

Brantridge School

Inspection report for residential special school

Unique reference number	SC042663
Inspection date	11 March 2008
Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
Type of Inspection	Key

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Head of care	
Head / Principal	Tasmin Gent
Date of last inspection	13 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

Brantridge is a non-maintained residential special school, providing education and care for primary aged boys, all of whom have statements of special educational needs. Some children have complex needs including learning disabilities and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is part of the Grafham Grange Special Educational Trust Ltd. The school can provide for up to 36 boys from the ages of six to 13 years.

Summary

An inspection of Brantridge school was undertaken over two days on the 11th and 12th of March 2008. During the inspection the inspector toured the premises, met with the children and school council, met with staff and the senior management team. The inspector reviewed records and documentation held at the school. The school provides a good level of care to the children who have complex needs. The school works to meet these needs by offering a holistic approach to school life. The staff are supported at the school by good supervision and extensive training in order to ensure the children are understood and kept safe and secure. The school functions as a whole, providing a settled environment for both those who work there and the children.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school as a whole have moved on since the last inspection and a lot of work has gone into developing systems and reviewing how relevant areas of the school can change to develop practice even further. Since the last inspection the school have met the recommended actions from the last report. The school has implemented new systems for receiving consent for all forms of medical treatment whilst the children are in school and the school registered nurse has systems in place which check all medication given to the children outside of her time at the school. The nurse will follow up and issues that are found within medication records. The head of the school monitors all of the medical systems. Although there was still a high level of restraint used at the school to be found, there has been a reduction in the last year and the school has brought in new systems, training and monitoring to reduce this situation even further. At the last inspection there had been some concerns mentioned from the children about bullying. Over the last year the school have introduced new initiatives and brought in a new policy document. Children reflected at this inspection that they did not feel bullying was a problem and that they could talk to staff about it. The school reviewed their health and safety policies and procedures and the system as a whole is now over seen by two members of staff, one of which is the health and safety officer. The central heating has now been updated and the radiators are no longer a risk and new systems are in place for the fire system where all exits are used and fire drills are at various times of the day. The therapy room now has a radio system in place in case of an emergency. Training of the staff has been overhauled and extensive training is available for staff including specific subjects relating to the children.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Each child has a health plan in place which details information about medical history and current health needs. The school have clear guidance and training for staff in place to ensure they have experience and knowledge when assisting the children to take their medication. A registered nurse is in overall charge for the medication, first aid and treatment within the school. The systems in place at the medical room are comprehensive and clear. The head of the school undertakes the overall monitoring of the medical systems. All of the children have consent for all forms of medical treatment. The school has written guidance on promoting the health and welfare of the children, and the children are enabled to discuss these issues with staff both in and out of school. Children's dietary needs are provided for and have continued to improve with the experienced staff being aware of and training in the new guidance on healthy eating in schools. The children identified they could ask for changes in the menu through the food meetings and the new school council. The children also said the food had improved and that more choices were available.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The school has a robust approach towards ensuring the children are protected from the risk of harm, neglect or abuse this is achieved by having clear guidance and training in place for staff who themselves have been checked through recruitment procedures. Children identified they would know how to complain and who they would speak to if they needed to. A complaints process is in place for both the children and parents/carers. A complaint was dealt with last year from the young people and it had been handled in such a way that the children did feel they had been listened to by the staff. The school has implemented a new child protection policy in line with safeguarding proposals. The school has also provided the staff with new child protection training. The school has clear systems of dealing with issues and this could be seen within the records. During the child protection training staff are given guidance on confidentiality of information. The children said they felt staff did keep information private. The school is pro-actively dealing with bullying in the school and over the last year have introduced initiatives such as 'random act of kindness' where the boys are praised for good things they do for other children. The school also looked at anti bullying projects with the children. The school have introduced a new policy to offer guidance to staff in how to deal with incidents of bullying. The children confirmed that bullying happens less and is just really name calling. The school has a clear policy and procedure in place for when children go missing. The records of absconding are low and only indicated those missing stayed within the school grounds and returned to school quickly. The school operates a consistent approach to behaviour management both within the school and boarding areas. The staff are trained in team teach techniques on a four day course, three of which are based on behaviour management. The school however does continue to show a high level of restraint being used mainly in the school day. There is however evidence in place that shows levels of restraint have reduced and forms show that staff are identifying what behaviour management has been employed before the child has been restrained. The school has clear guidance in place as to which sanctions are permissible. Recorded sanctions although at a high level, are appropriate and at times show if a specific young person is struggling at the school. There are numerous risk assessments in place with regards to ensuring the safety of the children. The assessments cover activities and the outdoor areas of the school. Accidents are recorded regularly and include details on how each situation is dealt with and what treatment is given. Fire safety is ensured via regular checks on equipment and alarms. Fire drills are regularly carried out and children have fire quizzes to help with their knowledge of fire escape routes. The organisation which operates the school has a thorough system in

place for recruiting staff. The appropriate checks are carried out on staff before they start work at the school. The school has a clear system in place for checking visitors in and out.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Each child has an individual education plan and educational statement. These plans are updated and objectives are made at each review. The children are supported by the staff in the boarding houses to attend and manage the school day. The children are supported with homework and homework club is run twice a week. The school has an excellent activities programme and on each evening and throughout the weekend the children are able to choose between activities at the school on site and going out into the community. This year the school have booked four different holidays which range from high activity to more relaxing trips at the end of the year and the children have been able to choose which one they wanted to go on. All trips and activities are clearly risk assessed. The children have their needs for specific support outlined in their placement plans and the school offers specific help and counselling. The school also has a family counsellor who works with the children's parents and carers. The children are supported by the staff at the school and relationships were seen to be warm and caring in a professional manner. The children said they would feel able to talk to the staff and feel listened to.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The school has introduced a new school council who were voted in by the other children. A member of the boarding staff was given training and set up the new council. The representatives are from each year within the school. The inspector met with the council who said they felt that it was working and some of their requests for change had happened. The council also said if a request was turned down an explanation was given. The children also have food meetings where they meet with the chef and discuss changes to the daily food menu. The children said some food had changed when they made a suggestion. Parents attend reviews and have weekly contact with the school. This year the school also held a family event at Christmas. The children confirmed they have regular contact with home and are able to use the boys' telephone and office telephone. Contacts are recorded into the boys' placement files. Each child has a placement file which were seen to be comprehensive and holistic in their approach. Each file seen covered all aspects of current care and historical information in order to inform the reviewing process and set new objectives and change aspects of the care where needed.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The school is set in a large manor house with a variety of out buildings, secure play areas and large grounds. The environment is conducive to providing the children with a good all round experience of school life. The school has security systems in place and risk assessments to ensure the safety of the children. The boarding facilities are within the main house and divided into three landings which are governed by age group. Each landing is appropriately decorated according to the age of the group living there. The décor is comfortable and child focused. Each landing has different arrangements for bedrooms and the older the children get the less children they share with although no dorm room is overcrowded. Each child has their own space to decorate with their individual choice. The boarding accommodation has had extra funding this year and it clearly could be seen in the upgrading of equipment and the facilities in place

for the children. The landings have adequate bathrooms and toilets for the amount of children staying there. The children said that they can have privacy and this is respected by staff and those around them.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has a variety of information linked to the statement of purpose including the children's guide and the parents/carers handbook. The guidance offers a clear picture of the school, its ethos and its daily routines. Alongside of the statement of purpose the school has up to date policies and procedures. The overall management of the school is very good and the senior management team have implemented positive changes and improved existing systems. The care staff felt that they could now suggest and be given the scope to try new ideas such as the end of year camps and the school council. The care staff team are a well established long term team. However, this year a new member of staff has been introduced. The team offer the children a wealth of knowledge and experience. The team are supported by the acting head of care and clear systems of supervision and training that are in place. The staff said they feel supported and happy with the extensive training they are now offered and the space they are given to complete course work. The school have clear lines of induction, mandatory and NVQ training courses in place which has been inclusive of all staff across the school. Staff also felt they now had more access to specific training related to the complex needs of the children. The school has an overall comprehensive system in place for the monitoring of practice and safety issues. There is a regulation 33 visitor in place who visits once every half term. Monitoring and statistics of issues such as restraint were seen and are being used as a part of looking at reducing such incidents as a whole. The school has had a new head in place for the last year and with the support of the senior management team has brought the school together as a whole. The whole school were also involved in the Grafham Grange Trust development plan meeting where they discussed values, a mission and goals statement and the setting of eight key priorities.

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 a continued approach to reducing the number of restraints within the school (Std 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.