

# Farleigh College

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Wendy Anderson / Thomas Webber
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	29 October 2007

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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**

Farleigh College is a co-educational, residential and day school providing education and specialist care for young people who have a statement of Special Educational Need with a core diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome or other related disorders. Placing authorities are generally Local Education Authorities (LEAs).

The college accommodates young people between the ages of 11 and 17. At the time of the inspection there were 30 residential and 16 day students. The school has four residential units within the college campus: Ridgeway for younger pupils, Avebury and Silbury for older boys, and Avalon, which is for girls only. The college also has a separate house located in a nearby village which provides accommodation for those young people who have been assessed as having the appropriate living skills to reside outside the immediate college campus with the support of staff.

Farleigh College is part of the Priory Group, a large national agency providing health, social and children's residential care across a range of care services.

### **Summary**

The college has been through a very unsettled period over the last year. This has included a change of Head and Head of Care as well as a number of other staff. This has led to some of the systems at the college not being adhered to. The staff remain very committed to their work and the young people but morale is low. The Priory Group has identified areas of concern and actions have recently been taken to improve matters.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

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

The college has acted upon the recommendations from the last inspection. This has included updating some of the bathrooms, young people continuing to have a choice of a single room and implementing the recommendations from the last fire authority and Environmental Health Officer inspection.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people receive healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. However, the menus at the college do not accurately reflect the variety of food provided for young people. Any special dietary requirements are catered for and there is good communication between the care team and the catering team. Filtered water, milk, juice, biscuits and fruit are available in the boarding houses during the evenings. Young people have input into the food which is provided in the boarding houses as well as being involved in the budgeting, shopping and cooking of these meals. The dining areas in the boarding houses are decorated and furnished in a homely fashion, with the main dining area being functional, clean and adequate for the numbers who use it.

Young people live in a healthy environment and have their health needs identified and met. Due to their complex medical histories the young people tend to remain registered with their home GP. However, the college has a contract arrangement with the local GP surgery for a doctor to attend to the needs of any young person at the school who becomes ill. The GP also conducts the initial medicals on young people admitted to the school. Routine dental and optician check ups are arranged by parents, although emergency dental care can be accessed through the emergency dental service. Psychiatric and psychologist assessments can be requested from the local child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) teams and the college has also accessed private psychiatric services in collaboration with parents.

Care staff support children who bed wet in a discreet and caring manner and there is a written policy for the laundering of soiled linen. The school has a Therapy Team comprising a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist, and a trained counsellor. The Priory Group has a free counselling service available for its staff.

The college has consent forms in place for the administration of medication and homely remedies but not for the administration of first aid. There is a clear system of booking medication in and out of the college. However, there was evidence of medication being accepted in a brown envelope and not the appropriate container. All staff receive training in the administration of medication and first aid, which is updated regularly. The storage of medication is not appropriate, especially the storage of controlled drugs. Some staff spoken to were unclear as to which were controlled drugs and which were not. There is a robust system of weekly stock checks on all medication but the college has no controlled drugs book. There was evidence of young people taking medication at the college which their parents had obtained over the internet from overseas but which would only be available in this country on prescription.

Young people's files contain information on their health and related needs but there are no comprehensive individual health care plans.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The college has clearly written policies on child protection, complaints, bullying, absconding (missing persons) and the notification of significant events. These are contained in the staff handbook and in the student handbook. The student handbook does not contain the contact details of Ofsted and there is a lack of consistent recording in the college's records. The Head of Care said that this issue had been identified and training has been arranged to address this.

Young people's privacy is respected and information about them is stored securely. In the main college, each boarding house only has a large walk in cupboard as an office, with the exception of one house which has a small office. Although this means the information is secure, staff have nowhere which is secure to update young people's records or dispense and record medication. Staff interviewed were clear on the need for confidentiality and the sensitive nature of information they are privy to. A number of the young people have mobile phones but they are also able to access the office phones as well as the public phones which are placed around the college, however these lack privacy. All visitors to the college have to sign in and out as well as wearing a visitor's badge.

Young people's complaints are addressed and they are kept informed of the progress and outcome of any complaint. The young people's handbook contains information on the complaints

process but this does not contain the contact details for Ofsted. Young people said they knew how to make a complaint and felt that staff listen to them and take them seriously. Staff receive training on how to deal with complaints appropriately. The college's complaints record does not consistently record the outcome of the complaint and if the complainant is happy with the outcome.

Young people are protected from abuse with appropriate responses being taken where there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse. The Head and the Head of Care are the college's designated child protection officers. The school has a copy of the local authority 'Safeguarding Children' procedures available for staff guidance. All care staff spoken to were aware that any disclosure of abuse must be immediately made known to the Head or Head of Care. All care staff have received child protection training as part of their induction and have also received in-house training as part of the Priory Group's online training programme, 'Foundations for Growth'. The college has the appropriate records on child protection issues but there is a lack of consistency in the detail of the record, any follow up action required and if there has been a referral to the local authority and the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Young people at the college are protected from bullying. The bullying policy is robust but there was evidence of this not being consistently applied by staff. The form for recording incidents of bullying does not contain details of follow up actions/work undertaken by staff and the young people involved. Young people said that bullying did not happen at Watersedge but that there were some incidents of bullying in the rest of the college. The information on bullying in the young person's handbook is not detailed enough.

Young people are enabled to develop appropriate behaviour through positive reinforcement of behaviours by staff and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviours. The behaviour management system and methods of care and control at the college are very good. Each young person has an individual behaviour plan which is frequently reviewed and updated and the college's general expectations of young people's behaviours are clearly stated in the young person's handbook. All staff receive training in the use of necessary physical intervention within their first term following their appointment. This training is renewed at least every two years. All incidents of physical intervention are recorded appropriately in a dedicated record book. The record of sanctions lacks the required information. Staff said that they did not feel empowered to effectively manage some situations resulting from young people's behaviours as they are not consistently informed of the outcome of meetings held by senior management. They felt one of the reasons for this is the lack of staff meetings which would provide a forum to share such information. During the inspection good staff/pupil relationships were observed. All staff address young people in a courteous and respectful manner. There is also a lot of playful banter between staff and young people.

Young people live in a physically safe and secure environment. The college has an excellent risk assessment process, which ensures risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. All health and safety aspects of life at the college are well addressed. A responsible officer ensures that a comprehensive annual health and safety check is conducted for all internal and external parts of the premises. The fire records are detailed and young people said they were clear on what to do in the event of fire as they have regular fire drills.

The college has a robust policy and procedure for the vetting and recruitment of staff but this is not rigorously applied. A number of the staff files inspected did not contain all the required information. These gaps could potentially place young people in a vulnerable situation.

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

The provision is good.

The college's care provision actively contributes to the educational progress of young people. Care staff are involved in supporting young people in the class and the college has plans to further extend this support. Each young person has an individual education plan which is regularly reviewed and updated. Young people have access to personal advisors from the Connexions Service to help prepare them for their further education and training.

Young people are able to take part in a wide range of activities. The college is in the process of extending the range of college-based activities and accessing clubs in the local community. All young people are able to access the school's IT equipment to contact their families. This system is appropriately safeguarded.

The college provides individual support to young people when they need it. The college carries out a comprehensive assessment on each young person. Following this, the college prepares a 'Placement Plan' for each young person, which comprises an Individual Education Plan (IEP), an Individual Care Plan (ICP) and an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP). The Therapy Team also constructs a Personal Development Plan (PDP) for each young person. All of these plans are reviewed each term or more regularly if required. The young people are also able to access the School Counsellor at any time for emotional support. The college provides termly reports and annual reports on individual young people, which include reports from any of the specialists involved. The college is looking at developing a key worker system which will link in with the current personal tutor system.

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

The provision is good.

There are limited avenues for young people to put forward their views. The college has a student council which meets on a regular basis. The young people on this council are elected by staff and not students. Members of the council said they felt they were effective and were able to give examples of where they had managed to change and/or influence things at the college. There are no young people's meetings in the boarding houses. The college carries out questionnaires with young people but is looking at developing more formal avenues to gain the young people's views. All young people are encouraged and supported to attend all their reviews.

Young people and staff have very positive and sound relationships. Young people spoke very highly about the staff who care for them, saying they are kind, caring, fun to spend time with and always there for them. Young people and staff were observed as being very relaxed and comfortable around each other.

The college has a planned and thorough admissions process. Young people visit for a three day initial assessment, there is then a further assessment carried out after they have been at the college three months. These assessments involve all the specialist services the college offers.

Each young person has a detailed placement plan which is frequently reviewed and updated. The plans involve input from the college's Therapy team and any other specialist service involved.

Young people are encouraged and enabled to maintain contact with their family and friends.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

All of the living areas in the boarding houses have adequate space, are bright and airy, and furnished and decorated to a good standard. There is a mix of single and shared rooms. Young people said they liked their rooms and had enough space and storage. The accommodation provided at Watersedge is of a very high standard. There is an appropriate number of bathrooms and toilets throughout the college. The school has a development plan for improvements to the buildings and an appointed maintenance worker attends to smaller repairs.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The college has a clear statement of its care principles and practice which is provided to all young people, their parents and placing authorities. This is supported by additional information, such as the prospectus and the young person's handbook.

Each young person has an individual file which contains all the required information and records their development and progress. These are kept up to date.

Young people are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet these. The college is adequately staffed but is looking at increasing the number of staff on duty. The staff are very committed to their work and the young people they care for. Over the last twelve months there have been significant changes in the staff team, including a new Head and Head of Care. There appears to be no clear vision for the future of the college and this has led to the morale of the staff team being low. These issues have been identified by the Priory Group who own the college and they are in the process of addressing them.

Young people are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs. At the time of inspection the college did not have 80% of its staff team at NVQ level 3. This should be achieved by the end of the 2009. There is an in-depth induction process which has been reviewed recently and is in the process of being improved. New staff said that they found the induction process very helpful and felt that it gave them a good grounding for the work they do.

The Priory Group's 'Foundations for Growth' online training system is comprehensive but staff said that they do not get time allocated to undertake this training, so they do this in their off duty time. Staff also said that they would like more training on the increasingly complex needs the young people being admitted have, and training from the therapists at the college on further developing their work with the young people. There are no personal development plans for staff.

Staff at the college do not receive supervision as required. Staff said that they receive a lot of informal support from their colleagues, especially the Head of Care and the Assistant Head of Care. Staff rotas do not have time set aside for staff supervision sessions. Staff meetings are not held regularly at the college.



As stated before, the college has been through a very unsettled time. This has meant that the monitoring systems are not consistent; these are being reviewed and updated. The Priory Group has undertaken an audit of the college recently and a detailed report was produced, with action to be taken. There are regular monitoring visits from an independent person on a monthly basis. A report is then produced which contains actions to be taken.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college incorporates the ethos of equality throughout the work they undertake with the young people. This includes working with the young people to value and celebrate people's individuality.

## **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 written consent is obtained from young people's parents or those with parental responsibility for the administration of first aid. NMS 14.
- ensure medication is not accepted at the college unless in a container from pharmacists with dispensing instruction. NMS 14.
- ensure storage for medication and controlled medication is appropriate, a controlled drugs book is used and staff receive training on what are and are not controlled drugs. NMS 14.
- ensure that medications parents obtain from overseas are checked with the college's GP. NMS 14.
- ensure there are individual health care plans for each young person. NMS 14.
- ensure menus accurately reflect all foods served. NMS 15.
- ensure staff files contain all the information required under NMS 27.2.
- ensure the records of complaints (NMS 4), child protection (NMS 5), and bullying (NMS 6) are detailed and comprehensive, including the outcomes and actions to be taken.
- ensure the privacy of the payphones is improved. NMS 3.
- ensure Ofsted contact details are included in the young person's guide. NMS 4.
- ensure the 'offices' in the boarding houses are improved. NMS 3.
- ensure young people's meetings are held in the boarding houses. NMS 2.
- ensure communication between senior management and staff is improved and regular staff meetings are held. NMS 10 AND 30.

- ensure staff receive specialist training on the young people's increasing complex needs. NMS 29.
- ensure staff receive training/advice from the college's therapy team developing the ways they work with young people. NMS 29.
- ensure staff receive regular formal supervision as required under NMS 30.2 and annual appraisals with personal development plans as required under NMS 30.6.
- ensure the rota has time set aside for training, staff supervisions and appraisals. NMS 30.
- ensure the college develops the appropriate monitoring systems. NMS 32.