

# Rowdeford School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	19 June 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**

Rowdeford School is situated in a Grade II listed Georgian house, set in 20 acres of parkland on the outskirts of Rowde, near the town of Devizes. Rowdeford School is a secondary, co-educational, special school for pupils with a range of needs, whose overall abilities will enable them to benefit from the curriculum it offers. This generally includes pupils whose measured ability and attainment places them on either the moderate learning difficulties spectrum, or at the top end of the severe learning difficulties spectrum. Many pupils also have associated medical conditions and/or syndromes. All pupils are considered to be 'socially vulnerable'. The school also has a specialist centre for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, called the Prospect Centre. The subject of this report is to focus on the weekly residential care provided to up to 25 young people, some of whom have quite complex needs.

### **Summary**

This announced key inspection took place over four days by one inspector, covering all of the Residential Special Schools' key standards. This forms part of the annual inspection programme to examine the standard of care provided to young people. The care practices established by Rowdeford School continue to ensure that outstanding outcomes are achieved for young people accommodated where an outstanding standard of care is provided to young people. This was endorsed by the questionnaires received prior to and comments made during the inspection by the young people, their parents/carers and other professionals.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

There were some deficiencies identified during this inspection in the recording systems within the school which were promptly addressed whilst the inspector was present.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Young people live in an environment where their health and emotional care needs are clearly identified and met. Young people's health care needs are primarily the responsibility of their parents with them remaining registered with their family doctor. However, young people can access the school's local doctor's surgery if necessary. Usually young people's parents will accompany them to any doctors' appointments, although staff will support young people with these if their parents are unable to do so. The school maintains suitable records of all health care appointments and their outcomes. Health care plans are maintained for those young people who have specific health care needs. However, medical consent forms are in place for all young people. Information regarding young people with specific health care needs such as allergies and intolerances are recorded and shared with staff on a need to know basis. This information is frequently reviewed and updated. Young people receive Personal Hygiene and Sex Education (PHSE) lessons within the school and residential units on an individual and group basis. Safe medication storage practices are maintained with all medication, including controlled medication, being kept securely in facilities in line with best practice. However, during the inspection, an improved system was established for the administration of controlled drugs. Staff administer all medication to young people with appropriate records being maintained. The school actively

promotes healthy eating for young people. A satisfactory and varied five weekly rotating menu has been established in consultation with the young people. The menus provide young people with choices or alternatives at all mealtimes with a selection of fresh fruit being readily available to them on a daily basis. Photos of meals provided have been developed and are on display by the main dining room to assist those young people who require a visual aid. Although, mealtimes, within the residential units, are conducted within a relaxed and congenial atmosphere, the lunchtime meal is somewhat rushed. The reason for this is that it is taken with the day pupils and two sittings are required due to the space and facilities available. Young people commented very positively about the quality and quantity of meals offered, stating that they receive plenty of food with alternatives being available.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The school actively promotes the rights of young people by ensuring that their privacy is respected with staff knocking on young people's bedroom doors before entering. Suitable locks are fitted to all bathroom, shower and toilet doors to also promote the dignity and privacy of young people. Opportunities are available for young people to meet with their families and visitors in private as well as making and receiving telephone calls. Staff are very aware and sensitive of the need to ensure that assistance with personal care for young people, who require it, is managed at all times with care, respect and consideration. The school has clear policies and procedures on staff working with young people of the opposite sex with staff being well aware of these. All young people's information is kept securely and staff are aware of the issue relating to confidentiality. The school has established clear policies and procedures for dealing with all complaints. These are referred to within the school's guide to boarding, a copy of which is given to all young people prior to admission. Copies of this procedure, which is in both written and widget (symbols) form, are also readily displayed within each of the residential units' noticed boards. The school supports and promotes young people to raise any issues openly and the process of making a complaint is clearly understood by them. Young people feel confident in discussing any issues with a range of staff within the school as well as the independent visitor. Since the last inspection the school has received one complaint relating to boarders. All complaints are dealt with promptly and appropriate action taken. However, there is no evidence to confirm that young people are satisfied with the action taken by the school. Young people live in a safe environment where their welfare is promoted and they are protected from abuse. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of the young people and how to safeguard them. The school has established comprehensive policies and procedures in respect to child protection including having access to the local safeguarding board's procedures. These are available to all staff who also receive child protection awareness training together with ongoing refresher training. The head and deputy head of care are the designated child protection coordinators for the school. Since the last inspection three child protection referrals have been made which have been appropriately referred and investigated with records of these being maintained by the school. The school has established an anti-bullying policy with all aspects of bullying being considered as unacceptable. Information on the school's anti bullying policy and all other relevant information is prominently displayed on the notice boards within the residential units in pictorial form (widget). Bullying is not seen as a particular concern within the school by both staff and young people. However, it is acknowledged that incidents of bullying do occur periodically but are dealt with by staff. All incidents of bullying are suitably recorded. The school has a clear system for the reporting and recording of any event where a young person goes absent without authority. Any absentees would be suitably recorded with

all relevant parties being informed. This has not been an issue since the last inspection. Staff assist young people to develop socially acceptable behaviour through encouragement and reinforcement of the school's rules and expectations. The school's behaviour policy focuses on positive behaviour with an appropriate balance being achieved between rewards and sanctions. There is no expectation that staff would use physical restraint and this method of control would only be used as a last resort. In fact no incidents of physical restraint have been used since the last inspection and only seven sanctions have been applied during this period with appropriate records being maintained. Although, there are staff who have not received physical intervention training, there are always staff on duty that have been trained should it be necessary in this area of practice. The school has established clear health and safety policies and procedures to ensure that staff and young people are appropriately safeguarded. The school takes positive steps to keep young people and staff safe from the risk of fire and other hazards in accordance with Health and Safety and Fire legislation and guidance. A tour of the premises identified no significant health and safety issues. Young people and staff regularly practise fire evacuation procedures and the various fire safety records are kept up to date. Detailed risk assessments are carried out in respect to all activities undertaken by young people, to the building and with regard to young people where specific risks/concerns have been identified. These are regularly reviewed and updated where appropriate. The school has established robust staff recruitment practices for the careful selection and vetting of all new staff to ensure the protection of young people. Young people are normally involved in this process. The files of the two newly appointed members of staff confirmed that all relevant checks had been carried out. Robust systems are in place in respect to all visitors to the school who must sign in and out, using the visitors' book and are provided with a visitor's pass. Where contractors visit the school these are supervised and the school tries, where possible, to use the same contractors so that they build up an understanding of the school and its pupils.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The education and residential staff work closely together to ensure that a holistic approach is undertaken towards the care of the young people. Good communication systems have been established between the teaching and residential provisions. Daily verbal and written handover meetings are established to ensure a cohesive approach, so that residential staff can contribute and participate in the educational progress of the young people. Where necessary, teaching staff meet with key workers and vice versa to address any particular concerns regarding any young people. A summary of the young people's individual education plans is maintained on their files which are maintained in the residential units. These list the statement objectives and targets of the young people and are reviewed annually. Residential staff commented that there are strong relationships between the themselves and the teaching staff. Work undertaken during the school day is encouraged and built on by the residential staff who also assist the young people with their homework. The school provides young people with the opportunity to engage in a range of activities, from Judo, football, go-karting, swimming and trampolining to participation in local community based activities such as a local youth club and scouts. After school clubs are established which are run by the teachers and teaching assistants. The school also arranges trips out for the young people. The school endeavours to support young people to maintain the hobbies and interests they had prior to their admission to the school. The school actively encourages the young people to take up hobbies whilst they are resident which they can continue to pursue once they have left the school. Photographs on the walls of the residential units provide evidence of the wide range of activities undertaken by the young

people. A good balance is maintained between free time and organised activities. One of the school's strengths is the support provided to individual young people as well as the entire school community. The individual needs of the young people are clearly identified in their various plans established by the school. These enable staff to provide the necessary help, support and guidance young people require. Young people also have access to an independent visitor who visits regularly and offers them the opportunity to discuss any issues affecting them.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions and contribute to and influence the way the units within the school are run. Young people are given every opportunity to express their views and opinions through a range of forums such as unit meetings, individual sessions with their key worker as well as to raise and discuss any issues on a day to day basis. An active and effective school council continues to operate which meets every term, having sought the views of other young people on issues under consideration and has been instrumental in making improvements within the school. Young people live in a warm, welcoming, nurturing and supportive environment where positive and relaxed relationships exist between the staff and young people. This is very much based on mutual respect and understanding. Staff celebrate the progress, successes and achievements of young people and are very committed to the care of them. A friendly, caring and relaxed atmosphere has been created where young people can freely express their views about any issues which are listened to by staff. Staff undertake their duties in a caring and professional manner and young people are relaxed and at ease in their company. Young people commented very positively about the care and support provided to them by the staff which was reiterated by their parents and other professionals. The school works well with the young people's parents and other agencies to ensure that they are all kept informed of any incidents and the progress made by the young people. Young people's needs are clearly assessed and a detailed individual placement plan/boarding contract identifies how their needs are met. In addition, these are supplemented by an individual care plan for each young person which sets out specific goals/targets to be achieved. Young people's care plans are reviewed and updated as and when required. All young people are allocated a key worker with whom they meet regularly. Young people usually receive day provision at the school prior to being accepted as boarders. Young people receive an annual review which is attended by them and considers their progress and whether the placement is still relevant. Staff are fully committed to supporting young people to maintain contact with their families during the week either by phone or visits. However, young people's parents are advised to contact the school in advance to make arrangements before they visit. The school retains good lines of communication between itself and young people's family members/carers through the continued use of home/school book. This ensures that all parties are kept informed about young people's wellbeing and progress. Young people have access to payphones which are sited in each of the residential units. However, it is acknowledged that some of these facilities are not particularly private and allows conversations to be overheard by those passing by. Parents/carers commented very positively about the care and services provided to the young people by the school.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

During the school day the young people wear their school uniform changing into their leisure wear for the evenings. The young people bring pocket money from home and each house had a record of this money. These records accurately reflect the deposits and withdrawals made by the young people. Most young people leaving the school move to other colleges or provisions. The school has a policy on young people leaving the school and supports them and their families in this process. This includes where possible going with young people to visit their next provision. All units actively promote appropriate life skills and encourage independent living. However, only one unit provides laundry facilities for the use of the young people and the school is aware of this deficiency. The school has devised a travel scheme to provide young people with the means to make them independent travellers and gain road safety and stranger danger awareness. The school's policy of encouraging the participation of the young people in various local clubs is seen as providing further evidence of the school's support for independent living. Young people live in one of the three units within the main school building which are maintained to a good standard, being clean, tidy and comfortable. Attention has been given to provide a homely environment for young people. The units provide sufficient communal space to meet the individual and collective needs of the young people together with sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities which are fitted with appropriate locks to doors to promote privacy and dignity. Not all young people are provided with their own individual bedrooms however, young people have personalised their bedrooms/individual spaces to their own tastes.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has established a clear Statement of Purpose which has been updated to accurately describe the level of service provided to young people. This together with a copy of the school's Guide to Boarding provides young people and their parents with clear information they need to know about the school. The school's Guide to Boarding is in the process of being updated and will be personalised for each new boarder and based on the individual units. Young people are fully supported to be involved in this process. The school is committed to providing sufficient staff on duty throughout the day and night to meet the individual and collective needs of the young people. Each unit provides two care staff on duty throughout the waking day with one member of staff sleeping in each night. These staffing levels are supplemented by teaching assistants who provide after school activities until 16:30. The school continues to provide young people with continuity and consistency of care with little staff turnover. Management cover is always readily available throughout the day and night. Young people are looked after by a staff team who are competent and experienced to meet their needs. Although, at least 80% of staff have still not achieved the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in the Care of Children and Young People, 50% of the staff are qualified with another two due to be qualified by January 2009. The school has also given a commitment that two further members of staff will start this award by January 2009, which will mean that once they are qualified, the staff team will exceed the recommended level. However, there are always qualified members of staff on duty to support and oversee the practice of the care provided to the young people. All new staff are provided with a thorough induction programme and they are also supported and encouraged to update their knowledge and skill base by attending a range of training. In-house specialist training for residential staff is ongoing to ensure that they are competent to meet the changing needs of the young people now being accommodated as boarders. The residential staff commented positively about training opportunities available to them. Young people are looked after by a staff team who are themselves properly managed and supported in safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Effective systems have been established to ensure



good communication is maintained between different staff disciplines within the school to ensure that young people receive consistency of care. Within the residential units weekly staff meetings and daily handover meetings are held which enable staff to keep up to date with regard to all issues pertaining to their individual units and the young people. An 'open door policy' is established within the school to ensure that staff receive appropriate levels of supervision. Annual appraisals and formal supervision is provided to staff at the recommended intervals. Staff feel very well supported.

## 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 the records of complaints confirm whether young people are satisfied with the outcome of the investigation and action taken (National Minimum Standard 4)
- ensure that at least 80% of residential staff have achieved the appropriate level of qualification. (National Minimum Standard 31)

## 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.**