9. Checks with relation to health and safety are completed on a regular basis including water temperatures, gas safety and portable electrical appliances. Fire safety checks are completed on a monthly basis although the risk assessment relating to fire needs to be updated. Fire drills are completed and recorded and a whole school fire safety check has been completed with only some areas of the school teaching block requiring additional work to be completed. An assessment of the ceiling on the first floor has been completed following the partial collapse of the ceiling within one of the empty bedrooms due to a leak in the roof. A new fence has been placed around the rear of the residential provision to ensure greater security to the school buildings and the young people. The recruitment records for staff are all up to date and in line with the expectations of the Standard. Records are well kept and organised. All necessary checks have been completed on staff prior to them starting work within the school.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The unit has good links with the school, with care and teaching staff observed working together to identify personal, social and educational development. Care staff are observed supporting young people in school following difficulties and teaching staff also have an input into the residential part of the young people's lives. Evidence from reviews and individual education plans showed an input from the residential staff. Staff from the care and teaching side discussed with the inspector how care staff often took a role within the classroom if specific difficulties had occurred relating to the young people. Care staff go through young people's educational contract, a form of daily report, at lunchtime and at the end of the day and are responsible for some sanctions relating to poor behaviour within the school environment. Young people enjoy a range of activities within the home both during school break times and in the evenings. The home is well staffed during the evenings, with some teaching staff giving additional support. Support for young people within the residential unit is available in a variety of systems, most of which being linked directly to the school. The staff within the home actively promote the involvement of young people into social groups, in an attempt to counter difficulties related to feeling isolated or to overcome difficulties that they were aware of between young people.

The school has created a link with an independent listener who visits the residential unit on a semi regular basis although there is information available to allow young people to contact them. The care staff team had a very good knowledge of the young people, including their likes, dislikes, family situations and behavioural responses to difficulties within the school and unit. Staff were able to therefore discuss with each other and the inspector how to support young people on a highly individualised basis

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

The school uses a range of consultative forums, from more formal pupil consultations with senior staff on a six monthly basis, daily group meetings within the residential unit to discuss behavioural contracts, to more generalised discussions regarding activities. The school has a number of young people who are involved with a food committee that looks at differing menus, alongside the likes and dislikes of the young people. Information relating to parental contact and consultation is available within the young people's files, although the majority of information is recorded within the home's log book. Staff continue to ensure that very good links are made between staff and the young people's families. Planning for young people is insufficient with there being an apparent reliance of children's education statements as offering sufficient placement plans. This is not the case due to statements lacking information regarding health, contact arrangements, medication and leisure needs. This lack of available evidence is surprising due to the obvious high awareness that staff have of the young people's needs and how these are attempting to be met by both the school and the residential provision. Staff are able to discuss differing individual strategies to support young people, these are not sufficiently recorded however. Similarly insufficient recordings are available of key worker, or minder meetings, while young people state that they get on well with staff and often talk to them about issues regarding their behaviour and progress that they have made. The young people in residence all return home or to residential accommodation at weekends and during the school holidays. Young people state that they are allowed access to parents or significant adults when required and also to other family members. Records are available of contact between the school and the young people's family, although these are not always up to date. The inspector did not find any restrictions with regard to contact taking place

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The school has an acceptable Statement of Purpose that was examined as part of the last inspection, this was therefore not examined. The unit also had its own individualised handbook that is available for parents and resident young people. Young people's files are basic yet adequate. The residential unit continues to use a log book system for recording all events that occur. This bound book contains all of the information for all of the young people. It is therefore very difficult for individual young people to read information that is written about them due to other's information being written alongside. This system for recording also decreases an ability to assess individual's behaviour due to the range of other recordings. Staffing numbers within the home are good, with additional support being offered by the senior staff on a 'bleep' system. Two staff sleep in the home each night within suitable accommodation. The range of

experience and trained staff within the home is good. Teaching staff play a part in offering additional activities in the evenings and are assessed as having a positive and consistent role within the lives of the resident young people. All staff work well with the young people throughout the evening and during periods that the young people are within the home, i.e. breaks and lunchtimes. The staffing arrangements for the home are stated within the home's handbook. Recordings of which young people and staff have slept in the unit are unclear within the log book and the accessibility of this information is compromised by the relatively inappropriate use of the log book. The lack of formal supervisions continues to be a concern within the residential unit. Although there are a range of informal individualised support structures, this lack of recorded meetings is an issue that has not been addressed by the school's senior team sufficiently. The management team have arranged for all staff to have appraisals and feedback from the care staff team is positive due to the highlighting of current skills and suggested avenues of career development. The whole residential unit's staff team have recently started meeting to discuss ongoing issues within the home. The Head of Care is appropriately qualified and has a sound history of working with young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The majority of the school support staff and all of the residential unit staff have completed the N.V.Q. Level 3 and some staff are in the process of completing the N.V.Q. 4 award in Caring for Children and Young People. Staff rotas show the hours that staff are expected to work within the home, although there is some concern that residential staff are spending the majority of their school time hours dealing with issues regarding young people where there are difficulties within school. This has a knock on effect regarding the lack of time available for record keeping, supervision and placement planning. The unit is well staffed in the evening. Although there is no specified system of monitoring all recordings as stated within Standard 32.2, senior staff have a good awareness of issues regarding each of the areas. The school has an annual development plan that is developed by the head teacher with their senior staff team. One of the school governors has completed one visit to the school in line with the expectation of Standard 33.3. This is recorded appropriately.

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 each young person has a full health plan in line with the expectations of National Minimum Standard (NMS) 14.5
- complete all permissions forms for medication administration fully NMS 14.25
- complete all recordings of medication administration fully NMS 14.20
- ensure all prescribed medication is administered in accordance with the related prescription NMS 14.21

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- record all instances where accidents have occurred in a timely fashion and within 24 hours where possible NMS 14.22
 - develop a specific policy and procedure with relation to the use of metal detecting 'wands' and ensure that all such uses are documented in line with NMS 3.11
 - ensure complaints records are in a consistent format and include the outcomes of any complaints NMS 4.3
 - record all instances of absence without authority fully including areas as stated within NMS 8.6
 - record all instances of sanction fully and in line with the expectations of the standard within 24 hours NMS 10.9
 - record all individual instances of sanctions and physical interventions within young people's files NMS 10.17
 - ensure each young person has a placement plan that is in line with NMS 17.5
 - assess the use of the home's log book due to the inability of young people to be able to access their own records NMS 18.1
 - include all information into young people's files with relation to NMS 18.2
 - record all those staff and young people who sleep in the unit and ensure these records are accessible NMS 28.13
 - ensure that staff have received regular supervision and that these meetings are sufficiently recorded NMS 30.2
 - assess the availability of time available for record keeping in line with the awareness that care staff are involved with ongoing duties throughout the day NMS 31.5.

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.