

The Harbour Hostel @ Tipner

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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| Inspector | Paul Taylor |
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| Date of last inspection | 05/06/2009 |

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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 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

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| 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

The Harbour School is a special school that became fully operational in September 2007. The hostel is the school's residential facility. The aim of the hostel is to provide a safe and stimulating environment that will support young people in their educational development. While most of the hostel's residents attend the Harbour School, placements can be referred from any Portsmouth school. The hostel is a self-contained unit attached to the school. Staff and young people in the hostel can access many of the school's facilities. The hostel operates with a dedicated residential staff team. Young people can be accommodated up to four nights a week. The hostel operates on a Monday to Friday basis, with young people returning home each week-end. At the time of the inspection the hostel was accommodating seven young people. The school occupies a somewhat isolated coastal location that is not directly served by public transport.

Summary

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

At this announced inspection key standards were assessed together with how the recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed. The hostel delivers a satisfactory standard of care which has some outstanding features.

A stable and committed staff team offers excellent levels of support in a caring and nurturing environment. Young people are very well prepared and supported to have every opportunity to develop their social and academic skills. The degree of success achieved by the setting in preparing young people to attend school and remain there is very significant. Young people have their health needs met to an excellent standard and the activities they are offered ensures that they receive an excellent opportunity to board in an environment which enriches their life experiences.

All the recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed. Photographs are now in each young person's care plan. All the members of staff have achieved the National Vocational Training at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent qualification. Good systems record how each young person is developing their life and social skills and close liaison is maintained with each young person's educational setting.

Three recommendations have been made as a result of this inspection. These relate to ensuring that the recruitment policy is consistently applied and that a senior member of staff checks key records, every term, particularly recruitment records. The third recommendation relates to ensuring that the practice of a compulsory bath

night on a Thursday is reviewed and the young people's opinions sought on the issue.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection four recommendations were made. These have been addressed to a good standard. The school prepared an action plan in response to the inspection and this has been implemented. The young people have opportunities to develop life skills such as cooking, cleaning and budgeting. This process is recorded and is paced at a level commensurate with each young person's individual ability.

An efficient system has been implemented whereby communication, with any educational setting which a young person attends, is achieved. Written communication in the form of home to school books is in place together with daily telephone contact if needed. Records of contacts with schools are recorded to ensure that all incidents and issues are promptly responded to. Additionally, members of staff will attend reviews on the young people and attend other meetings, such as parents evenings, to ensure that clear communication is achieved.

All the young people now have a photograph placed on their file. This ensures that the staff have photographs on hand to pass on to the police if a young person is missing.

All members of staff have now achieved the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent qualification.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The health of the young people is promoted to an excellent standard. The health needs of each individual are identified prior to admission and signed consent forms obtained. Staff closely monitor the health and wellbeing of young people during the time they are staying at the hostel. Liaison is maintained with specialists health professionals, such as psychologists and psychiatrists, if it is needed. Any young person who becomes ill while boarding returns home. Primary responsibility for the health of each young person remains with their parents or guardians as none of them are boarding for more than four nights a week. Members of staff will assist young people to attend medical appointments if it is needed. Medication is securely stored and a written record kept of all medicines dispensed by staff. All staff have undertaken first aid training. Guidance, advice and support in relation to health and social issues are provided by both teaching and residential staff. Young people are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle by eating properly and getting regular exercise. Specific care and attention is taken to promote the emotional well-being of the young people.

Each young person's dietary needs and preferences are known. Food is cooked by members of staff and the young people enjoy the home made cooking. Unanimous

positive feedback was received about the quality of food and variety of the menu. Mealtimes, which are well organised and enjoyable social events, are seen as an opportunity to socialise and to develop social skills.

It is clear that the young people are cared for in an environment where their physical health and emotional well-being is promoted diligently and to an excellent standard.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The privacy of young people is respected by staff and any confidential matters are discussed in private. Staff always knock before entering young people's rooms. All toilets and showers offer privacy. Confidential information is securely stored.

The young people have access to a clear complaints procedure. They are also aware of outside external agencies they can complain to if they do not want to use the home's process. No complaints have been made since the last inspection. One young person reported that 'I know they will listen if I have something that I need to discuss'. Daily house meetings as well as meetings with key workers ensures that issues can be discussed and resolved before they become complaints.

The school has child protection policies and procedures aimed at keeping young people safe. The headteacher has undertaken advanced safeguarding children training and assumes responsibility for co-ordinating child protection within the school. All residential staff undertake child protection training and are clearly aware of their individual responsibilities in regard to reporting any protection concerns. Close communication with schools and home ensures that the staff are up to date with any issues or concerns.

Young people report that bullying is not an issue and that it is totally unacceptable at the hostel. Close supervision and support of the young people ensures that the staff are quickly alerted to any conflict or dynamics that may need to be addressed. The home's attitude and approach to bullying, combined with the open communication that is achieved, ensures excellent outcomes for the young people.

There are clear procedures for the staff to follow if a young person goes missing. The young people are aware that they will be reported as missing to the police if needed. Incidents of young people going missing are rare as they want to be at the hostel and have a choice in being there. If a young person indicates that they intend to leave without permission and cannot be persuaded to stay, then efforts are made to transport the young person home to their parents. The staff are very aware of each young person's vulnerability and address any situations of young people going missing robustly and efficiently.

Behaviour management and support for the young people in the home is of a very good standard. Clear behavioural boundaries are in place and these are applied consistently and fairly. Young people report that they are treated fairly and that staff

encourage them to achieve positive behaviour which is acknowledged and rewarded. Each young person has an individual behaviour management plan and this outlines what triggers may lead to negative behaviour and what strategies should be used to support them.

If sanctions are imposed then they are recorded in a book set out for this purpose. The head of care checks this record to ensure that all sanctions are appropriate. Young people report that sanctions imposed are fair.

All members of staff are trained in the method of physical restraint used in the setting. Each young person has a written plan which outlines what strategies should be used to support them at times of challenging behaviour and what form of physical intervention is appropriate for them. Young people's parents sign forms to acknowledge that the use of physical intervention may at times have to be used to ensure young people's safety. Incidents of restraint are extremely rare, there being three incidents in a year. Records of restraint are checked by the head of care and visiting governor to ensure that they are appropriate. The records are of good quality and include all the details required.

Numerous risk assessments, relating to the environment, activities and specific behaviours of the young people are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that they are relevant to each situation and to minimise the risk.

Fire equipment is checked routinely to ensure that it is operating correctly and fire drills occur on a regular basis.

The organisation has a sound procedure in relation to recruitment and this has been followed in the appointment of residential staff. The procedure has not been consistently followed especially in relation to a music teacher who works in the hostel. The staff on duty have, however, ensured that the member of staff has not been left unsupervised while teaching the young people. Additionally, all visitors to the premises have to sign the visitors' book and show identification. They are then supervised during their time on site.

The systems in place ensure that the young people's safety is promoted to a satisfactory standard.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The primary function of the residential provision provided at the setting, is to enable young people to attend and achieve at their educational placements, whether these are special or mainstream schools or further education colleges. This is achieved to an excellent standard. The performance and achievements of the young people, both academically and socially, are assessed on a regular basis. These assessments inform the individual learning plans and what targets each young person is set to achieve. Progress is measured and recorded and the young people report that the hostel has

helped them to have more success at school. 'I would never have even got to school without help from here' was a comment made by one young person. Young people are aware of their targets and know what the expectations are upon them in order to progress and achieve.

Numerous and varied activities are offered to the young people when they stay at the hotel. The young people have an opportunity to take part in a program which enriches their life experiences and offers them the chance to take part in positive activities. The staff are aware that some of the young people have backgrounds where their opportunities to take part in positive activities are limited and so ensure that these can be enjoyed when they stay at the hostel. Apart from the structured activities and outings, the young people are able to socialise with each other informally during the evenings as well as being able to have time on their own doing quiet activities if they wish.

Individual support offered to the young people is of an excellent standard. The young people have ready access to members of staff on duty and it is clear that the members of staff know them very well and offer them individual attention and guidance. Young people clearly engage in the process which provides them with the care and support to match their individual circumstances.

The young people have access to a school governor if they wish to seek support external from the staff team and most have parents who they can turn to for advice. Additionally, some young people also have mentors from a local youth service as well as social workers. The approach of the setting ensures that every young person has a support network in place and this avoids the potential for them to become isolated both at school and in their community.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The young people have numerous opportunities to voice their opinions about how they feel they are being cared for. They are regularly consulted about their preferences with regards to issues such as menus and activities. The young people have not been fully consulted over the issue of having a compulsory bath night every Thursday, even though there are showers available. The head of care said that this issue was being reviewed. A senior member of staff from the school based on the same site as the hostel, visits the setting on a daily basis to give the young people a chance to speak to him about any concerns or comments. The young people are confident to express their opinions and they feel that they are listened to.

Interaction between the staff and the young people is relaxed, good humoured and warm. The staff work hard to ensure that the young people feel listened to and that their views and feelings are valued and important. Young people are seen to seek the company of members of staff and are seen to engage with them in a relaxed and

open manner.

Admissions to the setting are very carefully considered. Each young person is carefully assessed before being offered a placement. These assessments determine the suitability of the setting in meeting the young person's needs and whether the established group dynamics will be affected by a new admission. The admission process is nurturing and sensitive and set at a pace with which each young person can cope.

Young people are supported and prepared to move on to their next educational placement, whether this is a transition to mainstream school or further education. If assessed as appropriate, the setting will offer young people a service after they enter further education.

Assessments are incorporated into plans of care which highlight the individual needs of every young person. The care plans clearly guide staff in caring for the young people and these plans are regularly reviewed and updated. The quality and thoroughness of the plans enables the staff to provide an excellent standard of care.

Young people are able to contact family and loved ones via the home's telephone. Additionally members of staff will regularly contact family members, where appropriate, to keep them informed of each young person's progress.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Preparations for assisting young people to make any transitions are very thorough. Young people are given opportunities to develop life skills such as cooking and budgeting. Additionally the staff will support young people in their placements if this is needed. For example, they will attend parents' evenings and meet key members of staff at the young person's next placement.

Young people live in an environment which offers good standards of accommodation. The size of the setting allows young people considerable space with good sized bedrooms and spacious communal areas. Each young person is afforded the opportunity to personalise their own rooms with appropriate posters and pictures.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The school has a prospectus which describes what it intends to deliver and the underlying ethos behind the running of the school. Additionally the young people have a handbook which outlines the rules and routines of the hostel.

The setting's staffing arrangements ensure the welfare of the young people is protected and promoted. Staffing levels ensure close and supportive supervision both

on and off site. Young people benefit from the continuity of care provided by a very settled staff team. Very good liaison is maintained with any school which a young person is attending. This includes daily telephone calls, daily communication books, as well as members of staff visiting schools for reviews and parents evenings. Each young person has a key member of staff for hostel staff to contact at their school if there is a need to discuss any issues. Close liaison and communication ensures that the young people feel that there is a consistent approach and that the staff are up to date with what is going on in their school life.

Training for the staff team is regular and varied. The staff team receives training every 'inset day' and this includes subjects such as behaviour management, child protection, first aid and drug awareness. Over 80% of the staff team have achieved the National Vocational Training at level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent qualification.

All members of staff receive regular supervision and appraisals. They report that they receive excellent levels of ongoing support from senior members of staff. Additionally there are regular team meetings to discuss the running of the hostel and the young people's behaviour and progress.

Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. These are readily available and provide members of staff with written guidance on relevant issues such as child protection and the policy on physical restraint.

Senior members of staff regularly monitor key records such as risk assessments, records of sanctions and restraints, minutes of meetings and any significant incidents and accidents. Other key records, such as recruitment files, are not checked by a senior member of staff every term to ensure that all the information required is in place. This has led to shortfalls in a recruitment process not being identified promptly. The small size of the setting means that key members of staff are able to quickly respond to any issues, such as individual young people coming to note for poor behaviour or struggling within school.

Regular monitoring checks are completed by a governor for the school. Reports made as a result of these monitoring visits identify any shortfalls that need to be addressed.

Promotion of equality and diversity is good. The young people are given opportunities to learn about different cultures and beliefs both in the hostel and at their schools. Individual needs are met to a very good standard and the culture of tolerance is embedded in the hostel.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- continue to review the decision to have compulsory bath nights and ensure that this does not routinely or unnecessarily diminish any child's independence or opportunity to make everyday choices. (NMS 2.6)
- ensure that the recruitment of staff includes all the necessary pre employment checks as well as checks with the Criminal Records Bureau. (NMS 27.2)
- ensure that a senior member of staff checks key records such as recruitment checks on a termly basis. (NMS 32.2)