

Fosse Way School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Wilfried Maxfield
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	5 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

Fosse Way School is located in the town of Radstock. It provides education for students aged three to 19 years who have a statement of special educational need. In addition, it offers weekly residential provision for 12 students who have autistic spectrum disorders. Whilst the majority of these students will be between 11 and 18 years of age, where appropriate, accommodation may be made available to those aged 19 or 20.

The residential unit is purpose built and provides well designed accommodation and facilities for the students. Local shops and amenities can be easily accessed to provide after-school activities.

Summary

This was an announced key inspection of the school. All of the key national minimum standards for residential special schools were inspected on this occasion.

As part of the inspection process children, young people, their parents and carers were offered the opportunity to anonymously complete pre-inspection questionnaires. Judgements contained in this report are made from evidence obtained from pre-inspection material, views expressed in questionnaires and from information gathered during the inspection.

This inspection found that the school offers outstanding levels of care to the students living in its boarding facility. Parents also praise the exceptional quality of care given and commend the school for its outstanding commitment to their children's development.

Fosse Way School fully complies with the national minimum standards and subsequently 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

Since the last inspection the school has revised its staff recruitment and vetting procedures and has implemented all elements of its safer recruitment and selection policy. All pre-appointment checks for residential staff are now fully compliant with the national minimum standards for residential special schools. Additional improvements have been made to the recording of menus since the last inspection. A detailed record of menus (as served) is now available for every child and young person. The recording of sanctions has been reviewed and the record has been improved. All measures are now being recorded correctly.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The staff group's commitment to the physical, emotional and mental well-being of children and young people is outstanding. Excellent care planning identifies health needs and a robust process of regular reviews ensures that staff know how to implement the school's preferred strategies. Effective arrangements are in place to secure external medical advice if and when needed. Staff are provided with effective training and supervision and are able to support

children with a wide range of complex medical conditions. Children and young people benefit from an excellent range of therapeutic interventions.

Robust systems support safe healthcare including the administration of medication and the recording of significant medical events. Young people's medication is administered by competent staff. Medication is kept securely, recording and stock controls are good. Safe and reliable hand-over procedures between school and parents are in place. Communication with parents on possible changes and adjustments to medication regimes is excellent.

The school provides a healthy lifestyle for young people combined with a good diet. All meals are well presented, tasty, healthy and nutritious. Children with particular dietary needs and eating disorders are exceedingly well supported. Records of menus are good and reflect those planned and those actually served. Mealtimes are strongly supported and staff are competent and committed to making this a beneficial and enjoyable occasion. Dining rooms are well furnished and appropriate for the needs of the children and young people. All staff are trained in safe food handling and hygiene.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The boarding accommodation provides good privacy for all residents. Staff follow strict guidance to ensure that sensitive areas are entered appropriately and respectfully at all times. Care plans contain good detail on intimate personal care needs and staff implement the schools preferred strategies to promote dignity and respect. Confidential records are kept securely in the residential setting as well as the central office. Staff are aware of the confidentiality policy and know how to share sensitive information.

The school's complaints policy enables everyone to make representations in the best interest of children and young people. A variety of communication tools are available and staff know how to support residents who want to voice a concern.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are overseen by a designated officer who has been trained in child protection at an advanced level. The school forms part of a network of local schools providing support and training to its staff groups and has strong links with the local safeguarding authorities. The designated child protection officer implements a robust approach in delivering training and updating the school's staff teams on the latest safeguarding policies. Staff are able to demonstrate an excellent knowledge of safeguarding and protection issues.

Staff have been trained to provide a vigilant and pro-active approach to the prevention of incidents of bullying. Concerns are highlighted and risk assessed if and when needed. The school maintains a record of 'e-safety issues and cyber bullying' after recent incidents have affected students. There is a clear strategy which involves cooperation with parents and carers in order to resolve the effects of such incidents. There have been no incidents of young people being absent without authority since the last inspection.

The school has excellent levels of experience and expertise in working with students who display challenging behaviours. Residential and school staff are trained in a specific method of de-escalation and the prevention of challenging incidents. Behaviour management plans are good and outline individual needs and best responses. Staff can demonstrate an exceptional depth of knowledge regarding young people's underlying psychological needs and are able to

set clear and meaningful boundaries. There are good and well maintained records of any incidences of physical intervention and sanctions.

Students enjoy safe and well maintained residential accommodation. A dedicated health and safety officer implements a methodical programme of upgrading the boarding premises. Fire equipment, such as alarms and emergency lighting, is checked regularly. The boarding environment and all of the equipment specific to students needs, is robustly risk assessed as is the use of the school's swimming pool and other areas in regular use. Boarding house staff have been provided with a detailed fire emergency evacuation procedure.

The school's senior management team has substantially strengthened the implementation of the safer recruitment and selection policy and procedure. Newly recruited staff only start employment when all of the necessary safeguarding checks are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school promotes and celebrates individual achievement. Parents praise staff for enabling children and young people to enjoy learning and work towards independence and achieve their individual potential. The structure supports a strong working together of education and care by integrating staff groups. Care staff are therefore in an excellent position to know and meet a range of needs in both fields. Special educational support placement plans provide outstanding assessment detail. Residential students enjoy a meaningful stay with excellent recreational opportunities. Activities are designed to support the general curriculum.

The school offers excellent help, guidance and support when needed or requested by the children and young people or their families. Staff can demonstrate how they contribute to children's individualised support in line with their needs and their care plan. Personal, social and health education is given to each child individually, when appropriate, according to individual development. A well managed and supportive key worker system is in place for each young person. Key workers provide students with outstanding levels of commitment and support.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Parents and carers describe the levels of contact and consultation with the school as excellent. Their opinions and views are actively sought and regular reviews provide formal opportunities for children, families and others to express their views. Children are encouraged to participate and contribute if they are able and are encouraged to give feedback on specific areas such the quality of activities, food and their immediate environment. A 'link book' encourages and promotes the flow of information between school, parents and carers.

Children and young people enjoy positive and sound relationships with staff based on mutual respect and understanding. Parents and carers praise the staff group, in questionnaires, for maintaining positive relationships with the group of children and young people.

All admission and leaving processes are clearly planned and agreed with all relevant parties. The quality of placement planning is excellent. Plans often contain an exceptional level of detail and insight and are able to demonstrate a deep commitment to the needs of young people. Where applicable, the statutory reviewing process is implemented and contributes to a child's

placement plan. All care plans are constructed with the help and assistance of parents and are normally approved by them. All students have regular and lively contact with their families throughout the week and all residents go home at weekends.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Student's independence is encouraged and promoted. Systematic transition planning is in place from Year 9 onwards and includes consultation with external agencies and the planned induction to new placements if and when required. Clear and practical independence targets are in place promoting consistency and the transference of skills. Residential staff contribute to the implementation of objectives and strategies and actively utilise the boarding home for domestic skills development.

The school has developed and enhanced the boarding environment over time and some improvements have again been made since the last inspection. This includes the upgrading of doors and individual bedrooms. The provision is well maintained, clean and comfortably furnished. Young people's rooms are spacious and contain personal items. A large number have been designed and furnished to an excellent standard and in consultation with students and their parents. All communal areas are well presented and comfortably furnished. There are sufficient bathrooms and toilets. These are all in good working order. Facilities for study, leisure time and activities are excellent.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The Statement of Purpose constitutes a somewhat basic document which does not sufficiently reflect on and characterise the many outstanding features of the boarding provision and its excellent integration into the school. There is good procedural guidance for staff. All documents evidence the actual current practice of boarding care and education. Secure and confidential records are kept for each student. Records are well monitored and regularly updated.

There are an appropriate number of staff to meet the needs of the students in the residential unit, both during the day and at night. The residential boarding provision is always well staffed. Key staff have been working together for many years and provide outstanding levels of consistency of care. Students benefit from an experienced core staff team which is well trained, supervised and supported. Staff training needs are identified and met through a rigorous process of performance management.

A very competent and well qualified acting residential manager is in post on a temporary basis in order to stand in for the Registered Manager who is on long term leave. The acting manager enjoys the support of his staff team and the senior management team.

The senior management group monitors and signs records according to the requirements of the relevant national minimum standard. A trustee carries out unannounced monitoring visits on behalf of the governing body.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Individual differences are celebrated and respected. Student's achievements and their abilities are developed in the context of their

individuality. Children with a wide range of learning needs are integrated into a lively learning community based on mutual care and respect.

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.