

Grafham Grange School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Veronica Crowley / Brian Mcquoid
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Head / Principal	Keith Stanley
Date of last inspection	21 September 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

Grafham Grange is a non-maintained residential special school for up to 44 boys aged from 10 to 16 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Grafham Grange Special Educational Trust administers the School. Pupils board during the school week, arriving on a Monday morning and leaving Friday afternoon. All young people attending the school have complex and challenging needs. Many will have experienced breakdowns of previous educational placements and have had periods out of full time education. Boarding provision is organised into five living units, four for younger pupils at the main school and the fifth for Year 11 pupils located at the nearby Woodyer House site.

Summary

The school operates its boarding provision to a very high standard with outstanding outcomes for its pupils. The inspection was carried out as part of the normal inspection process on an announced basis. The aim of the inspection was to review the 19 key standards for Residential Special Schools. The school keeps excellent records, which intrinsically demonstrate how pupil's health, safety and wellbeing are promoted. There are extensive and robust systems in place, adopted throughout the school, which aim to protect pupils and ensure effective responses are made in all safeguarding areas. The staff work holistically and communication between residential, therapeutic and academic staff is exceptional, as is communication between the school and parents/guardians. Pupils therefore enjoy a high level of continuity of care. Pupils benefit from excellent levels of individual support both from staff and other adults external to the school. Commitment to staff training is afforded high priority. A dedicated staff team encourage, support and empower pupils to attain their full potential. There is very strong leadership overseeing and monitoring all aspects of the care provided.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection carried out at Grafham Grange in September 2006 highlighted two recommendations that related to care planning and goal setting within the care planning process. Both have been addressed satisfactorily. Pupils now benefit from a more detailed care planning process which brings together the different plans, goals, actions, risk assessments and monitoring tools, encompassing the needs of the 'whole child'. These documents are held in an easily identifiable and accessible format and clearly demonstrate the history, the agreed plan, and subsequent progress for each pupil.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils' health is well promoted through clear, concise health plans and well trained staff. The plans contain all detail required by the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for Residential Special Schools and are excellent working documents. They clearly demonstrate that pupils' physical health and emotional needs are identified, assessed and reviewed regularly. Documentation, cross referencing to practice, illustrates how the school are meeting the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes. All matters relating to health and medication are very effectively managed and duly monitored. Medical consents from parents, and suitably trained staff ensure

that emergency treatment can be provided to pupils at all times. Pupils' welfare is further promoted by the highly valued input and accessibility of specialist services. These are the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), psychologists, psychiatrists and the school's own therapy team. In addition pupils have easy access to General Practitioners, dentists and an optician if required. Pupils enjoy a very creative Personal, Social and Health Education programme linked effectively to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda and outcomes. It includes the use of external agencies and tackles topics such as managing conflict, sexual health and relationships. A 'smoking management/cessation' programme and drugs awareness training is proving particularly effective for pupils. Physical education lessons and activities across the 24 hour curriculum illustrate the school's commitment to ensuring pupils benefit from a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are fully included in suggesting and choosing activities to pursue. Staff are proactive in finding new opportunities, such as the climbing club, for them to enjoy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils' privacy and dignity are respected by well trained staff following policies that underpin good practice. Files are securely stored and confidential information is only shared with individuals with a right to access, or on a need to know basis, in order to safeguard and promote the pupils' welfare. Pupils can make and receive telephone calls and meet their family and friends in private. Pupils' welfare is protected through a rigorous complaints procedure. There is a clear culture within the school of listening to pupils and empowering them, staff and families to raise any concerns they may have. Pupils confirmed they knew how to raise any concern or worry and that it would be dealt with appropriately and promptly. In addition following a regular review of pupil complaints, a new system 'Worries and Suggestions' was introduced to allow completely anonymous representations to be made to a senior manager. Records demonstrate that staff at the school act swiftly in line with their policies, to ensure, in the main, that satisfactory outcomes are achieved. Pupils' welfare is protected through robust child protection procedures adopted by the school. Any concern of a child protection nature is addressed in line with the local Safeguarding Children procedures. One incident necessitating a child protection referral is currently being investigated in line with policy and procedure. Staff receive child protection training as part of their induction, within their National Vocational Qualification Level 3 award and as an annual refresher. There is also a high awareness of safeguarding issues amongst the pupils, which has been promoted via appropriate images, school assemblies, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), and individual and group work. Pupils are further protected by comprehensive risk assessments and staff vigilance. Pupils are protected and their welfare promoted against bullying by good staffing ratios and the open culture that exists within the school. There is a 'no blame' approach which actively supports both victim and perpetrator. Risk assessments, the PSHE curriculum and key working programmes are designed to target individuals in a pro-active manner both before and after events that arise from bullying, to ensure that, in the main, pupils are well supported. The school reviews and reappraises annually to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils. Pupils are safeguarded through a comprehensive policy, and robust procedures should they go missing. Records clearly demonstrate the school acts in accordance with these procedures. Pupils are supported through detailed risk assessments. Good staffing ratios, vigilance and excellent communication ensure pupils are kept safe. Pupils develop positively through the creative culture of reward and celebration of achievement. Behaviour is discussed at the daily handover sessions between staff and at weekly multi-disciplinary team meetings in order to positively support pupils. Each pupil has a behaviour risk assessment and works towards targets via a 'points' system. Rewards

for achieving individual targets include verbal praise and encouragement, gaining certificates, choosing favourite activities and being awarded prizes and tokens. The positively focused school philosophy demonstrates a high level of success in turning around negative behaviours by focusing on the positives within each pupil. The school has policies and procedures on behaviour management. These policies support staff in the promotion of acceptable behaviour. They include the use of sanctions (consequences), restorative justice and guidance on physical intervention. All staff are trained in 'team teach' physical intervention techniques. Sanctions imposed and physical interventions undertaken are recorded appropriately. The school has developed close links with the local Community School Liaison Police Officer, Youth Offending Teams, Children's Services and CAMHS. Pupils' welfare is protected by an extensive health and safety policy, comprehensive risk assessments and well trained staff. Maintenance issues are prioritised and staff work effectively to ensure pupils are protected from unavoidable hazards. Pupils are protected by effective checking of electrical appliances and gas installations. Substances hazardous to health are securely stored and hot water temperatures regularly monitored. The school has a foreseeable crisis plan in place. Pupils' welfare is promoted through a variety of risk assessments relating to activities undertaken, the school grounds and other known risks. Pupils are protected by rigorous fire procedures. The pupils take part in regular fire drills to ensure they know what to do in case of fire. All testing of equipment is carried out in line with regulations and an up to date fire risk assessment is in place. Pupils are safeguarded by thorough and robust recruitment procedures. The school follows a very clear policy on recruitment in line with the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS) guidance. The school maintains detailed records of the selection process undertaken and ensures rigorous checks are in place prior to new staff commencing work.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils' educational achievements are greatly enhanced through the holistic approach applied across the school. The 24 hour curriculum is a vehicle providing each pupil with a planned and integrated programme of activities across the school day and evening so that each pupil's potential for learning and enjoyment is fully realised. Pupils are also offered many opportunities of working towards independence, particularly for the Year 11s at Woodyer House. Communication between residential, therapeutic and academic staff is exceptional. There is a hand-over twice daily in addition to weekly multi-disciplinary meetings to ensure continuity of care. Pupils benefit from detailed Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) underpinned by their Statements of Educational Need. These clearly illustrate individual targets/goals set and achievements gained in all areas of their lives at the school. IEPs are regularly reviewed and updated. Each pupil is initially assessed in order to identify the levels of support necessary. Excellent reviewing and monitoring systems demonstrate pupil progress in personal, social and behavioural development. The school has good links with youth career agencies and colleges. Records demonstrate an excellent track record of pupils gaining employment or going into training or further education. Pupils enjoy excellent levels of individual support from staff and external agencies. The multi-disciplinary team that support the pupils at the school includes a Consultant Psychiatrist, a Psychologist, a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), a school nurse and various therapists offering art therapy, family therapy and cognitive behaviour therapy. The nurse also accesses other health professionals in order for pupils' assessed needs to be effectively managed. These services are utilised on an individual basis when the need is identified. Excellent results have been achieved. Records demonstrate how the use of this integrated therapeutic programme, which operates within the 24 hour curriculum, supports

pupils' emotional development and enhances life opportunities. Pupils related how the school had been instrumental in helping them achieve in education and other areas of their lives.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils' welfare is promoted by being fully involved in the consultation process within the school. They have an exceptional, pro-active school council, which positively effects change. The minutes of these meetings clearly demonstrate how the matters discussed are linked intrinsically with the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes. Examples of some positive changes include menu preferences, improved sports facilities, introduction of community service for incidents of vandalism, regular review of evening events, increase in the amount of electronic equipment in living groups, instigation of a recycling programme and various fundraising incentives. Pupils are also afforded many opportunities of working towards independence. Residential education focuses on self help and independence skills within the 24 hour curriculum. This may be through offering choices, playing an active role in duties around the house, accessing the community or taking risks within the risk assessment framework. Pupils benefit from extensive, well written and concise care plan packages. Individual care needs are identified via the admission, assessment and planning process. They bring together the different elements and encompass the needs of the 'whole child'. A wealth of evidence demonstrates how the school meets the needs of each individual pupil. This includes the known history of the pupil, risk assessments linked to 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, goal planning/monitoring, progress reports, Statements of Educational Need and how they will be met, 'looked after children' documentation, and the school's own assessment which identifies strengths and needs. All pupils have key-workers. They advocate, support and encourage pupils to attend informal and formal meetings, ensuring they are part of the care planning and reviewing process. They work with the family/carers and other professionals to identify the needs of the pupil and ensure that they are met. The relationship between the key worker and pupil is an integral part of the process. Pupils' prosper through positive, regular contact with families. Pupils are encouraged and supported to maintain valued relationships with family either by telephone or by facilitated visits. The school is responsive to concerns by parents and stakeholders with respect to communication, and has made recent improvements in communicating pupil progress to parents/carers, and appropriate external professionals, via half termly reports. These ensure all parties are fully informed and involved in the progress and care of each pupil. The residential department makes weekly contact with parents/carers by telephone. Pupils are able to make and receive telephone calls in private to friends and family.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Pupils benefit from a very well run school. The school's statement of purpose, philosophy and prospectus are up to date and accurately reflect what the school sets out to do for those pupils it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. In addition the school provides an excellent information booklet for new pupils which very simply illustrates expectations and the service that is provided. Pupils' welfare is protected and promoted by sufficient day and night staff with experience to meets their needs. Although currently there are vacancies within the

residential team, cover is provided by use of flexible working, and time off in lieu. There is a continuity of staff to ensure best possible outcomes for pupils. Additional staff are utilised to cover any extra activities. There are good arrangements for managing and supervising staff throughout the 24 hour day with an excellent 'on call' system for summoning senior assistance should the need arise. A real strength of the school is the quality of the relationships that exist, and are nurtured, between staff and pupils. Both parties listen and respond to each other well, valuing the real sense of community. Pupils are safeguarded by a committed and dedicated staff team. The staff are in varying levels of achieving National Vocational Qualification Level 3. High priority is afforded to training. Upon commencement of employment staff undertake an intense and extremely thorough induction. All core training is provided, which includes child protection, fire, health and safety, first aid and positive behaviour management. Following a successful probation period they are registered onto National Vocational Qualification awards. Pupils' welfare is promoted by staff who are suitably supported. Staff all receive regular supervision and attend regular staff meetings, multi-disciplinary meetings and whole school meetings. They also receive debriefing following any traumatic or violent incident. The Head of Care is suitably qualified and his deputy, who ably covers in his absence is currently embarking on the Registered Manager's Award Level 4 having attained degree qualifications in Canada. Pupils' welfare is protected and promoted by a range of monitoring systems. All relevant documentation regarding the running of the school is checked and signed off by either the Head of the school or a delegated member of the senior management team. Governors are involved in the half-termly visits as required under the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The school has a development plan created by the management team, senior staff and Governors. They are now in the process of looking at the next 10 year plan as the school continues to evolve.

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)

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.