

# Farney Close School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Liz Driver / Kevin Whatley
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	1 December 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**

This is an independent residential special school for young people aged 11 to 17 years, who experience social emotional and behavioural difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. A board of directors, a board of governors and a board of trustees oversee the running of the school. The school is approved to accommodate a maximum of 72 residential pupils, both male and female. All pupils board on a weekly basis and return home at weekends.

### **Summary**

This announced key inspection looked at all the key national minimum standards for residential special schools.

The school is outstanding in every aspect and continues to develop further and make changes that result in better outcomes for young people across all the Every Child Matters outcome areas.

Young people are provided with excellent health care including nutrition provision. The setting aims to keep each young person safe and free from abuse at all times as well as promoting safe life styles. Young people enjoy the facilities and activities on offer. The young person's voice is seen as a priority at the setting. Accommodation is very good with an organised programme of redecoration and refurbishment.

The school offers a stable and challenging environment where each young person has the opportunity to see themselves as successful, with the potential to grow and develop when they leave. A strong level of mutual respect between young people and staff allows them to feel safe, well looked after and to succeed.

As an organisation the setting has high standards and continues to improve what it offers young people.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

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

The last inspection resulted in no recommendations.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's individual health needs, including emotional, physical and medical needs, are identified and comprehensively assessed prior to their arrival at the school. Young peoples' needs are regularly reviewed throughout their school life. The school liaises closely with parents and young people in the drawing up of the health care plans and actively seek out the services needed to address these, for example, involvement of specialist health workers, child and adolescent mental health services and specialist tutors for dyslexia. This excellent provision for promoting health and wellbeing has been further developed since the last inspection; specifically around healthy diet, monitoring of heights and weights and promoting healthy life styles. The setting accessed a local authority initiative called Mind, Exercise, Nutrition- Do it (MEND)

where young people with high body mass index attended a ten week course, with staff, to look at how they can live a healthier life. The benefits to the children have been considerable.

The school employs a designated senior member of staff with specific responsibility for the health needs of young people. She is knowledgeable and well structured in her work delivering a high standard of care with excellent procedures for staff to follow. Over the last year she worked closely with other health related professionals to further develop the service provided excellent outcomes for young people. The number of staff who have first aid qualifications is in excess of the recommendations in the national minimum standards, with virtually all education and care staff and a range of ancillary staff trained to appointed person first aid or full first aid at work level.

Young people benefit from robust medication administration procedures that enhance their safety and wellbeing. Staff who administer medication have received appropriate training. Consents for the administration of medication and first aid are in place for all young people. Excellent monitoring systems are in place to ensure practices and records are maintained to a high level. Changes to record keeping have been introduced to further protect young people especially around the recording of controlled drugs.

Food on offer is nutritious and varied with changes made over the last year to include more fresh food and the use of local producers. Food is high on the school forum agenda where young people raise suggestions that are taken seriously. Special diets are well catered for. A recent environmental health inspection resulted in an excellent report. Development over the last year has seen the setting working closely with the local school's liaison nurse to further develop staff and young people's knowledge of healthy living and the importance of a healthy diet. The catering department have been included in training days and have made significant changes to allow young people to make healthy diet choices that have seen very good outcomes for young people. The catering manager is sympathetic to individual dietary needs and will go that extra mile to ensure, for example low fat food is available for supper on the houses in the evenings if requested.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Robust policies and procedures help to ensure that appropriate levels of confidentiality are maintained. The security in storing confidential files has recently been enhanced. The privacy and dignity of all children is managed sensitively and effectively. Staff have a good awareness of the issues of privacy and confidentiality of the young people. Many of the young people require close supervision, however, the staff are sensitive to their needs and choice to be alone at times. Secure systems are in place to ensure the safety of all young people around the school site. Staff maintain respect for the privacy of young people at all times although feedback from young people felt they could have more freedom; this was fed back to the headteacher

The school has a clear complaints policy which is known to children and staff. Children know that any complaints would be dealt with considerately and appropriately. The 'worries and complaints' leaflet is displayed on the house notice boards. There are no serious complaints registered in the complaints book and the head of care confirmed that the staff have a good relationship with the pupils and parents/ carers, enabling them to deal with concerns as they become evident. The school focuses on informal resolution of matters wherever possible. The school's quality assurance survey completed by pupils in the later part of 2009 confirmed that

young people were clear about who to speak to if they were worried or wanted to complain. In addition young people can raise concerns with the school's two independent visitors who visit regularly without notice. Their photographs and contact details are prominently displayed in each house.

Comprehensive policies and procedures support staff in keeping young people safe. The setting has highly experienced staff displaying a sound understanding of key child protection and safeguarding matters. The setting's commitment to this is clear with the training on offer and links the school maintains with other professionals. A recent young people's questionnaire evidence 100% of young people felt safe at the setting.

Bullying is not identified as a serious issue at the setting. Staff are extremely vigilant and high levels of supervision lessen the opportunities for bullying to exist. Any bullying incident tends to be spontaneous verbal bullying rather than being premeditated and physical. The work carried out and put into highlighting all kinds of bullying is exemplary, involving young people at every level. The setting carries out its own yearly quality assurance questionnaires for young people with a very in depth questionnaire around bullying. There is a clear commitment to identifying trends and to act on results of the questionnaires, for example work carried out on cyber bullying in school with young people has been extended to parents and carers at home. Young people at the setting have participated in the special school's section of a local competition, Sussex's Safe Place, and were winners in 2008 and finalists in 2009. The setting has also recently signed up for a national bullying charter.

Clear policy and procedures are in place and each child has a care plan which also details action to be taken when they are absent without authority. Staff are involved in going to look for the children and are involved in collecting them and welcome them back to the school when they return.

Appropriate strategies are in place at the school for behaviour management. Young people are made very aware of the expectations of behaviour and staff model and encourage acceptable behaviour. Close supervision ensures potential problems are monitored. Staff receive training on physical interventions and are provided with frequent refresher courses. Records of sanctions and restraints are very well maintained. Full records are maintained, which includes a section for the child to record their comments following restraints, that are monitored closely by senior management. Restraints are evaluated on a half termly basis, to identify any patterns and to work on how to reduce future restraints. Records show that majority of physical interventions occur during the school day and not in social time. Pupil risk assessments are of an excellent standard and include triggers, locations and strategies for avoiding and managing predicted behaviours.

Health and safety is excellent and thorough, with a designated senior manager taking responsibility for this area. She has an excellent knowledge of current legislation having recently completed a national qualification in health and safety. All records are kept to a very high standard, from fire records to risk assessments. Since the last inspection a fire safety visit has taken place with actions taken by the school, including rewiring of some areas at the setting. In addition the school also uses an external consultant once a year to carry out a health and safety audit.

Young people are protected by the setting's robust recruitment procedures. The school ensures a thorough recruitment process to ensure the right person for the job is employed. Criminal Record Bureau checks are renewed every three years.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The residential contribution to education is extremely well established involving close liaison with the teaching staff. Residential staff give very active practical and emotional support to young people who have difficulties. The residential care worker's role is enhanced by the time spent in education that enables them to support young people educationally out of school hours. The school fulfils its aims and significantly improves pupils' life chances. It is also successful in making young people feel good about themselves.

Young people have their education needs fully assessed, planned and reviewed in a holistic manner. Staff have a thorough understating of young people's needs and provide high standards of care. All young people have individual education plans that are very regularly reviewed and form part of their general reviews. Both teaching and residential staff have input into the reviews. All young people have a designated link worker who is available for them to seek individual guidance, support and advice on personal matters.

The setting has worked hard on developing young people's independence skills. Young peoples independence skills assessment provides young people and their link worker with a focus and structure by which each of the areas for development can be addressed.

Care plans identify how support for individual young people's needs will be provided and which person or agency will respond to that need. Staff are fully open to addressing a wide range of possible needs, including, for example, disability, race, culture, sexuality, language and personal safety. The school has well established links with a range of agencies who can offer appropriate support. Young people confirm that staff are approachable and they receive the support they need. Information is available for young people to access agencies independently if necessary.

Young people are assisted to gain valuable experience outside of the school; for example, voluntary and highly supervised work at a local children's nursery offers young people an excellent opportunity to learn about others, to help them and to gain a greater sense of self esteem for themselves. This has been introduced in the last year and has proved very successful with plans to develop it further within the local community over the next year.

Young people are actively encouraged by staff to take part in leisure activities both inside the school and in the community. Young people's own interests are also actively encouraged and supported. Activities on offer are very closely supervised with very good risk assessments in place. Activities are a key aspect of school life and provide young people with meaningful and enjoyable pursuits after the school day.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The school places a high emphasise on the importance of consulting with children parents and carers. Young people's views are sought throughout their time at the school and are included

in all significant decisions that affect them. Young people have appropriate elements of choice in their day-to-day lives, within the constraints of the structured routines.

Young people have numerous avenues to express their feelings, views and wishes openly, both individually or in a more formal arena such as house meetings and the school forum. Changes have been made as a result of suggestions brought to the school forum meetings such as changes to the food menu and a review of evening activities.

The setting has responded to the young people's suggestions that they take part in two national fund raising campaigns where they raised over £1000. Sky television has been installed as a result of a request from young people and a large TV screen has been installed for watching films, sporting events, wet breaks, themed assemblies and staff training. Currently the young people want to look at how they can be more environmentally friendly and this has been taken up by the school.

The setting has a very comprehensive admissions and leaving policy. Prospective pupils visit the school before they move in and usually they are visited at home by the care manager. Children are involved in the plans for moving on from the school unless exceptional circumstances occur. Prospective pupils and their families are provided with the necessary information and advice following a referral and the school invests much time and effort in ensuring that the pupil, their family and the staff are well informed prior to admission. Much work has been carried out over the last few years on developing further opportunities for young people when they reach 16 yrs. The setting has looked at the effectiveness in helping young people leave school by developing and consolidating independence skills and participating in the investors in careers award. Transitions away from the school are considered in depth to lessen any negative impact

Very high standard placement plans detail individual needs are based upon comprehensive assessments. Children understand the purpose and contents of their care plans and work on them with their link worker. The school works closely with parents/carers and the placing agency through the statutory review and pathway plan process. Young people are involved in the plans their reviews. All year 11 pupils have the option of undertaking work experience from home on Fridays, which helps them to find their feet in the world of work away for the school. The setting's care package has recently been revamped and is working well.

Contact with family and carers is encouraged at the school. All relatives and carers of the children visiting the school are welcomed. Contact details are contained in placement plans. Some pupils express annoyance that they are not allowed mobile telephones at the school, as they wish to be able to contact friends and family. The young people are aware that the school does not allow this due to their overall vulnerability and the possibility of text bullying. This is made clear prior to arrival at the school. All children are allowed free calls each week and they may also use a private pay phone.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

The location and layout of the school is well suited for its purpose. The layout of the rooms fits very well to the needs of the young people. The accommodation is homely, very well maintained and furnished to a high standard. Recent upgrading of bathrooms has added to the quality provision, although some staff bathroom facilities are in need of upgrading in the



near future. Most young people's bedrooms are doubles. The toilets, bathing, and showering facilities are very good. Young people are able to personalise their own rooms and have a very good range of resources such as pool tables, computers, and Karaoke machines available for their enjoyment in the houses.

## Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding with every aspect of the setting's care, policies and procedures and practices embracing differences in education ability, presenting behaviours, culture, ethnicity, sexuality, gender and religion. One example of how the school embraces individuality is that in November 2009 the setting produced a multi cultural recipe book with recipes submitted from staff, young people and parent/carers. from different countries and cultures.

The school's Statement of Purpose is presented to a very high standard. It clearly states the manner in which the residential provision contributes to the whole school approach to meeting young people's needs. The young person's information pack contains a wealth of information that young people find helpful, it is of excellent quality and in a suitable format. Parents and carers can access a wide range of information including the schools web site.

The school benefits from a high number of established, highly committed and experienced members of the care team who provide a consistently high standards of care. The number of staff on duty meets the needs of the young people and to support them in their activities, visits and appointments. The staff team has a balanced mix of male and female staff. Changes to the staff team since the last inspection have been handled well, to minimise the impact on young people and staff alike.

There is a thorough induction and staff training programme that staff confirmed was comprehensive in its content. Care staff are provided with extensive training opportunities. The school invests much time and money in its training programme and is committed to having a highly skilled team of care staff, who are clearly proud of their role in the whole school strategy. Staff receive very regular supervision and yearly appraisals carried out by senior residential care workers. The head of care exceeds the qualifications standards and continues to access further training.

Farney Close is an extremely well run school that offers stability and efficiency for young people and staff. The senior management team provide excellent leadership and is supported by an active and involved board of governors and directors. Monitoring of every aspect of the setting is robust and fed back to the governors. The school continues to maintain the high standards of care while seeking to develop and improve when ever they can, as seen at this inspection.

## 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.