

St. Andrew's School

Inspection report for residential special school

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| Inspector | Jackie Callaghan |
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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

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| 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

St Andrew's School is a local authority co-educational residential special school for students aged between 11 and 19 years old. The aim of the residential provision is to provide opportunities for students with severe learning difficulties and/or autism to develop further independence skills based on the 24 hour curriculum. The residential service operates from Monday to Friday and students can access this on a full-time or a part-time basis dependent upon their identified needs.

The school is set in a suburb of Derby city and has good transport links. There is a school minibus available for students to use where it is not possible to walk or use public transport to access community facilities.

Staffing levels are based on the needs of the students. There are a minimum of four care staff on the morning shifts and a minimum of five care staff on duty on the evening shifts. The head of care works alongside staff to offer additional support where needed. During the night there are two waking night staff and two staff on sleep-in duty which includes one staff member sleeping-in the bungalow.

The residential provision can provide services for a maximum of 17 students and consists of three areas in the main building and a three bedroom bungalow. All areas have their own communal dining and living space, toilets and bathing facilities. All bedrooms are single occupancy.

Students actively contributed to this report and were present throughout the three day inspection.

Summary

This was an announced full inspection, which concentrated on the key residential special schools national minimum standards under the Every Child Matters outcome groups. All outcome groups were inspected.

St Andrew's is a good school with many outstanding features. Students enjoy sleeping in the residential provision and benefit from clear, professional, effective and imaginative management. This coupled with a staff team who are skilled, knowledgeable and enthusiastic provides all students with stimulating and purposeful care.

This inspection found that there are no shortfalls against the standards. However, in order to further develop the good and excellent care seen three recommendations have been set. Two in staying safe and one in positive contribution.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the school was asked to improve the systems for health care, to review the complaints, safeguarding, recruitment and behaviour management processes and ensure

that all care records detail all the necessary personal information. The school was also asked to ensure that staff supervision and quality assurance systems are robust.

Individual care plans now fully detail the students' medical history and the accident recording documentation has been reviewed and updated. As a result, it is now easier to monitor and identify any patterns which may affect students' wellbeing. The school now meets all students' dietary needs including cultural diets, for example, offering Halal meat. The complaints and child protection procedures have been reviewed and now include all the points required by national minimum standards and all staff now receives child protection training. This means that students' welfare is fully safeguarded.

The behaviour management policy has been re-written to ensure that it is clear and includes what the prohibitive sanctions are to ensure that staff are fully aware of what cannot be used. A new proforma that details all the necessary checks that have been undertaken before any agency staff begins to work at the school is now in place. Consequently, behaviour management and the recruitment selection processes now robustly protect students from risk of abuse.

Staff now receive supervision at the required intervals and both internal and external monitoring systems vigorously identify shortfalls in practice. As a result, students receive care that actively promotes their welfare.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Students' individual health and intimate care needs are identified and assessed at an early stage. This is recorded in a clear easily accessible plan for each student detailing how his or her specific and general health issues are to be addressed. Health needs which may impact on future outcomes for the student are addressed succinctly and staff, in partnership with parents, actively seeks out the services needed to address these. For example, speech and language therapists. This means the students receive dynamic care that actively promotes their wellbeing and health.

Student's medical needs are safely met. The school operates a well developed and effective medication policy and practice guidance which specifically addresses the use of non-prescribed medication. Student's welfare is being actively promoted through staff training in a number of health related areas including first aid. Staff are aware of the appropriate procedures to follow and staff's competence to administer medication is continually assessed. Student's wellbeing is further promoted because residential staff are copiously supported by a nurse that works at the school. This successfully enables the school to meet the ever-changing and complex health care needs of students and is a commendable working partnership. One parent confirmed this view as they state 'staff encourage children to try activities they may not access or be willing to try at home. These activities enable the children to be healthy'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Students' privacy is respected. Staff show a very high regard for the privacy of students and assist them with personal care tasks in a quiet, sensitive manner. Student's welfare is further promoted through the complaints process. Some students who are able, say they are very confident that their concerns are addressed. This demonstrates that for the majority the system

is very effective. The school uses pictorial communication systems to enable communication for all; however, they do not have the complaints form in this format. This means that they are missing the opportunity to overtly enable all students to potentially raise concerns or grumbles independently.

Students can and do access independent advocates on an individual basis when the need arises. However, the main focus of this external support is often when a student is in crisis. The school does not have an independent person who visits regularly to provide ongoing support for students. Consequently, such a visitor can offer an independent ear to students and provide another avenue by which students can raise any issues.

Student's welfare is protected because staff receive training in child protection and demonstrate a good knowledge of policies and procedures. The school refers all possible child protection matters to the appropriate social work team, if only for information. Students are protected from bullying by others. The provision is proactive in creating a culture within the school that does not tolerate bullying and provides support to vulnerable students. There have been no recorded incidents of bullying in the residential unit. The school also takes appropriate steps to ensure that students who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.

Students are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour. The schools' behaviour management policy and strategies have, as their prime objective, the creation of a safe, supportive learning environment. There is very evident warmth in the relationship between the staff and the students. Staff are very comfortable with their role of setting clearly understood boundaries while maintaining a high quality relationship between themselves and students. One parent commented that 'it is clear to me as a parent that the schools has my child's interests at heart'.

Students stay in a school that provides them with effective physical safety and security. This view is supported by students with one student saying 'I feel very safe at school'. The school has risk assessments that are updated regularly for all aspects of safety of the premises. These assessments include fire, student's behaviour, and activities. Students learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they regularly practise the emergency escape drill. This ensures that students can exit swiftly and calmly in the event of a fire.

The school operates a good staff vetting procedure and staff demonstrate an appropriate awareness of the need to safeguard students. All files hold evidence of recruitment checks having taken place prior to staff being employed, which includes an appropriate enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Students' educational progress at the school is actively supported by the residential provision. They receive an excellent level of support. The school successfully values, promotes and encourages all of their students to make the best of their educational opportunities. Students are rewardingly enabled to explore their potential and develop their personal interests because staff work in a very encouraging and supportive manner. Consequently, the care, learning opportunities and activities are outstanding.

Students receive superb individual support when they need it. Considerable effort is put into combining social, education, care and health needs into a package which, not only meets individual identified needs but actively promotes development. Students freely initiate interaction and seek help with various staff members on duty. Their wellbeing is positively promoted as they are each allocated to a key person to ensure their continual care needs are met. This means that students are benefiting greatly as staff are energetically focused on their success, needs and achievements.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Students are developing an evident awareness of others as they share and take turns, for example, at meal times. Students are imaginatively encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. Staff demonstrates that they place great value on the views and opinions of the students and no student is assumed to be unable to communicate their views. As a result, the student's voice is a prominent feature that helps shape the care they receive. Pictorial surveys seek out students' opinions on the activities that they undertake. However, this excellent approach is not being exploited by the school. As widening the surveys to ascertain other aspects of students experiences at the school would only further increase the outstanding consultation taking place.

Students experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes. Their needs are continually assessed and written plans clearly outline how these needs will be met. Staff have an excellent understanding on how the student's placement plans cross reference with other information such as their education targets. The schools' records respect the need to value diversity, for example, the individual cultural and religious needs of all students. Written plans demonstrate that students receive fruitful external support as the school has a pro-active approach to working with other professionals. Consequently, all students receive individualised vibrant care.

In accordance with their wishes students are actively enabled and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families when sleeping at school. The school understands the value and importance of communication and contact with parents. Significant time is taken to build relationships and share information with families. This excellent working partnership promotes student's welfare as they get consistent messages from both home and school. Parents confirmed this view with comments that includes. 'They really get to know the whole family' and 'they bend over backwards to meet the needs of the children and parents'.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. The whole school continually attempts to provide a consistent, stable, safe and caring environment that enables students to realise their potential academically, physically and socially.

The standard of accommodation is good. It provides a comfortable setting for students in order to assist them with domestic-style living. They actively choose decorations for their bedrooms and help to maintain the homely atmosphere. This ensures that the students take pride in their surroundings as well as helping them to develop ownership of the environment.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Students, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the schools' care principles and practice for boarding students. As a result, students are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently. They are kept safe and provided with first-rate care as they have sufficient numbers of skilled staff to look after them. Students are making good progress because staffing in the school is well organised and effectively managed.

Students receive the care and services they need from very competent staff. Their welfare, safety and developmental progress are strengthened because staff receives a planned induction and a good training programme. As a result, staff become sure of their job role and individual level of responsibility very quickly. Students benefit greatly from this positive approach as they are cared for by highly motivated, suitable and knowledgeable staff.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school provides a secure and structured community for all their students. This means that students fulfil their potential whilst learning to live and work together in a spirit of co-operation, kindness, respect and enthusiasm.

Good systems are in place to monitor the service and daily lives of students. The organisation has established a pattern of management monitoring and reporting procedures, which is effectively implemented by the head of care and the senior care team. Staff have great confidence in the people who manage them and managers value the staff. As a result, students and staff enjoy the stability of an efficiently run school. Systems for monitoring the operation of the residential school are robust, and the school has an atmosphere of purposeful and imaginative direction.

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):

- review the complaints process to overtly ensure that it is in an accessible form for all students (NMS 4.3)
- explore the opportunities that students have to talk to or raise issues with an independent visitor (NMS 4.3)

- extend the depth and frequency of gaining student's wishes and feelings regarding their care and treatment in school. For example, asking their opinion of the differing aspect of residential life. (NMS 2.5)