

# New College Worcester

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Martha Nethaway / Christy Wannop
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	31 October 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**

New College Worcester (NCW) is a non-maintained special school and exists to provide an appropriate education for young people with a visual impairment, primarily within the 11 to 19 age range. Students are able to access the National Curriculum and progress to study beyond 16. There is a strong emphasis on supporting the development of independence skills necessary for young people, including mobility, living skills and access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The college provides a boarding environment, but is able to offer educational opportunities to a limited number of local children, dependent on teaching group size. Up to 108 students of both sexes can be accommodated across the site.

### **Summary**

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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 satisfactory.

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

The provision is outstanding.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

#### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The overall quality of the boarding provision is satisfactory. New College Worcester has addressed the previous 12 recommendations from the last inspection visit.

The outcomes for enjoying and achieving is judged as at least good and the outcomes for being healthy and organisation are judged as good. Staying safe is judged as satisfactory and this is connected to compromising fire security related to fire doors and a previous incidence of the school not applying its own recruitment procedures sufficiently rigorously.. Making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing are judged as satisfactory.

Students' physical, social and emotional well-being is well supported by staff. Positive steps are taken by staff to promote good outcomes for students' health and this is underpinned by good policies and procedures. Students have full access to good quality health care facilities. These include an on-site school nurse, and a well-equipped surgery and sickbay that are of a

high standard. All students have a documented health care plan and this information is located in the nurse's surgery where all health care needs are monitored and reviewed. Good systems are in place to ensure communication is effective between the residential staff and the school nurse. Staff are provided with clear procedures related to the storage, administration and disposal of medication. These arrangements are overseen by the school nurse. Arrangements for students to receive routine medication are satisfactory; however staff are not trained to administer emergency prescription medication to those students with complex health needs who may need it. The school nurse has identified this as a shortfall which will be addressed. Students enjoy healthy and nutritious meals. The catering team provide a good range of menus to ensure a balanced diet is being maintained for students. They are able to choose from a variety of dishes. Specific dietary needs are catered for including those related to culture, religion, food intolerance and for allergies. Students are learning about the principles of healthy eating and all available opportunities to prepare and cook meals in the residential accommodation.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The principal is keen to promote this area actively in order to embed the policy into practice and has worked with teaching staff to list what the school currently provides.

Students are supported to retain their privacy and staff promote the principle of mutual respect. Students have good access to telephones and the internet and can keep in touch with their families and friends outside the school. Staff promote students' welfare and this protects and keeps them safe. Students commented that they 'feel safe and secure at the school'. Staff are provided with a comprehensive level of guidance related to the safeguarding and protection of children. These are clearly understood by staff, and they are aware of their role and the importance of reporting concerns about students' welfare. Senior staff have attended appropriate training New College Worcester has a clear complaints policy and procedure in place. Students know and understand how to make a complaint if they are unhappy. Students are confident that they have a 'voice' and if things are not right, that adults will listen to them. Records demonstrate a professional and sensitive approach being adopted by staff. Senior managers monitor these records. Student and staff relationships are positive. The standard of students' behaviour is generally good and they readily identify that staff expect good standards of behaviour. Students consider that the sanctions that are used when they misbehave are fair and proportionate. All staff are trained in the use of physical intervention. As there have been no incidents requiring physical intervention, staff need regular reminders of how to complete the pro-forma records fully.

Staff monitor the whereabouts of students and there are good procedures to follow should any unauthorised absence from the school take place. The number of these incidents is low and 'safe and well' checks are being completed. Students have been instrumental in devising a system of establishing zones on the campus that can be accessed by those with different levels of skill and responsibility. Fire safety checks are being completed and fire drills involve students so that they learn what steps to take in the event of an emergency. Shortfalls are identified in the use of wedges to prop fire doors open and this compromises the fire security for the residential accommodation. Although risk assessments are completed to ensure the health and safety of children and staff, the system of management and review of the structure of risk assessments requires attention.

Whilst the school has good recruitment procedures in principle; these are not rigorously applied in practice. Although all staff hold a CRB check one member of staff was found to have begun work without a reference..

Relationships between staff and students are good, and students express confidence in the adults caring for them. Students are articulate and sensible in their suggestions about how the school is organised around them and are clear about the democratic routes available to them such as school council, junior house meetings and have easy access to the principal. Some sixth formers said they would welcome small unit meetings with their house parents to iron out minor issues. The working relationships between residential staff and teaching staff are effective. Regular meetings and good lines of communication are maintained and this benefits students in meeting their needs. Staff work hard at creating an environment that promotes academic achievement. Students have good access to facilities that support their educational studies including a purpose-built library. They have access to good facilities for private study. Students are actively encouraged to achieve. There are varied opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular activities and this helps build their social and interpersonal skills and self-esteem.

Care plans are of variable quality but are generally satisfactory, though it remains to be seen how they will be audited and reviewed and implemented in practice. Students living in the boarding houses have sufficient space to meet their needs. Students generally share bedrooms although there are some single rooms. Students find the accommodation homely and the sixth form accommodation has been improved with new furniture and soft furnishings in the communal area.

New College Worcester has a Statement of Purpose and student prospectus that describes what can be expected from the school. Care staff are experienced and sensitive to the needs of students. Staffing levels have improved and this has had a positive impact on the achievement of continuity of care for students. Senior staff have not yet introduced a staffing policy for the residential accommodation.

Standard 33 visits are to be strengthened and completed by external individuals with a clear mandate to review the performance of the setting and its impact on the outcomes for students.

## **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 school staff who may need to carry out medical or nursing procedures are trained to do so and have written authorisation to carry out the procedures. (NMS 14.23)

- implement a system for monitoring children's absence from school without authority. Where a worrying pattern of absence is recorded, the school initiates both a review of the care plan and the relevant current care practice of the school. (NMS 8.8)
- implement a fire risk assessment under the Fire Regulatory Reform Act 2005 and risk assessments for children and particular risks arising from the disabilities of any child at the school. (NMS 26.3 and 26.7)
- ensure a satisfactory recruitment process is recorded in writing. This is with reference to the date staff begin to work with children, checks on qualifications and that all references have been returned. (NMS 27)
- review how the opinions and views of sixth form students are actively sought. (NMS 2.4)
- review the implementation of the written placement plans as outlined in Standard 17.1. (NMS 17.1)
- ensure that there is a staffing policy that covers all elements of standard 28.2 and that the duty rosters demonstrate achievement of this standard. (NMS 28.2).