

West Kirby Residential School

Inspection report for residential special school

Unique reference number	SC018958
Inspection date	18 November 2008
Inspector	Nick Veysey
Type of Inspection	Key

Address	West Kirby Residential School 107-119 Meols Drive West Kirby WIRRAL Merseyside CH48 5DH
Telephone number	0151 632 3201
Email	garethwilliams@wkrs.co.uk
Registered person	Board of Governors
Head of care	Gareth Williams
Head / Principal	
Date of last inspection	11 March 2008

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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

The school is a Special Educational Needs College for young people with complex and significant behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many young people also have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including speech and language, autistic spectrum disorder and associated medical needs. All pupils have experienced major difficulties in mainstream schools and other educational settings.

The school has residential provision for up to 30 young people during weekdays in term time. There is a variety of boarding arrangements available depending on the needs of the child, ranging from one to four nights each week. The school provides residential accommodation on the main site and in two houses in the local area.

The location of the school and the houses enables young people to access facilities in the community easily. They are close to bus stops, a train station, leisure centres, swimming pools, youth clubs, shops, the beach, parks and other schools.

There are currently 26 young people staying overnight at the school and the vast majority of them took part in the inspection. Young people and staff from throughout the school completed inspection questionnaires with their views and experiences of the school.

Summary

At this full inspection all the key standards were inspected. The main focus of the inspection was to find out how well the school meets the needs of young people boarding there.

This is an outstanding school that meets all the National Minimum Standards. The school provides a safe and stimulating environment that encourages young people's learning and personal development. Young people enjoy attending the school, feel supported and well looked after. A young person who will be leaving the school soon said 'I'm looking forward to going to college, but I'll be sad to leave school and the people who have really helped me'.

Staff are caring, highly skilled and competent. They have created a warm friendly atmosphere where young people feel valued and know they are people they are able to turn to for advice and support if they have any problems. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the staff's excellent understanding of their individual needs and the support they need. All parts of the school are very good at sharing information about young people's experiences and needs to make sure that they are being cared for properly.

Young people are extremely well supported to deal with the challenges they face, develop confidence in their skills and abilities, and to play an active part in the community. Moving some young people to live in accommodation in the local community has been a positive development with excellent outcomes for the young people involved.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no requirements or recommendations made at the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people live in a healthy environment. Their physical and emotional health needs are clearly identified and their well-being is promoted. Individual young people have comprehensive plans showing their health needs, the arrangements for meeting them and the treatment, support and advice they have received.

Staff monitor young people to make sure they are healthy by encouraging them to attend routine health checks and by ensuring they get medical treatment when they are unwell. Young people said 'they help a lot and always look after us if we don't feel well'.

The school has strong links with specialist health and advisory services to make sure that young people get suitable support with specific health issues, such as diet, asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, mental health and disabilities. Young people also have access to specialist services in school including physiotherapy, psychology and speech and language therapy.

Staff deal with health issues sensitively. They make sure young people get excellent support and advice to promote healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating, physical activity and sexual health. The school places great emphasis on helping young people understand their own health needs and taking appropriate responsibility for managing their physical and emotional well-being. There are many excellent examples of young people making significant progress in managing their own personal care.

Medical and care staff are suitably trained and competent to meet a wide range of complex individual health needs. Also, staff with first aid qualifications are on duty at all times to make sure appropriate action is taken to safeguard young people in the case of an emergency.

The school has very robust systems in place to ensure that the arrangements for medication are safe and promote young people's welfare. Staff make sure that young people only have medication specifically prescribed for them and take it in line with the prescription instructions. Medication is securely stored in a suitable cupboards. Staff keep detailed records of any medicines stored in the school and the administration of medicines to young people.

Young people enjoy healthy and nutritious meals made from fresh ingredients that meet their dietary needs. Staff clearly understand what makes a healthy and balanced diet. They encourage young people to develop healthy eating habits by providing good advice about nutrition and eating healthy portions. Meal times are well organised and sociable occasions. Young people routinely plan and choose what they have to eat, go shopping for food, help to cook meals and bake.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people feel safe staying at the school and are protected from harm. They said 'the school is good at keeping us safe and looking after us'.

Young people's privacy is promoted. They have single bedrooms and enough space where they can relax easily and spend time alone when they wish. Young people make and receive telephone

calls in private. Staff respect young people's privacy consistent with good parenting and the need to protect young people. Confidential information is held securely in the office.

Young people's concerns are taken seriously, and promptly and fairly addressed. Information about young people's rights and complaints is contained in the school's young people's guide and displayed on posters around the school. Young people know how to make a complaint if they are unhappy and ask staff for help. They said 'I would go and talk to my lovely key worker if I was worried about anything.'

Young people feel the school is good at dealing with bullying. The vast majority of young people have not experienced bullying. Young people who have had difficulties said that staff had helped sort the problem out.

Young people's welfare is promoted and safeguarded. The school takes appropriate and decisive action to safeguard young people and work effectively with the relevant external agencies. Staff fully understand about their roles and responsibilities to promote and safeguard young people's welfare. They are familiar with the school's safeguarding policies and are suitably trained in child protection. They provide an excellent level of supervision for young people based on their age to make sure they are safe in school and in the community. Also, they give young people good advice about personal safety including road awareness and the use of the internet.

Staff work effectively with young people to ensure they do not go missing. The school has suitable systems in place for reporting serious incidents involving young people to the relevant agencies. Staff keep accurate written records of all serious events and the action taken by staff to protect young people. However, on one occasion the school failed to inform Ofsted of a serious incident involving young people.

Staff use comprehensive individual behaviour plans to support young people throughout the school. As a result young people have clear and consistent boundaries and know what is expected of them and what is unacceptable. Staff use highly effective communication skills to encourage young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour. They place great emphasis on praising young people when they do well and appropriately rewarding them.

Staff help young people deal with their anxieties and frustrations in a positive way by engaging in suitable activities and talking about how they are feeling. Staff challenge unacceptable behaviour constructively and assist young people to learn to manage their behaviour and solve problems.

The school keeps detailed records of all the measures of discipline used with young people, including incidents where physical interventions have been used. The school has excellent systems in place to evaluate the effectiveness of each incident with young people and the staff involved to work out how best to support young people in the future. Young people's behaviour plans are reviewed regularly to ensure they are up to date and meet young people's needs. Young people's views about the support they need when they are having problems are central to the plans. For example, young people ask for time and space to help them settle before they are able to discuss the problem.

Staff are suitably trained in behaviour management techniques to enable them to intervene safely to resolve problems.

Young people live in secure and safe environments on the main school site and in the two houses in the community. The school addresses health and safety issues with a range of thorough risk assessments. They identify hazards in and around the school as well as risks faced by individual young people including building work, activities and challenging behaviour. Staff carry out regular health and safety checks including fire safety systems to make sure that the school is a safe place to study, work and live.

The vetting of visitors and people wishing to work at the school is very thorough to make sure young people are protected. Staff working at the school have had an appropriate Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The residential provision actively supports and promotes young people's education and personal development. Young people get excellent support when they need it. They said, 'staff are always willing to help me with my homework' and 'staff are good at helping us with our homework if we're stuck.'

Staff have a detailed knowledge of young people's individual education and learning needs. This enables them to work effectively with young people on their identified targets to help them develop their skills and build confidence in their abilities.

Staff see education as important and have created an environment that supports and stimulates young people to learn and study through leisure and educational activities. Also, staff encourage young people to develop their social and communication skills by taking part in group activities in school and in the local area. They make sure that young people are emotionally prepared for school and offer them excellent support if they experience difficulties.

Staff throughout the school are exceptionally good at sharing information with each other about young people's needs and the support they require. Staff spend a lot of time individually with young people. Young people are able to talk to staff about problems and receive individual support when they need it. Young people said 'staff are there to talk to if you have a problem' and 'staff are good at helping me get through my problems'.

There are many excellent examples of young people getting advice and support with a wide range of possible needs including sexual health and relationships, healthy lifestyles, making decisions, dealing with problems, personal safety, the effects of drugs and life skills.

Staff are very knowledgeable about young people's individual needs and personalities. This enables them to work out how best to support young people with specific issues. Staff have a good understanding of how issues of equality and diversity, such as gender and disability, relate to individual young people. Staff said 'although two young people may have the same condition, they are very different and need to be supported based on their individual needs'.

Staff actively seek suitable services to help young people and their families experiencing problems. They are tenacious at making sure young people get the support they need. The school has well-established links with a range of helping agencies such as Children and Young People's Departments, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Brooke Advisory Clinic.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The school's records provide an excellent insight into the individual needs of young people and plans in place to meet them. Young people have comprehensive written placement plans identifying their needs and outlining the arrangements for meeting them. Staff put the plans into practice and keep detailed records about young people's progress and experiences. Young people's education and placement plans are reviewed regularly to make sure that they are up to date and continue to meet their needs. Young people attend review meetings and feel that they are listened to and their views about their lives taken into account.

Young people are able to contact families and friends to help them maintain relationships. Staff make sure that the arrangements for contact promote and safeguard young people's welfare. They work closely with young people's families to let them know about their progress, if there are any concerns about their welfare and involve them in decisions about the education and care provided.

The school gathers sufficient information about young people before they move in to ensure that the school is able to meet their needs and assess their compatibility with other young people. Young people move into the home in a sensitive way. Staff are good at helping young people settle in making sure they know what is expected of them, what to do if they are worried and their way around the school and local area. Young people's progress is reviewed regularly to ensure that the school is the right place to meet their needs.

Staff are very good at helping young people settle back into school following the holidays and at the start of each week. They ensure that young people's daily routine takes into account that they may have travelled long distances coming to school and may need time to adjust back into school life.

Young people are involved in preparing for leaving school and know where they will be moving to. Staff provide emotional and practical support for young people leaving. Staff contribute to the assessment of young people's needs to ensure that young people continue to get the support they require.

The school places great emphasis on encouraging young people to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. Young people feel they have a say about what happens through the school council, group meetings and individual discussions with staff. Young people said, 'we have our say' and 'are involved in the plans for the group, such as buying items.'

Staff enable young people to develop confidence in their social and communication skills. Staff are highly skilled at encouraging young people to express opinions, make decisions and contribute to the life of the school. They praise young people for their ideas, encourage young people to listen to other people's views, respect other points of view, take turns, and make sure that everyone has the opportunity to say what they think. In this way staff are able to achieve a suitable balance between wishes and needs of individual young people and those of the group.

Young people enjoy positive relationships with staff based on trust, honesty and respect. Staff are helpful and enjoy spending time with young people. They have very clear professional and personal boundaries with young people consistent with good child care.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The school places great importance on helping young people become more independent and preparing them for adult life. The school provides young people with a variety of experiences to enable them to work constructively with others, learn how to manage their difficulties effectively and succeed in many different situations.

Staff encourage young people to develop their skills and confidence through involvement in a range of education and vocational activities that meet their individual needs, abilities and interests. Young people's preferences are taken into account. They have opportunities to study and get work experience in areas that interest them. This includes attending college courses in car mechanics, ceramics, horticulture, hairdressing and basic life skills, and work experience in areas such as catering and child care.

Staff are creative and resourceful in building young people's confidence in their social and life skills. Young people are supported to try new experiences and take controlled risks such as using public transport independently to go to college. Young people are encouraged to take more responsibility for themselves suitable to their age and understanding. Also, they are encouraged to develop their personal care, safety, organisational and social skills.

Young people enjoy homely and comfortable accommodation. The residential accommodation is decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard. Young people have personalised their bedrooms and have enough personal space to meet their needs. The new houses provide young people with the opportunity to live in a more conventional domestic arrangements and feel part of the local community. As a result, young people routinely learn skills through taking part in the running of a home such as shopping, planning meals, cooking, using money, DIY and household tasks.

Young people wear their own clothing outside school time. They bring pocket money from home and choose how they spend it. Staff help young people to look after their own money. Also, they give young people good advice on the use of toiletries to enable them to develop their personal care skills.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school is professionally and efficiently run by effective senior managers who promote a clear vision and values and provide a safe and stable environment for the young people studying and living there. The school is committed to sustained improvement in the quality of care it provides.

Strong and thorough systems are in place to review the quality of care, identify areas for improvement and take action to ensure that the school meets young people's needs and promotes their welfare. This involves two School Governors visiting the school regularly to

check records, assess the physical condition of the buildings, and talking to young people about their experiences.

The promotion of equality and diversity in the school is outstanding. Evidence supports a consistent commitment to delivering equality and diversity in practice. The school provides education and accommodation for young people with a wide range of complex behavioural, learning, medical, emotional and social needs. Staff recognise young people as individuals with different needs, backgrounds, interests and views. They ensure that young people receive an individual service designed to meet their personal needs. Staff throughout the school have an excellent knowledge of the young people they are working with ensuring their needs are consistently met. The school values the rights of individuals to respect and dignity and created an environment where people's differences are accepted.

Young people know what support they can expect from the school and how they will be looked after. The children's guide provides important information about the school in a way that is easily understood by young people. Also, the school has a clear and accurate written statement for parents and placing authorities of how the school operates and plans to meet young people's needs.

Young people are looked after by highly competent and enthusiastic people, who have suitable skills and experience to meet their needs. The staff reflect the gender and cultural backgrounds of the young people living in the school and provides positive adult role models for young people. They are caring and provide a supportive and stimulating environment for young people with a wide range of complex needs. The number of staff on duty at any one time is excellent and meets the needs of the number of young people living in the home.

Staff are positive about the level of support and guidance they receive. Professional staff supervision takes place regularly within the timescale recommended in the standards. Also, team meetings take place weekly to discuss and review individual young people, the running of the school, staff development and training, and look at ways to improve the service they offer.

The school's written records provide a comprehensive picture of individual young people's needs, development and progress. Young people's records are well written, organised and contain up to date information about them including the relevant documents from placing authorities.

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
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- notify Ofsted promptly of all serious events outlined in the standards involving young people in the school (NMS 7.2).