

# Farleigh College

Inspection report for residential special school

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC033016
<b>Inspection date</b>	5 March 2010
<b>Inspector</b>	Maire Atherton
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Address</b>	Newbury Manor Newbury Frome Somerset BA11 3RG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01373 814980
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Priory Education Services Ltd
<b>Head of care</b>	Alun Maddocks
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Helen Sharpe
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	23 March 2009

---

© Crown copyright 2010

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

## 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**

Farleigh College is a co-educational, residential and day school providing education and specialist care for young people who have a statement of special educational need with a core diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome or other related disorders. Placing authorities are generally local authorities.

The college accommodates young people between the ages of 11 and 17 years. At the time of the inspection there were 30 residential and 12 day students. The main building, a grade two listed Queen Anne house, accommodates four residential units: Ridgeway for younger pupils, Avebury and Silbury for older boys, and Avalon, which is for girls only. The college also has two separate houses in local communities which provide additional accommodation.

Farleigh College is part of the Priory Group, a large national agency providing health, social and children's residential care across a range of care services.

### **Summary**

A new senior management team has been appointed since the beginning of this academic year. The clear leadership provided by management bringing the strands of care, therapy and education together is providing staff with good support systems. Young people are benefiting from increasingly consistent care from a well-motivated and enthusiastic staff team.

Ten recommendations have been made, these primarily relate to policy development and recording systems.

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 18 recommendations made following the last inspection. There were three recommendations about medication and these have been addressed. The system for obtaining parental consents has been updated to include first aid. Health care plans have been introduced and this will be commented on in the being healthy section of this report. Menus do not reflect all the food served to young people and this recommendation has been repeated.

There were five recommendations made in staying safe. Two related to privacy, both have been met. A new pay phone has been installed that affords young people greater privacy and the office space has been improved where this was possible. Ofsted's contact details are now included in the young people's guide. Child protection and bullying recording systems have been improved. Complaints recording will be reported on in the staying safe section. Staff recruitment files do not evidence that all the required checks have been undertaken and this recommendation is repeated.

There are formal systems in place, including regular unit meetings, to gain the views of the young people about decisions that affect their day-to-day lives.

There were six recommendations made under the outcome organisation and these have all been met. Staff morale has significantly improved under a new management team that provides them with the support, training and time necessary in their roles in caring for young people.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

The staff team work hard to promote the health and well-being of young people. There is a developing holistic approach, through formal weekly meetings using the skills and knowledge of the therapy team to support residential staff in their work with the young people. The therapy team comprises a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist and an independent trained counsellor. The health plans in place are a work in progress but are not underpinned by any health promotion policy and guidance. Emergency health care needs are met by the local GP surgery, a parent commented 'they were brilliant when my son was taken ill'. Eighty four per cent of pupils report that they are well cared for when ill. Routine appointments are managed by parents as young people remain registered with their own GPs. This can cause difficulties for staff in obtaining the full healthcare information that is required. Professional external support needs for individual young people are well identified and obtained. Young people's medication is appropriately stored and administered. A new medication system is to be introduced in the summer term 2010, underpinned by regular training and oversight by a national dispensing chemist. There is a clear accident reporting system in place which is effectively monitored.

The school adopts a very flexible approach in ensuring that young people can benefit from a balanced and varied diet. Well-equipped kitchens and dining rooms both off- and on-site provide young people with opportunities to budget, shop and cook meals of their choice. Those living on-site also have choices about where they eat lunch and evening meals, either in the main dining room or in the units. It remains the case that menus at the college do not accurately reflect the variety of food provided for young people. Young people feel that there is some room for improvement in the food provided. For example, there is a wide range of salad options at lunch time but young people would like to see more choice of hot options. The cook asks the student council for their suggestions but there has been limited feedback to date. Kitchen staff are experienced in meeting special dietary requirements. There are robust arrangements in place for staff to receive relevant training and there is clear guidance on assured safe catering, which is monitored by the organisation. The catering kitchen is located in the basement and staff are adept at meeting the significant challenges they face to get the food where it needs to be, particularly when the lift is not working. There are no specific risk assessments in place with regard to these issues.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people say that the staff respect their privacy, for example by giving them a cordless phone so that they can make calls from their bedrooms. Young people confirm that room searches are done in accordance with the guidance and they understand why these take place.

Information about how to make a complaint is readily available to young people, on notice boards for example, and young people cite a number of adults that they could talk to if they had a complaint or problem. There is some variation in the perception of how complaints are

managed. Some young people are happy with the process while others report some dissatisfaction. Complaints made orally are not routinely recorded or regarded as formal complaints. There is a not system in place for managing and responding to informal complaints.

There are robust systems in place for providing all staff with the level of training in child protection commensurate with their role in the school. There are effective links both with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and those of children placed at the school should this be necessary. The school has good systems in place for notifying those who need to know of any significant issues that occur.

There has been considerable work in the school, including the use of external speakers, to inform young people about the anti-bullying policy and the procedures that are in place. This work has been led by a designated member of staff. Initially this raised the profile of bullying and increased the number of bullying reports that young people made to staff. These reports can be made in person or anonymously in writing. Young people confirm that the school manages any instances of bullying well. One young person said 'They're good with verbal bullying'. The monitoring of bullying reports has led to the development of strategies to reduce bullying, such as increased staff deployment at identified 'hot spots' for example.

There is clear guidance for staff to follow in the event of a young person being absent without permission. No such absences have resulted in a young person being reported as missing but some instances of brief unauthorised absence are not fully recorded.

The majority of young people say that the school promotes good behaviour by the use of incentives and rewards, using a points based system that they understand. One young person outlined the different strategies he has been encouraged to use which he feels have really helped him manage his responses to challenges. Young people also talk very positively about their relationships with staff and their interactions are warm, open and inclusive. The majority of young people express the view that physical intervention is used as a last option by staff when they have tried everything else. Staff receive training in the approved behaviour management technique used in the school, with an emphasis on distraction, deflection and diversion. There are individual behaviour management plans in place for each young person. The records show a decrease in the number of physical interventions and there is a strategy in place to continue the reduction of such incidents. This is supported by good monitoring and a change to the debriefing system, which gives young people the opportunity to express their views. These views have not routinely been recorded. Young people feel that sanctions are fair and appropriate.

The school provides young people with a safe environment. The designated health and safety officer has good systems in place to ensure that the maintenance and servicing of equipment, fire detection for example, takes place at the required intervals. There is a range of risk assessments in place, individual and environmental, with annual reviews at a minimum and updates when necessary.

The recruitment process as outlined by staff is not fully supported by the documentary evidence on staff files. This shortfall has the potential to put young people at risk. A new appointment has been made to create a human resources role. The post holder has developed systems to monitor compliance with the policies and procedures in place.

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

The provision is good.

There are effective working relationships between care staff and teachers that promote and support the education of the young people. Each young person has an individual education plan. Young people give examples of how they benefit from a flexible approach that is tailored and responsive to individual need, such as being supported to leave the classroom when distressed and return later.

Young people speak positively about the activities that are offered during the evening and at weekends. Group activities at weekends include bowling and trips to the cinema and a water park, with 'Wireworld' being a particular favourite. Examples of individual activities are cadets, scouts and dance classes, all using community based groups. Birthdays are celebrated with considerable care, sensitivity and much enjoyment. Unstructured time may be spent using the computers, watching television and playing games, with support and supervision by staff as required.

There are generally good systems in place to identify and support the individual needs of the young people, both using a formal framework, meetings and the written plans, and informally on a responsive basis as needs arise. The latter is achieved through the positive relationships that exist between staff and students. The introduction of weekly education, therapy and care meetings (known as ETC) that focus on one young person at a time is informing the development of different strategies in individual work with young people. Additional support needs that may arise from a young person's culture or ethnicity are not well identified. The independent counsellor is on site twice a week and is known and accessible to the young people.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people express considerably different views about how well they feel their opinions are heard with 'sometimes staff listen and sometimes they don't' being the majority view. A parent also commented 'New student forum doesn't actually listen, there as good practice but does not take on what they say'. The minutes show that young people contribute to the agenda but there is no evidence of follow up from one meeting to the next. Unit meetings are becoming established to enable young people to have a say in the day-to-day decision-making process. Some young people struggle with the formal group approach and staff are good at gaining opinions from individuals on issues that affect them directly, one unit has a comments box. Two young people have successfully negotiated having pets at school, using well constructed arguments supported by care planning and risk assessment tools.

There is a clear admission process, tailored to individual young people on the basis of their initial assessment, with some moving to full boarding immediately and others adopting an incremental approach, starting with a couple of nights and building up. There are a number of plans in place for each young person. Some are good and reviews show that the young people are achieving targets and setting new ones. Other plans do not show this, with targets being repeated without evidence of thorough consideration that the targets should remain unchanged or what the support needs are to achieve the targets.

Young people are supported and encouraged to maintain contact with family and friends as appropriate in accordance with the care plans in place.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The residential accommodation provided is maintained to a good standard and provides young people with warm, comfortable bedrooms and living areas. The majority of young people have single rooms that they like, with sufficient space and storage. The school is creative in the use of space but improvements, such as replacing windows, are hampered by the grade two listed status of the building. Since the last inspection a second off-site house has been leased which provides excellent accommodation, with spacious, attractive living areas and single bedrooms. This has provided opportunities for young people to join groups in the local community. The other house has two self-contained bedsit rooms which provide young people with opportunities to develop independent living skills.

Since the last inspection access to the on-site residential provision is restricted during lesson time by the use of electronic door locks. This ensures that staff know who is in the main house at these times.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The college has a clear statement of its care principles and practice which is provided to all young people, their parents and placing authorities. This is supported by additional information, such as the prospectus, the website and the young person's handbook. The statement was reviewed in September 2009 to recognise the change in registration with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, to 65 young people aged 11 to 19 years. In line with this the school is looking to provide additional off-site accommodation in satellite houses.

Young people speak positively about the staff that work in their residential units. Staff are enthusiastic about and committed to the work they do with young people. There is no written staffing policy in place so it is not possible to fully evaluate the adequacy of the staffing levels. Young people confirm that there are a minimum of two staff on duty on each of the units. Records show that the number of staff on shift is increased in accordance with the needs and number of the young people. Staff also work flexibly across units, to support identified needs on the basis of established relationships. On occasion cover is provided by staff from other units or agency staff. This is not the preference of some young people. The college has secured agreement to recruit two more staff in addition to the four staff vacancies that have been advertised. There is a clear structure to the staffing with each unit having a team leader. Three senior team leaders provide additional management support and flexibility to meet changing needs as they arise.

There have been major changes to the management since the last inspection, one student commented 'I've been here 18 months and I've seen 3 heads'. Between April 2009 and September 2009 interim arrangements were put in place, supported by the regional manager. A new principal was appointed in September 2009 and at the same time the deputy head of care was made acting head of care to cover the absence of the post holder. An appointment to the new post of head of education was made in January 2010. The management changes have not routinely been communicated effectively to the parents.

Young people benefit from a strong leadership team that supports and communicates with staff effectively and brings care, therapy and education together achieving a more consistent



approach. Staff feel valued and empowered and appreciate the open door policy that the management team has adopted. This has been underpinned by regular supervision, team meetings and a commitment to and time for training. Currently, 50% of the staff team have completed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 and 50% are working towards this qualification. Some staff are working towards NVQ at level 4.

The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. There is a strong emphasis on equal opportunities and staff promote sensitivity, awareness and respect for difference. This is not reflected in the records, which identify needs in relation to disability but not culture or ethnicity.

There are good systems in place for monitoring the welfare of young people at the school, both by the senior management team and the nominated visitor.

## 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
----------	--------	----------

### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop a health promotion policy (breach of national minimum standard 14.4)
- ensure menus accurately reflect all foods served (breach of national minimum standard 15.4)
- complete a risk assessment for the movement of food from the kitchen to the dining areas (NMS 26)
- develop a robust system for recording and reporting responses to informal complaints (breach of national minimum standard 4.3)
- ensure that all instances of unauthorised absence are fully recorded (breach of national minimum standard 8.6)
- ensure that young people's views of incidents are recorded in the school records (breach of national minimum standard 10.14)
- ensure staff files contain all the information required (breach of national minimum standard 27.2)
- ensure school council minutes reflect the outcome of the issues discussed (breach of national minimum standard 2.1)
- ensure the plans for each young person detail both the support required to meet the needs identified, including any arising from background or culture, and how staff are to assist young people to achieve the targets set (breach of national minimum standard 17.5)

- develop a staffing policy in accordance with NMS 28.2. (breach of national minimum standard 28.2)