

The Grange Therapeutic School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

Unique reference number	SC001831
Inspection date	10/03/2011
Inspector	Christy Wannop
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	The Grange Therapeutic School, 15-17 Somerby Road, Knossington, OAKHAM, Leicestershire, LE15 8LY
Telephone number	01664 454264
Email	
Registered person	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Head/ Principal	
Nominated person	Steve Watt
Date of last inspection	09/12/2009

© Crown copyright 2011

Website: 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 Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: 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 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

The Grange School is a residential special school, established in 1976 for up to 80 boys aged between eight and 16 years of age. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs to address their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many pupils have additional learning difficulties. The school aims to promote the healthy physical and emotional development of all pupils through a balanced, progressive and responsive approach to education, care and therapy. Many boys return home at weekends, although some are cared for at the school for longer periods.

Acorn Care and Education acquired the school in January 2005. Most of the school's facilities are at Knossington, a rural setting in Leicestershire. There are five residential houses, four on or very close to the school campus and one senior house in the nearby town of Oakham. In the village of Knossington is one modern building, The Spinney, for younger pupils. The Manor, a Victorian cottage, is within school grounds, and Northfields and Southfields in the main school building are for intermediate boys. The Hayne, a large Victorian house, is in nearby Oakham, four miles away, and is for key stage 4 boys, with a focus on life skills. There are currently 47 boarders, with an additional 28 day boys on the roll of the school.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This inspection was announced at short notice and covered all the key national minimum standards in each Every Child Matters outcome area, plus organisation. It also followed up on the two recommended actions from the integrated inspection in December 2009, which looked at care and education. Both recommendations made at the last inspection have been met.

The school meets all and exceeds very many of the national minimum standards. The overall judgement on the quality of residential provision is good, with an increasing number of outstanding features in the outcome areas of being healthy, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution and economic well-being. Staff help children to develop a sense of their worth within society. Respect between staff and children is highly valued and relationships are excellent. The quality of communication between residential, therapeutic and educational staff is very good and staff make strong links over matters such as child protection, behaviour, health, home and education. There is a positive approach to making things happen for the benefit of children.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection found shortfalls in arrangements for fire safety. There have been major improvements in this and the school fully implements fire legislation and guidance. This keeps children safe from risk of fire.

The last inspection recommended improvements in information gathering prior to admission to residence. The school now obtains all necessary information prior to admission, and gives residential staff the information they need to care safely for each child.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There is outstanding health care for children, through the combined contributions of qualified nursing staff, comprehensive health planning and robust arrangements for safe delivery of medication and first aid. There is an increasingly positive picture of how the service helps students to experience a healthy lifestyle and feel good about themselves. Staff arrange activities that give students opportunities to develop physically and emotionally, and experience positive well-being. They promote healthy choices and active lifestyles through exercise and plenty of fresh air, so children learn how to take care of their health. The Grange has a 'Healthy School' accreditation and the best quality rating for standards of food safety. Meals are healthy and nutritious and meet children's dietary and cultural needs. Food is tasty, plentiful and mealtimes are social occasions. One child said: 'There are healthy foods and we can choose fruit and yoghurts.' This holistic approach ensures that children are physically and emotionally healthy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The school and residential service make strong arrangements for ensuring children are safe while they learn and stay at The Grange. Adults respect children's privacy and personal space, and handle confidential information properly. In surveys, children made clear that they had adults who they could trust and talk to. Formal and informal complaints are well managed and children know they will get a prompt response to their issues.

There are good arrangements for safeguarding children from abuse. Staff at all levels are trained and there is strengthening practice in working together and responding to any concerns in conjunction with safeguarding services. Staff lessen the impact of bullying on vulnerable children by high levels of supervision and good anti-bullying strategies. One child said: 'I can always go to a member of staff, who will do something about it.' While children do occasionally go missing, this is not for long and staff are vigilant in searching for them and working with the police to ensure their safe return.

The school is particularly effective at helping children to manage and regulate their own behaviours, many of which are extremely challenging. Physical intervention is used when necessary and staff are trained to do this. One child said: 'Staff will always help me if I am getting it wrong or if I am being dangerous and unsafe.' Standards of behaviour within the school are good, based on positive relationships and a sense of pride and responsibility to the community of the school. Staff are accomplished and highly sensitive in recognising the triggers for behaviour and in supporting children when they struggle with stress, anxiety and anger. One child described the difference between his old school and here: 'You get more chances to get it right.'

Children live in a school that is safe and secure because health and safety are very well managed. Health and safety legislation and guidance are effectively implemented to reduce unnecessary risks from fire and other hazards. The school uses robust recruitment procedures that ensure that all staff are suitable to work or have contact with vulnerable children. This integrated approach to safeguarding across the school protects children and promotes their well-being. One child wrote: 'The staff look out for us all the time,' and another commented, 'staff are always there to protect us and keep us safe.'

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school's residential provision is outstanding in its support for children's educational progress. The care, education and health team give highly individualised holistic support, and there is an excellent therapeutic psychology and counselling service. Each child has a regular personal support session with a key worker. These sensitive conversations are valued by staff and children, are effective in delivering the aims of the placement and are an opportunity to regularly assess children's emotional and behavioural needs carefully, focusing on progress. Children described how they liked the school because they helped with problems and one said he got 'a lot of support with the things I need help with.' They develop confidence and self-esteem through the wealth of opportunities provided by the school, good leisure pursuits in the houses and action and adventure activities, for example fishing, mountain biking, Duke of Edinburgh awards, outward-bound excursions, and holidays abroad. One parent said she had never known her child 'be so happy about school.'

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The school really helps children to make a positive contribution to their school, their families and the community. They are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run, through one-to-one sessions with their key workers, an active school council and daily house meetings.

Staff help new children to move in sensitively, and really work hard to prepare them for transition to independence when the time is right. The school gathers good information about children prior to admission and this now forms an effective part of care planning and supports strategies to reduce risk from behaviour or vulnerabilities. Care practice is excellent and this is now supported by effective written information about children. Children have thorough individual risk assessments which help to keep them secure.

The quality of relationships between staff and children is excellent, characterised by trust, respect and positive role modelling. Children clearly have confidence that the staff care about them. One said, 'Staff don't like to see you get upset or hurt.' Children want to be at the school and adults know that relationships are the key to progress. Well planned, careful routines are homely rather than institutional and the approach of the staff recognises each boy as an individual with rights and responsibilities within the school community.

Partnership working with parents is also a major strength. Staff value the opportunity to visit children at home and recognise the importance of working consistently with parents to further each child's development. Parents say this communication is good. Contact between family and children is encouraged by phone, email and visits, and children benefit from this close communication about their care. A parent said: 'Staff are always ready to listen to me,' and another said that they felt they were 'working off the same page' and describe how much the school has helped their families.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The school provides a great environment for boys to learn and benefit from a residential education. As children progress through the school towards young adulthood, staff support them to reach their potential and achieve their personal best. The school works hard at points of transition to identify the best place for children when they leave school, and supports college placements. Children are involved with the local community and society, and learn to contribute and play their part as responsible citizens through voluntary work and fundraising. These community activities promote inclusion and an awareness of wider world citizenship that values diversity.

The school has beautiful grounds, managed safely for children's use. Houses are all different, but equally comfortable, warm and welcoming. Children have their own bedrooms which reflect their interests and tastes. They can bathe and take care of their personal needs with privacy and dignity. In surveys, students were positive in their view of how they are helped, enabled and encouraged at the school.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management of the school are good. Children benefit from excellent communication between residential and educational staff to support their achievement in education. This strong liaison underpins the 24-hour curriculum. One parent said: 'The school had been a 'lifeline' for my child.'

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Policy, procedure and good practice help children to know that their individual needs are valued and the service is able to meet their diverse needs in everyday life in the school. One boy said: 'The staff do not tolerate racism or bullying and you know you can always talk to someone.'

Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for residential education. A clear staffing policy works in practice to give children satisfactory supervision, continuity, a mix of male and female staff, security and the specific support that they need. A cohesive, experienced team of staff are clearly passionate and committed to the work they do with children, and a very high proportion have achieved the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in working with children and young people. They are well trained, supported and guided by the experienced, imaginative residential management team. Parents describe staff as 'excellent' and recognise that they provide 'holistic care.' Quality assurance functions are well embedded in care practice, and senior staff are continually seeking improvement. An extensive range of management systems monitor the effectiveness of the whole school provision and the welfare of the children, and make active plans for development. A parent said, 'the school is great.'