

Millgate School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Caroline Brailsford
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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

Millgate is a residential special school run by Leicester City Council. It caters for approximately 50 boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties aged between 11 and 16 years. The school has a residential facility operating four nights a week, term time only and can accommodate up to 10 pupils. There are also facilities within the residence for pupils to attend an extended day provision. The residential accommodation is situated on the first floor and comprises an open plan kitchen, dining room, lounge, single bedrooms, bathing facilities and staff accommodation.

The school, including the residence, is an older-style building in a residential area within the city and is close to all local facilities including shops, a leisure centre and parks. It is approximately 10 minutes travel by bus to the local library and city centre. This was a limited inspection due to adverse weather conditions. Four pupils were attending the extended day provision and contributed to the inspection. However, no pupils were boarding at the time of the inspection.

Summary

This key inspection was announced and all key national minimum standards were inspected. Each of the outcome areas have been given a judgement rating. Organisation and staying safe are judged as satisfactory. Being healthy, enjoying and achieving, economic well-being and positive contribution are judged as good.

The school generally provides a good residential service to the students. The main reason for the school being judged as satisfactory is because there are three recommendations from the last inspection which have not been met and these issues have the potential to impact on the care given to the students. The recommendations have therefore been repeated. These relate to staff supervision, the recording of physical interventions and the monitoring of the school, which does not meet the national minimum standards. However, four recommendations from the last inspection have been met. As a result of this inspection, two other recommendations have been made.

Strengths of the school include the competence of the staff. The team are experienced, know the students extremely well and provide good quality care. They can also provide consistency and as a result, the students make good progress. The changes to the management team have made it difficult to progress some issues since the last inspection but the team is becoming more established. They are very motivated to make the required changes, to provide good leadership and a good quality of care to the students.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Improvements in the school include the students' handwritten records now being signed by staff. The school prospectus has been amended to ensure that it contains full information about the residential flat and what it sets out to achieve for the students. All risk assessments are now reviewed regularly and include documents pertaining to individual students. These

documents work well to ensure that risks are minimised as far as possible. The safety of the students has also been improved by a more rigorous vetting process.

The monitoring of the school by the management team has improved and there is now a system which has been developed since the last inspection. However this recommendation has been repeated as the documentation in this area is still weak.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The students eat healthy food during their stay and the healthy food status achieved ensures that unhealthy snacks and junk foods are not allowed. There are lots of opportunities to encourage students in their healthy choices and they are involved in and enjoy cooking in the school. This encourages them to try new foods and helps them to understand about good nutrition. The healthy food is also complemented by a broad physical activity programme which ensures that students' good health is promoted.

The staff know how to support students with regard to their health and emotional well-being. They know the specific needs of individuals well and follow a care plan to ensure that needs are met. Where individuals have particular needs, these are also managed well. The students approach the staff with ease about any problems they may have and feel well supported in this area. The emotional well-being and self confidence of students are also continually assessed and have a high priority in the care that is delivered. As a result, students' health and emotional well-being are addressed well.

Medicines are safely managed. Staff are very familiar with the policies and procedures for the administration of medicines and there is a drive to ensure that this is improved at every opportunity. The process is well monitored and overseen by a designated member of staff to ensure that staff are vigilant.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Students enjoy a high level of privacy and confidentiality in all aspects of their daily living; this helps them to feel safe and protected. Personal care and particular health issues are dealt with very sensitively and the staff see that the dignity of the students is of great importance.

The complaints procedure is easily accessible to students. There are good relationships between the students and the staff. These relationships and an open culture, encourage students to raise any issues they have easily with staff members on a day-to-day basis. Students say they can easily talk to staff and they sort out concerns. They also easily talk to staff about bullying issues. Staff have a clear understanding and commitment to implementing the school's anti-bullying policy and to ensuring and enabling students to express any concerns they may have. Young people are exceptionally well supported in this area with innovative ideas such as a school bullying council and a text service working well. This helps students to learn about bullying and to take responsibility for their actions. The actual investigations about bullying issues are difficult to track however, and as a consequence it is not clear about exactly how incidents have been investigated.

The safety and welfare of the students have a very high priority in the school and they feel safe during their stay. The staff understand and are clear about what they should do if there is a safeguarding issue. Staff are also very familiar with the referral process to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. They are trained in safeguarding issues and are therefore very aware of vulnerability issues for students in residential care situations. Each individual has their needs and risks identified in documents providing detailed, clear information to staff about how risks can be minimised as far as possible. These risk assessment documents work very well in practice and help to keep the students safe.

Students' behaviour is well understood by the staff and they know what the 'triggers' are for more challenging behaviour for individuals. Staff have completed training and are competent in diffusing situations to try to avoid the use of physical intervention. Incidents of physical intervention are rare in the residence flat. However, the records overall are overcomplicated and do not meet the national minimum standard. There are three recording systems rather than the one bound book as the national minimum standards require. The description of the event is not always documented or clear. Should there be a complaint or an issue, it would be difficult to look back and see a true record of what happened. This makes the young people and the staff vulnerable.

Behaviour management is something that the residential staff team are consistently good at. They have built up good relationships with the students and see them in an extremely positive light. The emphasis is on positive intervention with rewards that are achievable for the students. This helps them to progress in their overall behaviour.

The building is safe for the students, staff and visitors. Fire drills have taken place regularly as have tests on all fire equipment in the building in line with the requirements of the fire authority. Staff and students are very confident about what they should do should there be a fire. Inspection of the gas and portable appliance testing are all up to date ensuring the safety of all who use the building.

There is a recruitment system in the school which maintains good levels of safety for the students. This includes Criminal Records Bureau checks at enhanced level, proof of identity and references prior to employment. The overall management of the system is good and therefore the students are well protected

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The staff are extremely familiar with the individual needs of the students. The high staffing ratios and good relationships between the students and staff help to ensure that students feel able to talk to the staff about their problems. Physical, emotional and social needs have a very high priority and all students have targets to work on during their stays. The extended day and residential provision provide many opportunities for students to make progress, particularly with their social and emotional needs, allowing them to develop in confidence. The students really enjoy a wide range of activities both in the school and out in the community. This gives them the opportunity to have new experiences and learn new skills.

There is a very good link between the teaching and the residential staff and there are regular times in residence when the two groups of staff work together to ensure consistency of progress. Residential staff are aware of educational targets and ensure that the students can develop at

every opportunity. This enables them to directly benefit from their stay in residence. The residential time is more relaxed so that young people can enjoy their activities and being with their friends alongside their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Assessment and care planning inform staff about how to meet students' needs on a day-to-day basis. The documents set out the needs, which the staff are fully conversant with. They know the students extremely well. As a consequence the quality of care is good.

Students are supported when they move into residence. They stay because they want to and as a consequence enjoy the experience. They receive a welcome pack which sets out the rules, how to complain and what to expect. Staff also sit with them and spend time explaining what to expect so they are as prepared as they can be.

Contact with families is very good and parents feel that staff are approachable. They feel very able to talk to staff and to their child whenever they choose during their time in residence. Students are also able to use the telephone freely ensuring that they can speak to family whenever they wish.

The staff ratio is good and therefore time is spent with students. This helps to ensure that their views about life at the school can be established. A lot of time is spent planning activities and outings with the students to ensure that their needs are fulfilled and that their stay is enjoyable.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The environment is part of the school building and by its very nature, homeliness is quite difficult to achieve. However the staff have worked hard to ensure that areas for students are homely and pleasant. The environment also is well suited to the group of students who use it. There are many areas for the students to relax and enjoy, including a sports hall, lounge, cooking areas and computer areas. The students' bedrooms are a little bare but they all know that they can put pictures and posters up and have their own things around them if they so wish. As a result, students feel comfortable and safe in their environment.

The boys' toilet area is a dark room with pipes that look unsightly around the toilet. There is a large crack between the sink and the tiles which both looks unsightly and is a potential harbour for germs.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There have been some changes to the management team during the last year. This has meant that management of the school has not been easy. However, the management team have ensured that the care of the students has not been affected and they have put the students first as their priority. As a consequence, some management tasks have not been completed as well as the management team would have liked. For example the monitoring has been completed, but not all areas of monitoring have been recorded. Also, some recommendations from the last inspection have not been completed. Overall the management team are enthusiastic and well

motivated to make the required improvements. They are committed to ensuring that the students receive a good service.

The governing body work well with the school and are aware of the strengths and areas for development. However they have not completed their half-termly visits to residence in line with the national minimum standards.

Young people continue to benefit because there is a well-established and competent staff team working at the school. They enjoy working with young people and watching them progress. The team work well together and possess the skills that they need to look after the students. They know the needs of individuals exceptionally well and how they should be met, ensuring that good quality care is delivered. There are enough staff on duty at all times to provide safe care and quality time with the students.

As well as their direct work with students, staff have time to complete paperwork and attend staff meetings. Although they can see their manager and receive the required support they need on a daily basis, they do not receive formal regular supervision sessions as the national minimum standards require.

The promotion of equality and diversity in the school is satisfactory and the staff ensure that each student is seen as an individual and is treated as such.

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 that the record of physical interventions are recorded in line with the standards (NMS 10.14)
- ensure that the operation of the school meets the requirements of the standards (NMS 32.2)
- ensure that staff receive formal supervision (NMS 30)
- ensure that clear and accurate records are maintained regarding events in the school; this is in particular relation to incidents of bullying (NMS 19.1)
- ensure that the interior of the school is maintained to a good standard of decorative repair; this is in particular relation to the sink in the boy's toilet (NMS 24.3)
- ensure that the governing body visits the school once every half term and completes a written report; this is in particular relation to residence. (NMS 33.2)