

Mossbrook Primary School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
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Date of last inspection	3 March 2009

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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

This residential service is attached to the school which provides a one night stay in the residential accommodation for children with communication difficulties, including autism.

All pupils who attend the school have a statement of special educational need. Children from other schools may use the provision.

The school admits pupils of mixed gender, between the ages of four years old and 11 years old.

The school is set in several acres of grounds on the southern edge of a large city.

Summary

This was a short notice full key inspection, all key standards were inspected. The four recommendations made at the last inspection in March 2009 have also been checked.

This is an outstanding service with many strong features resulting in very good outcomes for children.

Children enjoy their stay in residence tremendously, have positive relationships with staff and are making progress in their individual development of social and independence life skills. Parents acknowledge the progress their children are making, confirm their enjoyment of the attending residence and are confident that their children are safe and well cared for in every respect. The service is developing further communication options for children through its links with the speech and language service.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The following recommendations have been implemented since the last inspection:

Risk assessments have been reviewed and dated. This has assisted in making sure that identified risks to children are regularly reassessed to incorporate any changes where necessary. This is to reduce or eliminate these risks, ensuring the children's safety. The care plans identify and include the information required to support children's personal care. Continued improvements to the environment have occurred. The bathrooms have been fully refurbished, enhancing the experience for children using these facilities. New beds have been purchased to improve the bedrooms furnishings. The monitoring systems have been formalised, evidencing the checks on the service carried out to ensure good care is provided to children.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The health and well being of the children is actively promoted ensuring they receive exceptional care. Specific health needs which may impact on the outcomes for children are identified at the earliest opportunity and staff actively ensure that the services required to address these are in place. There are excellent links with other supporting professionals such as, the psychologists, paediatricians clinics (which are held on site) and speech and language therapist

services. The school has a comprehensive range of policies, procedures and protocols that includes intimate and personal care guidance for staff working with the children.

There are clear health records and information, which are easily accessible for each child. These detail how specific and general health issues are to be addressed during their visit. Individual health and intimate care needs are identified and assessed at the point of referral for the service and reviewed at regular intervals. Staff have a wealth of knowledge about the needs of individual children.

Menu planning integrates culturally appropriate food and encourages children to try new dishes. The food provided for children shows that the staff responsible for the provision and preparation of meals have a very good understanding of what makes up a good balanced diet. Children are learning about healthy eating as well as enjoy a wide range of meals. A child said they make healthy choices at meal times. All said they enjoy their meals. The children make suggestions for the menu. Alternatives are also provided for those children who are unable to eat the planned menu. There is always fresh fruit available. Good manners and behaviour are actively promoted. These positive expectations for children ensure the meal time is an enjoyable social occasion.

Policies and procedures are in place for the safe storage and administration of medication and the staff take full responsibility for ensuring safe practice. Children's health and welfare is safeguarded because staff are made aware of the appropriate procedures to follow. Children's well-being is further promoted as staff receive training in the safe handling and administration of medication, and staff are trained in basic first aid. Currently advanced training in the safe administration, recording and storage of medication is being undertaken by all staff.

There are robust booking in procedures for receiving medication. Good procedures for the storage of medication and good recording of medication administration are also in place. There are specific medication procedures to follow for individual children. Example; for those with epilepsy. Having precise medication records is key to the effective management of healthcare matters. Staff are aware of the importance and necessity of always being up to date in this area to ensure the safety of children.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff show a high regard for the privacy of the children and intimate care tasks are carried out in a sensitive manner ensuring that dignity and privacy is upheld. Children can make calls to their parents in private when they wish. There are also clear policies in relation to maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality and this is actively practiced.

Children's welfare is further promoted because the school has a well-written policy about how to make a complaint. There is an effective system in place to record any concerns raised by children or parents and the action taken to remedy these. There have been not complaints made since the last inspection. There are varying formats in use to ensure all children know what to do if they are unhappy or worried about anything. Children did know that they should tell a member of staff or a parent if they had a concern.

The welfare of children is fully safeguarded because the school has excellent, robust child protection policies and procedures. There is a dedicated team who oversee this area. These policies are well established and understood by staff and there are good links with the Local

Safeguarding Children Board. Training around safeguarding is very broad and updated annually. This ensures safeguarding in its widest sense is promoted.

There are clear policies and procedures with regard to children who are absent without authority which staff are aware of. There have not been any incidents of children going missing since the last inspection.

Children are protected from bullying as there are clear procedures in place to deal with incidents effectively, which staff are knowledgeable about. All children completing questionnaires and those who spoke with the inspector said there is no bullying occurring. Staff said there are high staffing ratios to children which means children are monitored closely. This enables staff to intervene in situations quickly and support the children.

The school's overall behaviour management policy and strategies have, as their prime objective, to promote positive and acceptable behaviour. This is achieved by the creation of clear boundaries, positive reinforcement and reward within a safe, supportive learning environment. The success of this can be seen in children's daily life in residence. They are very well behaved and polite. This is demonstrated in many ways, particularly at meal times. There are supportive behaviour strategies in place for individual children and these are having good outcomes. There have been no sanctions or incidents of physical intervention.

The safety of children is actively promoted, through the practices and support from staff. There are a wealth of risk assessments, which have been regularly reviewed and updated for each child, all aspects of safety of the premises, fire, security and grounds. These assessments are taken into account in the daily activities of the school as well as in residence and any activities off site. However, some do not sufficiently detail all the action to be taken to reduce or eliminate the risk.

Fire records indicate that weekly checks on the system and appropriate fire instruction and drills have taken place, to ensure appropriate measures are in place, to keep children safe.

The school has robust security arrangements in place for all visitors to the school and residence. All staff employed undergo rigorous checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There is a high degree of support provided to children. This is provided by the residential care staff, which value, promote and encourage all children to make the best of their educational opportunities. Children are able to explore their potential. This is achieved by giving children choices and opportunities through play, social interaction and promoting and developing life skills. For example; they made choices about the activities they wished to do, played alphabet bingo as a group, they helped serve drinks and socialised during meal times together. Therefore, they develop their personal interests because staff work in a very encouraging, enabling and supportive manner. Consequently the care, learning opportunities and activities are excellent.

There is individualised assistance for children, with the appropriate assessments and plans in place. Through the individual education and residential targets identified, focussed support is provided to each child to assist their achievement and progress. Children have made progress in daily living skills, becoming more able to attend to their some of their own personal care

needs, bringing independence and confidence. Some children's ability to communicate with staff and their peers has improved, bringing increased autonomy and increased positive behaviour.

There is a seamless transition from being at school and combining social, educational, care and health needs into a package which, will not only meet identified needs but promote development within the service as a whole. Considerable effort is put into achieving this by the staff team.

Children freely initiate interaction and seek help from the staff members on duty. Children said the staff who look after them are 'great' 'kind' 'caring' and 'never ignore us'. Young people's well-being is positively promoted to ensure their continual care needs are met by a stable staff team with a wealth of experience. Therefore, children benefit from staying in residence because staff are focused on their success, needs and achievements, bringing improved outcomes for children.

Social skills are extremely well promoted. This is achieved within the ethos of residence, being to encourage, engage and give children opportunities to experience a wide variety of activities. For example; the ball pool, dressing up, building Lego, playing board games, boccia, cycling, dancing, reading and watching DVD's. Children said they that they enjoy these activities and the time they spend in residence. They made these comments with exuberance and enthusiasm.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are consulted and listened to actively. Staff talk and communicate through sign and symbols with them about their residential stay. Children make decisions on matters that effect them, such as meals, activities, personal care and bedtime routines. These aspects are all fully integrated into the care practices of the school and residence, through daily routines, conversations, children's council and review meetings. Parents said they are fully consulted and their views are listened to. They described communication between, school and residence as excellent. Communication is made through the children's communication books, by telephone and at reviews. They said they have every confidence that their children are safe and well cared for in residence.

Staff clearly demonstrate that they place great value on the views and opinions of the children in their care and every effort is made to assist with their communication. Since the last inspection, additional speech and language support has been accessed for the children in residence. This is building further communication approaches for individual children. This is ensuring all children can communicate further to give their views and opinions and make real choices for themselves.

There is evident warmth in the relationship between the young people and the staff team, who have been working within the residence for many years, and have built up strong bonds with the young people. Staff are very comfortable with their roles of setting clearly understood boundaries while maintaining a high quality relationship between themselves and the young people.

A clear plan is in place for each child that has been drawn up between parents, staff and the children. This identifies how young people's needs are to be met during their overnight stays.

Clear targets are in place for children to work on in order to develop socially acceptable behaviour and self care skills. These areas continue to be developed.

Children only stay in residence for one night during the week so contact is not an issue. However, parents or carers can visit should they choose to do so or contact the service by telephone. Children are able to telephone home as and when they wish.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to develop life skills that assist in preparing them for adulthood and independence. The residential staff are clearly dedicated to supporting young people to make informed choices about their lives. Children have developed skills in such areas as; attending to their own personal care, table manners, having their own interests, acceptable behaviour, building confidence, giving their views and opinions.

Residency is on the same site as the school and improvements to the environment have continued, to meet the needs of the children. The accommodation is well decorated, maintained and furnished to a good standard and there is ample space for children to undertake a variety of activities.

The kitchenette, dining and lounge areas are pleasant and domestic in style. New settees have been purchased for one lounge. The bathrooms have been fully refurbished in the last twelve months and additional equipment is in place to meet the needs of children with mobility difficulties. The children have commented what a positive difference this has made to their stay. A young person said the bathrooms 'are like those in a London hotel'. New beds and curtaining have been purchased for bedrooms to enhance the basic facilities provided. The young people have personalised their rooms with posters and photographs. The service continues to improve the environment further for children.

In addition further play areas are being developed and re organised to increase the opportunities for children in this area.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has a prospectus that includes the philosophy of care and the clear expectations of the school and the residential support service. This has been reviewed in April 2009. A guide to the service and residence is given to all children and their families prior to their first visit. There is information for children in varying format on the service offered to children staying in residence.

The care management systems that are in place assist children in making immense progress. This is achieved thorough formal and informal supervision of staff, daily handovers, team meetings, excellent training opportunities for staff and the monitoring of the service.

Staff said having an established, stable team with a wealth of experience, who work well together benefits the children immensely. They are well supported and guided by the management team in promoting young people's welfare. This ensures that a consistently good standard of care is provided.

There are very good staffing levels to support young people. Three staff work routinely on each shift to support five children. A senior staff member works on each shift and each evening the head teacher and deputy head teacher are on call on site for additional support to the staff team and children.

All residential staff have successfully completed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in caring for children and young people, exceeding the minimum target of 80% of the care team.

The staff have access to a wide selection of training in current childcare practices to ensure they are competent to meet the needs of the young people. They have opportunities to undertake mandatory training in a number of areas, such as behaviour management, advanced medication, autism, selective eating and epilepsy. Annual refresher training is provided in safeguarding children. However, some staff have not had refresher training in first aid in over three years.

The staff have a wealth of knowledge about the young people's needs and are working with them to ensure the right support and care is being provided. Young people receive an individual service which is tailored to meet their personal needs.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. This is evidenced through practice, supporting policies, procedures and the individual placement plans. This is reflected within each section of this report.

There are a number of quality assurance processes, including monitoring by an independent person acting on behalf of the board of governors. Visits are made to residence as part of the overall monitoring of the whole school. The head teacher, in charge of care in residence, monitors the service and care provided and produces a termly report on the findings. This practise enhances the quality assurance processes already in place.

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 risk assessments detail in full the action to be taken to reduce or eliminate the risk identified (NMS 26.4)
- continue to improve the furnishings and fittings within bedrooms (NMS24.1)
- provide refresher first aid training to all staff on a regular basis (NMS 29.4)