

# Mount Tamar Special School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Michelle Oxley
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	21 January 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**

Mount Tamar School provides education and care for children and young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The residential provision operates as a support for educational needs. The building is situated centrally on the school site. The hostel is open four nights a week during term time. Pupils attend from one to four nights according to need. A highly structured routine is offered. A variety of on and off site activities is available.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this announced inspection visit is to assess the care provision at the hostel against key National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. This provision continues to offer a highly valued service that supports children's educational attainment and their social development. Mount Tamar Hostel achieves an overall judgement of good with outstanding aspects across all outcomes areas. The strengths of this service continue to be the commitment and stability of the staff team, a consistent and successful approach to behaviour management, committed and focused managers.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

As recommended at the last inspection, two rooms have been fitted with new electrical sockets. The food provided now matches the meal stated on the menu, as recommended following the last inspection. A full employment history is now obtained for new staff following a recommendation made after the last inspection. A health and safety risk assessment covering all the building has been devised as recommended following the last inspection. Clear glass in shower room has now been obscured. Monitoring the service under National minimum Standard 33 remains insufficient in terms of visits reported on. This recommendation is carried forward.

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

The provision is good.

The health needs of children and young people are identified and promoted. For example health needs are set out in the placement plan. Children are encouraged to employ good hygiene routines. There are systems in place to effectively deal with all medication coming in and out of the home, this includes controlled drugs. Staff receive training in first aid. Parental permission for administering treatment and medication is in place. The food provided is plentiful and on the whole nutritious. There are main meals at lunch time and in the evening. The portions are large and there is always a desert. A choice of main meal is provided including a vegetarian option. The food provided now matches the meal stated on the menu. Meal times are lively but well managed and organised occasions. Children who were questioned all said they liked the food

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

The provision is good.

The staff team respect children's privacy and confidentiality. For instance, they always knock before entering a child's room and children are asked not to go in and out of each other's room.

Shower screens are fitted with obscured glass as recommended at the last inspection. Case files and other sensitive information are held securely. Systems are in place to deal with complaints. Children know how to make a complaint. They can approach staff directly and request to make a complaint or they can use the home's complaint box, this is discretely located in the hallway. Recorded complaints are dealt with in a timely fashion in line with the home's written procedure. There are systems in place to promote the safety and welfare of children and to protect them from abuse. The service places a good deal of importance on safeguarding children and there is a good understanding of how this is to be achieved across the team. All staff, care, education and ancillary, receive training in child protection. This is updated annually. New staff receive an introduction to procedures as part of their induction. Key staff across the school have responsibility for dealing with safeguarding matters. There is one designated officer who deals with referrals from the hostel. There is a good awareness of current and impending legislation regarding vetting and barring of abusers. Child protection concerns are passed on to safeguarding agencies without delay. Staff deal promptly with incidents of bullying. The team's approach to care ensures that children are constantly engaged in meaningful activities. This keeps children occupied and also helps them to build positive and respectful relations with their peers. When potential incidents occur staff will intervene to prevent it escalating. Matters are dealt with swiftly and fairly by the team. Children can alert staff to bullying by posting a bullying slip. Information about bullying has been collated in order to identify patterns. Significant events have been reported to relevant individuals and agencies, however on one occasion Ofsted were not informed. Children are protected by the hostel's absences procedures. There are two recorded absences without authority since the last inspection. In both cases staff dealt with the matter according to procedure. This means that relevant agencies and individuals were contacted. Physical interventions are rarely used at the hostel. However staff have received training from Crisis Prevention Institute. Staff who are not trained are not permitted to intervene. Records of restraints log prevention of self harm as the primary reason for the intervention. Two entries in the restraint log omit the type of hold used and the length of time the hold was used as set out in the standard. Procedures to vet staff and visitors to the home are in place. Staff are vetted before they commence work at the hostel including obtaining a Criminal Records Bureau check. A full employment history is now obtained for all new staff following a recommendation made after the last inspection. There are systems in place to protect children, visitors and staff from risks and hazards. These include gas and electrical installation safety checks and fire equipment tests. A health and safety risk assessment covering all the building has been devised as recommended following the last inspection. Fire drills are carried out at regular intervals, but the time that drills are carried out is not recorded. The team do not have a record in order to vary the timing of future drills.

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

The provision is outstanding.

There are established and effective links between the hostel and school. Staff are mutually supportive and work together in the interests of the child. A link book is passed between school, hostel and home, keeping everyone informed. The hostel manager attends a handover meeting with the teaching staff at the end of the school day. Children are able to talk with staff about the education day and have the opportunity to say what they have learnt at school in their 'feedback' meeting. Staff value educational attainment and take time to praise individuals for their participation and achievements. Children have ample opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities as part of a group and in line with their individual interests. In the summer 14 children enjoyed a holiday in Somerset provided by the hostel. Staff support young

people to participate in a various off site clubs such as youth club and army cadets according to their individual needs and interests. During this inspection two young people were taken to the pantomime. On site, children have many activities to choose from; these include snooker, table tennis, art and craft, board games, football and much more. Young people are provided with individual care and support in line with their needs and wishes. Staff know children well. They take time to understand their specific circumstances. In turn young people feel that they can talk with staff and will turn to them if they have a concern. The team will seek out appropriate outside professional support for individuals when it is required.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Mechanisms are in place to consult children, parents and placing authorities. Children feel that they are listened to. They have time with their key worker during their stay. Children have the opportunity to make their views known at daily feedback meetings and they can post their comments in the suggestion boxes. Families are encouraged to keep in contact with the hostel and their views are sought on an ongoing basis. A monthly parents meeting is held; a link book between the hostel home and school keeps everyone up to date. The team's approach to behaviour management is outstanding. Staff are able to set and maintain safe, consistent and understandable boundaries for young people. This is achieved by creating structure and purpose to the day within short, manageable time scales. Young people earn rewards through acceptable behaviour. They have a say in how they think they should be rewarded and so develop an insight in to their own behaviour. A high level of commitment and consistency is displayed by the team. This is crucial to maintaining good order and supporting young people in their achievements. Each young person's needs are set out in their up to date placement plan which means that staff are provided with clear information about how to provide care. Placement plans set out targets for behaviour, care and independent living. Health plans and individual risk assessments and the arrangements for contact are also set out in the placement plan.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The staff team assist young people to develop skills for independent living. For example one young person attends a vocational course at college. The young person has developed skills in using public transport and has just started to manage money, buying lunch rather than a packed lunch. Since the last inspection there have been some improvements to the décor and fixtures and fittings. These include refreshing the paint work, installation of a new shower room with obscured glass, new curtains and new mattresses. The team have made the building homely and communal areas and bedrooms are domestic in style. The building remains problematic in terms of a layout which is not conducive to managing the group's behaviours. As a consequence some bedroom doors have been fitted with alarms, used at night. Parents spoken with are aware and say that they think the alarms are necessary, but they have not signed to confirm this. The home's restraint policy which is available to parents and placing authorities, sets out the use of door alarms. Two rooms have been fitted with new electrical sockets as recommended at the last inspection.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

A statement of purpose is in place; this reflects the service provided. Some policy documentation contained in the statement still has the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) contact details rather than Ofsted. The staff team remains stable with only one new member of staff starting work since the last inspection visit. This provides much needed consistency and continuity of approach for children. Staffing levels are assessed sufficient to meet the needs of the group. There are five in the team and all team members work together on shift covering peak periods and ensuring that two team members sleep in. Staff receive training opportunities conducive to their role. There is a programme of NVQ. The manager has attained NVQ at level 4 and the registered manager award, one senior staff member has commenced NVQ at level 4. New staff under go an induction process, this includes child protection and fire safety. The manager is well organised, effective and committed to the role. She is respected and valued by the team. The manager leads by example working on shift with the team. Staff receive supervision from the manager every six weeks. Supervision sessions are recorded. The team enjoy their work moral remains high. There is a strong emphasis on team working. A consistent approach to care practice has been developed and is adhered to. A commitment to consistent practice underpins the successful outcomes for young people achieved by this service. The service is monitored by the head and by a visiting governor. The matters set out in the relevant standards are monitored, however visits in relation to National minimum Standard 33 are not frequent enough to meet the standard meaning that external monitoring is limited. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Policy documentation in relation to recruitment and care practice is adhered to. Special dietary needs are catered for and arrangements are made to ensure that diverse group needs are included in all activities.

## 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):

- replace CSCI details with Ofsted contact details in policy documents (NMS 1)
- ensure that all significant events are reported to Ofsted (NMS 7)
- ensure that the book to record physical interventions includes all the information set out in the standard (NMS 10)
- make a record in the fire log of the time of day that fire drills are carried out (NMS 26)
- ensure that written parental permission is obtained where door alarms are in use (NMS 23)
- ensure that the home is externally monitored in line with the standard (NMS 33)