

Field Heath School

Inspection report for residential special school

Unique reference number	SC027138
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Inspector	Clare Davies
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	8 January 2007

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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

Pield Heath School is a non-maintained day and residential special school for boys and girls between the ages of seven to 19 years with moderate/severe learning difficulties and associated communication problems. Boarding provision is available from Monday to Thursday in addition to overnight respite care. The majority of the young people who use the service stay for one night per week. The boarding accommodation is located in the school grounds and called St Joseph's House. It is a self contained building with sleeping accommodation on the first floor separated by gender. The school was founded by the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus of Mary and they remain the Trustees. A convent and nursing home are also located in the grounds of the school in Uxbridge, Middlesex.

Summary

The school provides a good service for young people who board and use the respite service. Health and care needs are carefully identified and consistently met by a well trained and supported staff team. Across the school, staff contribute to the development and progress of each pupil, providing a whole school approach from a multi-disciplinary team. This working together promotes the school as a community whose foundation comes from the Catholic faith. The principal provides strong leadership supported well by senior managers. There are good policies and procedures in place to support staff and promote good practice. Individual needs are met and pupils are encouraged to reach personal targets; achievement and success are celebrated by the school community. Recruitment practices are not being consistently applied.

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 recommendations made at the last inspection. The school continues to review its policies and practice and has embedded the Every Child Matters principles in all areas of work. Pield Heath School has been awarded Healthy School status and the surgery and some areas of the boarding house have been refurbished.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There are clear policies and procedures in place to support staff in meeting complex health and medical needs. Medication is stored securely in the boarding house, St Joseph's, and in the refurbished surgery. Generally only prescribed medication is administered though key staff have access to a limited amount of pain relief if needed. The school obtains parental consent in relation to medical matters and it is highlighted in each young person's health plan where consent has not been granted. Each young person who stays at St Joseph's House has an individual health plan, these are good documents identifying health and medical needs and how they are going to be met by the school. The school nurse liaises with health professionals in the community and a nominated school doctor. Staff are able to receive on site training by the school nurse and seek advice when required, all staff have received some training in first aid. An asthma nurse from community health services visits the school every term. The school nurse attends external training to update her nursing knowledge and maintain her professional registration. The nurse has developed some supportive relationships with parents and attends

medical appointments with them and their child when requested. Health promotion is emphasised through the school curriculum, the boarding house, catering and the nurse. The nurse is involved in the delivery of personal, social and health education (PSHE) in the classrooms. Pield Heath has achieved National Healthy School status. Young people are provided with a good and varied diet with special needs catered for. Evening meals and breakfast are cooked and eaten in St Joseph's House in a family setting. Young people are consulted about menu choices through the student council.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Generally single bedrooms are available in St Joseph's House. The staff balance their levels of supervision with the need to promote young people's privacy. Staff are respectful in their work with young people, knocking on bedroom doors before entering and asking permission to touch belongings. Policies on intimate care provide guidance to staff and support best practice. Young people and their parents are advised of the school complaints procedure through the prospectus and handbooks. The Welcome to St Joseph's document is produced in text and colourful symbols listing people and external organisations to contact if young people wish to complain. Staff receive regular training in child protection ensuring they know how to respond to any concern or disclosure of child abuse. There is a system for any member of staff to report any concerns to the school nurse or principal who collates such information and refers to the local authority as appropriate. The school has developed good links with Hillingdon local authority to be part of multi-agency working on safeguarding matters. Pield Heath School promotes anti-bullying behaviour through the classroom, PSHE, circle time, assemblies, and on an individual level linked to behaviour plans. The children's mission statement promote kindness to others and friendship through 'Courtesy, Concern and Care'. This statement is referred to in promoting tolerance and positive behaviour towards others. Good behaviour is noticed and praised and celebrated with the whole school during assembly. Staff are firm with consistent boundaries to assist in providing a structured environment required by so many pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. When challenging behaviour becomes disruptive the staff are trained in de-escalation techniques and how to physically intervene if required. Suitable records are made and overseen by a care co-ordinator and the principal. If a pupil is presenting challenging behaviour a meeting is held with key staff to identify risks and triggers. Together the staff develop strategies and produce behaviour plans to inform all staff on how to respond to and support particular young people. Good attention is paid to overall health and safety matters supported by robust policies and comprehensive risk assessments. All required fire safety measures are being taken, as are measures to ensure the safety and maintenance of gas, water and electrical services and equipment. Systems in place to provide a secure environment are very good and the procedures for the safe handover of pupils from school transport at the beginning and end of each school day. There is a recruitment process that requires several checks to verify the suitability of employees. Clearance through the Criminal Records Bureau is undertaken for all staff. On receipt of any written reference some contact is made with the referee for verification though this does not happen routinely. Safer recruitment procedures have not been followed systematically, the school has failed to secure references prior to some staff commencing.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The support for the young people's educational achievements by the care staff is very good. There are good channels of communication between school and care staff and consistency in their approach to behaviour management. When there are care staff shortages some classroom staff work in St Joseph's House further supporting a whole school team approach. The speech and language therapist work closely with care staff, this work contributes to the overall care plans for the young people in school and social settings using symbols and sequencing of information. Life skills and independence are promoted through the 24 hour curriculum and detailed in the individual education plans that span the classroom and the residential provision. Individual support is provided to meet a wide range of needs, medical, social, emotional, learning difficulties and physical disabilities. Young people are encouraged to develop their self confidence and life skills towards greater independence. Staff are knowledgeable in how best to meet these needs and receive appropriate training and support. Older pupils are being assessed as they develop in confidence and apply the life skills learnt at school in the boarding provision, in their own home and in the community. In addition to speech and language therapists supporting pupils the school also has access to a music therapist, drama/play therapist and an occupational therapist. There is a sensory room within the school that is available during some evenings for those young people who stay in St Joseph's House. Young people clearly enjoy staying at school and taking part in the activities offered. There are clear policies and procedures in place to promote equality and diversity. Pield Heath is a Catholic foundation school and offers a service within a Christian ethos. The school promotes a culture of inclusion and celebrates a range of religious festivals to incorporate the diverse ethnic backgrounds of the pupils and staff. A reflection room is designated space for staff and pupils to use to meet their individual spiritual needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There are formal opportunities where young people are consulted, such as the school council, student committee for the sixth form, house meetings, questionnaires, surveys and working parties. The school council regularly undertakes surveys in the dining room about the menu and notes any requests. Some changes implemented by the student council have been an increase in dance sessions, a Key Stage 4 youth club, a healthy tuck shop and after school club football training. Young people are assisted to become involved in their annual review meetings and when staying in St Joseph's House they are invited to make choices with regards to the activity they wish to do, what snack to eat and what clothes to change into after school. Comprehensive care plans are regularly updated, they cover all aspects of the young people's care needs in conjunction with the health and medical information. Young people who stay at St Joseph's House are able to freely maintain contact with their families. Parents are able to contact their children at reasonable times and visit if they wish. Care staff, teachers, school nurse and senior management all maintain good communication with parents through home/school diaries, telephone calls, and letters. The school provides workshops and training events for parents and a forum where they can share experiences and receive support in caring for a child with special needs.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The accommodation in St Joseph's House is in good decorative order providing a homely feel with comfortable furniture. The young people who stay like the house and those who board

regularly have personalised their bedrooms with posters, photographs and belongings. Repairs and maintenance issues are promptly dealt with by school maintenance staff.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school provides suitable information for young people and their parents about staying at St Joseph's House. The school prospectus and parent handbook is a very good document with colour photographs. A welcome booklet to St Joseph's House has been produced with text and symbols for young people. There are good staffing levels in place with waking night staff available to help young people if they wake up during the night. The commitment from the staff is a strength of the school and any absences in St Joseph's House are covered from within the school to ensure continuity of care. There is access to a member of the leadership team on call each night for advice and support when needed. Pield Heath School is committed to staff training and has achieved the Investors In People award in 1999 and retained it in 2006. The school has also been awarded the Charter Mark for excellence in customer service. Care staff are trained in Team Teach, safeguarding, communication techniques, medical matters, health & safety, first aid and NVQ level 3. One of the joint care co-ordinators has achieved NVQ level 4 and the other holds a nursing qualification. Staff feel supported in doing their job and report very positively on the school's response to their requests for additional resources, materials and training opportunities. The principal is highly respected by the staff team providing very good leadership. There are very good policies and procedures to support the practice in this school with good systems in place to monitor records and development. Monitoring of recruitment records did not take place in January (see Staying Safe). A representative of the governing body visit each term and provide written reports of their findings.

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 safer recruitment procedures are consistently applied. (NMS 27)

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.