

Philpots Manor School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
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Head of care	
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Date of last inspection	11 December 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

Philpots Manor School is an independent residential special school and training centre providing a holistic approach to education based on the social and educational principles of Rudolf Steiner. It specialises in provision for children with special needs who, because of their own particular difficulties, have been unable to learn and develop within the setting of mainstream school. The school can accommodate up to 60 children. A small number of day pupils attend the school. The majority of the children return to their home at the weekend, a small number of children board at the weekends. The children are accommodated in small family groups within six units and benefit from an intensive level of support in both the unit and the school environment.

Summary

The inspection was undertaken as an announced key inspection. The key announced inspection took place on a weekday. In general most outcome areas were assessed as being good, with one deemed satisfactory. The children have their health care matters met by qualified and experienced staff. A comprehensive and robust approach toward the protection and wellbeing of the children ensures that they are kept safe from the risks of harm or abuse. Children enjoy a range of activities and are offered appropriate support and guidance. Open communication ensures that children feel they are listened to. Children live in comfortable and clean accommodation with access to the considerable school grounds. Boarding is provided in a satisfactory and caring manner. The boarding ethos of the school is relaxed, open and homely.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Over the course of the last year the school has changed its registration from being a children's home to a residential special school. Since the last inspection the school has moved on and brought in new management staff to look at health and safety and risk assessment systems. The school has been involved in a development plan to improve and renovate the boarding facilities and the general environment. The school has employed more staff within the houses who have formed a layer with those already in place to support both senior house parents and the co-workers which in turn enhances the children's time whilst they live in the boarding houses.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Health needs of each child are identified and recorded in comprehensive health plans. Contacts with health care professionals and specialist services where necessary have been made for each child. The children feel that the staff look after them and that they would be cared for when ill. Staff are aware of issues and give advice to the children where appropriate on health matters such as sexual health, substance and alcohol misuse and community living. However young people felt confused on the issue of relationships within the school. The administration of medication is monitored and safely stored to ensure the children's health is protected. Each house at the school has its own medication cabinet. Good records and procedure are in place for this purpose and are adhered to closely. Staff receive training in the administration of medication and first aid. Medical consent is on file for each young person.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The children live in a safe environment with clear systems in place to safeguard their wellbeing and provide a safe environment. The school offers a good level of training to the staff when dealing with child protection or any other area where the children need support and security. The home has clear systems in place to deal with child protection issues and these are dealt with in an appropriate manner. Procedures are in place to provide the correct responses to bullying and for when children go missing without permission. The young people reflected that they felt safe at the school and that staff cared for them and tried to help them in difficult situations. The children are able to complain and have knowledge of how to complain. Complaints were seen to be dealt with appropriately with full accounts of events and conclusions. Systems and training are in place to guide staff when a situation arises which could involve behaviour management and restraint in order to keep the children safe when needing control and boundaries. The records show low levels of restraint used at the school. Appropriate sanctions are used at the school. Records viewed showed the sanctions were given in line with the sanctions policy. Children reflect that staff were fair in giving them sanctions when they had done something wrong. The school has excellent systems in place to check, monitor and assess the health and safety and risks around the environment and premises. Risk assessments are also in place for all activities both at and outside of the school. Records show that all checks for fire equipment and fire safety and drills are in place and show high regard for the children's wellbeing. Over the last year the school have introduced a three year plan which will focus on better access in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and site security. The children's safety in the home is protected by careful use of the visitors book and a comprehensive recruitment procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Comprehensive placement plans and care plans reflect the individual needs of the children. Systems in place at the school have been designed to support the children and offer guidance towards independence. Support is evident for the children when they require specialist services and attend appointments. Staff relationships appear good with professional and appropriate working relationships with the children. The school offers full support to the children both through the school day and in the pastoral care. The school offers many facilities and activities to further the educational task. Each child has an individual educational plan and a yearly educational review. The school offers a wide range of activities and the children said it was brilliant and they always had loads to do.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The children benefit from placement plans that set out how the school will meet their assessed needs, drawing from historical and up to date documentation. Placement plans were seen to affect how care was offered to each child within the school day and life within the boarding houses. A clear reviewing system is in place for both educational reviews and looked after children reviews. Both the children and their parents and carers are invited to attend. The young people reflect that they are always invited but sometimes decline to go. Each children has a different package of boarding time, some have flexi-boarding and others full time boarding.

Each child has a different approach to maintaining contact with their family. The children felt happy with the provision in place when contacting home. The children are able to voice their opinions at house meetings and to members of staff. The children can make choices and are supported in their cultural and spiritual difference. Young people said they enjoyed their time at the school and spending time with staff. The children said they felt listened to and confident to talk to the staff on most issues. Parents are invited to the school to attend reviews and any special events held.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The school has a comprehensive approach in place to working with the young people to achieve a good level of independence this is implemented through independence training in the houses, college and work experience. Information was seen of the school seeking and enabling young people to move on to new placements. The school is set in rural countryside in large grounds. The setting enables the school to offer a wide variety of activities and has a stables and farm on site. The boarding houses are situated around the school and vary in size. The school is currently renovating the boarding houses providing the children with a comfortable homely environment to stay in. Each child has their own individual space in a bedroom and the houses have an adequate number of bathrooms and toilets. The young people said that their privacy is respected by the staff.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The school has a Statement of Purpose and children's guide which link in together alongside the policies and procedures. The policies in place have not been updated or reviewed recently. The staff structure in the boarding houses has changed slightly to include a new layer of employed house parents, this has given support in the houses to both senior house parents and co-workers to enhance the service given to the children. Teams across the boarding houses offer a wealth of experience which provides the professional support and care. The children reflected that they felt safe and cared for in the boarding houses. Supervision is provided for the house parents and co-workers from the senior house staff. However, supervision for the senior house parents was seen to be sporadic which is inclusive of their yearly appraisals. Staff are provided with comprehensive training which covers induction, mandatory subjects and NVQ courses. Staff said the training had improved although the co-workers wanted more specific training around the children's complex needs. Overall monitoring of the school is good with the senior management team undertaking this role. The school also has a Regulation 33 visitor who visits each half term and produces a report, each visit is based in one boarding house so each house is visited throughout the year. Reports seen had been acted upon. Management of the school is good with new assessment systems being brought in to place in order to improve the overall environment and the decision to employ more full time staff has helped change the running of the boarding houses. The school do not currently have a policy relating to young people staying in the holidays.

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 guidance is in place related to relationships between the young people (NMS14)
- ensure that the recognised levels of supervision are provided for all members of staff (NMS30)
- ensure new policies are produced and that ones in place are reviewed.(NMS32)
- ensure new guidelines are in place regarding respite care at the school and private fostering undertaken by staff in the school holidays (NMS32)

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.