

Field Heath School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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Inspector	Muhammed Harunur Rashid
Type of inspection	Key

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Nominated person	Julie Rose
Date of last inspection	18/01/2010

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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

Pield Heath School is a non-maintained day and residential special school for boys and girls between the ages of seven to 19 years with complex needs who also have moderate/severe learning difficulties and associated communication problems. Boarding provision is available from Monday to Thursday in addition to overnight respite care. The majority of the young people who use the service stay for one night per week.

The boarding accommodation is located in the school grounds and called St Joseph's House. It is a self contained building with sleeping accommodation on the first floor separated by gender. The school was founded by the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus of Mary and they remain the Trustees. A convent and nursing home are also located in the grounds of the school in Uxbridge, Middlesex.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was a full announced inspection that focused on the key national minimum standards. All outcome areas were inspected. Three boarders participated in the inspection process and nine have completed their surveys. The inspectors interviewed the head of school, head of care and other members of staff.

Pield Heath Residential Special School is outstanding. Young people are benefiting from living in a school that is consistently managed and organised to achieve the best possible outcomes for the young people. The school provides excellent standards of care. Staff closely work with the health professionals, therapists and external agencies to meet young people's holistic needs. Excellent relationships exist between staff, young people and their family members. The school provides a safe and pleasant environment to young people. Staff promote young people's educational progress at the school through excellent communication methods between the school and the residential provision. Young people are supported by a dedicated staff team who focus on improvement. Staff are provided with various training to develop their knowledge and skills in order to meet young people's complex assessed needs. No actions have been raised as a result of the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection so this section is not relevant.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people live in a healthy environment where their health care needs are comprehensively identified and individual health care plans are in place to meet these assessed needs. Staff are proactive and responsive to the emotional and health care needs of the young people. Staff are well trained and supported by the school nurse, doctor and local health services. The health professionals and therapists work within well established partnerships that links with teachers, care staff and families. Where necessary care staff support young people to attend routine checks, for example, dental and optician appointments. Young people are provided with a mini gymnasium in the boarding house. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle; and staff encourage and support young people to take part in healthy activities and exercise.

There are effective systems in place for storing, administering, recording and monitoring young people's medication. Staff have attended medication administration and first aid training and two staff administer medication to avoid any mistakes. First aid boxes are provided in the house. Sufficient care staff have completed their first aid training.

Food is freshly prepared and staff ensure that young people's dietary requirements are met in accordance with their religious, cultural and health needs. The menu plan is developed in consultation with young people. Staff encourage young people to take part in preparation of healthy meals and also to improve their independent living skills. Staff and young people eat together in the dining room. Dining rooms and the furnishings are suitable for the numbers and needs of young people and staff dining in them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The school has an excellent focus on safeguarding and protection matters with clear policies that are communicated effectively to promote the safety of all young people. All staff, including volunteers, receive yearly child protection training to develop their knowledge and skills in this area. The school has built good links with the London Borough of Hillingdon safeguarding team and call them if they have any concerns. There is a whistle blowing policy in place.

The school has an up-to-date anti-bullying policy. Staff monitor relationships between young people closely and there is excellent communication between the school and boarding house so that if there are any concerns these are addressed promptly.

An appropriate policy and procedure is in place for dealing with unauthorised absence from the boarding house. However, there has not been an incident for many years.

There is a comprehensive complaints procedure in an accessible format for young people which uses various symbols. The procedure is as it is displayed in the premises. There is an effective system in place to record any concerns made known by young people and others. For example, young people can write down suggestions, concerns and complaints in their communication book. This information is then collated and responded to. There have not been any formal complaints in 2010.

Young people's privacy and confidentiality is promoted by the policy in place, the practice of staff and through the secure storage of young people's records. Young people are provided with single bedroom accommodation and a sufficient number of bathrooms and toilets are available. Young people's records are kept safely and securely in the boarding house. Staff are sensitive to gender issues when dealing with young people of the opposite sex.

The management of challenging behaviour of the young people is one of the great strengths of the school. Young people who exhibit challenging behaviour are supported through positive reinforcement to make changes in their behaviour. There is a behaviour management policy for the school that incorporates education and the boarding provision. Every student has a behaviour management plan and risk assessment in place and this includes specific information that is relevant to the residential setting. Behaviour management support plans are reviewed annually or as needed if needs change. The emphasis is on prevention of unacceptable behaviour and the school has incentive and reward schemes which encourage positive behaviour. For example, in the residential house there is a 'positive tree' on the lounge wall. Young people are awarded a leaf for positive behaviour with their name on that is added to the tree. At the end of the week the young person with the most leaves is given a reward/small prize. At the end of the term the young person with the most leaves is given a bigger prize and a certificate.

Comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures are in place and there is a general policy in place in the staff handbook regarding responsibilities and duties. Staff have attended health and safety training. Staff take appropriate steps to keep young people, visitors and themselves safe from risk of fire and other hazards. Comprehensive risk assessments of the premises are in place. Staff carry out regular fire alarm testing and fire drills. Current gas and electric test certificates are available for inspection. The health and safety designated officer showed the evidence that the number of incidents have decreased over last two years. This is because of better support and awareness is in place.

The school has a robust recruitment policy and procedure in place. All trustees, governors and the head of administrator have attended a safer recruitment training in 2010. The school ensure that all necessary information is obtained prior to staff commencing work. Staff files examined included photocopies of their passports, two written reference letters and an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure certificates.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's educational progress at the school is actively supported by the residential provision. They receive an excellent level of support. All young people have individual education plans and these are regularly reviewed. Their educational progress at the school is promoted through excellent communication methods between the school and the residential provision. Independence training programmes linked to an accreditation scheme (ASDAN) are developed to promote various life skills for young people. The school works closely with parents to ensure consistency in this area. Various resources are provided in the boarding house to support learning. For example, information is displayed using pictorial signs.

The school strives to meet the individual needs of young people. Care and support is based on individual needs, desires and preferences. Excellent effort is put into combining social, education, care and health needs into a package that meets young people's individual needs.

The school values diversity. There are an equal opportunities and a racial equality policy in place. Staff and pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds and faiths. Although this is a Roman Catholic School the school ensures that the arrangements for worship are suitable for multi-faith assemblies and prayers. The school arranges themed activities days. For example, each year the school arranges a 'one world' day in which different rooms celebrated different cultures. There have been school trips to different worship places and different faith leaders have also visited the school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There are excellent arrangements for consulting young people and their families. Young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. There are various ways the school consult with the young people. For example, the results of 'You said, we did', a consultation survey, are taken into account. Regular house meetings take place to consult with young people. There is a parents forum in action and they are consulted in the decision making process including decisions around behaviour management. They are invited to young people's review meetings and the school also arranges parents' workshops. The school is in the process of introducing a weekly drop-in sessions for the parents; the first session is arranged. There is a school council which regularly meets. The council membership is representative of the wider school population and is an excellent example of the inclusive way in which the school operates. Every council member is able to make a contribution to the meeting and they are actively listened to.

There are clear policies in place for both respite and general admissions. The

application forms completed are detailed with information about young people's likes and dislikes. Young people's family members are encouraged to visit the boarding house and the arrangements for a placement are made taking into account the individual needs of the young person and what will work best for them. The school employs a transitions worker who supports young people with the transition to adult services. Transition plans are also discussed and minuted during review meetings.

The comprehensive care plans are regularly reviewed. These cover all aspects of the young people's care needs in conjunction with the health and medical information. The residential life skills programme set the goals for young people to achieve and breaks down them into smaller goals. The school has a speech and language therapist on site and all young people are supported to develop communication skills. This means that they are able to make choices and make known their views. Senior management staff attend reviews for young people. Other members of staff, such as the school nurse, also attend reviews where this is relevant.

The boarding house has an open door policy. Young people are able to contact parents when they wish and can invite them to visit the home. Parents are kept informed of welfare concerns and about the progress of their children.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people enjoy living in well designed and pleasant premises. Sufficient space and facilities are available to meet their needs. The building is very well maintained. Since the last inspection the boarding house has been refurbished. The communal areas are furnished to a very high standard. Comfortable sofas in the lounge, toys, lots of bright pictures on the wall and photographs are provided. Young people are provided with new furniture and carpets in their bedrooms. Bedrooms are personalised for young people who board weekly and young people who come for respite use the same room each time and are encouraged to bring their own belongings. New shower units are fitted and old toilets are replaced to ensure good quality facilities. A mini gymnasium is provided in the boarding house. There are two kitchens in the communal area. They are well-equipped, safe and well-maintained.

The grounds are large and there is lots of outdoor space including a sensory garden. The school operates CCTV cameras for the purpose of welfare and security of the young people. These do not intrude young people's privacy. The school has developed links with other local schools and the choir visits older people's homes in the local community. The 'fresh air fitness' (outdoor gymnasium equipment) is now open. Young people and members of staff regularly use this facilities. Young people's family members are also welcomed to the new gymnasium.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Young people benefit from living in a school that is effectively managed and well run. Young people and all other relevant parties have access to an updated statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding students. The welcome guide for young people has been developed in an appropriate format. This provides information about the facilities available to them.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding through the exceptional contribution the school makes towards meeting young people's diverse care and learning needs. There is an equal opportunities and a racial equality policy in place. Staff knowledge about individual young people and their needs is excellent. Staff gather a comprehensive range of information to ensure plans of care are individualised and unique to each young person. All staff have in-depth knowledge of the young people they are working with to ensure their needs are consistently met. Staff encourage and support young people to get access into various community resources.

Sufficient numbers of staff are on duty at all times to meet young people's complex assessed needs. Young people are supported by a dedicated and stable staff team. The staff team understand their roles and responsibilities and take a special interest in the young people's welfare. Excellent relationships exist between young people and staff. Young people are overall happy with their care.

Staff training is supported by the school. An annual programme covers a wide range of training which staff are expected to undertake in order to meet young people's needs effectively. Care staff are trained in de-escalation techniques, safeguarding, communication techniques, health and safety, first aid and a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People. The head of care is currently undertaking NVQ at level 4 training in management and anticipating to complete this by June 2011. All staff receive regular supervision and annual appraisals from their line manager.

There is an excellent internal self evaluation that helps to enhance the quality of care for young people. Young people are able to see governors and express their views and opinions about life at school.

The head of school, head of care and the staff team have a focus on improving various aspects of the care and learning needs of young people. The leadership team meetings take place on a weekly basis, care staff and link meetings also take place in each week, full staff meeting once in every half term and teachers meet weekly.

The newly developed IT system provides a better way of recording and storing information about young people and all other necessary documents required for the

functions of the school. The school has now developed a system called 'group call' in order to communicate with parents through text messages.