

# Starhurst School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Diane Thackrah
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<b>Head of care</b>	Steve Wilson
<b>Head / Principal</b>	
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	7 May 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 is a residential school that incorporates day pupils as well as offering residential accommodation. The school can accommodate up to 24 pupils between 11 and 16 years old, who exhibit a wide range of emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Weekly boarding is offered as well as the opportunity for day pupils to sleep over. The evening programme covers a range of educational and social activities both in and outside of school. The school is set in grounds of 11 acres surrounded by countryside. The residential accommodation consists of three separate lodges, each with its own lounge, kitchen, toilets, showers and bedrooms. There is a large outdoor play area for sports activities.

There are 14 young people currently boarding in the school. A large number of them participated in the inspection.

### **Summary**

At this announced full inspection, all key National Minimum Standards were inspected.

This is a good service. Young people have their health needs well addressed and are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the good relationships that exist between staff and young people. Good arrangements for health and safety and safe staff recruitment promote young people's well-being. Positive steps are taken to discourage bullying and challenge it if it does occur. The school works closely with a range of outside agencies in order to meet the full range of young people's needs. Young people have good opportunities for contributing to the running of the school and for having their say about things that impact on their lives. There are good opportunities for young people to engage in social activities that promote their well-being and enhance their experiences. Young people benefit from living in a pleasant environment. Staff are well trained and supported by a manager who has a strong commitment to improvement. However, there are minor shortfalls which place some limitations on young people and their parents' rights to complain and the recording of some medication is not accurate. Overall, these shortfalls have minimal impact.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

No requirements were made following the last inspection of the school.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Young people have their health and well-being promoted and protected. Good health care is actively promoted by the school and particular health issues are dealt with sensitively. On admission every young person brings a completed medical questionnaire which includes parental permission and consent for emergency dental, hospital or medical treatment. All young people are registered with a local general practitioner and see other health professionals as and when needed. There are effective arrangements to secure specialist medical services when needed.

Young people are encouraged to engage in exercise and healthy living. An anti-smoking club has recently been formed.

Staff members are trained in first aid and the safe handling of medication. In the main there is safe handling of medication and staff members understand their responsibilities in this. Prescribed and 'household' medication is kept securely and there is an audit trail of medication that is administered and that enters and leaves the home. However, one item of 'household' medication is not clearly logged as stock. The impact of this on young people is minimal as staff members are clear about what medication is held in the school.

Young people receive healthy and nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. Young people's views about food are taken into account in menu planning and special dietary needs can be catered for. There are four choices of meal each lunch time including a vegetarian option. Young people commented 'We have choice at meal times' and 'I like the food here'. Staff help to ensure that meal times are well-managed, orderly, social occasions. Dining facilities are good.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Young people's privacy is respected. There are suitable policies and procedures regarding privacy that staff members understand. Records are held securely and washing facilities offer privacy. Staff members know how to deal with and share information that they are given in confidence. Staff understand that they must knock and wait for a response in most circumstances before entering a young person's bedroom. One stakeholder commented that 'Privacy and dignity are respected at all times'.

In the main there are good systems for dealing with complaints. Young people are given information about how they can make a complaint in a number of ways. The school has a very good 'complaints and ideas' form that gives young people the opportunity to raise any concerns. These concerns and ideas are clearly taken seriously by the school and young people feel listened to. Young people are given information about how to make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish, however this information is not available in the parents' guide. Furthermore, the school's policy on complaints does not detail that young people have a right to access the complaints procedure of the placing authority. These minor shortfalls place some limitations on young people and their parents' rights to complain, however, overall the systems for making complaints are good.

There are very good systems in place for ensuring that young people are protected from abuse. All staff members receive training in safeguarding and understand their role in child protection. The head of care plays a proactive role in ensuring that up to date information is obtained regarding safeguarding issues and sits on the sub committee of local authority safeguarding children's board. Young people say that they feel safe and protected by staff members.

Young people are protected from bullying. Bullying is challenged and staff members are proactive and creative in addressing issues of bullying. There are suitable policies and procedures in relation to young people going missing from the school that staff members understand. Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour and appropriately to unacceptable behaviour. The school has a suitable sanction policy. All staff receive training in the use of physical restraint which focuses on de-escalation techniques. Records detail that there is minimal use of physical

restraint in the school. When it is used, staff ensure that the young people have an opportunity to discuss it afterwards.

Health and safety is taken seriously in the school and there are policies and procedures that serve to protect young people's safety. Environmental risk assessments are in place and there are regular checks on the gas systems and electrical installation. There are good fire safety arrangements that the staff and young people understand. There are robust staff recruitment procedures that promote the safety of the young people. All staff members are Criminal Records Bureau checked prior to commencing work in the school and all other required documentation is in place.

## **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The school's residential provision actively supports young people's educational progress. There are good links between education and care staff which aids consistency in care for the young people. Care staff members support young people with their homework and ensure regular attendance at school. They also contribute to the statement of special educational needs. There are suitable facilities that are conducive to study and doing homework and young people have access to books and the internet.

Young people have very good opportunities to engage in a wide range of social activities. Staff members organise interesting activities both indoors and outdoors including trips throughout the year. High risk activities are risk assessed.

Young people receive good support from staff members in line with their needs and wishes. Staff members are sensitive to young people's needs and ensure that there is always an appropriate adult available. Specialist professional services are made available to young people where necessary. Young people are provided with information about support services that are independent of the school. Comments from young people include 'staff are nice' 'there is always staff members to talk to', 'I've never had a problem with boarding staff members' and 'staff are very fair'.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

There are good systems in place for young people to make decisions about their lives and influence the way the school is run. These include a student council, suggestion box, informal discussions and a complaints and suggestions form. Young people are able to vote in student council meetings and a number of suggestions raised by young people at meetings have been put in place, including a new school football strip and new sports equipment. Feedback is given to young people following consultations and young people say that they feel listened to and are taken seriously. Young people are able to contribute to their reviews. Their views are actively sought and taken into account.

There is a sensitive admissions and leaving policy that helps young people to settle in and move on in a planned way. Young people and their parents always visit the school prior to admission and have opportunities for asking questions. Young people are able to maintain contact with their family members whilst living at the school. All have a mobile telephone and there is a room where young people can use the school telephone to make phone calls in private.

Staff understand the needs of young people as all have a written statement of special educational needs. There is clear and comprehensive information held about young people detailing how assessed needs will be met by the school. Information held includes details about young people's health and educational needs, methods of communication, specific cultural and religious needs and leisure interests. Each young person has a link worker who monitors that the school is complying on a day to day basis with their care plan. Staff members contribute effectively at all statutory reviews.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from living in a pleasant environment. Effective precautions are taken to prevent unauthorised persons from having access to the school. The school maintains links with the local community in a positive way. The young people are currently involved in a garden project and there are plans to give some of the produce that they have grown to local people. Some of the young people volunteer at the local cubs.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The service is managed well. There is a Statement of Purpose that is kept under review. Young people, their parents and staff members have access to information about the service in a format that they can understand. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The care team code of conduct details that young people will be valued, have their dignity upheld, will not be discriminated against and will have their rights upheld. Diversity is celebrated in the school.

There is a formal staff supervision programme and staff meetings take place consistently. The head of care operates an open door policy and staff speak very positively about the level of support they receive from management. Staff have their individual performance formally appraised. Training opportunities for staff members are good and provide them with the skills necessary to offer good care to young people. Most staff members have completed, or are currently undertaking the National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in children and young people. The numbers of staff on duty at any one time are good. The competence and experience of staff helps them to work with a potentially challenging group of young people calmly and professionally.

There are good systems for monitoring quality within the school, including monitoring from the governing body which helps to protect the well-being of the young people.

## **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 there is a clear audit trail of all medication held in the home. (NMS 14)
- ensure that information about making a complaint to Ofsted is made available to parents and information about making a complaint to their placing authority is made available to young people. (NMS 4)