

Fountaindale School

Inspection report for residential special school

Unique reference number	SC402858
Inspection date	16 February 2010
Inspector	Helen Walker
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	

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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 co-educational, day and residential special school for physically disabled and sensory impaired young people aged from three to 19 years.

The school is situated in wooded parkland on the outskirts of Mansfield. The boarding accommodation is specially adapted to meet the physical needs of the young people and is located in the main school building. Bedrooms are single or shared.

Residential care is provided two nights a week during term time for pupils aged from 11 years. There are 60 pupils on roll with up to 11 resident each night.

Summary

This was a full announced inspection. Key standards were inspected in all outcome areas. The school provides young people with a good level of care with outstanding aspects in the areas of enjoying and achieving and positive contribution.

Young people are cared for by a consistent, experienced and very caring staff team. Residential care significantly promotes the wellbeing of the young people in a supportive environment. Strong links with an array of health professionals help to provide an holistic and joined up care approach.

Staff understand the need to protect the young people from harm with relevant safeguarding procedures in place. A wide range of activities that link with education and residential care are offered to the young people. Different means of communication allow the young people to have their views heard and positive changes made as a result of this.

There is a very strong team approach to ensure the social and educational needs of the young people are positively promoted.

To further promote the well-being of young people recommendations have been made in respect of staff and the heating in the dining area.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This is the first welfare inspection of the school.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The health needs of the young people are very well promoted. Most of the young people have significant health care needs and clearly benefit from care provided by staff at the school. This includes health professionals who are based at the school site, for example, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, school nurses and occupational therapists. An excellent range of therapeutic facilities including rebound therapy, hydrotherapy pool and a sensory room are available in the school.

Communication between health professionals and residential staff is consistent and enables a holistic approach to the care of the young people. Staff are confident in their understanding of young people's individual health care needs.

Young people's medication is securely stored and there are clear procedures for the receipt of this into the residential unit. For example, all prescribed medication is accepted only with full information about the type, quantity and dosage of this.

Young people have a balanced and varied diet. The school cook is fully informed of the dietary needs of the young people and takes account of this in the meals provided. Mealtimes are very social and inclusive occasions. Staff are supportive to young people who require assistance at mealtimes, whilst mindful of supporting independence skills, such as using cutlery. The use of a kitchen in the residential unit allows young people to learn skills such as preparing simple snacks and to make drinks under staff supervision.

An independence flat in the residential unit has a very well equipped kitchen with a rise and fall hob and sink. This allows young people who use a wheelchair better access to make use of the equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff show a high regard for the privacy of the young people and ensure their dignity is maintained. This includes times when young people receive personal care such as bathing. Confidential records are stored securely.

Procedures and guidance are in place to enable any complaint to be dealt with appropriately by the headteacher. There have been no complaints raised since 2006. Young people have the support of staff who know them very well and are aware of their preferred means of communication which includes electronic systems, pictures, symbols and signing. This supports the young people and assists them to more effectively communicate their feelings to staff.

Young people's welfare is safeguarded through staff training in child protection. Staff understand the action to take in the event of any allegation or concern about a young person's wellbeing. Staff said management are approachable and they feel confident in raising any issues in order to protect the young people.

Due to the nature of young people's disabilities there are appropriate levels of staffing in the residential unit which provide them with good supervision. No young people have been missing and bullying is not an issue in the school. Staff encourage young people's positive behaviour and their achievements are celebrated. Staff undertake training in managing challenging behaviour and have a range of appropriate techniques and skills to assist them.

A well established care team work with the young people. Care staff have recently undergone criminal records bureau checks in line with safeguarding guidance. Additionally, the school have a thorough recruitment and employment procedure which helps to ensure staff are suitable to work with the young people.

The residential unit is well-maintained and staff understand the need to keep a safe environment. Health and safety monitoring is in place along with various risk assessments that relate to the

residential unit, fire safety equipment tests and fire evacuation drills. These steps contribute to the overall safety and wellbeing of young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent liaison and communication between the school and residential unit enables care staff to fully support the young people's educational needs. Care staff are very enthusiastic and really positive to provide continuity between education and care in the school.

The head of care is proactive in her approach to establish young people's individual needs through her daily contact with teaching staff, both at the start and end of the school day. Care staff are fully involved in the educational review process and their views are taken into account to inform the review meeting.

Both the teaching and care staff contribute to the after school activities. All staff are enthusiastic in their involvement with the after school club and make this an interesting and totally enjoyable time for the young people. The activities are wide ranging and young people are actively supported to participate.

The level of individual support the young people receive is outstanding. Disability is not seen as a barrier to access opportunities available to others. Young people are ably assisted to make their views known by use of many different means of communication which are specific to their individual needs. Staff have an excellent understanding about the ways in which young people communicate. For example, that a slight change in facial expression communicates an opinion. Staff are patient and afford young people time to be listened to and encourage them to make choices for themselves.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Support within the school to promote the young people's views to be heard is exceptional. The majority of young people have non verbal communication, however, their opinions and those of their families are actively sought by the school. The care staff work in close partnership with speech and language therapists to consider the most appropriate means of communication for each young person.

Changes made as a result of listening to young people include the recent request for three female young people to share a bedroom. This allows young people to develop their friendships and promote peer interaction. Due to young people's health needs this is not something that is easily achievable in domestic settings but has been arranged within the residential unit.

Prior to a residential service being offered to a young person, a robust assessment is carried out. This includes health professional assessment to ensure young people's health needs can be met appropriately by care staff. Strong emphasis is placed on staff supporting children to reach their potential.

Written plans cover the every child matters outcomes and outline the care to be provided. Staff have an excellent understanding of the plans and demonstrate this in practice. Information

available covers many aspects of the young people's lives including religious and cultural beliefs, learning independence skills, education and health.

The head of care ensures there are planned introductions and endings in respect of the residential service provided. Many of the young people who use this service have done so for a number of years and are familiar with the routines and know the staff who care for them.

Young people board at the school for a maximum of two nights a week. Following their stay the young people return to the care of their family, which enables them to maintain valued relationships outside of the school.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Young people have suitable accommodation that meets their needs. The residential accommodation is integral to the school and situated to one side of the building. Corridors and bedrooms allow good access, particularly for young people who use wheelchairs. Specific equipment is provided to meet young people's needs and this includes hoists and specialist beds.

Recent refurbishment of a hygiene suite (bathroom) provides a pleasant facility for the young people. Within residential are communal areas for young people, for example, lounge, dining area, kitchen and an environmentally controlled independence flat. The flat allows students with more complex physical needs active choices and involvement in the management of their environment.

Most of the rooms are kept at a constant and reasonable temperature. However, the temperature in the dining area fluctuates which does make the room chilly and uncomfortable at times for the young people and others using the room.

Four bedrooms are in use with some young people sharing rooms. This arrangement is reached through assessment and agreement of the young people and their parents. Personalisation of rooms is evident and recognisable to the individual young person. For example, young people with visual impairment have reassuring documents in Braille and pieces of decoration which are tactile and familiar to them.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school's Statement of Purpose is part of the school brochure and provides clear information about the service provided. Young people's information is also available. Both documents are under review to ensure the content is current and appropriate to reflect the care provided.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Staff are aware of the young people's individual, assessed and cultural needs. Staff fully support young people to have access and inclusion to suitable activities and services.

Young people benefit from being looked after by a consistent, experienced and very caring staff team. Staff have an excellent understanding of young people's individual needs and have a high regard for promoting their welfare. The staff team have worked together for a good number of years which enables continuity of care for the young people. Parents offer praise

for the level of care provided to their children and it is evident that young people thoroughly enjoy staying in the residential unit.

Staff are supported and guided in safeguarding to promote the young people's wellbeing. There is a rolling programme of training which includes updates relevant to the care needs of the young people. However, care staff have yet to obtain a relevant childcare qualification to support them in work with the young people.

The head of care provides effective leadership in respect of the residential unit. However, they do not yet hold a relevant childcare or management qualification to better equip them in their role as head of care. The head of care is currently undertaking a suitable childcare qualification.

There are systems and processes to monitor and audit the quality of the care at the school. In addition to the monitoring of care by the headteacher and head of care, a half term visit is made to the residential unit by a member of the local education authority. A full and informative report of the visit is presented to the Board of Governors and headteacher. This level of monitoring provides an overview of how the service is running which helps to ensure good care continues to be provided.

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 adequately maintained accommodation, in particular the heating system in the dining area of the accommodation for boarding pupils (breach of NMS 24.1)
- ensure the head of care has a professional qualification relevant to working with children, which must be either National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 4 or the Diploma in Social Work (breach of NMS 31.2)
- ensure a minimum of 80% of care staff have the appropriate NVQ level 3 care award or equivalent qualification. (breach of NMS 31.4)