

Lindsworth School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
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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

Lindsworth is a special school providing day, extended day and residential places. It provides up to 14 residential places if two bedrooms are shared, or 12 places if all bedrooms are single. Residential pupils board at the school for four nights a week, Monday to Thursday inclusive. At the time of the inspection all the residential pupils were boys and there were three being accommodated. All the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and their predominant difficulties are social, emotional and behavioural [SEBD]. The school operates on two sites. The residential provision is sited on one of these, the Lindsworth 'South' site, in Kings Norton, Birmingham. Currently there are 168 pupils on roll of which six are girls. There are five boarders, all boys. Pupils actively contributed to the findings in this report.

Summary

At this announced, full inspection all the key standards were inspected. The outstanding recommendations made at the previous inspection were also followed up. Pupils are settled and recognise that they board in a safe environment. There were no serious issues or concerns were by pupils. Staffing levels are high and good training and staff development of practice is taking place. The promotion of equality and diversity is good throughout the standards inspected. Seven recommendations linked to inconsistent recording and practice frameworks, lack of monitoring processes and, poor structural damage to the windows have been made as a result of this inspection.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were 17 recommendations from the previous inspection that related to health care issues, behaviour management processes and complaints not being appropriately recorded. At the last visit, planning for pupils was found to be weak with the recording systems not fully ensuring that sufficient information was being kept within pupil's files. Staff were receiving supervision from senior staff in a range of ways but the required formal sessions were ineffectively recorded. All administration of medication and related health care issues are now fully and consistently recorded. Pupils care planning and documentation now ensure that there is sufficient information being kept on files. Staff are receiving appropriate formal supervision which helps them to reflect on and improve their practice. As a result, pupils well-being is fully promoted and safeguarded.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Each pupil lives in a healthy environment where their intimate care needs are identified and promoted. Whole school initiatives and direct input around mental, physical and emotional health recognises pupils uniqueness. Both staff responses and direct work is shaped around this. For example, pupils cultural identity. As a result, they receive care that actively promotes their welfare. Staff know about pupil's health needs and have the skills to manage the administration of medication and first aid. Practice around recording why doses are missed is improving and generally promotes pupils' health and safety. However, although staff are aware of the wider recommended pharmaceutical guidance and practice around storage and

administration of controlled drugs they are not implementing it. This has the potential to compromise pupil's well-being. Pupils are consistently provided with a well-balanced diet. The available choices mean that they receive the range of nutrients required for healthy growth and nutrition. Staff are keen to promote healthy eating and encourage pupils to eat fruit or try new foods at meal times. The school recently had a 'food tasting' week. Pupils tried a range of different foods including those from different cultures. This helps them to adopt a positive attitude towards food. Meal times are very social occasions where they sit with their friends, and staff members to happily discuss a wide range of topics.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Pupil's privacy is respected as staff are sensitive to their needs and do not intrude unnecessarily. Currently all pupils have single rooms and have good personal space. Pupils say they are very confident that their concerns are addressed and that they know about the complaints procedure. There is an effective system in place to record any concerns made known. Consequently, supporting pupils and staff to work together to ensure care is continually appropriate. There are good systems in place to promote the safety and welfare of pupils, ensuring they are kept safe. All staff receive child protection training and have a satisfactory understanding of what action to take regarding an allegation or suspicion of abuse. It is acknowledged that in an establishment of this structure, combined with the behaviour patterns of some of the pupils accommodated, bullying is likely to occur. Pupils acknowledge that bullying does sometimes happen. However, they do not consider it to be a big issue within the school with one pupil commenting "I'm happy with most things, school is good for me and I feel safe". The school is proactive in creating a culture that does not tolerate bullying and provides support to vulnerable pupils. Therefore, pupil's well-being is given a high priority. The school's behaviour management policy and strategies have, as their prime objective, the creation of a safe, supportive learning environment. The policy aims to gain achievement of a successful learning outcome for pupils in recognising and responding to their individuality. Policies help staff to understand that their responses to behaviour must take into account potential, complex and diverse dynamics. Pupils may knowingly or unknowingly place themselves at risk as often they do not recognise normal boundaries as opposed to mainstream pupils within the same age range and emotional development. One pupil confirmed that "this is the best school I have ever been too, even the consequences of my bad behaviour helps me". However, the use of sanctions is not consistently recorded. This prevents effective monitoring in order to identify patterns and trends and thus, potentially limits staff's early intervention. There is a section on the physical intervention form that allows for pupils comments. This is not always completed which may mean that pupils are not always given the opportunity to voice 'what when wrong for them'. It also denies them overt opportunities to report any possible injuries, therefore potentially compromising their welfare. Pupils sleep in a school that provides physical safety and security. The school has regularly updated risk assessments which cover all aspects of the premises and the grounds, fire, pupil's behaviour, and activities. Pupils learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they regularly practise the emergency escape drill. Staff recruitment files contain extensive evidence of suitability checks that have taken place prior to staff being employed. This includes an appropriate enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. Consequently, pupils are appropriately safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils benefit from a service where they receive individual support according to their needs and where education is promoted as an important factor in their lives. Teams of care staff and ancillary staff supported by teachers and teaching assistants, work collectively towards a common aim. They develop trusting relationships which in turn provides the ideal environment for pupils to realise their potential. The school has explicit and a well-written range of equality policies, that staff fully understand and successfully implement in practice. Staff have a broad approach which aims to provide good quality education for all pupils, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, attainment and background. Individual support to each pupil is given a high priority by the residential staff. Pupils are benefiting from a service where staff deliver a focused level of individual support that is based on individual needs. Their well-being is positively promoted as they are each allocated a key person called a 'minder' to ensure their holistic care needs are met. The school is socially inclusive, all pupils are supported to play an active role in the life of each house and the wider community. The impact of this socialisation within the community enables pupils to develop the social skills needed to survive in the world. Pupils benefit from receiving residential care at Lindsworth because staff are focused on their success, needs and achievements. Lindsworth has successfully created and maintains a school ethos which promotes equality, develops understanding and, challenges myths, stereotypes, misconceptions and prejudices.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Pupils make a positive contribution to their placement and future plans whilst living at the school. They are happy in the setting's caring environment and have positive relationships with staff. Staff have a good understanding on how the pupil's placement plans should cross reference with other information such as their education targets. These records respect the need to value diversity, for example, the cultural and religious needs of all pupils. Written plans demonstrate that pupils receive appropriate external support as the school has a proactive approach to working with other professionals. Pupils are sufficiently supported in their transition when leaving the school. They learn important life skills such as cooking. They explore their potential and develop their personal interests because staff work in a very encouraging and supportive manner. The school is developing a programme to enable colleges, armed forces and training providers to come into the provision to make presentations and work directly with pupils. Pupils are supported to have appropriate contact with friends and family. The school understands the value and importance of communication and contact with parents. None of the pupils appear to be, or report being, isolated. Significant time is taken to build relationships and share information with families. The school is sensitive and responsive to the needs of parents regarding information about their child's care and progress.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Lindsworth school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose to meet the needs of all pupils placed there. It attempts to provide a consistent, stable, safe and caring environment that enables pupils to realise their potential academically, physically and socially. The accommodation for the pupils is of an acceptable standard with good-sized communal areas that are used as a lounge/dining room and a separate games room. Exterior paintwork, especially to window frames, is unsatisfactory. Although the school recognises this and are having continued discussions with the local authority to try and

secure funding for window replacement. There remains an ongoing shortfall in the provision due to the fact that some window frames are rotting and are potentially dangerous.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Pupils have good information about what they can expect from the school, how they will be cared for and who they are likely to share with. Parents and external professionals have a clear statement on how the school operates. The establishment’s staffing policy is included in its Statement of Purpose and is broken down to reflect the minimum staffing expectations in the school. The range of experience and trained staff within the home is good. All new members of staff are required to undergo a process of familiarisation within the work place in order to enable them to function effectively and safely from the day they take up their appointment. The formal staff supervision programme and staff meetings take place consistently and within the recommended timescales. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Evidence supports a consistent commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. Pupils are receiving a good individual service in the school which is designed to meet their personal needs. Monitoring of the majority of the areas as requested by the standard is being completed. This takes place by a range of people as designated by the head, with documents being signed once records have been checked. Notably some key areas are not being checked sufficiently, for example, the records to support the identification of pupils behavioural patterns and trends. Exceptionally brief reports show that a designated person visits the school. These visit do not cover all the areas identified within the standards and as such do not paint an accurate picture on which priorities for improvements can be formed. Lindsworth overall is a well-managed school, where the pupils residing within the residential units enjoy the stability of a well-maintained and appropriately supported care environment.

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 policy and written guidance, implemented in practice for administering and storing medicine is in-line with pharmaceutical guidance (NMS 14.17)
- record all instances of a sanction fully and in line with the expectations of the standard and within 24 hours (NMS 10.9)
- develop a consistent system for recording sanctions that can be successfully monitored effectively by senior staff (NMS 10.6)

- ensure physical intervention recording consistently demonstrates that pupils are encouraged to write or otherwise have their views recorded and where possible sign their names against them (NMS 10.4)
- ensure that the exterior of the school is maintained to a good state of structural and decorative repair, this specifically applies to the windows (NMS 24.3)
- improve system for monitoring of practice in line with the Standard 32 to identify any patterns or issues requiring action (NMS 32.2)
- ensure governors monitoring visits are conducted inline with timescales identified by standard 32.2 and that they cover all the areas in 33.3 and a written report of the visit is provided to the head of the school (NMS 32.2, 3 & 4)

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.