

Capenhurst Grange Special School

Inspection report for residential special school

Unique reference number	SC006621
Inspection date	29 September 2009
Inspector	Karen Forster
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	7 October 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

This residential special school is maintained by the local authority and provides special education for children between the ages of 11 and 16 who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The majority of children are day pupils. At the time of the inspection 15 children were receiving flexible programmes of residential care in school. The premises include school; residential; administrative and recreational buildings. The residential accommodation consists of domestic style lounges, bathrooms and shower rooms and single bedrooms, some of which are en-suite.

Summary

This visit is an announced full inspection of the boarding provision in school, using the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. All of the Every Child Matters outcome areas were included, plus an additional outcome area of organisation. Recommendations made at the last inspection were reviewed with the school's leadership team.

This school provides a satisfactory level of boarding provision for young people. There are many strong features of the residential programme, including the health care advice and support, the involvement of pupils in school plans and decisions and the positive qualities of the accommodation. The shortfalls within staying safe and organisational outcomes impact on the quality of the residential service, which means that the overall quality of care is satisfactory.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were six recommendations raised following the last inspection, five of which have been suitably addressed by the school. The school has secured copies of the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction modules, for use when assessing the skills and competence of care staff. Extra details of students' racial and cultural heritage are now included within the school's care plans. The school's business manager has researched the implications of the forthcoming Independent Safeguarding Authority, and has already begun to address the implications for the Criminal Records Bureau clearance for school staff. Transitional information within individual care records for those pupils aged over 14 years of age, now reflects the details of the school's contact with Connexions and plans for leaving school.

The night-time staffing cover on one unit has been risk assessed by the authority upon the Head teacher's request, and recommended changes to staffing are under consideration by the leadership team and governing body. However changes to the young people using this area and the relocation of the unit, means that a recommendation is made in respect to this issue following this inspection.

The governing body's quality monitoring programme in relation to the care provided within the residential section of school was reviewed during this inspection. The frequency and content of the current programme does not meet the national minimum standard.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The local Primary Healthcare Trust employs a qualified school health advisor, who provides suitable health advice and support to pupils and organises screening programmes in school. The school has developed individual health plans for those young people who stay in school. These plans cover all areas required by the standards.

Accurate records of accidents are maintained, and all care staff have received first-aid training. The school secures parental written medical consent to medical treatment and medication administration by school staff which meets the standards. This means that young people's emergency and primary health care needs are well addressed whilst staying in school.

The catering manager has the responsibility for the meals provided at the school and for organising menus. Young people's views on the food provided are sought and taken into account. Meal times are organised social occasions and the quality of food provided is of a high standard. Alternative options are always available at lunch time, including salads or a lighter meal. Young people who have specific dietary needs are catered for.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's privacy and right to confidentiality are respected. Care staff were observed working in ways that give appropriate regard to young people's privacy. The school maintains a comprehensive filing system to hold information about pupils. The main files contain confidential information and are maintained securely in a lockable steel filing cabinet, and the working files are kept in the care office where they can be accessed by all staff. A selection of young people's files viewed were found to contain relevant information that the school uses well to inform their care of the young people.

The school maintains a suitable complaints policy that meets the standards. The three stage procedure includes time frames for each stage and the expected responses from the school. This means that any complainants would have sufficient data to start the complaints process, and to know what would happen with their information.

The acting Head of Care is the school's named person for safeguarding issues, and has undergone appropriate training for this role. School staff receive suitable safeguarding training, and know the identity of the school's designated officer. Care staff are clear about their responsibilities within the safeguarding procedures, and their vigilance and keen reporting works well to keep young people safe.

The school's anti-bullying policy is well implemented within the service, to help identify and manage the risks of bullying behaviour in school. Students report that bullying is a current issue in school but that staff quickly address these episodes. There are clear and agreed strategies to help manage the risk of bullying, and these are consistently implemented by school staff.

The missing from school procedures are clear and meet the standards. It is evident from the school's records that the procedure is consistently followed in practice. This means that all

relevant parties are alerted and appropriate responses made to episodes where pupils are missing from school.

Care staff and resident young people share a clear understanding in relation to acceptable levels of behaviour, and staff responses to unacceptable behaviour. Positive behaviour management strategies, that reward acceptable behaviour with meaningful rewards and recognition, are used. The newly developed behaviour management system provides a visual programme of tracking individual progress and presented behaviour. Young people are familiar with the meaning of the programme, and staff consistently implement the management measures throughout the 24 hour curriculum.

The school takes positive steps to protect school occupants and visitors from the risk of accident or incident. Whilst health and safety practice is suitable, the recording of safety measures is slightly below standard. The school's fire safety risk assessment is only evidenced through accounts of visits from the local Fire Safety Officer. Although this evidence suggests that a copy is in place, full access to the fire safety risk assessment document is currently impeded, which reduces employee's access to required fire safety information. All utility installations have been checked for safety as required, and the necessary safety checks on fire systems are in evidence.

Staffing records show the school operates recruitment policies and procedures that mostly meet the requirements of the standards. The school's records of completed clearance checks on care staff are incomplete in relation to details of staff checks against list 99. There is evidence that such a check was completed, but no detail of the date or reference number for the procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The school maintains good care support strategies that promote young people's attendance and progress in class. These strategies include the deployment of care staff during the school day to support students and teaching staff. The use of daily observation logs completed by teaching and care staff respectively, help to inform a consistent caring regime throughout the 24 hour curriculum.

Young people make good use of the range of activities on offer at the school, and enjoy the opportunities provided both on and off site. The extended school day programme continues to attract students' interest and participation, and the weekend day activity programme is well used.

Young people are offered individual support and advice when required or requested. They have access to the services of a school health advisor; art therapist; counselling service; holistic therapies and nurture based programme. This positive range of support systems is indicative of the individual, specialist support that is delivered to individuals who make good use of the programmes provided. Care staff were observed giving individual support and advice to young people in a positive manner.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people meet on a daily basis with a care associate whilst in residence, to review their progress and celebrate their achievements from the previous evening. Key workers maintain a positive level of face to face and telephone contact with parents/carers to keep them updated on young people's progress. The house committee of students meets regularly in school and contributes towards governor's meetings, and considers new ideas for the school. This means that contributions from all relevant parties are well considered in school, and the whole school community feel well involved in the life of the school.

Young people value the school's residential provision, and find their flexible boarding programme a positive addition to their educational placement. Newly admitted young people are made to feel comfortable and quickly find their feet in the residential areas, as they have the close attention of care associate staff.

The school compile individual care plans for each resident young person. The plans are clear and detailed and meet the standards. Action plans for each young person are well maintained and up to date. This ensures that meaningful care targets and strategies to achieve them, are well detailed and fit well with the students' individual education plans. Those young people who stay overnight in school who have a looked after status, will participate in statutory care reviews in addition to their annual statutory educational review. Key care staff contribute towards these forums and can attend the care reviews, however there is no evidence of care review records.

Young people are assisted and encouraged to maintain regular contact with parents/carers and significant people during their nights in residence. Key workers maintain regular contact with parents/carers to keep them informed of the individual young person's progress. The programme of parental group meetings in school, makes a positive contribution towards the shared care culture enjoyed by students in the school. This means that students and parents find welcome support and an active interest in their welfare, during their time in school.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The school provides a good standard of residential accommodation for young people. Young people in small groups make good use of domestic style, comfortable lounges or lounge/diners. All of the residential units are well maintained, clean and well ventilated. Each residential unit contains sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities for the numbers of accommodated young people. All bathroom, shower and toilet areas are suitable for use, and doors have appropriate locks to ensure privacy for young people when using them. Single bedrooms are provided for young people's use, and these areas are suitably furnished and equipped. Play equipment and TV and musical appliances are provided in communal areas and are well used by the young people and staff.

The local environmental health department has assessed the food safety and preparation areas in school, and their report states that standards are satisfactory.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. School staff demonstrate a well developed understanding of individual heritage and cultural needs for young people. This strength is

evident in their care practice, as young people are treated equally, and respected as individuals. All young people are provided with opportunities to develop socially and emotionally, and success is measured at a personal level and well recognised. The individual's place in their family unit is well promoted through the positive work of the parents programme. This helps young people in their relationships with family members and significant others.

The school's statement of practice has been reviewed to reflect recent changes in the school staffing structures. It is a detailed and informative document that contains most of the required information, however the identity of the designated safeguarding officer is not included as required. Care staff know who the school's safeguarding officer is and this role is well detailed in the whole school's safeguarding policy.

Care staffing levels are satisfactory and mean that care staff can meet the needs of the resident young people well, on most shifts. On isolated occasions, for limited nights, the flexible boarding programme has been withdrawn due to a lack of care staff available to sleep in. This obviously causes a gap in the residential provision. After a request from the Head teacher, the local authority responsible for the school has risk assessed the level of night care staffing cover in school. Their conclusions are currently being considered by the school's leadership team and governing body. The population using one particular area has changed since the last inspection, and the unit has been relocated within school. However there is no designated sleep in member of staff in this unit, as required by the standards. School have applied certain measures to manage the night-time supervision of pupils in this area. The unit is alarmed and there is a member of sleep-in staff in an adjacent unit down the corridor, but these arrangements fall short of the standards.

Care staff meetings are held regularly, and the school holds full staff meetings during inset days. The senior management team meet weekly, and written communication between staff members is good. Whilst these strategies certainly provide opportunities for care staff to review, plan and evaluate their group practice, there are only two individual supervision sessions every school year. These six monthly performance management reviews allow some opportunity for personal reflection and the identification of training needs, however the frequency is below standard.

All of the care staff are qualified to NVQ level 3, which exceeds the threshold set in the standards and provides a positive number of qualified staff on rota. This means that the skills and knowledge of all members of the care team, have been assessed and externally verified by an independent body. Staff use their training well to inform their practice and improve the outcomes for resident young people. The substantive Head of Care has lengthy experience and is qualified to NVQ level 3, this means there is a shortfall in the standards which require an NVQ level 4 qualification for this position.

The school maintains suitable records as required by the standards, and all entries are clearly signed by the author and dated. The aforementioned weekly meetings of the senior management team allow for a detailed verbal exchange to review school records and to identify any trends or patterns in behaviour. However there is less evidence of a dedicated monitoring mechanism for the identified trends to be recorded, and to allow for changes in practice to improve the outcomes for young people. This provides a gap in the school's internal quality monitoring system. The Head teacher produces a written report on the operation of the school each term, this report is forwarded to the governing body.

Independent monitoring visits are carried out on behalf of the school, by a representative of the governing body. The findings are recorded in a report as required, however the content and frequency of the visits do not meet the standards. This means that the independent element of the quality review programme of residential care is completed, but is not as comprehensive as required by the standards.

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):

- provide accessible copies of the fire safety risk assessment for the premises (NMS 26)
- ensure that the date and reference number of the List 99 check for care staff appointed prior to April 2002 is clearly recorded within school personnel records (breach of national minimum standard 27.2)
- make arrangements for the retrieval of Looked After Child review minutes for relevant young people from students' Social Workers (NMS 17)
- ensure that the school's statement of practice refers to the identity of the school's designated member of staff for safeguarding (NMS 1.3)
- provide sleeping in staff within each occupied residential unit in the school, ensuring that all units are included in the staff cover (breach of national minimum standard 28.8)
- ensure that care staffing is sufficient to allow for a consistent residential programme, without interruption due to lack of staffing (NMS 28)
- provide and record one to one supervision forums between care staff and their line manager at a frequency that meets the standards (breach of national minimum standard 30.2)
- provide a Head of Care with experience and a NVQ level 4 qualification that meets the standards (breach of national minimum standard 31.2)
- ensure that the internal quality monitoring system is recorded and includes all of the areas listed in the standard (breach of national minimum standard 32.2)
- ensure that the governing body's quality monitoring programme is completed in line with the standards, especially in relation to frequency and content (breach of national minimum standard 33.2).