

Cuckmere House School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Angela Gunning
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Date of last inspection	9 November 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

Cuckmere House School is a specialist SEN (Special Educational Needs) College for boys aged between five and 16 with an educational statement for behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school is maintained by East Sussex County Council. A Pupil Referral Unit is also provided within the school for junior pupils and there is a Primary Behaviour Support Service to support pupils in other schools, as well as other initiatives aimed at supporting young people to access education. The school's residential provision, Tower House, is located in a separate building in a residential area of Seaford, approximately half a mile from the main school site. Up to 12 boys can stay over night at Tower House and generally stay between one and three nights during the school week. There is extended day provision for both primary and secondary pupils at Tower House. A Special Activity Unit is also located at Tower House.

Summary

This was a key inspection and was conducted as joint Education/Social Care inspection. It included an evening visit to Tower House and a day visit to Cuckmere House School. This inspection looked at outcomes for the key National Minimum Standards for children and young people who are educated in Residential Special Schools. This inspection found that Cuckmere House School provides an excellent standard of residential provision to assist boys in their educational, personal, social and emotional development. The school provides a very caring and supportive environment that enables boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties to reach their potential.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school was asked to ensure that medication procedures at Tower House are fully robust. All prescribed medication accepted into Tower House are signed and dated and display a pharmacist label. These procedures are being monitored on a termly basis. The school was asked to maintain a record of any use of physical intervention in a bound and numbered book. New recording procedures have been introduced at Tower House and a bound and numbered book is kept on the premises. These procedures are being monitored on a termly basis. The school has developed a Tower House Improvement Plan linked to Every Child Matters outcomes.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The health needs of the boys are well met at Cuckmere House School. There are very good systems in place to promote the young people's physical, psychological and emotional health. The school has achieved Healthy School Silver Award, Sports Mark Gold Award and ECO Schools Silver Award. There is very good liaison with various healthcare professionals who assist and support staff to ensure each young person's health needs are identified and catered for. The school has an effective medication policy and procedure and there are good systems to monitor medication and medical needs. Healthy and varied meals are provided and the boys are given a balanced diet that meets their dietary needs and choices. Healthy eating is promoted and mealtimes are relaxed and sociable occasions. The young people confirm they like the food and are involved in planning and preparing meals.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Bullying is rare at Cuckmere House School and there are good systems in place to ensure the school deals with it effectively. For example by creating a safe secure environment and respectful relationships with pupils and parents and working well as a team to provide positive role models. The boys confirm that there is 'not much bullying and it gets sorted'. The young people's safety within Tower House is protected by various systems such as careful use of the visitors' book, regular fire safety and health and safety checks. There is an up to date fire risk assessment of the premises and risk assessments are carried out to ensure the safety of the young people and staff. Records indicate that staff recruitment procedures are comprehensive and thorough to safeguard the young people and fit the right person for the job. Cuckmere House School has very effective and cohesive child protection procedures. Staff receive the necessary training and are aware of the child protection procedures in order to safeguard and protect the young people. There is a clear complaints procedure which is made available to the young people, their relatives and representatives. The boys confirm they are aware of the complaints procedure and can talk to people if they are unhappy. The behaviour management systems are excellent, with clear boundary setting and a consistent and positive use of rewards and sanctions. The boys confirm they are aware of the behaviour management system and say that the rules are fair. The school is very good at engaging and assisting relatives in the management of the boys' behaviour. One relative commented that her child 'had severe behaviour problems and in a short time seen such an improvement in behaviour'.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The promotion and support for the educational achievement of the boys continues to be a strength of the school. The young people make outstanding progress during their time at Cuckmere House. The residential provision makes a very valuable contribution to the educational and social achievement of the boys. Care staff support the boys in the school during the day and the Pastoral Liaison Manager is based in the school to support them to access education. The sharing of information between education and care staff ensures young people are given the practical and emotional support they need to reach their educational potential. The young people are given appropriate and individualised support. Each young person has an Individual Social Plan (ISP) with structured achievable targets. Staff demonstrate that they know the boys very well and are aware of their individual needs and targets. The young people confirm they are given help to follow their interests and hobbies and reach their individual targets.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The school is very effective in assessing the needs of each young person and these are well known by staff. There are plans of care to ensure these needs are met and kept under review. For example, each young person has an Individual Support Plan (ISP) that is targeted at their specific needs and monitored and reviewed regularly. There are very good channels of communication between relatives/carers and school. For example, staff engage with relatives when dropping the boys home, by weekly telephone calls and by inviting them to meet with care staff at school parents events. The school also offer transport for school parents evenings. One relative commented that 'staff always spare time to tell me what's been going on'. The

young people are given appropriate support and encouragement to keep in contact with their family and friends and they confirm they can call home when staying at Tower House. Listening, consulting with the boys and welcoming initiative and ideas for school improvement is part of the ethos of Cuckmere House School. The boys confirm they are able to communicate their views in various ways, such as school council meetings, weekly group meetings, informal daily meetings and annual review meetings. Staff demonstrate that they value the views and opinions of the young people.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Tower House provides a spacious and comfortable environment to meet the needs of the young people. The premises were seen to be clean, tidy and well maintained. There are on going improvements to ensure that the accommodation is maintained, decorated and furnished to a good standard. The young people respect their accommodation and commented very positively about staying at Tower House and made comments such as 'it's like a second home'.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Cuckmere House School's Statement of the Purpose is clear in setting out the care and facilities the school will provide and is reviewed annually. All pupils who attend Tower House are given a Tower House guide, which is made available in each bedroom and is amended and updated annually. There is very effective management of Cuckmere House School which promotes a reflective and continuous improvement ethos. Records indicate that there are good staffing levels and a range of training is provided. A well established and competent staff team ensure the school is run in the best interests of the young people.

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):

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)

Annex A

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.