

Arbour Vale School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Brian Mcquoid
Type of Inspection	Key

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Registered person	Slough Borough Council
Head of care	
Head / Principal	Debbie Richards
Date of last inspection	20 October 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

Arbour Vale School provides education for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), or have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The school occupied new premises in September 2007, with a purpose built residential unit located on the site which is able to accommodate 12 pupils. The residential provision became operational during the summer term of 2008 with the number of pupils accessing the provision steadily increasing. The stated aim of the residential provision is to work on specific objectives with pupils who have a diagnosis of ASD, via education programmes, and extended learning opportunities through delivery of a 24 hour curriculum. There is close collaboration between parents/carers, residential staff, and school staff to ensure consistency between environments. Overnight placements are from Monday evening to Friday morning inclusive.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The quality of boarding provision at the school is outstanding with all the national minimum standards being met. The head of care provides extremely effective leadership, is an integral part of the school's senior management team, and has a strong commitment to the continuing development of the service. Residential pupils at the school receive an exceptionally high standard of individualised care from a caring and committed staff group who are skilled at meeting their needs. Excellent communication and collaboration between staff provide a fully integrated approach across the care and education settings, to the benefit of students. Staff have established close working relationships with parents and those pupils accessing the

residential provision have been seen to make remarkable progress in areas of their lives. The promotion of equality and diversity within the boarding provision is outstanding.

The residential provision is in a purpose built boarding house, located within the school campus and a very short distance from the main school building. The accommodation is of an exceptionally high standard and pupils have access during the evenings to a wide range of outstanding facilities, both within the boarding house and the school. These include two spacious lounge areas, a multi purpose games room, a sensory room, a well equipped garden, hydro therapy pool, a splash pool, a gymnasium, a sensory theatre, a trampoline used for 'rebound therapy', and a dance studio. The school site and the boarding house provide a very safe and secure environment which is maintained to a very high standard. There are excellent systems in place for managing risk associated with the premises and for activities undertaken by pupils, both on and off site. A facilities management company ensure the fire safety arrangements are satisfactory within the boarding house, and staff conduct regular fire evacuation practices.

Established systems ensure the welfare of pupils is extremely well protected. Staff are well trained in safeguarding and fully understand the procedures to follow in order to ensure pupils are protected from harm. Staff clearly have an intimate knowledge of the pupils they care for and have developed positive and meaningful relationships with them. Pupils are encouraged to use 'emotion' symbols to express how they feel and staff are acutely aware of their responsibility to advocate for them. Excellent staffing levels and individual risk assessments ensure the safety of pupils and there are currently no concerns about pupils posing any risks to one another. There is a positive approach to supporting pupils in managing their behaviour, and staff are skilled in developing positive behaviours while reducing those which are challenging. The use of any sanctions and physical interventions is at a very low level and these are very well recorded.

Pupils are encouraged and supported in leading healthy lifestyles and have their health needs extremely well addressed while accessing the residential provision. Pupils are provided with a varied and healthy diet, and individual preferences and special dietary needs are very well catered for. Subject to risk assessments and staff support, pupils are able to access the kitchen to prepare drinks and snacks for themselves and to shop for food and assist in the preparation of meals. Pupils are encouraged to engage in physical activities and there are excellent opportunities provided for them to do so. There are excellent links with the school's nurse and community health professionals, pupils have individual health plans and staff are trained to administer emergency treatment to pupils with specific health needs. Health initiatives within the school have identified specific health concerns for some boarding pupils and residential staff have subsequently been extremely successful in addressing these. There are excellent systems in place for the management and administration of medication within the boarding house and staff with responsibility in this area have completed specific training.

Pupils benefit from excellent levels of individual support according to their needs. There is a strong emphasis on maximising a pupils ability to be independent and this is integral to how the residential provision operates on a daily basis. There is excellent communication and collaborative working between the care and residential staff, with individual education plan targets being shared across the settings, and comprehensive care planning within the residential provision identifying additional targets for individual pupils to work towards. Staffing levels within the boarding house are excellent and provide a consistency of staffing which pupils

benefit from. The staff group possess a wealth of experience, they operate extremely well as a team and receive excellent support in terms of training, supervision, and their own personal developmental needs.

There are established and extremely effective systems in place for the monitoring of the boarding provision, it's overall operation and effectiveness, and the ability to protect and promote the welfare of pupils. The head of care ensures internal monitoring is carried out in accordance with the standards, and there are regular visits carried out by the school's chair of governors, with reports produced and available within the boarding house. Staff de-briefing takes place after each shift and staff meetings are held on a weekly basis. There is excellent communication between the care and education settings, and the head of care attends the school senior management meetings.

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

There are no recommendations.