

Millgate School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Mick Walklin
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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

Millgate is a residential special school run by Leicester City Council. It caters for approximately 50 boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties aged between 11 and 16 years. The school has a residential facility operating four nights a week, term-time only and can accommodate up to 10 pupils. There are also facilities within the residence for pupils to attend an extended day provision. The residential accommodation is situated on the first floor and comprises an open plan kitchen, dining room and lounge, with single bedrooms, bathing facilities and staff accommodation.

The school, including the residence, is an older-style building in a residential area within the city and is close to all local facilities including shops, a leisure centre and parks. It is approximately 10 minutes travel by bus to the local library and city centre. This was a limited inspection due to adverse weather conditions. Four pupils were attending the extended day provision and contributed to the inspection. However, no pupils were boarding at the time of the inspection.

Summary

At this announced inspection, all key standards were inspected.

This is a satisfactory service in most respects with some good features. The school's residential provision actively supports pupils' educational progress. It enhances the opportunities available to pupils by providing stability and improved attendance through an extended curriculum. This allows good progress both academically, socially and emotionally. They receive excellent individual support from staff that are understanding of their needs. The welfare of pupils is promoted and there are excellent procedures to protect them from bullying and abuse, with the school's anti-bullying strategy having a very high profile. Staff promote acceptable behaviour by the use of praise, rewards and an effective 'contract' system. However, physical interventions and sanctions are not always recorded in detail. The residence is well furnished and maintained. A healthy lifestyle is promoted and addressed effectively as part of the school curriculum. Staff are well trained and supported, although formal supervision is not occurring as often as recommended. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The school prospectus contains good information about the school curriculum but makes no reference to the residential provision. The acting management team have provided stability during a turbulent time. However, monitoring of some aspects of the residential provision is not occurring as recommended.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school has made good progress in meeting the recommendations from the last inspection. These related to improvements to some documentation and procedures such as care plans, medication administration, complaints procedure and safeguarding procedure. However, although sanctions and physical interventions are now recorded in bound numbered books, information is still not sufficient. The school was also asked to ensure that gas installations are

serviced annually and this is now occurring. The monitoring of the residence by the acting head and governors is still not occurring as recommended.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Pupils stay in a healthy environment and their health and care needs are clearly identified. A healthy, active lifestyle is promoted and addressed effectively as part of the school curriculum. Pupils retain links with their own doctors during their stay and will return home if they become unwell. Documentation of their health needs has improved as part of the care plan. Staff receive first aid training and the school nursing service provides input, advice and training, together with direct work such as smoking cessation clinics. Input is also available to support pupils with emotional or behavioural problems. Medication is appropriately stored and there are robust procedures for booking medications in and out of the school, including verifying prescription information with parents and carers. Administration records are thorough with ongoing stocktaking checks and regular audits carried out.

Pupils are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary requirements. Meals are freshly prepared in the main kitchen with menus audited by the council catering office to ensure that they are balanced and nutritious. Residential staff cater one night a week. A choice of meals including a vegetarian option and salad bar are provided. Fruit and yoghurts are freely available with unhealthy snacks and fizzy drinks either limited or not available. Meals are treated as social occasions with staff sitting with pupils. Comments from pupils included, 'The food is good. We get to choose what we want' and, 'They cook healthy food and there is very little fast food'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Pupils' privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled. Staff respect bedrooms as personal space and knock before entering. There are clear protocols for room searches if necessary. Although pupils are independent in areas of personal care, staff encourage them to maintain their own privacy and dignity as appropriate. Pupils' records are securely stored and staff are aware of their responsibility for maintaining confidentiality. Surveillance cameras are situated in areas of the school including the residence corridor in order to monitor pupils movements. Pupils confirmed that they do not find these intrusive.

Pupils are aware of how to complain and feel confident approaching staff to address any issues. Information is displayed throughout the school which contains the contact details for Childline and Ofsted. One complaint and one concern over the past two terms have been fully investigated and well documented.

The welfare of young people is promoted and there are excellent procedures to protect young people from bullying and abuse. Bullying is taken extremely seriously with the school's anti-bullying strategy having a high profile. Pupils identify bullying as a problem and staff are effective at addressing any issues. Pupils are encouraged to report bullying to any staff, either verbally, by completing a bullying form or contacting a designated member of staff by email. There are also three pupils identified as 'bullying mentors' who have received training for this role. Perpetrators are put on a one, three or five day anti-bullying programme during which they will attend bullying awareness sessions and undertake themed work. Victims receive

individual support as appropriate. Comments from pupils included, 'I got bullied but staff dealt with it', 'The school spoke to me and another boy' and 'We fill out a bullying form and staff deal with it'. However, one pupil complained that bullying on school transport goes unreported. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures with any allegations being reported to the appropriate authorities. Pupils attend the residence on a voluntary basis and unauthorised absences are rare. However, policies and procedures are in place should this occur.

The school is effective in promoting acceptable behaviour by the use of praise, rewards and contracts. The school's code of 'RESPECT' is promoted at all levels of school life. Unacceptable behaviour is quickly challenged by staff. However, they deal with low-level behaviour by using humour, whilst recognising when a firmer approach is required. An effective 'contract' system used throughout the school enables pupils to gain rewards for achieving behavioural goals. Four levels of contract offer incentives to pupils for achievement and penalise disruptive, challenging behaviours. Pupils say that the contract system is fair. A behaviour mentoring team works proactively with pupils to support them through difficult periods. A 'behaviour suite' provides a quiet environment without distractions to allow pupils to calm following incidents. Pupils have 'Positive Handling Plans' providing staff with clear management guidelines which identify pupils' preferred handling strategies. Electronic incident records are of a good quality, but the recording of some sanctions and physical interventions do not contain enough detail and the use of different recording systems is confusing.

Pupils stay in an environment that provides physical safety and security. Routine maintenance and servicing, together with regular health and safety checks, ensures that the environment is safe. However, the fire risk assessment is overdue for review and some building risk assessments have not been reviewed since 2006. Periodic fire drills are conducted, although, the names of staff and pupils participating are not recorded. Visitors to the school are thoroughly vetted. Recruitment and selection procedures are robust, although a character reference was missing from a recently employed bank staff's file. The city council has a policy of requesting Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures from governors which is in the process of being implemented.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The school's residential provision actively supports pupils' educational progress. It enhances the opportunities available to them by providing stability through an extended curriculum. This allows good progress both academically, socially and emotionally by means of improved attendance and engagement in classes. The residential and extended day provision is well used and popular with pupils. Teaching and residential staff work in close liaison with each other. Pupils are provided with a variety of opportunities to achieve in the school day and in a more informal setting in the residential facility. They play a role in their learning and development in terms of target setting. Key skills are developed during activities in the residence and staff provide good support for pupils with homework after the school day. Teaching staff commented that the residence provides stability for those pupils that need it and that pupils turn up on time for lessons and are ready to learn. Staff have effective strategies to ensure school attendance and work closely with other agencies such as the Education Welfare Service to address this issue.

Pupils receive good levels of individual support. They are allocated primary workers responsible for co-ordinating care and liaising with parents. Their self-esteem and confidence is promoted

across all aspects of school life. Staff give positive support when pupils find tasks such as homework difficult. There is also good support when pupils become upset or anxious. Staff ensure that they are accessible to pupils to discuss any issues. The school code gives clear structures relating to behavioural expectations but are flexible enough to ensure that pupils can achieve goals. Pupils commented that staff are good at helping and caring.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Pupils are well supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. School council and residential council meetings are held periodically. Consultation with young people have resulted in changes to the school tuck shop, rewards system, choice of activities and school uniform colours. Residential pupils have been consulted about room décor and given a budget for posters. Although formal residence meetings are not held, pupils are consulted regularly on an informal basis. Parents are also consulted periodically.

Pupils are introduced to the residence in a way that suits their individual needs. Following risk assessments and discussions with parents and carers, pupils can be introduced to the residence in a phased and supported manner.

Care plans contain satisfactory information about residential pupils' individual support needs. Their Statement of Educational Need has a high profile in the planning process. Regular target setting enables pupils to self-assess their progress. Individual running records have been introduced following the last inspection. However, some handwritten entries have not been signed. Pupils are supported to maintain contact with parents and carers. They have access to a telephone each evening to make calls if they wish. Primary workers have a responsibility to maintain regular contact with parents and carers to ensure good communication.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The location and design of the residential accommodation is suited to the needs of pupils. The accommodation is of a good standard and presents pupils with a comfortable, homely environment to enjoy. The open plan communal area is spacious and pupils have designated single bedrooms. However, three pupils complained that the beds are too hard. Staff accommodation is situated in the same hallway. Pupils have access to areas of the main school in the evening such as the sports hall. There are effective precautions to prevent unauthorised access and ensure that pupils are safe.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The school effectively challenges prejudice and inequality with anti-bullying and racism awareness programmes. The inclusion policy sets out principles for inclusion, responding to diverse learning needs and overcoming barriers to learning and assessment. The school code addresses equality and diversity issues. Pupils are encouraged to access mainstream leisure opportunities during their stays such as local sports clubs and Army cadets. Catering staff have a sound knowledge of religious and cultural dietary needs although none are catered for at present.

The school prospectus contains good information about the school curriculum but makes no reference to the residential provision or what the school sets out to do for those pupils it accommodates. Some information is provided in the school's pastoral care policy.

Staffing levels are adequate to meet the needs of the residential pupils. The staffing policy has been amended to accurately reflect staffing levels during the day and night. There is continuity of staffing with little staff turnover in the past year. Cover for staff sickness is provided by bank staff. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced for their role with an ongoing programme of staff training during school inset days, together with additional training as required. Although staff say that they feel well supported, formal supervision is not occurring as frequently as recommended.

Staff and pupils have seen a very difficult year with the loss of key senior staff. Senior posts within the school are currently filled on a temporary basis pending the appointment of a new Head. The acting management team have provided stability during a turbulent time. However, monitoring of some aspects of the residential provision are not occurring as recommended such as an annual review by the acting head to assess compliance with National Minimum Standards. Plans are in place to improve this shortly. A governor visits the residence periodically, although, these visits are not occurring as frequently as recommended.

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 sanctions and physical interventions are recorded in detail (NMS 10)
- attend to the health and safety issues identified (NMS 26)
- ensure that all new staff are suitably vetted (NMS 27)
- ensure that all handwritten records are signed (NMS 17)
- update the school prospectus to include information about the residential provision (NMS 1)
- ensure that staff receive formal supervision as recommended (NMS 30)
- ensure that the conduct of the school and residence are effectively monitored (NMS 32 and 33).