

Windlestone School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Darren Hobson
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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

This is a residential special school for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school opened in 2006 and provides 20 residential places for boys and girls aged 11 to 16. Accommodation comprises a purpose built residential block with two homely and well equipped units. Residential pupils benefit from having access to the extended-day facilities provided at the school. Children are supported by an experienced and well trained staff group of residential and teaching staff.

Summary

The purpose of the visit to this school was to carry out an inspection of all key National Minimum Standards. National Minimum Standards were inspected in all outcome areas. The school's residential provision has significant strengths in all outcome areas particularly in enjoying and achieving, which is outstanding. Monitoring systems to ensure the effective and efficient management of the school are very good, as are relationships between children and staff. Some concerns were identified regarding the use of CCTV cameras within the residential provision. There was restricted access between lounge and bedroom areas by children, a cupboard for the storing of hazardous substances was left open and there were gaps in the recording of food safety requirements.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no improvements identified at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Good arrangements are in place to ensure that children's health needs are assessed, monitored and promoted. There are robust procedures for the safe administration of medicines and a number of staff have completed formal training to do this. Medication records are well maintained and accurate and all medicines are stored securely. Risk assessments are carried out on all medicines administered to children and each child has a comprehensive care plan relating to their health needs. Good support is provided to children when they are poorly, staff either transporting them home or monitoring them while they remain in residence. Where necessary and with the agreement of parents, staff support children to attend medical appointments. Children commented positively about the care and support they receive in respect of their health needs. Children receive a varied, healthy and balanced diet which contributes towards their overall health and well-being. Menus are well planned and all mealtimes have salad and fruit options available. The school has recently been awarded 'healthy schools' status. The school tuck shop only sells healthy food and drink options such as fresh fruit, dried fruit and fresh orange juice. Kitchen staff actively seek children's views on new meals provided through a system of questionnaires. Records of meals taken are good, however, kitchen records in respect of fridge and freezer temperatures were incomplete and so do not ensure a high level food safety. Some of the things children said were, 'always salads at meals and fruit at breakfast' and 'at dinner time and tea time we have a choice of salad and at break time we

have a choice at tuck shop of fruit'. Within the questionnaires returned, children expressed a high level of satisfaction regarding meals provided.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Personal information relating to children is kept confidential and securely stored. Children are able to make private telephone calls. Information and contact numbers for helplines such as ChildLine are displayed openly within each residential unit. Children reported that their privacy is respected. An example given by most children is that staff and other children knock and wait before entering their bedroom. The school has a good system in place for dealing with complaints and systems for recording these are satisfactory. Children know how to make a complaint and who they can talk to if they have a problem or concern. One young person said, 'if we had a complaint we could speak to staff, they would sort it out, they are great'. 'Personal tutor or senior staff, anyone would sort it.' Staff equally have a sound knowledge of the complaints procedure which is displayed openly throughout the school. Policies and procedures for dealing with abuse, including allegations made against staff are good. Staff have a good level of understanding of the procedures and know what to do if they are concerned about the welfare of a child. Copies of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) guidelines are available. Child protection training is given with an annual update being provided to all staff by a representative of the LSCB. These matters ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted. The school has an anti-bullying policy which is well understood by staff and children. There are robust systems in place to record and monitor all incidents of bullying. Comments made by children about bullying included, 'yes but staff sort it' and 'staff stop it and deal with them'. Staff and children reported that levels of bullying are low, which was confirmed by an analysis of the school's monitoring and reporting systems. The school has completed its anti-bullying portfolio which is going for accreditation by the local authority. Children are positively and effectively helped to develop socially acceptable behaviour. Systems are in place to support and promote positive behaviour. Comprehensive records are maintained in respect of all sanctions given to children and incidents of physical intervention by staff. It was noted that all recorded sanctions were appropriate. There have been no incidents of restraint within the residential units in the last 12 months. Some of the things children said about restraints were, 'usually everyone behaves, we all like it and want to be here' and 'staff are helpful they just want to keep us all safe if anyone loses it, no-one ever hurt in restraint'. The school has appropriate systems in place for dealing with when children who go missing. There have been no reported incidents since the last inspection. The premises are well managed for risk. There are good systems in place regarding fire safety and regular fire drills take place both within the day school and residential hours. Risk assessments are comprehensive and systems are in place to ensure regular checks and maintenance of safety equipment and installations are good. However, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) cupboard adjacent to the kitchen in the day school was found to be open. Although this area is only accessed by children as an emergency exit, it is an identifiable and unnecessary risk to children's well-being. Vetting arrangements for staff contribute toward safeguarding children's welfare. Most staff records are complete and the required information is maintained, although the school does not in every case confirm with referees that they have written the reference. Doing this would better ensure that all staff employed are suitable to work with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The residential provision very actively supports children's educational progress. The extended day activities ensures that children have access to the school's excellent facilities and support each evening. Residential staff have very good links with the day school and are able to follow individual children's progress. Children's bedrooms have a desk and chair, and each unit benefits from having a personal computer and other educational resources. Children reported that although they don't normally get homework unless they ask for it, they do get help and support with it. Children access the school's music, ICT and arts departments each evening. An extensive range of activities are undertaken by residential pupils both within the school and externally. Children were observed undertaking a number of activities in school including pool, computers, art and quieter activities such as watching television and playing on games consoles within the residential unit. Additionally, a group of children went swimming while another went to the cinema. The school provides excellent support to children undertaking a hobby or special interest. One young person told of how he is supported to attend his martial arts class, while another was supported with accessing football training at a club he plays for. Comments made by children included, 'go out a lot to swimming, cinema and other things' and 'trips go out every night you can choose to go or not but you sometimes have to take turns, one of the best things about Windlestone is the activities'. The school has an effective personal tutoring system with each child having a named worker. They are responsible for overseeing children's needs and support arrangements, particularly fostering a close link with children's parents. As part of the school's own monitoring and evaluation systems, questionnaires completed by parents and external professionals showed that they considered the quality of support to children to be good or outstanding.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

There are good systems in place to consult with children and their parents. The school maintains fortnightly telephone contact with parents as a minimum. Parents are supported to attend meetings in respect of their children's progress with staff providing transport for those who require it. Children are consulted on many aspects of the running of the school. An example of very good practise was the involvement of six young people in the interview of the new head teacher who takes up post in the spring term. Children said about this, 'some of us interviewed for the new head teacher, the one we all wanted got the job'. Children can also express their views and opinions in the weekly whole school meeting which takes place each Friday. Within residence meetings are less formal, taking place around the kitchen table. Observation of staff interactions and relationships with children showed these to be warm and very positive, built on mutual respect and clear expectations. One young person said, 'the best thing about residence at Windlestone is the staff and kids socialising, the personal relationships between us, the emotional support'. This good personal support nurtures children's development and contributes towards the significant progress made by children at the school. Every child at the school has an individual educational plan. Additionally, children in residence have a placement plan. Many of these have generalised school based statements in most sections and are not sufficiently detailed and specific to children's individual needs and therefore do not support the care children receive. Very good quality and informative health plans and risk assessments in respect of children are maintained. Good systems are in place to review children's plans and statements of special educational need. Children make a full contribution to meetings about their care and progress. Children are encouraged to maintain contact with their friends and families through telephone calls and visits. Children spoke positively about the support they received from staff

who will transport them if needed. Family and friends are also welcome to visit children at the school.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The residential provision at Windlestone School is well designed and spacious. Each unit benefits from a large lounge, games room and a domestic style well equipped kitchen. Residence is decorated and maintained to a high standard. Children's living areas are domestically furnished and children can personalise their bedroom if they wish. Staff sleeping quarters are located close to children's sleeping areas. En-suite bathrooms ensure children can carry out their personal care in well equipped and private facilities. A fully equipped toilet for use by people with disabilities is located within each unit. The residential building is on one level and doorways are wide making provision and access for disabled children is good. Effective security measures ensure children are kept safe. There was no evidence however that children, their parents or placing authorities have agreed to the use of CCTV cameras within residential bedroom corridors, the siting of which may compromise children's privacy. Children also need to request staff to unlock the adjoining door between the lounge and bedroom areas, which limits free movement within residence.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school's Statement of Purpose and brochure gives readers clear and comprehensive information about the school and how it operates. There are good levels of experienced, well trained and qualified staff to meet the emotional and social needs of children. The head of care, designated person child protection and the head of pastoral support are accessible and children particularly identified that they can talk to these individuals if they have a problem. Staff receive six weekly supervision and are well supported. The head teacher and his senior management team provide strong and effective leadership. Children's and staff records are generally maintained to a good standard although a shortfall was identified regarding the verification of staff references. The school has robust systems for monitoring the effectiveness of the provision. Records relating to children's progress, their health and well-being and physical interventions by staff are maintained, monitored and evaluated to a high standard and used to contribute to future school development and policy. This ensures care practices support positive outcomes for children.

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 records relating to food safety are adequately maintained and up to date (NMS 15)
- ensure that substances hazardous to health (COSHH) are securely stored (NMS 26)
- ensure that children's placement plans are specific and sufficiently detailed to meet their needs (NMS 17)
- ensure that children are able to move freely between lounge and bedroom areas of residence (NMS 23)
- ensure that the use of and reasons for visual monitoring systems are agreed with children, parents and placing authorities, and are recorded within children's placement plans and the school's statement of purpose (NMS 23)
- ensure that arrangements for the verification of staff references are routinely undertaken (NMS 19)

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.