

St. Andrew's School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
Type of Inspection	Key

Address	St. Andrew's School St. Andrew's View DERBY DE21 4EW 01332 832746
Telephone number	
Email	head@standrews.derby.sch.uk
Registered person	Derby City Council
Head of care	Philip Roy Harrison
Head / Principal	Philip Roy Harrison
Date of last inspection	15 October 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

St Andrew's School is a local authority co-educational residential special school for students aged between 11 and 19 years old. The aim of the residential provision is to provide opportunities for students with severe learning difficulties and/or autism to develop further independence skills based on the 24-hour curriculum. The residential service operates from Monday to Friday and students can access this on a full-time or a part-time basis dependent upon their identified needs.

The school is set in a suburb of Derby city and has good transport links. There is a school minibus available for students to use when it is not possible to walk or use public transport to access community facilities.

Staffing levels are based on the needs of the students. There are a minimum of four care staff on the morning shifts and a minimum of five care staff on duty on the evening shifts. The head of care works alongside staff to offer additional support where needed. During the night there are two waking night staff and two staff on sleep-in duty which includes one staff member sleeping in The Bungalow.

The residential provision consists of three areas in the main building and a three bedroom bungalow. All areas have their own communal dining and living space, toilets and bathing facilities. All bedrooms are single occupancy.

Students actively contributed to this report and were present throughout the three day inspection. There are currently 19 boys and 4 girls receiving a service.

Summary

This was an announced full inspection, which concentrated on the key residential special schools national minimum standards under the Every Child Matters outcome groups. All outcome groups were inspected.

St Andrew's is an outstanding school. Students enjoy sleeping in the residential provision and benefit from clear, professional, effective and imaginative management. This coupled with a staff team who are skilled, knowledgeable and enthusiastic provides all students with stimulating and purposeful care.

This inspection found that there are no shortfalls against the standards. However, in order to further develop the good and excellent care seen, one recommendation has been set in economic well-being.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school has reviewed the complaints processes and created a pictorial complaints form. As a result, this process now ensures that it is accessible to all students. A new independent visitor now regularly visits the residential provision. Consequently, this visitor is providing another avenue by which students can raise any issues. Finally, the residential provision has introduced

an achievement form. This, along with existing pictorial surveys, seeks out students' opinions on residential life and also consults them on the wider aspect of their experiences at the school.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Health promotion is a prominent feature at the school. The physical, emotional and mental health needs of each student are actively identified on admission and comprehensively supported throughout their school life. For example, excellent partnership working with physiotherapy and occupational health departments means the school provides holistic care for students.

Staff receive accomplished ongoing training in medication administration and wider medical procedures. Students' medical files are confidential and are kept in a locked cabinet in the medical room. The excellent partnership between the school's student support manager and school nurse means that students receive prolific personal, social and health education. As a result, students are enabled to make informed decisions regarding their diet, sexuality, health and exercise.

Students receive a healthy and nutritious diet and excellent messages about healthy eating. Mealtimes are very pleasant and sociable occasions which unreservedly enhances the social development of all students. Students are actively involved in menu planning, ensuring that their likes and dislikes are catered for. They help tidy away and wash up after mealtimes. One parent commented that the residential provision 'provides pupils opportunities to do everyday jobs so they can learn to look after themselves.'

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Students using the service require varying levels of support and supervision from staff while carrying out personal care. Staff provide this in a way that maintains each student's privacy and dignity. Students are actively supported to raise issues or any concerns that they may have through an accessible complaints process. No complaints from students or parents have been made since the last inspection, however, this subject is always discussed at the many student forums that operate within the school environment.

Staff take their responsibilities seriously for keeping the students safe. They receive annual child protection training and have substantial knowledge about safeguarding students' welfare. As a result, students feel valued and secure. Students comments include, 'I feel very safe at school', 'sleeping at school is good they really look after you.' This view is also confirmed by a parent who wrote 'they always make sure pupils are safe when going out to clubs and doing activities.'

The school and residential provision has actively created a culture where students are easily able to confide in staff if they are being bullied. Courtesy and respect are at the very heart of the school's work and this results in students behaviour being exemplary and bullying being virtually non-existent. This is confirmed by a parent who comments that 'the care shown to my son is superb and we welcome their intervention.'

There are effective systems in place for protecting students who are absent from the school without permission and for notifying and reporting significant events to relevant bodies. There

has been no such incidents since the last inspection. Students are successfully encouraged and supported to behave in ways that will sustain them in the community once they have achieved independence. Staff are focused on providing behavioural boundaries that are fair, consistent and easily understood. As a result, students know what is expected of them and they proudly meet the challenge by eagerly displaying positive behaviour.

Students' health and safety is extensively protected because the school has thorough risk assessments for all aspects of the safety of the premises and grounds, which are implemented successfully in practice. The school operates a robust staff vetting procedure and staff demonstrate a proactive awareness of the need to safeguard students.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school has high expectations of their students and continually sets them challenging targets. As a result, students are successfully enabled to thrive as individuals. They are supported to develop their knowledge, skills and independence through practical and meaningful activities. For example, steel drum practise during which they work together, with their peers, to create wonderful music in an atmosphere of fun and accomplishment.

The links between school and the residential provision are exceptionally strong. Residential staff innovatively support students to take part in activities that actively contribute to individual student's educational progress. Residential staff are familiar with the educational needs and progress of students in their care. This ensures

that students are effectively assisted to learn to be independent.

The school actively acknowledges racial, religious, gender and other differences and encourages open discussion and learning on such issues. Residential students from minority groups are encouraged to develop a positive sense of identity. As a result, they are successfully supported to engage with the wider world.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The views of students are gathered and expressed through a residential student council in which every student participates. One nominated student also acts as a link to the school student council. Meetings have a student chair. Students also take responsibility for writing the minutes. The agenda and other information is produced in word and/or symbol formats so that they are totally accessible to the students.

Students also actively contribute to a document entitled 'All About Me'. They compile a portfolio that is continually revisited during each school year giving a clear individual personal profile that complements their records of achievement. Consequently these plans continue to allow a better understanding of the student and their aspirations for the future.

Students experience careful, planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes. Before admission the head of care goes into their home and spends time with the student and parents to gather lots of information. This successfully paves the way for a smooth transition

into residence. The student comes in for tea visits to begin with, as a gradual introduction to residential living begins. Parents confirm that the admission process is exceptionally supportive.

Students have their needs assessed and comprehensive written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school. Programmes from external partners, such as physiotherapy, are implemented and incorporated in care planning; this demonstrates the extensive holistic practice that the school takes in order to fully meet students' individual needs.

In accordance with their wishes students are proactively encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families when sleeping at school.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The school has made a number of environmental adaptations, particularly in areas used for personal care. For instance, bathrooms have handrails and one bathroom has a hoist. The school's location, design, size and layout is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. There has been many improvements made to the physical provision with new students' beds and re-decoration. However, The Bungalow is looking very tired and dated. The school, however, acknowledges that it is not a warm and inviting space for students to sleep in. Students are actively encouraged to personalise their bedrooms in order to make it feel more like home.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The Statement of Purpose accurately describes what the school sets out to do for those students it accommodates. The staffing policy ensures that the level of staffing is optimum in order to truly meet the school's Statement of Purpose. Consequently, students receive a flexible package of care by a skilful, committed and enthusiastic residential team.

The residential staff, like the rest of the school staff, benefit from empowerment and ownership at all levels. This means that students experience a consistent approach that is personalised to meet their exclusive needs. Staff are exceptionally well trained. All staff have the required qualifications such as the National Vocational Qualification in Care at level 3 or above. Staff report that supervision processes are exceptional with staff commenting, 'you are well supported to do your job' and 'supervisions are extensive, comprehensive and exceptionally supportive.'

The existing head of care is currently on secondment to another department within the local authority. This is viewed as positive as the head of care is extending her professional development. Through this secondment period existing residential staff are 'acting up'. This has enhanced and developed these staff members' skills and the current acting head of care has risen to the challenge and is providing accomplished leadership and management.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The aim, which is successful in practice, is to treat all people within the school community and beyond equally. The headteacher and all staff have a central belief that being able to respect diversity is a core skill which all staff at the school have.

There are excellent procedures for monitoring the operation of the residential provision. There is a well-focussed school development plan in place, which accurately prioritises actions and

provides criteria for success. It has improved the quality of the planning, incorporating more detail and adaptation to students' needs and invested significantly in the professional development of staff. This has resulted in a workforce more equipped to meet the needs of the current residential population.

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):

- consider prioritising refurbishment to the residential provision to promote a more homely environment. This specifically applies to The Bungalow. (NMS 24.2)