

St Rose's School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Clare Davies
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Date of last inspection	30 September 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 school is a co-educational, non-maintained, Roman Catholic day and residential school. It caters for children and young people with physical disabilities and associated sensory, communication and learning difficulties aged between two and 19 years. A multidisciplinary team of health professionals are employed by the school to provide individualised programmes of therapy.

Residential accommodation is available in three buildings on site. Full-time boarding is available as well as flexi boarding. The school closes every other weekend and holiday periods so the maximum boarding period is for two weeks. At the time of this inspection there were 12 boarders and 28 day pupils.

Summary

This announced inspection focused on all the key national minimum standards for residential special schools. The school provides an overall satisfactory outcome for boarders with some areas outstanding in enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and in the promotion of equality and diversity. There are 13 recommendations made in relation to being healthy, staying safe and organisation.

The school is very well resourced with trained staff, specialist equipment and aids for communicating with young people with special needs. Care staff and teaching staff work well together for the benefit of the young people, complemented by the input of therapists and health professionals making up the multidisciplinary team. There is an individual approach and staff have a good understanding of the complex needs associated with the young people for whom they care.

There has been a lack of self assessment to identify where the national minimum standards have not been met. Recommendations have been made in relation to updating policies, ensuring full comprehensive records are made, improving the monitoring of care delivered and applying a more rigorous approach to staff recruitment and the administration of medication.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

There were two recommendations made at the last inspection to improve practice in the outcome area of staying safe, these have been satisfactorily addressed. Parents have been provided with contact details for Ofsted and the school has a policy on whistle blowing.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff encourage young people to live healthy lifestyles while they are staying at the school and this has been recognised by receiving the Activemark and Sportsmark awards. Young people's physical, emotional and mental health needs are generally addressed well by the service. Young people's health care needs are particularly well highlighted in care planning documentation. This ensures staff respond appropriately to individual needs and the care plans promote

consistency of care given. The multidisciplinary team of speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and nurses work together with education and care staff to deliver tailored programmes of therapy. The school has not verified that the nurses employed are currently registered through the Nursing and Midwifery Council. These checks will verify that nurses have maintained an updated level of training to support their professional registration.

Staff receive training to ensure young people's health care needs are met. For example, all staff are trained in first aid and a nurse conducts specialist training on site for staff involving methods of assisted eating and the management of epilepsy. The school does not always maintain up-to-date records to reflect this training. There are good working relationships with some paediatric consultants who conduct appointments at school. This allows the young people to remain in a comfortable environment and avoid the need to travel to a hospital. Parents can participate in such appointments at the school and key staff can contribute to the consultation. This means staff receive information about any changes to treatment or medication so it can be implemented quickly.

Parents are fully informed about their child's health while at school and although consent has been obtained for some medical treatment and the administration of homely remedies it has not been sought for first aid, optical and dental treatment. Qualified nurses take prime responsibility for administering medication to young people. However, the policy does not support best practice as promoted through the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain. Sometimes medication is dispensed for care staff to administer at a later time. Although such medication is securely stored and labelled, this practice has the potential for errors to occur.

This school has been awarded 'Healthy School' status and has a five star award from the local authority for food hygiene standards. The whole school is involved by supporting 'the fruit of the week' as selected by pupils. The school kitchen serves home made dishes using local produce where possible. Catering staff are trained in food hygiene practices and produce menus to reflect nutritious options. Older students are involved in choosing the evening and weekend menus for their residential setting and they enjoy a cookery club after school where they prepare and cook the evening meal. Older students are involved in meal planning, shopping and budgeting linked to their life skills programme. The kitchen in the residential area for older students is well equipped and designed to assist with physical disabilities. The main house only has access to the school kitchen and is not a suitable environment for young people to make drinks or snacks; this can be done safely from the dining room with staff support.

The therapists are integrated well into school life and there is always a speech and language therapist present during lunchtimes. Risk assessments have identified young people at risk of choking and plans regarding how to support them and respond have been written on cards. These excellent documents are available at mealtimes ensuring young people receive immediate support and appropriate reactions to their eating and drinking needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

There are sound systems in place for safeguarding the welfare of young people. Behaviour management works well in practice where praise and reward are promoted. With the limitations imposed by the young people's complex needs, staff rarely need or use sanctions. The shortfalls in meeting the national minimum standards relate to the staff not having received accredited

training in physical intervention and de-escalation techniques, similarly the records of any physical intervention or sanctions do not provide the information as required by the standards. The school report they have not had the need to physically intervene but without suitable training, there is the potential for young people with challenging behaviour to be managed inappropriately.

Staff show respect for the privacy and dignity of young people. This is balanced with high levels of supervision and policies on delivering personal and intimate care. Parents are advised of the complaints procedure through their handbook and the young people's guide includes picture symbols on how to complain. However, for some young people, their ability to register concerns or complain about being unhappy is extremely limited. Staff build up a good understanding of their moods and feelings and can act as an advocate to ensure that any concerns or issues that they become aware of are dealt with appropriately. Behaviour such as bullying and leaving the site without permission is very rare as young people receive good levels of supervision at all times. School policies advise staff on how to respond to such situations.

Staff have a good awareness of safeguarding procedures and the importance to pass any concerns or allegations to the headteacher or head of care. Staff and governors receive regular training on safeguarding issues and the policy has been updated. The school provides young people with a good level of physical safety and security across the site. During the construction of a new hydrotherapy pool and other buildings there are clear written agreements between the school and the contractor identifying permitted and non-permitted areas during the construction period.

Positive steps are taken to ensure that young people, staff and visitors are safe from the risk of fire during the school day. However, there are no records to show that any practice in evacuating from the residential areas occurred during 2009, the most recent drill was held in March this year. There are regular checks and servicing of fire safety and detection equipment, supported by a fire risk assessment. There is a range of risk assessments for on and off site activities, the environment and individual young people, these are regularly reviewed and updated as required. All new staff are subject to safer recruitment checks such as clearance through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and receipt of two references before starting work with children and young people. The school has not routinely contacted each referee to verify references and records do not confirm that gaps in employment have been thoroughly explored. These omissions mean that the recruitment procedures are not robust in safeguarding young people.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Each young person has an individual education plan which is regularly reviewed. Young people's educational progress at the school is promoted through strong communication methods between the school and the residential provision, usually face to face at times of transition. Independence training programmes linked to Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) are developed to promote various life skills for young people. The school works closely with parents to ensure consistency in this area. Various school resources are accessible to the young people who board to support learning during evenings and weekends. For example, computers, sports and play equipment, indoor space for games and activities. A programme of events is arranged each evening. This varies from sporting activities to sensory play, and some involvement

in youth groups, integrating with able bodied young people. Those who enjoy sport have the opportunity to participate in local and national events.

Young people receive highly individualised care and support. Considerable effort is put into combining social, education, care and health needs into a package that meets young people's individual needs. Every effort is made to enable young people to communicate as fully as possible using whatever method of communication is most suited to them. This allows them choice and more control in their lives and enables them to have input into how their individual needs are met.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There are formal opportunities where young people are consulted such as the school council, surveys and weekly meetings for the older students. As a result of listening to the views of young people the television lounge has been redecorated in the main house and an additional games console purchased. Young people have been consulted about the refurbishment of the kitchens for older students that now have height adjustable surfaces and equipment installed. The school council discuss issues such as the environment, recycling, business enterprise, fundraising and student surveys. The council produced the pupil handbook which is illustrated with photographs and symbols; this is a useful document for any new pupil wondering what it is like at this school.

Prior to joining this school a comprehensive assessment is undertaken involving the young person and their family to identify care and education needs. Therapists from the multidisciplinary team assess the effect that the physical and sensory disability has on the young person's development and considers how the school can meet these needs and encourage progress. A residential placement can progress at the pace of the young person and can build up to the maximum of a two week period with the school closing for weekends every fortnight and for school holidays. Older students in the post 16 department receive guidance and support in preparing to leave this school and to transfer the independence skills they have learnt into a college based environment. Connexions, a service for young people preparing for adult life, have advisors who regularly visit the school and staff support students by accompanying them on visits to prospective colleges or similar.

Each young person has a care plan setting out their needs and how they will be met. These are excellent documents covering every aspect of a young person's needs while at this school. Staff teams work together to complement their therapeutic programmes ensuring there is a holistic approach to meeting individual needs. An excellent use of photographs supports staff in delivering consistent care by following the care plans.

Young people are supported by staff in maintaining contact with their families while they are resident at the school. Parents are able to make telephone contact and visit by arrangement, some live at a great distance and therefore visiting is more difficult. Care and education staff maintain good communication with parents and senior staff make themselves available. In addition to open days, parent evenings and review meetings the school offers a parent support group where training is available and information sharing with other parents of young people with special needs.

The school makes great efforts to make a positive contribution to their local community. The school has partnership agreements with mainstream primary and secondary schools, and community partnerships such as a further education college, an adult opportunities centre and a gym club integrating with able bodied children and young people. As a school they frequently participate in local events and welcome the community into their school when hosting events such as a musical prom inviting other schools to participate.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The accommodation suitably meets the needs of young people with physical disabilities who may also have sensory, communication and learning difficulties. Most areas are wheelchair accessible and specialised personal care equipment is available such as hoists and height adjustable beds and baths.

The residential accommodation is structured over two buildings currently, with a third building available to meet the demand of future referrals. A wing of the main house provides accommodation over two floors for young people under 16 years and for those older students that require nursing care overnight. There is a mixture of single and shared bedrooms though one single room is significantly smaller than the others. Currently all young people have their own bedroom where they have been able to personalise their space with posters, pictures, toys and belongings. Two bedrooms are located on the ground floor of the main house and they have access to bathrooms nearby. There is some good bathroom provision in the house and some that is in need of updating and redecoration. The bathrooms that have been decorated and upgraded provide a far better experience for young people receiving personal care.

The house has a play room with sensory toys and equipment. In addition there is a television lounge with a games console. Other rooms provide a chapel for prayer and reflection, and a family room for visitors. Young people residing in the main house use the school dining room for mealtimes. The layout of the residential accommodation in the house does not define a designated area for boarders as offices are located between the lounge and ground floor bedrooms, this could impede on young people's privacy.

Another building provides residential accommodation for students attending the post-16 education provision. This purpose built accommodation is on one level with access by a lift to a lower level for the education and therapy rooms. Single and twin bedrooms are spacious and personalised with young people's belongings. Most have en-suite bathroom facilities with overhead tracking for use of hoists, and there are specialist equipment and aids installed in other bathrooms. A very large living area provides for watching television, using a computer and other activities. At the other end of the room is a kitchen area with access to low level surfaces and equipment to promote independent skills. Young people reported that they liked their accommodation and enjoyed decorating their bedrooms with their artwork and pictures.

The school is situated in pleasant grounds and there are plans for a new hydrotherapy pool and a sensory garden to be completed by the end of the year.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. There is a culture of inclusion where every young person is valued for their contribution to the school community. The school participates in the Comenius programme sponsored by the British Council to develop knowledge and understanding among young people and education staff of the diversity of European cultures and languages, and the value of this diversity. Three members of staff and a pupil have visited Germany and the school also participates in a Global Curriculum Project where they have linked with a school in the Philippines. The school has invited overseas visitors to join them in the autumn for International Peace Day when they will take part in the local international flag ceremony. This is a Catholic school that welcomes children, young people and staff from other faiths. Equality of opportunity is made wherever possible for young people to experience enjoying and achieving. The school is well resourced with trained staff, specialist equipment, and aids to communicating with young people.

Suitable information is available to parents and young people about the boarding provision at the school. The pupil handbook is a child-friendly document with good use of colour photographs, pictures and symbols. There are very good staffing levels and the dedicated residential staff team receive support from classroom staff when there are shortages. This ensures continuity of care for young people and the development of existing relationships.

Residential staff are encouraged and supported to undertake appropriate training such as; safeguarding, health and safety, first aid, moving and handling, managing epilepsy. Less than 80% of care staff have achieved the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 award in caring for children and young people. Records of staff training are insufficient with a lack of personal development plans. The head of care has achieved NVQ at level 4 in management and as a qualified nurse is able to train care staff in some medical procedures. The residential staff feel very well supported in doing their job and meet formally with their line manager in addition to ad hoc discussions and team meetings. Their commitment to the young people is strong and it is evident that they enjoy working with them and providing a positive experience while at school.

There are some systems to monitor the care of young people and the development of the service, this monitoring is not effective and fails to identify all the shortfalls. Representatives of the governing body visit the residential provision and provide written reports of their findings however these reports do not always include all the matters listed in the national minimum standards such as seeking the views of staff members and young people.

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 that the school has obtained, and retains on file for each child, prior written permission from a person or body with parental responsibility for that child, for the administration of first aid and appropriate non-prescription medication and to seek medical, optical or dental treatment when required (NMS 14.10)
- ensure that where the school employs a nurse, that staff member holds a current registration as a nurse and the school has confirmed on appointment that they are registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMS 14.11)
- ensure there is a policy and written guidance, implemented in practice for administering and storing medication (NMS 14.17)
- ensure the school has a stated policy on the use of physical intervention which is consistent with any relevant current government guidance on approved methods of physical intervention. All staff of the school are to be aware of, and follow in practice, the school's policy on use and techniques of physical intervention (NMS 10.11)
- ensure that the school provides or secures the provision of training for staff in safe and appropriate physical intervention techniques with children and young people, and the circumstances in which they may be used, which includes training in reducing or avoiding the need to use physical intervention (NMS 10.12)
- ensure records of any sanction or physical intervention includes the details as specified in the national minimum standards (NMS 10.9 & 10.14)
- ensure children, young people and staff know the emergency evacuation procedures for the school including those for use at night, in case of fire, and confirm that they have regularly practised such evacuation through fire drills. In particular from the residential areas that includes evacuation from the first floor of the house (NMS 26.5)
- ensure that the school's system for recruiting staff includes all of the elements listed in standard 27.2. In particular, direct contact by the school with each referee to verify the reference and an explanation of any gaps in employment or application form, with a written record by the school that explanations for any gaps have been sought and are satisfactory (NMS 27.2)
- ensure the school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets, all of a good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children and young people. In particular, upgrade the bathrooms in the main house that are of a significantly poorer standard than other bathrooms (NMS 25.1)
- ensure that subject to needs of individual staff there are programmes of training available. In particular, maintain records of any training undertaken, for individual staff, and in order to monitor the skills and training needs of the care team as a whole (NMS 29.4)
- ensure that a minimum ratio of 80% of care staff have completed their NVQ level 3 in caring for children and young people or have qualifications which demonstrate the same competencies as the NVQ (NMS 31.4)
- ensure that the head or senior member of staff, delegated by the head to do so, monitors and signs records as listed in standard 32.2 to identify any patterns or issues requiring action, and takes any required follow up or consequential action (NMS 32.2)
- ensure that the monitoring visits by the governing body report on the matters as listed in the standard (NMS 33.3).