

Springfield House School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Carole Moore
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Date of last inspection	11 July 2006

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About this inspection

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

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

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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

Service information

Brief description of the service

Springfield House School is a Birmingham Local Authority Community Special School for pupils aged four to 11 with a range of special educational needs. The majority have social, emotional or behavioural difficulties; some have learning difficulties and some are diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. The school can accommodate 63 pupils and is open on weekdays and term time only. The school is situated in a rural position near Knowle, Solihull and can accommodate children up to four nights a week. The residential provision can be a flexible arrangement based on an assessment of children's overall needs. The purpose of Springfield House School is to provide a nurturing environment with firm boundaries in which children can rediscover their ability to learn and to enjoy and achieve.

Summary

This was an announced inspection looking at the key Residential Special School National Minimum Standards (NMS) under the Every Child Matters outcome groups. All outcome areas were inspected with emphasis on the medication systems, keeping the young people safe and the school's behavioural management processes. The inspection also focused on how the school is managed and their quality assurance functions. At this inspection, Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Making a Positive Contribution and Organisation were judged as good, Enjoying and Achieving as outstanding and Economic Wellbeing currently as satisfactory as building work and decorating is still ongoing. Three recommendations were raised in relation to Organisation, Staying Safe and making a positive contribution.

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 the care team were asked to ensure that controlled medication records had two signatures to ensure that children's overall health needs were met and that the school fully complies with the safekeeping and disposal of all controlled drugs. There is a designated senior staff member who ensures that there is safe practice with all drugs and this was clearly evidenced during the inspection. Under the outcome of staying safe a variety of new measures have been implemented to meet the necessary standards in relation to behaviour management, record keeping and training in child protection. A great deal of hard work has been undertaken by the new acting management team in relation to children's case records and new working files have been put in place to address the issues raised at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

National Minimum Standards 14 and 15 were inspected. Basic information regarding the health and medical histories of each pupil is gained as part of the schools' admission process. Parents retain responsibility for ensuring their child's overall health care needs are met. The school has a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that includes personal care guidance for staff working with the children. Children receive care that actively promotes their welfare. Children are consistently provided with a well-balanced diet. Children's choices mean that they are receiving the range of nutrients required for healthy growth and nutrition. The food provided for children shows that the staff responsible for the provision and preparation of meals have

a very good understanding of what makes up a good balanced diet. Children learn about the principles of healthy eating as they enjoy an interesting and varied range of meals. They have a variety of dishes to choose from and alternatives are also provided for those children who are unable to eat the planned menus. In addition, fresh fruit is always available. The children are seen to treat mealtimes as enjoyable social occasions and accept good standards of behaviour as the norm. Policies and procedures are in place for the safe storage and administration of medication. Children's health and welfare is safeguarded because staff are aware of the appropriate procedures to follow. Children's well-being is further promoted as staff receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication, and all staff are trained in basic first aid. Medication records are seen as key to the effective management of healthcare matters, staff are aware of the importance and necessity of them always being up to date and fully comprehensive.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

National Minimum Standards 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 were inspected. Staff show respect for the privacy of children and understand when they may share confidential information. Children are encouraged to be independent and responsible for their own personal hygiene. The school has a good focus on the safeguarding and protection of children. Staff follow the operational policies and procedures to promote their safety and welfare and children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection. Staff know what action to take if they have concerns about a child. Staff receive training in child protection that is consistent with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and staff have had additional training from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Staff place a strong emphasis on the active encouragement of acceptable behaviour from children. Counteracting bullying is addressed in the procedures. A risk assessment approach is identified and this is underpinned by the policy. Bullying is clearly identified in the children's guide to the Lodge and there are reminders around the Lodge about the expected code of conduct. Staff make a strong effort to continually supervise and monitor the whereabouts of children. Staff have a clear risk management approach for children who are likely to go missing from the school. Children's previous histories related to being absent without authority and their vulnerability, are given serious consideration by senior staff. Staff follow clear procedures to look for children who are missing and inform all the relevant parties, including police, social work team and parents or carers. Children's welfare is further promoted because the school has a well-written policy about how to make a complaint. The school's statement of purpose clearly describes how to make a complaint as well as the children's guide to the Lodge. However, the name and address of Ofsted needs to be inserted into the brochures. There is also a children's grumbles or suggestions box which can be found in the lounge areas of the Lodge and this provides an effective system to note and record any concerns made known by the children. There have been no formal complaints referred to Ofsted. Children's well-being is positively promoted. Staff are very positive at giving praise and encouragement to children to manage their own behaviours. Staff are trained in the use of physical intervention using the team teach approach and this training is regularly updated. The use of physical intervention in the residential units is kept to a minimum and sanctions and physical interventions are always appropriate and fully recorded in a bound and numbered book. Currently the records do not allow the child to have their view recorded within these records. The school has regularly updated risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire, and young people's behaviour and activities. These assessments are taken into account in the daily activities of the school as

well as the Lodge and any activities off site. This further ensures the overall health and safety of the children. The children are protected by the school's recruitment systems which ensure all staff satisfy the appropriate vetting checks prior to commencing work at the setting. All personnel records are held in the main school building and were available during the inspection visit.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

National Minimum Standards 12, 13 and 22 were inspected. Children's welfare and safety is well supported because residence plans and risk assessments are in place and include in detail children's social, sexual, and health education. Children's education is fully supported. Each young person has their own individual education plan as well as their individual statement of education which is appropriately detailed and understood. These residence plans take into account a child's cultural and religious needs. Children's social skills are extremely well promoted as they are encouraged to engage in activities within their local community. For example, some children attend Solihull sports centre and guides and some attend the local golf course as well as a variety of organised activities that take place within the extensive grounds. Children benefit because the school have many activities and a variety of venues and they are committed to providing good quality equipment for their enjoyment. Children receive a high and excellent degree of support. Children explore their potential and develop their personal interests because staff work in a very encouraging and supportive manner. Consequently, the care and learning opportunities and activities are good. Children freely initiate interaction and seek help with various staff members on duty. Children's well-being is positively promoted as they are each allocated a designated person to ensure their continual care needs are met. There is a vast and valuable range of support services available for the children and their families. This includes a speech and language therapist, music therapists and counselling services provided by the 'Malachi Trust'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

National Minimum Standards 2, 17 and 20 were inspected. Consulting with children, listening to them, discussing decisions affecting their welfare with them, talking to them about their residential stay and helping them make decisions on matters that effect them are all fully integrated into the care practices of the school. Staff demonstrate that they place great value on the views and opinions of the children in their care and every effort is made to assist with their communication. Regular meetings take place with the children and these meetings are recorded. Children's welfare and self-esteem is promoted with positive strategies in place to encourage their development. Staff have a positive attitude to meeting the needs of children and staff succeed in providing good quality care to support their needs. There is a very evident warmth in the relationship between the staff and the children and staff have been working at Springfield House for many years, and have built up a strong bond with the children. Staff are very comfortable with their role of setting clearly understood boundaries while maintaining a high quality relationship between themselves and the children. Children's care and welfare is promoted as detailed residence plans are in place. They cover a range of important matters and are used in conjunction with behaviour plans and risk assessments. Targets are set and plans put in place to achieve their objectives. These residence plans currently do not clearly evidence the work that is carried out to enable the children to meet their targets. Children are supported

to have contact with friends and family where appropriate. Friends and family are welcome to visit the school and suitable rooms are available for children to receive their visitors in private.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

National Minimum Standards 24 was inspected. The residential section of the school have moved into the nearby Lodge and extensive work has been carried out on the building to make it fit for the purpose. New bathrooms and showers have been installed to meet the gender mix of children who stay overnight. Decoration of all the bedrooms has taken place in consultation with the children and there are a variety of colourful and child friendly bedrooms. The Lodge looks homely and is well maintained and there is ample space for children to undertake a variety of activities, including a quiet chill out room. They also have use of a converted stable for undertaking further activities. The remainder of the Lodge is still in the process of being redecorated and further improved.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

National Minimum Standards 1, 18,28, 29, 31,32 and 33 were inspected. Springfield House School is effectively managed, which contributes to having a positive impact on the care and support of children. Staff know and understand the stated aims and objectives of the service which is consistent with the Statement of Purpose. Children are well informed about how the school is run, the facilities and the staff support available in the residential provision. The statement of purpose and other information about the Lodge does not include the Ofsted name and address. Children's records have all been updated and each child has a private and secure record of their history and progress. There is a new IT system and all records are entered into one document, the aim being to increase a harmonised approach between school and the residential unit. The acting Heads of Care are well qualified and skilled and ably supported by the Head. Children are receiving good support because the staff team are qualified and suitably experienced. The majority of staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young people or its equivalent. Staff commitment and motivation is strong and total inclusion in the care and educational settings helps achieve the best outcomes for children. Children benefit because staff manage their time well and staff are well deployed. The rotas are flexible to meet the busy times of the day. The setting has further considered how the quality assurance function is able to capture children's experiences and demonstrate how the service is being measured and improved. The school governors contribute to the overall monitoring of the Lodge and records indicate that these visits take place with appropriate regularity and some are unannounced. The reports are comprehensive in detail and highlight any areas needing action. This is then taken up by the Heads of Care and responded to promptly. The visits provide additional safeguarding mechanisms for the children by looking at staff and management practices.

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 the statement of purpose accurately describes what the school sets out to do and has the correct addresses and telephone numbers in all its brochures. National Minimum Standard 1.1
- ensure that where sanctions are imposed, children are encouraged to write or otherwise have their view recorded and sign their name against them. NMS 10.9
- ensure that residence plans are regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress made. NMS 17.2.

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.