

William Henry Smith School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Stephen Trainor
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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

William Henry Smith School is a non-maintained special school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and offers education and accommodation to boys aged between 8 years and 16 years. Accommodation is provided in five houses. On the ground floor of each house there is a communal lounge, dining room, kitchen and staff office, with pupil bedrooms and bathroom and shower rooms on the first floor. Each pupil has his own bedroom and bathroom and shower facilities are shared. The school also offers older pupils the opportunity to live for a short time, with staff support in a small self-contained flat within one of the houses, in order to develop their independence skills.

The school is set in several acres of grounds and has facilities for indoor and outdoor sporting activities, such as an adventure playground, all weather sports enclosure and indoor sports hall and gym. It is situated in a semi-rural location on the outskirts of the town of Brighouse, with good transport links to Halifax and access to other larger towns and cities.

The majority of pupils took some part in the inspection, either by completing a questionnaire or through discussions with the inspector on the days of the inspection visit.

Summary

This key announced inspection had a short lead in time. It assessed every outcome heading covering all the key residential special school national minimum standards. Progress against recommendations made during the last inspection was also evaluated.

This is an excellent service in every respect. The senior management and staff teams are highly motivated, qualified and competent. Practice is extremely well coordinated and fully embraces the government's Every Child Matters framework, designed to improve services for children and young people. There is regular consultation and transparent communication with pupils, parents and everyone supporting placements. Excellent relationships have been established with a Local Authority Designated Officer who supports safeguarding practice. The school's operation is being monitored well.

Individual care and education plans are comprehensive. Plans are supported by different professionals including access to many different therapists. The pupils make good progress at the school. There is an enriched curriculum of care and education where pupils achieve and develop.

Pupils, many with complex needs, experience healthy and stable lifestyles. A rewards system operates efficiently. There are excellent relationships between staff and the pupils. Pupils are relaxed in the comfortable surroundings of the school and within their individual boarding houses.

This report highlights some recommendations to be considered to improve practice further. The health policy, requiring double staff signatories, when administering medicines was not being followed in one house. The policy for disposal of medicines was not clear. Some supporting information linked to the recruitment and selection process was incomplete. There is no clear record to show staff have attended complaints and representations training.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The recommendations made at the last inspection have been suitably addressed. The policy for non-prescription medicines has been reviewed and this makes clear the 'over the counter' medicines that can be used. Records show that staff members have attended safe handling of medicines training.

One of the senior houses, Mandela, was redecorated and refurbished. The headteacher reviewed the policy on the use of closed circuit television alongside privacy and the data protection policies. A new format introduced to record pupils' progress on a daily basis is working well.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Pupil health and well-being is tackled on many different levels. For example, there are excellent social and emotional aspects of learning being coordinated by residential staff and teaching staff. A 24-hour curriculum of care and education is established that allows the pupils opportunities to develop skills and knowledge on how to lead a safe and healthy life.

There is an internal and external network of support from professionals and agencies. The school has access to many different types of therapist who support the arrangements in place. The type of support to be provided is agreed and outlined within plans. Good communication between staff means excellent continuity of approach. Progress is easy to follow within records being produced. Each pupil has a detailed health plan subject to regular review. Key workers are fully aware of pupils' health needs.

The promotion of health is taken seriously at William Henry Smith School. Pupils' welfare is closely monitored and their health needs are extremely well met. Pupils are supported by a qualified school nurse who provides excellent support, advice and guidance. Good contingency planning was demonstrated to cover the planned absence of the school nurse. Pupils' health support was not affected.

Catering, food preparation, diet and exercise all have a seamless supporting role within each pupil's health arrangements. Pupils' physical appearance and social presentation is good. Focus groups provide extra support if needed. The pupils confirm satisfaction with how health and well-being is being handled. All confirm that staff look after them well if they are ill. Routine medical, optical and dental appointments are organised by the school nurse. Smoking cessation and drug misuse are two ongoing programmes being run at the school to support pupil health. Good information and learning opportunities are provided to help pupil make choices on how to lead safe lives.

There is a policy and written guidance, which is implemented well in practice, for administering, recording and storing medication. The policy is not clear on how to dispose of medicines. Parental permission for administering medicines is gained. Medicines, including controlled drugs, are being kept securely within lockable cabinets. Records are being kept on all medication, treatment and first aid given. Staff have been suitably trained. A good practice procedure requiring two staff signatories when medicines are administered was not always being followed.

Ongoing consultation with health professionals occurs to ensure practice remains safe. There are procedures operated for transporting medication on home visits.

The inspector was made welcome, allowing pleasant mealtimes to be experienced. Meals are varied, healthy and nutritionally balanced. Every effort is made to include the favourite food preferences of the pupils. Special themed meals support work on looking at cultural diversity. The meals offered are to a good standard. Many pupils expressed their full satisfaction with the quality of meals. There are many genuine opportunities presented for pupils to talk to the catering manager and influence menu design. Some suggestions are not suitable. A healthy schools award has been gained. No concerns are outlined within the last environmental health inspection report.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

There is a clear school policy and procedures for responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse. Practice clearly links into and is consistent with local safeguarding team protocols. Excellent relationships have been established with the Local Authority Designated Officer. Transparent communication is evident and accurate records are being maintained on issues affecting the school or its pupils. Good interagency cooperation is providing suitable physical safety and security for the pupils resident.

Staff have received training and are capable of responding to child protection matters. A local authority commissioning and development officer reported being 'Impressed with the way safeguarding and the Every Child Matters outcomes are firmly embedded at the school'.

Staff practice was observed to respect pupils' privacy, as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect children. Information held on the pupils is handled safely. There is a policy linked to the use of surveillance cameras at the school. The purpose of these cameras is clearly defined as helping to ensure the safety, security and well-being of staff and students, reducing incidents and protecting the school premises. Pupils commented that the cameras help to keep them safe and they recognise that they reduce the opportunities for bullying to occur.

This school makes every effort to reduce the impact of bullying on pupils. The anti-bullying policy had been reviewed recently. Many pupils commented, 'Bullies are dealt with by staff' and 'Staff talk to bullies and put them on restrictions'. Pupils unanimously agreed that they have someone to talk to if they were bullied. They are confident that staff respond quickly to any matters highlighted by them.

Complaints are clearly listened to. Written information available throughout the school enables pupils to form a complaint if they wish to. Complaints procedures have been publicised widely. All levels of complaints are taken seriously and a record of the actions taken to resolve them is produced.

Reporting systems and actions taken in the past in response to significant incidents have been appropriate. Information held on the pupils is comprehensive, respected and confidentially handled. Detailed risk assessments are produced to highlight concerns and pupil vulnerability. Behaviour management programmes are monitored and responses coordinated efficiently. All staff receive training in suitable methods and techniques to be used if physical intervention is needed. There is a written protocol on the actions to be taken for pupils absent without

authority. Strategies have had good success in reducing the number of reports being made to the police.

The response to health, safety and security is well coordinated. Fire and rescue services visit the school ensuring fire precautions are safe. The premises fire risk assessment is up to date. Servicing contracts for electrical, gas and fire safety are established. Boilers are serviced at the correct intervals. Portable appliance testing is routinely undertaken ensuring electrical equipment is safe. Risk assessments have been carried out on all aspects of the school premises and grounds. No hazards were observed during this inspection. School recreational equipment is checked annually and this ensures it remains fully operational. Risks associated with challenging activities are clearly being minimised.

A clear checking system is evident throughout the recruitment process. Suitable evidence including enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks, references, qualifications, applications forms and records of the interview were presented on a random selection of staff. Staff have completed safe recruitment training. Some supporting information within personnel files was missing and this meant that it was difficult to see how references are being verified. Interview notes for one of the therapist working at the school had not been filed. Suitable vetting of visitors to the school is undertaken with identity checks being carried out before access is permitted. The pupils know that all visitors should be wearing official passes. The head of support services discussed portability of Criminal Record Bureau checks and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. These are being monitored to see if they have any impact on future recruitment practice.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Timely individual support is provided, ensuring that the pupils prepare for their future. Support is coordinated within a multidisciplinary framework meaning that they make good progress. The knowledge that staff hold enables a truly individual response to be taken when the pupils are most in need. The individual and collective needs of the pupils are clearly being met at this school. Many positive comments were made by the pupils on the independent living programmes operated at the school.

The philosophy of care is outlined within the school prospectus. All programmes are linked to social and emotional aspects of learning. High standards are being maintained by setting appropriate achievable targets. Improving behaviour helps support individual's learning and the development of new skills. A dedicated team of therapist working from the school provide needs lead services. A commissioning and development report, prepared on behalf of each authority using the school, commented very favourably on the school's management and operation.

There is a culture of high expectation at the school and this has led to steady improvements in academic results. Many initiatives have been introduced. There are different teaching styles helping pupils to improve their academic potential. Resources at the school are excellent and classrooms are bright interesting places where the pupils usually like to be. Staff members feel that the school does very well at delivering the 24- hour curriculum of care and education. Year 11 students gain experience of work placements. Connexions advisors visit the school regularly. Pupils are being prepared with skills relevant to adult life and the world of work and leisure. Transition plans are produced to keep pupils focused.

Staff practice engages the pupils in an extensive range of activities to develop skills and individual potential. Adventurous & boisterous as well as quieter recreational pastimes capture pupils' interests. New experiences are constantly being provided. Camping trips and holidays are planned for. There is good evidence that each individual is fulfilling their own potential in an environment appropriate to his special education needs. A broad, balanced and relevant curriculum of support is provided and this helps pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Staff's ongoing communication maintains positive relationships throughout the school placement. Parents and local authorities are provided with regular school updates, letters and reports on pupil progress. Meetings are convened if there are any concerns. Statutory reviews take place. Education statements are updated annually. The pupils are involved in all their meetings and reviews. This means that they are clear on the targets that have been set for them.

There are effective systems in place for pupils being admitted to and leaving the school. All introductions are planned. The school's philosophy of care and expectations on behaviour are made clear. Age appropriate written guidance has been produced for all the pupils to guide them through their time at the school. Parents can visit the school and pupils confirm that it is easy to keep in touch with friends and family members. Pupils go home virtually every weekend.

Staff routinely seek to build working relationships with the young people, parents and other professionals involved in pupils' lives. Surveys provide many positive comments on practice. Management practice also responds to concerns that are highlighted. There is clear pupil involvement in everything that occurs at this school. The school operates a boys' council that has elected members from each class group. Many different questionnaires and forums are used to seek pupils' views. School assemblies and key worker sessions deliver a clear message to show pupils' views are valued. Pupils were observed confidently discussing school matters and expressing their thoughts and opinions during a council meeting.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

William Henry Smith School is stable and clearly fit for purpose. This is a dynamic, progressive thinking school that is constantly looking to improve and develop resources and appearance. The school budget is managed wisely. Accommodation is safe and pleasantly decorated, providing sufficient space and excellent resources to meet needs. The boarding provision comprises of an admissions and assessment house and junior and senior areas. The standard of each boarding house is good. Maintenance of the whole school site is coordinated very well. The pupils value their surroundings.

The school ethos is encouraging personal growth and development from the point when pupils are introduced. Pupil social presentation is good and they work hard with staff to gain skills suitable for the time they leave. There was a fairly high percentage of Year 11 students with transition plans. Work experience placements and independent skills training formed much of the focus for these older pupils. They recognise the skills and qualities that future employers

would be looking for. Daily life at the school provides the pupils with many opportunities, appropriate to their age and need, for the development of knowledge and skills. Key workers, Connexions advisors and educational staff support the arrangements in place. Pupils also remain focused on finishing their statutory education and sitting examinations.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The headteacher and senior management team have a wealth of experience and extensive range of qualifications. Staff practice remains consistent across each of the Every Child Matters outcomes. There is an ability to reflect on practice and implement ongoing developments. The management philosophy utilises creative thinking and problem-solving approaches. Practice meets with the requirements of residential special schools national minimum standards. Information provided for this inspection was extremely detailed and showed that the school is fulfilling its statutory obligations in a constructive and positive manner.

The senior management team provide excellent support to maintain a competent well-qualified workforce. Records show a clarity of purpose in how staff are being managed. Good induction and foundation training are being provided. Training, support and supervision are linked to staff's personal development. There is good investment in training and this means staff morale is excellent. Staff's enthusiasm makes the school an interesting place for the pupils to live. Deployment of staff is good and optimum staffing levels are being maintained. Staff are clear about their roles, balancing their work so that the individual and collective needs of the pupils are met while ensuring that the necessary administrative tasks are undertaken.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The service has been responsive in linking equality throughout the 24-hour curriculum. There is clear policy and staff receive good training. A key principle of care is to ensure students living at the school do so with dignity, respect, autonomy and individuality. Equality and fairness is reflected within staff's practice. Staff are good at listening to pupils and this allows individuals opportunities to voice their views, opinions and concerns. Transparent communication with pupils and social workers demonstrates a real commitment to further improving equality in practice. Pupils acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is being addressed to a good standard.

The school's operation is monitored closely by governors who report their findings following visits to the school. There is a full range of policies. Guidance is regularly reviewed and updated when necessary. An excellent staff handbook brings all areas of practice together within one format. Staff practice is fully reflective of these documents. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to read information written about them.

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 the school health policy is followed and provide a double signature when recording medicines being administered and establish a disposal of medicines record (breach of national minimum standards 14.17 & 14.20)
- ensure comprehensive recruitment and selection information is held within each personnel file (breach of national minimum standard 27)
- update staff training records following complaints and representations training. (breach of national minimum standard 29.1)