

# St John's School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Kevin Whatley / Paul Taylor
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	11 November 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**

The school caters predominantly for pupils between the ages of seven and 16 years who have a learning disability. A small sixth form has recently been opened for young people with similar needs; sixth formers who live would normally reside at the organisations college site. The school is co-educational and provides a service to both day and boarding pupils. Boarding is available during term times and this includes weekends. There are two boarding houses, one within the main school building and one off site in a residential area. Facilities on site include a swimming pool, youth club, hard play area, play field, medical suite and classrooms.

There is a college based in Brighton for older pupils. The head of care services and the senior management team oversee the management of care on both sites. The college is the subject of a separate inspection.

### **Summary**

This inspection was announced taking place over the course of three days; residential provision at the organisations college site was inspected simultaneously. The two recommendations made at the last inspection were found to have been addressed. Three recommendations were made as a result of this inspection. Young people have their health care needs met in an excellent and holistic fashion. The dietary needs of young people are addressed extremely well with an emphasis on healthy eating. Robust policies, procedures and practices ensure young people are kept as safe as possible; a few records kept of such matters lacked clarity. The challenging and risky behaviours of young people are fully considered. The individual needs of young people are met in an outstanding manner with care planning and reviews highlighting all relevant aspects of care. The way in which young people are assisted to contribute their views and opinions is excellent. Young people are provided with accommodation which is comfortable and homely. The home is organised and managed very well with experienced and committed staff being guided extremely well to provide consistently high standards of care.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

Two recommendations were made at the last inspection. One was in relation to the need for clearer recording of physical interventions, while the second considered there to be a need to verify the role of the independent visitor.

Records confirmed the manner in which incidents involving the use of physical intervention were addressed with clear details and outcomes. A description and criteria has now been developed for the role of independent visitor at the school.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people have their health care needs met in an excellent manner. Each young person has a health care plan in place which details information about medical history and current health needs. The school has clear guidance and training for staff in place to ensure they have experience and knowledge when assisting young people to take their medication. A team of

registered nurses offer oversight and expertise in the areas of medication, first aid and treatment. The systems in place are comprehensive and robust. The nurses monitor administration and storage of medication thoroughly and conscientiously. All of the young people have written consent for medical treatment.

Each young person has their emotional and physical wellbeing promoted to an excellent standard. Medical appointments are available to the young people with health care professionals. Specialist input is organised by the school to address the specific health needs of each young person.

The food offered to the young people is varied and healthy. The catering staff are well aware of any specific dietary needs whether these are based on religious, cultural or medical grounds. Key members of staff meet to ensure that specific dietary needs are identified and planned for. The menu gives the young people the opportunity to enjoy foods from a variety of different cultural backgrounds. Young people can voice their opinions about the food and their preferences in formal settings, such as the school council, and informally with tutors and care staff. The appointment of 'Learner Governors' also enables young people to give feedback about food to the governing body.

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

The provision is good.

Confidential information is suitably stored, while young people have their privacy suitably respected.

The school provides suitable information to ensure young people know how to make a complaint. Complaints are addressed in a robust and sensitive fashion with the numbers being low. Young people clearly have their views and concerns listened to and responded to well. No complaints have been received by Ofsted since the last inspection.

Young people are adequately protected from the risk of harm or abuse. Clear policies, procedures and training, guide staff in child protection matters. Care staff are clearly aware of child protection issues and protocols. Swift actions are taken to ensure young people are kept safe when issues arise. Protocols are in place across the organisation to ensure a consistent and thorough approach to all matters of concern with key members of the senior management team taking lead roles. The recording of child protection situations are generally good, however a few entries were found to lack sufficient details. When child protection incidents occur a majority of the relevant agencies and concerned parties are informed; one safeguarding incident had not been reported to Ofsted. Robust recruitment practices ensure all required checks are completed prior to staff being employed. School staff undertake child protection training with the head of care also being the child protection co-ordinator.

The schools approach toward bullying matters ensures that no significant patterns of such behaviour occur. When staff become aware of any issues the school respond swiftly to safeguard, support and guide those involved. Young people noted that when issues arise staff are quick to intervene. The levels of staff supervision limit the amount of incidents which could potentially occur. Information is displayed around the school advising young people that bullying will not be tolerated and providing advice on what to do if they are experiencing any.

The manner in which young people have their challenging, negative or risky behaviours addressed is outstanding. Such behaviours which can include aggression and violence are implemented

in individual behaviour management plans which provide a clear and obvious guide for staff to follow. All staff are suitably trained in the use of physical intervention with any incidents being thoroughly reviewed and considered. The ethos of the school is to engage young people wherever possible and to continually seek alternatives to actual restraints being necessary. The use of restraint is very low. Negative behaviours which occur during school time are addressed within school. The expectations of behaviour are well known by young people with positive reinforcement used consistently to reward their efforts, actions or behaviours. The use of sanctions are kept to an absolute minimum.

Young people and staff alike are well protected from environmental risks. Suitable health and safety checks are carried out with regular fire safety, gas and electrical tests and servicing being completed. Fire drills are carried out routinely. Activities outside of the school are suitably risk assessed.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from the school's holistic approach which ensures that residential and educational staff work closely together. Young people receive outstanding levels of individual support from the care staff. Comprehensive, detailed and thorough care plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that support is sensitively and consistently delivered. Young people are supported by the staff in the boarding houses to prepare for the school day.

Close liaison between teaching and care staff ensures that targets for each pupil are known across the campus. Such a robust approach ensures young people can be supported and assessed regularly while their progress can be monitored and supported. This support is underpinned by input from therapeutic staff, such as speech and language therapists and occupational therapists, who also work in the organisation. It is clear the school place the individual needs of young people at the forefront of the care they receive.

The school has an excellent activities program which supports and enables young people to attend activities on site and in the community. A specific member of staff is responsible for organising activities and this ensures that the programs meet individual needs and offer young people many opportunities to develop and enhance their life and social skills.

It is clear that the young people are given opportunities to experience events and occasions which enrich and develop their progress.

At present the school do not have a person in place to fulfil the role of independent visitor, although young people felt they have many opportunities to express how they feel.

The level of individual support offered to the young people is outstanding. Each pupil's needs and particular issues and behaviours are known and the staff work very closely across the curriculum to ensure that each pupil receives the support and nurturing they need. Young people feel staff know them and look after them very well.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are given numerous opportunities to voice their opinions on how the school is run. There is a school council, which meets regularly with representatives from the school staff team, to discuss various issues. Each living area has house meetings which involve all young people and enables them to voice their feelings in their chosen methods of communication. Young people have managed to influence areas such as menus and activities as part of the school council meetings.

An excellent recent initiative has involved the appointment of 'Learner Governors'. These are young people who have been elected by their peers and who are able to attend meetings of the governing body to put forward ideas and suggestions from school members. Additionally, the young people are constantly able to share their views on how life is for them at the school on a daily informal basis in their interactions with class teachers, tutors and residential care staff.

The school caters for young people who have complex and at times, very challenging needs. The admission process and assessment is extremely detailed and very carefully planned. The multi disciplinary approach operated by the school ensures that care staff, teachers, therapists and health staff work together to assess each pupil, and to ensure they meet their needs in a holistic fashion. Care plans are completed to a very high standard with detailed and comprehensive guidance in place for staff to follow.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The school provides young people with a comfortable and relaxed place to live within a homely environment. All areas of the residential settings were found to be in a reasonable condition being well maintained throughout. Young people are able to personalise their own bedrooms and are clearly proud of their efforts and choices. Communal areas offer young people sufficient space and comfort with all modern entertainment items being available.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Comprehensive information is provided for young people and others which clearly describes the school and includes details of the residential services it offers. Young people have their own guide which is available in formats which they can easily understand. Regular newsletters are produced with articles from young people themselves alongside information about events and the life of the school.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Young people play an integral and important role in contributing to the manner in which they are cared for. The individual needs of each young person are clearly taken seriously and acted upon. The whole ethos of the organisation promotes the needs of young people who have learning disabilities and complex care needs. The manner in which young people are supported and encouraged to participate in their learning and engage as part of the local community is excellent. The specific needs of young people are always taken into consideration but are never seen as a barrier to equality or experience.

The numbers of staff on duty at any one time meet the assessed needs of young people living within the residential provision of the school. The staff team is settled, consisting of suitably

qualified and experienced practitioners. Staff receive very high levels of training with a manager in post to specifically plan and organise tailored courses. Weekly training events take place with care staff from the college and school coming together. Such a move has seen an improvement in consistency of care practices with staff feeling much more a part of one care team.

New staff undertake an induction programme which focuses on all key areas of care provision alongside supportive guidance from senior staff and their peers. All staff receive excellent levels of supervision, including bank staff, which they say is meaningful and productive. Staff feel morale within the teams is extremely good with excellent support and guidance being provided.

The management approach in running the school is extremely good. The school continues to be managed for the benefit of young people with the organisation striving to improve all aspects of service provision. The senior staff team remains hugely experienced providing sound and committed leadership across the school and college.

A rigorous monitoring process ensures all aspects of care provision are regularly considered and assessed by the head of care and senior management team, with staff being encouraged and guided to provide continuity and quality of care. Prior to September of this year the necessary monitoring inspections were completed by an external practitioner on behalf of the organisation. Unfortunately this person is no longer able to carry them out and no monitoring visits have been completed by a governor or someone appointed to do so.

## 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 the recording of child protection matters contains sufficient details of any actions taken by the school and the status of incidents which have been reported (NMS 5.1)
- ensure child protection matters are reported to Ofsted as necessary (NMS 7.2)
- seek an appropriate person to fulfil the role of independent visitor (NMS 22.8)
- ensure a suitable person is engaged to undertake the necessary half termly monitoring visits (NMS 33.2)