

# Priory School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	27 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**

Priory School provides education for children between the ages of nine years and 16 years who are subject to a Statement of Special Educational Need. All of the children have been assessed as having a learning difficulty at some level and a number will have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There are two boarding houses and pupils are accommodated in single bedrooms and dormitory areas in groups of four or less. The boarding provision can cater for up to 24 children, the majority of children access the boarding provision on one, two or three nights each week and a small number board all week. A total of 42 children access boarding in total and five children stay at the school into the early evening before being collected by parents.

### **Summary**

This was an announced visit that took place over one day in March 2008 and included feedback to the Head and the senior staff team. Due to the nature of the children's special needs, questionnaires were completed by over 90% of pupils. They were supported by the chair of Governors over a two day consultation period prior to the inspection and opportunities were also taken to observe children at school, and talk with several who were able to communicate directly and verbally. The visit to the school lasted 10 hours and additional time was taken to read the information requested from the school. This was the statutory key inspection of the school. All the 20 key National Minimum Standards (NMS) were inspected as part of this inspection. Additional standards were also inspected and outcomes are included in this report.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Staff are caring and good at working and communicating with young people. They get effective management support and school staff and boarding staff work well together to make sure the young people's needs are met throughout the day and there is a structural support to how the school operates. The staff have got better at writing notes about things that happen in the boarding houses and communication is good throughout the site. Care plans are more 'user-friendly' and allow for child involvement.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

The Head of Care and staff follow procedures regarding administering medication for young people. The system is well organised and ensures that the correct medication is taken to each individual young person and recorded as received. Care staff administer the medication following training in the administration of medication from a medical professional. The Head of Care and senior staff have undertaken additional training with regard to specialist medication. Some young people take controlled medication. Children and young people live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are fully identified and promoted. Care and placement plans contain comprehensive information about the young people's health needs and actions that staff need to take. The young people receive appropriate information, advice and guidance with regard to personal health and social care as part of their education timetable. The teaching and boarding house staff sit and have meals with the young people and staff are provided with clear information about the individual catering needs of the

young people. The young people are supported in helping themselves and behaviour targets are monitored throughout the day, including mealtimes, as part of the individual expectations of behaviour for each young person.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Records relating to young people are held securely. Young people are able to access the use of a payphone in private. Staff respect young people's privacy and deal appropriately with confidential information through the provision of an appropriate person who is made available in the role of an independent person. As a result young people access support that is external to the organisation. There are no unresolved complaints since the last inspection. Complaints information is produced in formats that give the young people a better understanding of how to complain. This is done to an effective level. There are no unresolved child protection issues since the last inspection and 10 referrals were made appropriately. However staff have not been updated through training on local authority child protection processes. Although established staff have attended child protection awareness training recently recruited care staff have not. This potentially compromises young peoples safety. The school's future plans to provide opportunities for increased access, from the public into the school, is to offer greater opportunity of entertainment, training and education for pupils. For example, a 'Cycle Club' uses the school site so pupils benefit from gaining access to the use of cycles and training. However the existing school visitor access policy is not robust enough to accommodate these changes. This may compromise a young person's safety. There are no recorded incidents of absconding since the last inspection. The care files contain good, clear information about young people if any absences occur. Young people develop appropriate ways of behaving and interacting with their peers and adults because staff work with them in a caring and constructive manner that offers them support. However pupils behaviour support plans are not linked to pupil's health plans where there is a relationship between behaviour and medication. The staff are well trained in working with the young people to manage conflict and challenging behaviour. The staff praise young people, focusing on their positive behaviours linked to the young person's individual behaviour management plans. Staff interact with young people and reflect the stated aims and values written within the school's behaviour management policy. Young people individual needs and actions are respected because staff work with a young person in a manner that respects and values each young person in their care. Records of incidents of restraints occurring are rare and appropriately monitored. Young people are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through staff giving them constructive responses that encourages acceptable behaviour. Representations from parents and significant adults for children are very complimentary with regard to the staff's way of working with young people. There is a health and safety audit and recommendations followed up. Sampled health and safety records are clear, accessible and evidence demonstrates required checks and monitoring is undertaken. Fire drills have been held since the last inspection. The Head undertakes a review of the premises risk assessments. As a result young people live in a school that provides physical safety and security. Staff recruitment files are well organised. There is very good evidence of interview notes, checks regarding qualifications, references and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. Recruitment records relating to all recently appointed members of staff was inspected. These records demonstrate vetting undertaken by the school meets regulatory requirements. CRB checks are completed before new staff commence work in the school. The careful selection of staff and the monitoring of visitors into the school prevent children from exposure to any risk of potential abusers. The privacy of children and young people is respected because staff are

consistent and positive with children and young people when promoting acceptable standards of behaviour.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Care staff provide support to the young people in the classroom as well as during residential time and teaching staff do after school duties to support the evening activity programme. The school operates a 24 hour curriculum for the young people. The staff are very aware of their role in achieving this with and for the young people and are consistent in their responses with the young people, demonstrating a good understanding and knowledge of the individual plans for the young people in their care. The links between the school, boarding house and parents are very good. Senior staff support meetings and ensure a good cross over between the school staff and care staff. Clear communication systems in school ensure good sharing of information for all involved with the young people, including their parents. The daily routines take place in a relaxed and welcoming manner and staff help the young people move from one area of the school and routine to another in a calm and supportive way. Comments from a social care professional with links to the school included, "Staff liaise with parents to ensure continuity of care". The young people have the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of leisure activities and enjoy themselves. The staff are encouraging and positive in their comments and feedback to the young people. The activities are age-appropriate and the young people are supported in exercising choice as well as following their set programmes, as appropriate. The staff are very aware of the need to follow individual plans, as well as help some young people look at different activities and ways of behaving when in the company of other young people and staff. The school's residential provision supports educational progress and provides opportunities for children and young people to engage in a range of appropriate activities. Children and young people receive individual support, as they need it.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

The interaction between staff and young people is warm and positive. Staff support the young people to make choices and to participate in the morning's routines and conversation. The interaction between the staff and the young people is relaxed and respectful and the atmosphere, homely. The young people like their boarding houses and are happy at the school. They are clear that they could talk to the head teacher or staff if they are unhappy. The staff are well trained and aware of the different communication methods used by the young people and in their use of communication passports and folders with the young people. Care files are well organised and contain good information regarding the welfare and health needs and assessments of the young people. Relevant paperwork from placing agencies and schools are kept on files that are securely stored. The Head of Care is aware of the individual needs of the young people and undertakes initial assessments on young people with their families and social workers as part of the admissions process. The care plans contain good information for staff regarding the young people's behaviour management plans and individual targets. The staff follow identified targets for the young people in their care at all times. The current care plans incorporate a new format for care planning that supports the young people in being more involved in producing their plans by using photographs, symbols or other forms of communication relevant to their individual needs and abilities. The relationships between staff, children and young people are very positive, the plans of care for young people are good and

young people are supported in maintaining appropriate contact with their families. Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run with no child assumed to be unable to communicate their views.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is not judged.

not judged

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The school's Statement of Purpose reflects the services, aims and philosophy of the school. The name of the current designated child protection person and full details of complaints procedures are consistently documented to ensure clarity in information produced about boarding for parents and young people. The school has produced an information pack for the young people using lots of photographs to better help their understanding. Relevant information is updated to reflect the current post holders for significant roles in school. Staffing levels were sufficient to meet the needs of the young people accommodated by the school at the time of the inspection. There is evidence of staff providing a good level of supervision and the staff to children ratio is high. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of the young people's needs. New staff had been recruited since the last inspection and recruitment is robust. The staff proficiently use distraction and other management strategies with the young people and are very aware of the individual behaviours of the young people in their groups. There are allocated tasks including allocated time with the young people depending on their need and activity. They interact with the young people in a firm and pleasant manner when encouraging them to respect each other's space and right to being treated with respect. The staff receive supervision. All staff were clear about their expectation of frequency of supervision, confirmed that this occurs as appropriate and staff verified induction training. Staff files are well maintained and the training programme contains good evidence of induction training and commitment by staff to the training provided by the school. A number of staff say they received good training and new staff are looking forward to doing their National Vocational Qualification as appropriate. The Head of Care and documented evidence confirms having the required proportion of care staff (80%) qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. The Head of Care is appropriately experienced and qualified. Care staff receive a variety of training, including first aid, administration of medicines, understanding learning needs and autism. Systems are in place for the Head of Care or another senior member of staff to monitor the records specified in the National Minimum Standards. Sampled records show evidence of this monitoring taking place. The school's governors regularly undertake unannounced monitoring visits and produce written reports. Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently and all enjoy the stability of an efficiently run school. The school ensures that the required proportion of permanent staff continue to access and are assisted to achieve qualification to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and 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):

- ensure the existing visitors' policy is more robust (NMS 26)
- ensure behaviour support plans are being recorded as a strategy of intervention for staff in pupils' health plans. (NMS 10)



## 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.**