

# Grateley House School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC012450
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 February 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Stephanie Omosevwerha
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	3 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**

Grateley House is an independent residential special school that is part of Cambian Education Services, a national company that specialises in providing residential care and education for young people on the autistic spectrum. The school provides co-educational termly residential care and education for students from nine to 19 years of age with Asperger Syndrome and associated difficulties within the autistic spectrum. The school has currently 42 residential places. The school's residential provision comprises seven separate house bases, each accommodating six students, some within the main school building which was previously a large country house, and some purpose-built within the school grounds. The school has recently been successful in registering a post-16 home within the Salisbury community, which provides a further nine residential places. This is inspected separately by the Care Quality Commission. At the time of the inspection the majority of house bases were of mixed gender. One of the purpose-built house bases on site accommodates post-16 students who undertake a 'Moving On' programme. The school provides an extensive range of therapeutic support services for students.

Students took an active part in the inspection both individually and in groups, for example, the inspector attended a pupil council meeting. They also had the opportunity to complete a written survey prior to the inspection.

### **Summary**

This was an announced inspection of the school focusing on all the key national minimum standards for residential special schools. Grateley House School provides very high standards of care, and outcomes for students are outstanding in all areas assessed.

Students are provided with individually tailored care plans that enable them to make outstanding progress during their time at the school. A holistic approach is taken and the school benefits from a multidisciplinary team of caring, educational and clinical professionals. Students' safety is afforded high priority and a culture of mutual respect encourages positive relationships between students and staff. Students respond to high expectations about conduct at the school which often results in significant improvements in their behaviour. The school makes sure that all students have a voice and can participate in the life of the school. The school effectively measures outcomes that demonstrate the school is highly successful in enabling students to live fulfilling lives in society. Feedback from parents evidenced they were highly satisfied with the service with many complimentary statements being made, such as: 'In providing a safe and nurturing environment, (my son) has been empowered to achieve academically, socially and emotionally and has started to develop independence skills commensurate with building towards an independent future.' Students also spoke positively about their school, one saying, 'I wouldn't be the person I am today if it wasn't for this school.'

The school has a strong commitment to self-evaluation and is continually looking for ways to provide better outcomes for students. This has included improvements to the environment such as refurbishment of one of the unit's lounge areas, purchasing new medical cabinets, new outdoor gym equipment and new electronic gates to provide better security of the premises. New initiatives have been developed to benefit the students such as opening a healthy school

tuck shop and providing sweatshirts for the school council to promote their image as positive role models.

No recommendations were made as a result of this inspection.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

There were no recommendations made at the previous inspection.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

The school places a high emphasis on providing a healthy environment and there is excellent provision for promoting the health needs of each student. This includes encouraging students to eat a healthy diet; providing ample opportunities for physical activities; and comprehensive guidance and support with health and personal care issues. The school employs a professionally qualified therapeutic team who work inclusively across the school to enhance students' well-being and provide expert guidance to members of staff. Parents reported on improvements to their children's health, for example: 'My son's emotional health has hugely improved over the time he has been at Grateley House.'

There are excellent systems in place for the management and administration of medication. A school nurse is on site to oversee students' medication needs and to provide a pivotal role in liaising with parents about students' health needs. Staff are trained in first aid and only designated senior staff take on the responsibility for administering medication as the school has found reducing the number of staff involved has minimised the number of medication errors occurring. The school is currently working towards helping older students to medicate independently. This has been successfully piloted with one student and thorough risk assessments were undertaken to ensure the student was sufficiently responsible to undertake this task.

The school has built up a strong working partnership with the local doctor's surgery and has links with local provision for emergency dental or optician appointments to ensure students have access to appropriate healthcare services while away from home.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Students' privacy is respected in accordance with good parenting. Staff are sensitive towards giving students personal space while maintaining a good balance of supervision and support to ensure they are safe. Students are encouraged to have a voice in the school and are able to raise any concerns they have. The school has adapted an accessible form to enable students to put any issues down in writing. Students are confident in addressing any member of staff and some members of staff have been trained as active listeners to ensure they have the skills for this role. The school proactively liaises with parents to ensure any minor concerns are dealt with promptly to avoid them becoming more formal complaints. This was confirmed by a parent who commented: 'They are receptive to feedback and address any parental concerns immediately.'

Students' welfare is given utmost priority and excellent safeguarding practices ensure students are extremely well protected in the school. Staff are well trained and take a vigilant approach highlighting any causes for concern to ensure they receive guidance and take appropriate action to maintain students' safety. The school reviews its procedures to ensure they are up to date and include latest guidance and best practices such as ensuring students have a good awareness of internet safety.

The school has high aspirations for students' behaviour and creates a calm environment with clear expectations that students understand and respond to, showing significant improvements in their behaviours during their time in the school. The school continually monitors and evaluates the strategies used to manage behaviour, which promotes practice that evolves and adapts. This has resulted in a significant reduction of the number of physical interventions used in the school. The school's ethos encourages students to respect one another and while some incidents of bullying do occur, it is not a significant problem. The school uses innovative and interesting ways to raise awareness of bullying so students can consider the impact and feel confident in coming forward if issues occur.

Students are unlikely to go missing due to high staffing ratios, and no incidents have been recorded. Excellent procedures are in place should an incident occur, and student risk profiles are completed that give a comprehensive summary of each student along with any relevant details to ensure this information is available immediately should it be needed.

Students live in a safe environment. Comprehensive risk assessments identify individual issues for specific students as well as the risks faced when taking groups of students out in the community. Health and safety issues are taken seriously and robust systems are in place for ensuring regular checks and servicing of facilities and equipment. The school has commissioned external audits of fire safety and health and safety and has responded promptly to any suggested actions to make sure the premises are as safe as possible.

Students are safeguarded by stringent recruitment practices which ensure all staff are thoroughly vetted and checked prior to commencing work in the school.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Students benefit from care and education programmes that are tailored to suit their individual needs. Communication between departments is strong and students' individual education plans are drawn up in collaboration with all key staff to ensure they are fully implemented in both education and care settings. A member of staff commented, 'We all are aware that we all have a vital part to play. To do this well relies on full and positive communication.' Residential staff recognise the importance of continued learning and are fully aware of the role in promoting students' skills and development in out-of-school activities. These are well resourced with an extensive range of activities on offer both on site and out in the community.

Post-16 students have a 24 hour curriculum identified with significant contributions from the care setting covering a range of social and independent living skills to enhance their experiences. There is excellent support for students during their transition to post-16 with provision for work experience and college attendance to help them integrate more effectively into the community. Students felt they had benefited from these experiences and one commented, 'I

enjoy Grateley more now because I have matured and am good at things that I wouldn't have done if I wasn't here.'

Students receive individualised support evident through comprehensive personalised plans put together with the students to identify their needs. Students are provided with strong keyworker support and have weekly meetings that are set up to focus on issues specific to them. All staff build positive relationships with the students they support and students feel confident in approaching any staff member with personal concerns. Students are encouraged and supported to engage in the life of the school and the wider community. The school employs a therapeutic team consisting of speech and language therapists, an occupational therapist, a clinical psychologist and two assistant psychologists providing a good range of in-house therapies to meet students' individual needs. Parents were impressed with the individual support their children receive and one summed this up by saying, 'Their dedication to helping the children at school is outstanding and invaluable and they often make all the difference.'

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

The provision is outstanding.

Students' views are actively sought and the school engages them in various methods of consultation to ensure they are fully involved in all aspects of school life. This includes key work sessions, house meetings and circle times, questionnaires and contributions to annual reviews. The school has an effective student council with representatives from all house bases. They provide excellent role models for other students and contribute ideas about how the school should be run.

All students have comprehensive placement plans that they regularly contribute to. This ensures staff have an excellent understanding of students' needs and the support they require. A thorough assessment process is in place for all new students ensuring any placement is offered on the basis the school can meet the students' needs. The school has effective systems for monitoring students' progress and is able to provide good evidence of how students' outcomes improve during their time in the school.

The school recognises the importance of parental contact and works positively to engage with parents and build positive relationships. Weekly contact is maintained with parents to update them on the students' progress and a homelink file is sent home with the student to provide written information of students' progress in both education and care settings. Students are able to contact their parents as appropriate through a variety of mediums, such as phone calls and emails.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

Boarding accommodation at the school is of a very high standard and is well suited to the needs of the students. Effective use of the environment contributes to overall learning, providing students with a wealth of resources and materials to enhance their education. Students have their own rooms that they can personalise and they take pride in their surroundings. There is a comprehensive programme of refurbishment to ensure the high standard of accommodation is maintained and improved.

## Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

All interested parties can find accurate information about the school in a comprehensive prospectus that clearly sets out the philosophy and the operation of the school. All parents receive a welcome pack that provides them with all they need to know about the school's practices, and information is available to students in a child-friendly format.

Students are able to live a full and active life at the school. Staffing levels enable students to participate in a whole range of individual and group activities both on site and in the community. Staffing arrangements are exceptional with each house base having a stable team of care staff providing a high degree of consistency for the students. The current staff team is able to cover sickness and absence and there has been no use of agency staff in the school. Night staff are coordinated by a separate manager which ensures highly effective cover for students during the night time. The senior management team make six unannounced visits during the year to monitor night time practice to further safeguard students during this vulnerable time.

Students are cared for by a competent and diverse staff team who have a good range of skills and experience. The organisation and management of staff shifts promote best childcare practices as there is always a senior member of staff coordinating the shift to enable things to run smoothly. The school's senior management team are exceptionally experienced and well qualified and provide staff with a strong degree of support and leadership. Staff are well trained with all staff completing a comprehensive induction and excellent opportunities for more specific training opportunities linked into the needs of the students. Staff feel confident about working with students and are encouraged to contribute developmental ideas so they remain motivated and enthusiastic in their roles.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the holistic needs of each student resulting in highly individualised care being provided. Detailed monitoring of individual outcomes ensures each student's potential is recognised and advanced. Students often come to the school having been excluded from mainstream society and stigmatised because of their difference. The school works with each student to gain the skills and confidence to feel valued and included into mainstream society. The school prompts students to think of others needs and problems, for example by taking part in fund-raising activities. The school promotes diversity by encouraging students to be involved in cultural events, such as an Indian dining experience and by covering current world issues in assembly and circle times.

The school has excellent systems in place for monitoring students' progress. Meticulous records and sophisticated systems for interpreting these enable issues to be identified quickly and action taken to ensure things are addressed appropriately. External monitoring is undertaken by an independent visitor who carries out a thorough audit of school practices and makes recommendations for improvement. The school is efficiently run and benefits from a dynamic and innovative management team who are constantly striving for further improvement through evaluative and reflective practice.



## 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.