

Grateley House School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Brian Mcquoid
Type of Inspection	Key

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Head of care	Susan King
Head / Principal	
Date of last inspection	5 March 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

Grateley House is an Independent Residential Special School that is part of 'Cambian Education Services' a national company that specialises in providing residential care and education for young people on the autistic spectrum. The school provides co-educational termly residential care and education for students from nine to 19 years of age with Asperger Syndrome and associated difficulties within the autistic spectrum. The school has currently 42 residential places. The school's residential provision comprises of seven separate house bases, each accommodating six students, some within the main school building which was previously a large country house, and some purpose-built within the school grounds. The school has recently been successful in registering a post 16 home within the Salisbury community which provides a further eight residential places. This is inspected separately by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. At the time of the inspection the majority of house bases were of mixed gender. One of the purpose built house bases on site accommodate post-16 students who undertake a 'Moving-On' programme. The school provides an extensive range of therapeutic support services for students.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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 outstanding.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The quality of the boarding provision at Grateley House School is outstanding. The school meets the requirements of all of the National Minimum Standards, and is judged to be outstanding in all areas. This includes 'Organisation', an area which relates specifically to staffing arrangements, management provision, and internal and external monitoring. This aspect is a particular strength of the school, ensuring that the school operates efficiently and that students are empowered and enabled to achieve positive outcomes in their lives. Since the previous

inspection the school has made improvements in a number of areas. These include the provision of therapy surgeries for care staff where individual students can be discussed, and further improvements to the systems in place for the overall management of medication. In addition there has been a reduction in challenging behaviours requiring physical interventions, and the school has opened a dedicated post-16 unit within the community.

The school provides an inclusive environment for students within which they feel safe, where they are suitably protected from harm, and where they are treated with respect and valued as individuals. There is a strong sense of 'community' at Grateley, with students readily identifying with the school, and extremely positive relationships existing between students and staff. Boarding accommodation at the school is of a very high standard and is well suited to the needs of students. All students are provided with single rooms within one of seven separate house bases, where they are extremely well cared for by dedicated staff teams. Students have keys to their rooms and have their privacy appropriately respected.

The school has established extremely effective systems for identifying and addressing the varied and complex needs of individual students. There is excellent provision for promoting the health and wellbeing of students. The physical, emotional, and mental needs of students are extremely well met by the school's staff group which includes a suitably qualified Therapy Team, a registered nurse, a number of staff who are first aid qualified, and visiting health professionals. There are excellent relationships with the local surgery and Primary Care Trust, and very effective liaison with external professionals in the students' home areas. There are exceptional systems in place for the management and administration of medication which are overseen by the school's nurse, and include staff who undertake specific training. Students benefit from a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education; they are provided with a nutritious and well balanced diet, and there are numerous and regular opportunities to participate in physical activities both on and off site. The school has achieved and is maintaining the 'Enhanced Healthy School Award'.

Staff at the school possess an acute awareness of safeguarding matters and receive initial, and ongoing training in relation to child protection. The school has two senior staff who are nominated Child Protection Liaison Officers, both of whom have undertaken training specific to the role. Supporting policies and procedures accord with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures, and the school liaises extremely well with students' placing authorities in relation to welfare matters. Excellent systems are in place for monitoring concerns relating to student welfare and the school follows procedures rigorously when child protection incidents are identified. The school also provides a safe physical environment within which there are excellent systems in place for managing risk. This includes those associated with the premises, and those linked to activities undertaken by students. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and health and safety audits take place annually.

Students 'feel safe' at the school. Bullying is not a significant issue, but does occur. There is a high awareness level across the school of bullying as an issue, and a range of resources and creative strategies are employed to prevent incidents occurring, and address them when they do. Staff work extremely successfully in supporting students to develop positive behaviours, build their confidence, and acquire social skills. All staff at the school are trained in a behaviour management approach which emphasises prevention and de-escalation techniques in relation to challenging behaviour. The school closely monitors the use of physical interventions with students and there is a continuing reduction in the frequency of such incidents, which are now

at a low level. Students feel fairly treated within the school. There are clear rules and boundaries; sanctions are used infrequently and the general behaviour of students is of a very high standard.

There is excellent provision at the school for consulting with and seeking the views of students, and this is integral to how the school operates. The school council operates effectively; there are house meetings and circle times held on alternating weeks within all house bases, individual key work sessions take place weekly for all students, and students attend and contribute to their annual reviews. In addition the school regularly surveys the views of boarders on specific subjects, with bullying and food being two examples. Relationships between students and staff are extremely positive, with students being able to talk to a wide range of people across the school. This includes the independent persons who visit monthly and members of the school therapy team, to whom students can self refer.

Staffing arrangements at the school are outstanding. All staff undertake a comprehensive induction process, there is a structured training programme overseen by a dedicated training officer, and excellent support for specific training opportunities identified by staff. The therapy team provide ongoing training for staff and hold workshops on specific topics identified and requested by members of the staff group. Staff receive regular supervision and are subject to annual appraisal. There are excellent systems across the school which facilitate communication between departments, and collaborative planning and implementation takes place when addressing the needs of individual students. The residential staff at the school are fully involved in implementing students' Individual Education Plan targets and play an integral and invaluable role in supporting students develop their social skills, and in acquiring life skills.

The school operates extremely efficiently and effectively. There are established and embedded systems which support and promote good practice, and excellent processes which ensure the effective monitoring of student welfare and the school's overall operation. The school's senior management team are exceptionally experienced and well qualified, and display a professional and committed approach to ensure the quality of care and education provided at the school is of a very high standard. In addition there is an acute awareness of the needs of students at the school, and a continuing drive to develop and improve how the school operates.

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):