

St. Andrew's School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Katarina Djordjevic
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	8 February 2008

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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

St Andrew's School is a local authority co-educational special school for students aged between 11 and 19 years old, which offers residential facilities. The aim of the residential provision is to provide opportunities for students with severe learning difficulties and/or autism to develop further independence skills based on the 24 hour curriculum. The residential service operates from Monday to Friday and students can access this on a full-time or a part-time basis dependent upon their identified needs.

The residential provision can provide services for a maximum of 17 students and consists of three areas in the main building and a three bedroom bungalow. All areas have their own communal dining and living space, toilets and bathing facilities. All bedrooms are currently single occupancy.

The school is set in a suburb of Derby city and has good transport links. There is a school minibus available for students to use where it is not possible to walk or use public transport to access community facilities.

Staffing levels are based on the needs of the students. There are a minimum of four care staff on the morning shifts and a minimum of five care staff on duty on the evening shifts. The head of care works alongside staff to offer additional support where needed. During the night there are two waking night staff and two staff on sleep-in duty which includes one staff member sleeping-in, in the bungalow.

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 satisfactory.

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 good.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The quality of boarding is satisfactory and the school meets most of the key National Minimum Standards. Judgements have been made for each individual outcome area as follows. Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Making a Positive Contribution and Organisation are judged as satisfactory. Enjoying Economic Wellbeing and Enjoying and Achieving are judged as good.

There were 14 recommendations set at the last inspection and action has been taken to address eight of these. There has been progress on making improvements to the building. Behaviour management plans are now in place and action has been taken to ensure staff are clear about what constitutes bullying. Students' daily recording sheets are more detailed about what actually happened and the outcome of an event.

Staff are committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle and work closely with parents and other health professionals to ensure students' health needs are met. Good and effective communication systems exist between the school nurse and care staff which helps to monitor and promote the wellbeing of students. Staff are knowledgeable about students' health needs. However, information regarding health needs is kept in different places and health care plans do not contain all details regarding health needs and how to meet these needs. For example, health care plans do not always include details about continence management. This makes it difficult to monitor that students' needs are being met.

Accidents are recorded in the students' health records kept in the nurse's room. Accident report forms are not routinely completed. This makes it potentially difficult to gain an overall view of the number of accidents and identify any patterns that may emerge.

Good and effective procedures are in place to ensure that medicines are appropriately handled and stored to safeguard students' welfare. Staff receive training on the administration of medication and regular monitoring of the medication systems helps to ensure practices are safe.

Students receive a varied and nutritious diet and healthy eating is actively promoted. However, not all students' cultural dietary needs are met. For example, Halal meat is not provided which results in some students only accessing vegetarian meals.

Staff work with students in a sensitive manner ensuring privacy and dignity is maintained. Staff understand the need for confidentiality and records are kept securely.

Students' welfare is promoted because they have very good relationships with the staff and feel able to approach them with concerns that they have. Students who are able to express an opinion know who to go to if they are unhappy or sad. There are various ways in which students are supported to raise any concerns which take into account their communication difficulties. Parents are very confident that any concerns they may have will be dealt with appropriately. The school's complaints procedure does not contain all the information required in Standard 4.

There are clear procedures for responding to safeguarding concerns in the school. There are links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board, but the policy and guidance does not contain all the information required in Appendix 1 of the National Minimum Standards. All staff and other people who have direct involvement with the students receive child protection training and instruction and are clear about their responsibilities to report any concerns. However, checks are not robust enough to ensure that agency staff who are used to cover staff absence,

have received child protection training. This leaves students potentially vulnerable to the risk of harm or abuse.

Staff are highly committed to supporting and enabling students to develop their skills and socially acceptable behaviour. Students are taught to respect each other and that bullying is unacceptable. Any incidents which may be perceived as bullying are dealt with promptly. Staff receive training in behaviour management and are skilled in managing students' behaviours. There is a low incidence of measures of control and discipline used. However, some sanctions imposed are prohibitive and records of sanctions do not give clear details of the time of the sanction and how long it lasted. Although there is no evidence that the sanctions have had any detrimental effect on students, the internal quality assurance monitoring systems have not been effective in identifying this shortfall. As a result prompt action has not been taken to ensure staff are clear about the use of sanctions.

The management of health and safety at the school is good which helps to protect students and staff from the risk of harm or injury.

There are clear procedures for the recruitment of staff. However, practices are not robust enough which potentially places students at risk of harm or abuse. For example, gaps in employment history are not always explored and references not always verified. Systems for checking that agency staff have had the appropriate recruitment checks are not robust enough.

Staff work tenaciously to enable students to reach their full potential and to get the best out of life. Staff are skilled in communicating with students, using alternative methods of communications where needed. Students are given opportunities to learn new skills and try out new activities, including accessing community activities and resources which helps to increase students' self-confidence. Students make good progress whilst staying in the residential unit in terms of acquiring independence skills, increasing their self-confidence and learning to integrate with their peers and members of the public.

Care and education staff continue to work closely together resulting in positive outcomes for students.

Students are supported to learn about and respect different faiths and cultures. However, care records do not always give clear details of students' cultural and religious needs and how to meet these. This may result in students' needs not being appropriately met.

There is an excellent working partnership between parents and the school which results in positive outcomes for students. Parents are very positive about the care and education their children receive.

Care records do not contain information about all areas of identified need, how to meet the needs, and details of students' likes and interests. For example, records do not include leisure needs. This lack of detailed information has the potential to affect staff's ability to meet the needs of students.

Staff work hard to provide a homely and pleasant environment for students to achieve as much independence as possible, within the limitations of the physical environment. Communal areas are decorated to a good standard and are well furnished. Students are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms.

The school's management team provides clear direction and leadership which results in a well-motivated and committed staff team. Staff feel well supported and valued. All staff except agency staff receive regular supervision. There is good continuity of staff so that students' relationships with them are not disrupted. Staff receive appropriate training which enables them to meet the needs of students. Induction programmes for new staff do not cover instruction in child protection procedures although staff do receive training at the next available opportunity.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

The quality assurance systems are not robust enough in identifying shortfalls or inappropriate practices which may result in students' needs not being met. For example, accidents are not monitored to ascertain if there are any health and safety hazards. Standard 33 visits do not regularly check records of sanctions, complaints and the use of physical intervention.

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 students' health care plans include all relevant information as detailed in Standard 14.6 and that they include details of how to meet identified needs (NMS 14)
- review the system for the recording of accidents to students to make it easier to monitor and review students' health and identify any patterns which may affect students' wellbeing (NMS 14)
- ensure the school meets all students' dietary needs including cultural diets and the provision of appropriate foods (NMS 15)
- review the school's complaints procedure to ensure it includes all points detailed in Standard 4.3 (NMS 4)
- review the school's child protection procedure to ensure it includes all points detailed Appendix 1 of the National Minimum Standards (NMS 5)
- ensure all staff including any agency staff used receive child protection training (NMS 5)
- ensure sanctions used are not prohibitive and that records of sanctions give clear details of the time the sanction is imposed and how long it lasted (NMS 10)
- ensure there are robust recruitment practices in line with Standard 27 (NMS 27)
- ensure all information as detailed in Standard 17.5 is included in the students' care records, that it is easily accessible and that all information in care records corresponds and is accurate (NMS 17)

- ensure students' cultural and religious needs are fully identified and met (NMS 22)
- ensure new staff employed are given guidance in child protection procedures as part of their induction and that this is recorded (NMS 29)
- ensure all agency staff used receive supervision at the required intervals (NMS 30)
- ensure internal quality assurance systems are robust enough and effective in identifying shortfalls in practice and that remedial action is taken (NMS 32)
- ensure checks made as part of the Standard 33 visits cover all areas detailed in Standard 33.3. (NMS 33)