

Philpots Manor School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Gaynor Moorey / Liz Driver
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Head / Principal	Andrew Duncan
Date of last inspection	4 March 2009

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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

The school is an independent residential special school and further training centre that provides a holistic approach to education based upon the social and educational principles of Rudolf Steiner. It specialises in provision for children and young people between the ages of 9 and 19 years of age who have been unable to learn and develop within mainstream education. All pupils demonstrate some degree of emotional, behavioural, communication or learning difficulty. The young people who board at the school live in small residential care groups in seven separate houses within the grounds. The boarding arrangements are flexible in order to meet individual needs, however, the majority of the boarders return home every weekend. The students are accommodated in small family groups within six units and benefit from an intensive level of support in both the unit and the school environment.

Summary

This unannounced key inspection took place on a week day. The purpose of the inspection was to undertake a full review encompassing all the key national minimum standards.

The school continues to provide a good standard of care which is provided by the head of care and the experienced staff team. The school is maintained by comprehensive and clear guidance, policies and procedures and tries to ensure that the students are safe from harm. The school provides the students with a good level of emotional support and encourages them with their education and interests. The school ensures that information is in place to enable statutory and educational reviews to take place. The students enjoy contact with family and friends and are given opportunities to express their opinions and make choices about their lives. The school is well maintained and provides a satisfactory environment for the students to live in. The staff are well supported by an experienced head of care and senior management team. The senior management team has comprehensive systems in place that include supervision, training and the overall monitoring of the school.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school received one recommendation from the last inspection which was in regard to ensuring that new staff do not begin work at the school until satisfactory completion of all necessary checks and receipt of references. Recruitment records were checked at the recent inspection and were found to contain all safety checks which could be evidenced to have been in place before new employees started work at the school.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people receive good health care provision. Policies and procedures support the health care provided and the setting's Anthroposophical approach to holistic care. Each young person's medical, emotional and physical needs are assessed and met to a good standard. The health care plans form an important part of each young person yearly annual review. Close liaison between the school, medical professionals and families ensures all information is up to date. Most young people remain registered with their home GP, although temporary registration

with a local GP can be arranged. The setting has a newly employed medical coordinator who is still settling into her role and this is an area of further development. Consents for areas such as first aid and non prescribed medicines do not fully meet the national minimum standards and not always readily available to the most appropriate person in the school.

Young people receive a good standard of food provision. There are varied and nutritious menus on offer. Young people eat in their residential units and meal times are well managed, orderly and seen as a social occasion. Specialist diets are catered for and can incorporate biodynamic products according to availability and affordability. Local producers are sought for fresh food and young people have commented about the increase in healthy food since the start of this school term. Much work has been carried out to ensure the school meets the environmental health standards in the kitchen areas.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff ensure that students' confidentiality and privacy is respected and safeguarded, by knocking on bedroom doors and ensuring contact with home and friends is confidential. Confidential information relating to each student is kept in an appropriate locked facility. All information is contained in the care staff office and school offices. Staff receive guidance on the confidentiality of information.

Policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the children's welfare. Due to effective communication, attentive staff, and close supervision, complaints are dealt with effectively and appropriately. Staff enable students to make a complaints. By the use of one-to-one sessions and student meetings, staff are pro-active in seeking out the views and concerns of young people. Students said they feel safe within the school and that the adults would always listen to them. The staff have good relationships and knowledge of the young people at the school that any problems are dealt with at early stage.

The school has a comprehensive policy and procedure when dealing with safeguarding and child protection. The policy gives guidance to staff about how situations are dealt with and how incidents are managed through to conclusion. There are clear links between the school and the local safeguarding team. Staff receive child protection training within their induction programme and subsequent refresher courses during their employment in order to have clear insight into dealing with such issues. There have been no child protection investigations since the last inspection. The head of care, a senior teacher within the school and a senior member of the care form the safeguarding team in the school and meet on a weekly basis to discuss any recent relevant issues that have happened. Students are able to discuss any matters with staff or their chosen individual.

The home operates a policy of zero tolerance toward bullying and the students are made aware of the guidance on admission. If bullying does occur staff at the school deal with issues in a sensitive, caring and appropriate manner. The students have behaviour management plans which look at any potential issues related to bullying behaviour. The school has in place forums for young people to talk on a one-to-one basis or as a group to look at any issues there maybe in the houses or school.

There is a policy and procedure for reporting children who are absent without authority. Records of absconding show no increase in the number incidents since the last inspection. Staff are

provided with clear guidance to address such situations with robust risk assessments in place to highlight any concerns the students may pose to themselves or others.

Records examined indicated that serious incidents are generally reported as required. One incident at the school was seen not to have been reported. The head of care confirmed that serious incidents are investigated and involve other agencies.

Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour. All sanctions are noted in each house. Major sanctions are recorded in a separate log book. The sanctions given are permissible and mainly relate to early bedtimes and loss of an activity. All staff receive training in the use of physical restraint. The school has a policy which offers guidance to staff in regard to behaviour management and restraint. Risk assessments are in place in respect to young people's known behaviours; this ensures that risks are kept to a minimum. Staff encourage acceptable behaviour and restraint records show that staff respond appropriately in managing these situations. Staff support the students with their behaviour through one-to-one sessions and daily group meetings.

Areas of potential risk for the students are assessed and the students are safeguarded where possible from harm. The school has documentation related to risk assessing activities, holidays, fire risk and the environment. The school has undertaken a whole school health and safety audit and are carrying out work where issues were found. Records demonstrate that the school's fire alarm system is tested and evacuation exercises carried out. Some of the residential houses had not carried out checks of the fire equipment on a regular basis. Clear systems are in place and checks could be seen from outside agencies and from the school's monitoring systems. The school has security measures in place to protect the students from intruders such as door keypads, role call and a signing in and out system for guests.

Staff records seen at the school for new staff employed since the last inspection indicate that staff are subject to a comprehensive recruitment process. Such records show that all necessary and required checks are completed prior to staff working with students, checks on overseas employees are fully in accordance with criminal records bureau guidance.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school supports educational progress to a very high standard. Young people are taught in small groups, live in small groups and stay with their class teachers for a number of years. This enables each young person to grow and progress both educationally and socially and forges trusting relationships with all the setting's staff. Much work is carried out to ensure each young person reaches their full academic and individual potential. Very close communication between the care staff and teaching staff ensures consistent strategies support the young people at all times. The level of individual support provided is outstanding and remains a key strength of the school. Detailed care plans show comprehensive knowledge of each young person's life story and how individual and identified needs will be met. Referrals to a wide range of specialist therapists and related professionals are facilitated to ensure every need is met. Young people are encouraged to be involved at every stage of the planning and review process. The setting offers young people a wide range of leisure activities and encouragement to develop and pursue personal interests in their leisure time. Staff are enthusiastic and inspire enthusiasm in the young people while encouraging individual choice and preference.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Each young person has a detailed and comprehensive placement plan that meets all their identified needs. These plans are of an excellent standard and subject to regular reviews. The staff are fully aware of their content and work with actions made as a result of reviews. Young people are fully involved at every stage of the planning process and they are routinely consulted about key issues in the school and about their future lives. Transition planning and procedures are outstanding. A designated transition team meets the needs of young people from Year 9 and over. Fully committed staff ensure all young people receive the support they need to move into adult life. The staff work hard to identify and liaise with agencies in the community that can support and encourage the young people when they move on from school into adult life. Work experience is facilitated in a well organised manner and fully supported by the school. Young people enjoy their experience of working in the community. Young people are able to maintain regular contact with families and friends. There are private facilities on site for private contact.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The school is in rural location and offers the students lots space and peaceful surroundings. Records demonstrate that the school is subject to regular health and safety risk assessments and has up to date certification relating to gas, electrical and fire equipment.

The boarding houses are clean and tidy and provides each student with both communal areas for group living and bedrooms which are both shared and single occupation. There are adequate bathrooms and toilets facilities. Sleeping-in staff have their own dedicated accommodation.

Each of the residential houses differ in appearance some of the houses need considerable renovation including bedrooms, bathrooms and lounges. The school has a wide range and eclectic mix of facilities and resources for recreational and creative activities. There are well kept grounds for the students to spend time in.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff ensure through practice and guidance that the rights of the young people are met and they do not face racism or discriminatory abuse. The students have their cultural needs met by individualised care planning and review processes which highlight and guide staff to meet the wishes of the students themselves.

The school has a variety of information linked to the Statement of Purpose including the students guide. The guidance offers a clear picture of the school, its ethos and its daily routines. Alongside the Statement of Purpose the school has policies and procedures some of which have been updated and a review of the others policies is on-going. Monitoring of the records and files was seen to be happening on a regular basis with senior staff undertaking this role. All records are stored safely and securely.

The overall management of the school is very good and the senior management team have continued to develop the residential side of the school. The head of care oversees the residential staff and they feel supported and able to voice their opinions.

The school has a long term core of staff in the care staff team. The houses are run by a senior member of staff and a deputy with the gap staff. New staff are supported by the long term staff when starting their employment and undergo induction training.. The team offers the students a wealth of knowledge and experience. The team are supported by the head of care and clear systems of supervision and training that are in place. The school does not have a regular system in place to undertake yearly appraisals for the staff. The staff said they feel supported and feel the training has improved. The school have clear lines of induction, mandatory and National Vocational Qualifications training courses in place which have been inclusive of all staff across the school.

The school has systems in place for the monitoring of practice and safety issues. The records are used to look at how systems are working and if any specific problems are arising. The senior management team has produced a development plan which include plans that focus on a major renovation of the residential houses.

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):

- obtain, and retain on file for each young person, written permission for the administration of first aid and appropriate non prescribed medication. Ensure all appropriate staff have easy access to this information (NMS 14.10)
- ensure that all significant events notifications are send to the appropriate agencies (NMS 7.1)
- ensure that renovation to the residential houses is undertaken (NMS 24.2)
- ensure a system is in place for staff appraisals (NMS 30.6)
- ensure that all fire checks for each residential house are undertaken regularly. (NMS 26.6)