

Furness School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Lucy Ansell / Sophie Wood
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	4 July 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

Furness School is a residential / day special school for 70 secondary aged boys experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties; it is maintained by Kent Education Authority. The school is situated in semi-rural surroundings on the outskirts of Swanley, Kent. The buildings are mostly Victorian and were built as a 'home for little boys' for the children of deprived London families in the mid 19th Century. In 1955 Furness School was established to take children with learning disabilities and since 1986 has been a school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is undergoing some major refurbishment, which has necessitated the closure of one of the school houses. It's closure has enabled the school to move the children more easily around the site while the building work progresses. Part of the refurbishment will take place during the summer holidays when the school is closed. In the last year a new school building has been added which provides the children with a modern learning environment. The refurbishment programme for the three houses will provide the boys with single en-suite rooms or single rooms with their own adjacent bathrooms. Green House which was used by the day boys before classes has been closed and a new breakfast club is provided in the school dining room. The children have access to a large playing field, swimming pool, and conservation garden in the grounds.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality of the boarding provision is good. The school meets all of the key National Minimum Standards and is exceeding in some of them. The schools overall management structure and the strong relationships that exist within the school contribute effectively to the protection and promotion of pupil's welfare. Clear written policies and procedures underpin the school's

practice and there is good information provided for boarders and their parents. Refurbishment works to the three boarding houses are now complete. The accommodation offers excellent levels of privacy with boarders staying in single bedrooms with en-suite facilities. Each house enjoys the comfort of pleasantly furnished, well-maintained communal areas, which are free from hazards; each one benefits from a large games area. Computers with internet access are available within the boarding accommodation and boarders are able to access the schools sports fields, hall, conservation garden and library after the school day. The extra curricular program of visits and activities is good. Boarders can pursue off site activities including the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, cycling club, theatre and cinema trips. Within the school environment boarders enjoy working in the conservation garden and using the music club. A number of boarders access the local community with membership of the army cadets and local kick boxing club. There is provision at the school for identifying and addressing the routine health needs of boarding pupils, however not all health plans are comprehensive and up to date. There are clear procedures for the management and administration of medication, although these do not include guidelines for the administration of 'as required' medication. Implementation of medication procedures is inconsistent. Most records are appropriately maintained. Qualified first aid staff are always available on site. Boarders have a strong voice with regards the day-to-day operation of the school. They believe their views and opinions really matter and say they are effectively listened to. Forums include an active student council and each boarding house holds weekly meetings, whereby boarders and care staff plan activities and discuss school issues. The school actively promotes inclusion with lots of activities so children can choose what is right for them. Boarders are given plenty of opportunities to express their opinions. The overall standard of pupil's behaviour at the school is excellent. Boarders' pocket money is stored safely. Robust recruitment procedures include careful selection and appropriate vetting processes. Bullying is not a problem at the school and the boarders report feeling safe. Staff have received appropriate child protection training and are suitably aware of the relevant reporting procedures. Boarders say they feel valued by the care staff and they enjoy positive relationships. Communication between staff across the school is good and contributes effectively to the welfare of pupils. Each boarder has a designated key worker who liaises between the school, family and if required external agencies. Although staff are very knowledgeable about the care needs of the boys, the care plans do not reflect this and lack comprehensive up to date information. Regular ongoing contact with parents is maintained using written reports and telephone calls. Staffing levels are adequate to meet the needs of the boarders, however, there is very little non-contact time available for the care team, which leads to difficulties in completing paperwork and conducting handovers. Adequate supervision levels and risk assessments ensure activities occur safely. The school has improved in a number of areas since the previous social care inspection. Clearer systems are in place to record the safekeeping and distribution of pocket money. Written risk assessments for off site activities are more robust. A significant key personnel change has occurred, with the appointment of a new head teacher. He has only been in post for four weeks but demonstrates a commitment to improvement.

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 that care and health plans contain comprehensive and robust up to date information (NMS 14 and NMS 17)
- ensure staffing rotas have time scheduled so the care staff can complete all their duties without compromising the overall care of the boarders (NMS 31)
- ensure 'as required' medication guidance is added to the medication policy and staff are consistent in following the school's guidelines for dispensing all medication (NMS 14)

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.