

Mount Tamar Special School

Inspection report for residential special school

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About this inspection

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

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

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Service information

Brief description of the service

Mount Tamar School provides education and care for children and young people who have emotional, behavioural difficulties. The residential provision operates as a support for educational needs. The building is situated centrally on the school site. The hostel is open four nights a week during term time. Pupils attend from one to four nights according to need. A highly structured routine is offered. A variety of on and off site activities is available.

Summary

The purpose of this visit is to carry out a full announced inspection of the hostel. The service continues to be a significant factor underpinning young people's educational attendance and attainment. Young people are cared for by a well informed and stable staff team. Behaviour management strategies used to engage young people at the hostel are outstanding. The care and support offered to individual young people is outstanding.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, there were three recommendations made. The heads were asked to consider increasing the number of staff on duty to ensure that complex needs were fully met. A new member of staff now works at peak times in the evening which means that the team have more time to focus on young people. This recommendation is now met. A recommendation was made to ensure that the home held a separate book to record physical interventions. A separate, dedicated book to record physical interventions is now in place. This recommendation is now met. Following the last inspection, the home was asked to ensure that all complaints made by young people are recorded, including minor issues. An audit trail of all comments and complaints made by young people is now in place. This recommendation is met.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people at the hostel receive good support to meet their health and care needs. The staff team have established links with medical professional who can offer assistance, such as the school nurse and Consultant Psychiatrist. The team recognise the need to deal promptly with health issues. On occasions when families and carers are unable to provide support, young people are helped to access medical attention. Hygiene is monitored in a non intrusive way, by ensuring that showering and cleaning teeth is part of the evening routine for everyone. This ensures that good personal and oral hygiene is maintained throughout each young person's stay. Prescribed medication and non prescription medications are dealt with in a considered way. There are two members of staff who handle hostel medication. There is a record of all medication coming in and out, plus a record for administration. The system could be complex due to the number of young people using the service in any given week. However, the likelihood of error is reduced by a systematic approach and the involvement of only two members of staff. Each day two cooked meals are provided, at lunch time and in the evening. Sandwiches or baked potatoes can be taken as an alternative to the main menu. The whole school uses the hostel's dining room at lunch time over three sittings. In the evening all the young people and staff sit together to eat their evening meal. Meal times are well ordered affairs. On the whole

waste is limited and young people eat what they have chosen. It is possible that the meals offered may not be providing the best possible diet for young people who use the hostel. This is because it is difficult for staff to judge the overall nutritional values, as the main menu did not accurately reflect what was available. On occasions the same type of meat was provided at both lunch time and in the evening, albeit in a different guise.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff are respectful of young people's privacy. They understand the need for confidentiality. For example information about young people is provided on a 'need to know' basis. In terms of everyday practice, staff knock on young people's doors before entering. Young people are protected by robust systems which aim to prevent and detect abuse. The school employs a child protection coordinator who has kept abreast of local and national developments through her links with the local safeguarding board. In addition three new coordinators have been trained to support child protection throughout the school. Staff know how to deal with suspicions or allegations of abuse because they receive annual training in child protection. New staff are trained as part of their induction. Young people are listened to, they know how to complain and are accustomed to using the systems in place in order to do so. Complaints or suggestions can be made by filling in a slip and posting in the relevant box in the hallway. Young people also feel that they are listened to by staff and may go directly to one of the team to have their complaint dealt with. The team responds effectively to complaints made. Each complaint can be tracked by a clear audit trail which includes the outcome. The team endeavour to protect young people from bullying by fostering an ethos which does not tolerate bullying and through responsive staffing across the school. The team have created a climate where young people feel able to talk to staff. They are accustomed to bringing incidents of bullying to the attention of staff, in writing and in person. Staff in the hostel and school are accustomed to communicating and passing concerns about potential bullying situation between home and class. The small staff team in the hostel is well established and the team know each young person very well. This knowledge enables them to detect when there may be a problems. Young people are supervised and managed throughout their stay, staff are able to intervene to prevent bullying situations developing. Young people who go absent without authority receive protection from sound procedures. There have been no recent absences from the hostel however, the procedures are well known to staff. These ensure that endeavours are made to find the young person and that the relevant individuals and outside professionals are informed. Physical interventions are occasionally used at the hostel. There are three recorded incidents in the last four months. A new recording system has been introduced, this is to be refined in order to ensure that the required information is not omitted. Positive steps are taken to keep young people, staff and visitors safe from hazards. For example fire safety equipment is checked frequently and gas installations are safety checked annually. A risk assessment has been carried out on the building for the purposes of managing the risk of fire. This provides good quality information, but is not comprehensive enough to constitute an overall risk assessment of the building and grounds. Children are protected from potential abusers by vetting procedures. However, one staff file did not contain a written record of the employee's employment history.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The hostel provides young people with crucial support regarding attending and achieving at school. Hostel staff ensure that young people arrive in class and are well prepared for the day ahead. Communication between school and hostel staff is excellent with both formal and informal systems in place. The head of care attends morning and evening handover meetings in school, a link book ensures that information is passed between home, school and hostel. On a less formal basis young people are encouraged to talk about their day at school and receive support with school work and praise from hostel staff. Young people are provided with individual care and support which meet their needs. Assessed individual needs are set out on each young person's placement plan. These include individual targets such as independent living, dealing with pocket money and medication as well as daily care needs. Staff know young people well, they can detect problems at an early stage. Young people feel that they can talk to staff about their concerns. Appropriate professional support is sought for individuals when it is required. Whilst care is provided in a highly structured way, a good deal of importance is placed upon meeting wishes and needs. For example young people are supported to attend community clubs such as youth club, boxing cadets or taken out on activities such as fishing and bowling.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Young people and their families and carers are consulted about key decisions on an ongoing basis. For example the staff team regularly have telephone contact with parents and also use a link book between home, school and hostel. Young people say that they feel that they are listened to and that staff are approachable. They have time allocated to work with their key worker, can make their views known at daily feedback meetings and they can post suggestions for change in the suggestion boxes. Staff act upon suggestions made by young people and record what they have done at staff meetings. The teams approach to behaviour management is outstanding. Staff are able to set and maintain safe, consistent and understandable boundaries for young people. This is achieved by creating structure and purpose to the day within short, manageable time scales. Young people earn rewards through acceptable behaviour. They have a say in how they think they should be rewarded and so develop an insight in to their own behaviour. A high level of commitment and consistency is displayed by the team. This is crucial to maintaining good order and supporting young people in their achievements. Each young person's needs are set out in their up to date placement plan which means that staff are provided with clear information about how to provide care. Placement plans set out targets for behaviour, care and independent living. Health plans and individual risk assessments and the arrangements for contact are also set out in the placement plan.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people are supported in the transition to adulthood and moving on from the school. The team assist young people to develop independent living skills through individual targets. They recognise the particular barriers which may prevent young people from developing and work in a holistic way to overcome these. For example the team work with families and form links with other organisations to support college and work placements, including independent travel, money management, self-care skill and self administration of medication. The building provides ample space to meet need but the layout is not conducive to the effective management of these young people. The building offers single room accommodation, office space, communal lounges dining room, games room, computer room, laundry and sufficient bathroom and shower

facilities. This means that young people have ample space to relax and to participate in leisure activities. However, the building is spread over four floors with narrow corridors, two sets of stairs, communal and leisure facilities located in different part and on different floors of the building. This presents difficulties for staff in terms of supervising young people efficiently. The building overall is well equipped. However two rooms do not have electrical sockets which means that staff have to improvise if young people wish to use televisions or radios. New shower cubicles have been fitted, with partially obscured glass screens, not as effective in terms of maximising privacy as fully obscured screens.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of purpose describes what the school sets out to do for the young people it accommodates. It clearly states range of needs and how these needs will be met. Staffing levels are sufficient to ensure that the needs of young people are met. The team consists of five members, including the manager. The whole team work on shift together everyday that the hostel is open. The rota is arranged so that two staff sleep in and so that at peak times, between 16.00 and 20.00 there is an additional member of staff. This allows the team to provide a greater range of activities as well as being able to attend to individual needs. Young people receive care from a well managed, competent and trained staff team. Staff turnover is minimal, one team member has left since the last inspection. She has been replaced by two new staff members. Long term team members have attained National vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3. The manager has NVQ 4 and the Registered Managers Award. New staff have been given the opportunity to commence NVQ training. The manager supervises staff at frequent intervals, in line with the standard. New staff have more frequent supervision. A comprehensive induction programme is in place, this includes child protection. Monitoring systems are not currently sufficient to ensure that patterns or issues are identified. A representative of the board of Governors visits the hostel on a formal basis every term and reports back in writing to the Head of Care and to the Governors. However there is some confusion around the purpose of the visits in relation to the overall monitoring functions of the service. The current system has fused the roles of internal monitor under National minimum Standard 32 and monitoring on behalf of the person carrying on the school under National Minimum Standard 33. Either way the frequency of visits is insufficient in relation to meting the standards.

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 menus reflect an accurate record of the food served and that a wider choice is available including a vegetarian option (NMS15)

- expand health and safety risk assessment to incorporate the whole of the building and grounds (NMS26)
- ensure that all new staff are comprehensively vetted, including holding a written record of employment history(NMS27)
- ensure that all young people's rooms are fitted with electrical sockets (NMS24)
- maximise privacy by fully obscuring glass shower screens (NMS 25)
- ensure that the home is effectively monitored in line with the matters set out in standards 32 and 33. (NMS32 NMS33)

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.