

St Rose's School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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Inspector	Clare Davies
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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

This school is a co-educational, non-maintained, Roman Catholic day and residential school. It caters for children and young people with physical disabilities and associated sensory, communication and learning difficulties aged between two and 19 years. A multi-disciplinary team of health professionals are employed by the school to provide individualised programmes of therapy.

Residential accommodation is available in two buildings on site. Full-time boarding is available as well as flexi- boarding. The school closes every other weekend and holiday periods so the maximum boarding period is for two weeks. At the time of this inspection there were 12 boarders with some day students preparing for their first overnight stay.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This announced inspection focused on all the key national minimum standards for residential special schools. St Rose's School provides good outcomes for students. One recommendation has been made in relation to the frequency of formal staff supervision.

There are temporary arrangements in place for the leadership of the school following the retirement of the headteacher in December 2010. Care staff report that they feel well supported and continue to have regular meetings and training to support them in the care of the students. The school has worked hard and must be commended for addressing the many shortfalls identified at the last inspection. The multi-disciplinary team approach is very effective in meeting the complex needs of the students. All the staff have a common aim with the students at the core of their thinking. The students enjoy their residential experience.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were 13 recommendations made at the last inspection and the school has worked hard to satisfactorily address all these areas. Sound procedures are in place for the safe storage and administration of medication, parental consent has been obtained for the school to administer first aid and the professional qualification of nurses has been verified.

Staff have been trained in physical intervention techniques and the school has a policy and recording system relating to this practice. Fire evacuation practices have occurred in consultation with a fire officer. Recruitment procedures ensure that

contact is made with each referee to verify the written reference.

Bathrooms in the main house have been upgraded to a high standard. Staff training has been appropriately recorded and the majority of care staff have achieved a formal qualification. Senior staff monitor key records and the governing body complete a monitoring visit on the boarding accommodation every half term.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The staff team at St Rose's School has a wealth of skills and experience to provide sound health and medical care to students with profound and multiple learning disabilities. Individual needs are identified as part of the admission process and the lead nurse ensures that medical information is kept up to date through liaison with parents and health professionals. Good links are maintained with the students' families ensuring that well-informed, consistent care is provided. The new appointment of a lead nurse has led to a review of medical policies and procedures. Staff have received refresher training and are supported in their work with clear protocols and documentation. The school are committed to ensuring that the health and medical needs of students are consistently met by employing additional nurses to extend the cover throughout the day ensuring a qualified nurse will be available 24 hours a day. In addition to the school nurses there is a support team on site of specialist health professionals who provide speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, music therapy and massage therapy.

The nurses, care staff and therapists work collaboratively promoting the waking day curriculum. Therapists work alongside care and education staff devising programmes of therapy to support students. Excellent documents support this work with photographs of exercises and positions required. This ensures the therapy is delivered in a consistent manner. The speech and language therapists undertake risk assessments relating to students eating and swallowing. This informs the most suitable way for food to be served and how staff need to assist and supervise with drinking and eating. After the school day, many activities are supervised by care staff and therapists and this can extend into the weekend. Staff report how valuable it is to have qualified nurses and a therapy team on site for guidance in their role of caring for, and supporting, students.

Parental consent is obtained for the administration of medication, first aid and other treatments as required for individual students. Protocols for students with particular medical needs ensure that the student, their parents/carers, the staff and health care professionals agree to a written plan on how to manage their medical conditions. Medication is securely stored and records clearly made of any administration. The lead nurse has introduced a system to record all medication coming onto and leaving the school site. This provides a clear audit of what medication is held and when parents are required to provide more. Staff are trained in first aid, use of an Epi-pen and gastrostomy feeding. Some senior staff are trained in the administration of emergency seizure medication. The lead nurse has ensured all information relating to

these procedures is up to date. 'Going out' cards provide key information on each student and their medication. This portable information assists staff when taking students off site in case of an emergency.

Students are encouraged and supported in leading healthy lifestyles with a balanced diet, physical activity and good personal hygiene. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is delivered in the classrooms, in the residential setting and on an individual level. Older students learn about the dangers of smoking and alcohol, and a visiting police officer speaks about the dangers of drug use.

The catering staff are skilled in providing a varied menu to cater for the diverse dietary needs of the students. This involves cooked meals, soft diets, special diets according to medical needs or at parental request. The catering staff have a strong presence in the dining room where they can receive direct feedback from students and staff on the quality and enjoyment of the meals served. There is a commitment to using fresh fruit and vegetables where possible and most meals are home cooked with fresh ingredients. The catering manager is developing an improved communication aid to inform students of the menu of the day through photographs available on the tables. This demonstrates the catering team's commitment to improving the student's experience of meal times. Students choose the 'fruit of the month' and as well as eating it as a snack they learn about the fruit and its country of origin. Some students enjoy the cooking club after school. The kitchen in the residential bungalow has some low surfaces to assist with student involvement.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Within the school's philosophy of care it states, 'children have the right to have their dignity respected by others in every way possible and to be treated whatever their disabilities. Children have the right to privacy'. Policies on intimate care reflect this philosophy and support the staff in respecting privacy and working with safe caring practices. Most students have single bedrooms to promote their privacy. If students are not happy or wish to complain, picture symbols provide guidance on who to talk to and what to do. There are good relationships between students and staff who understand their individual needs and methods of communication; this is essential in providing an environment where children and young people need to feel valued and understood. There have been no formal complaints, parents are advised of the procedure in their handbook and the contact details for Ofsted are published.

The designated person for child protection matters has attended multi-agency training with the local authority and has delivered training to all school staff. Child protection policies and procedures provide clear guidance on what to do if staff should have a concern about any child. Anti-bullying is promoted through the classroom, PSHE and through the student council. Positive behaviour is noticed and praised, staff support the pupils when they are distressed and respond to individual needs. The need for any physical intervention is rare, however, staff are trained in an accredited method ensuring that any intervention is conducted in a safe manner to

reduce any risk of injury to students and staff. Residential staff are very observant to notice any changes in behaviour of any students. They can draw on the expertise of a multi-disciplinary team to identify how best to support the students.

Fire safety is comprehensive with regular testing of systems and equipment. Staff have received fire safety training and have practiced evacuation from the first floor with the use of a new evacuation aid. Individual evacuation plans have been written for each student, this identifies their method of communication and important information relevant for when being transported. Risk assessments cover boarding accommodation, areas around the school site, activities and off site trips. These documents are reviewed annually or sooner if any issue arises. The risk assessment for the new hydrotherapy pool is being considered by some of the therapy team, the pool is not in operation yet. There are safe policies for use of transport and regular safety checks occur of gas and electrical appliances. Staff personnel records are comprehensive and evidence that full checks occur in line with safer recruitment practices.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The educational achievement of the students is greatly enhanced through the holistic approach applied across the school. Individual education plans have targets linked to aims within the care setting ensuring students are equipped with a full waking day curriculum. The speech and language therapists ensure that students can effectively communicate through a range of mediums. Pictures, symbols, sign language, computer aided devices and facial expressions. Staff are skilled in recognising individual methods of communication for each student. Through accredited qualifications or just for enjoyment, students pursue their interests in areas such as; music, sport, art and design, food studies, hospitality, maths, money management and many other areas. A sensory garden has recently been created in the school grounds providing a safe stimulating space for boarders to use during the evenings and weekends. The staff and students are excitedly awaiting for the finishing touches to complete the new hydrotherapy pool this term so that they can use this fantastic on site resource.

The individual support available to each student is outstanding. This has been recognised through being awarded specialist status in special educational needs (sensory and physical). Staff understand students and their behaviours well and are very knowledgeable of their individual needs and the implications this has for their care. There are lots of activities arranged on site and in the local community. Students participate in sports competitions, youth games, swimming galas and outdoor pursuits involving a mixed team with students from a local mainstream school. In consultation with students through interviews, surveys and observations it is evident that they enjoy being at this school. When asked to rate it out of ten, one student gave it a full 10/10 and another rated it as eight.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Consultation and involvement of students in decision making is integral to daily life at this school. Staff have a good understanding of how the students express themselves and are both patient and persistent when communicating with them. Students are encouraged to make daily choices for example with regards to food, clothing, their learning and their activities. There is a student council who have been involved in the development of recycling on the school site, organising the selection for fruit of the month and they have designed and produced a welcome book for new students. Students are encouraged to make a positive contribution in the school and within the local community. There are many joint ventures with other local schools and some students have taken part in the local youth forum.

Attention to detail is given for any student joining the school. The move is carefully considered and planned at a pace that is commensurate with each student's ability to cope with the transition. Information is given to parents and in an appropriate format for the student including photographs and social stories. Staff may undertake a home visit to assist in replicating the student's environment in the residential setting where possible. For example, with similar furniture, bedding, comfort toys and sensory stimulation. Similarly when students leave school they receive support in preparing them for change. The post 16 department enables students to transfer their skills from the school environment to college and the adult world. Farewells are marked as special occasions and planned with students.

Individual plans clearly identify a student's needs and how they will be met through the day and night. Key documents contribute to the care plans such as risk assessments, medical protocols, an education plan, therapeutic programmes and the student's likes and dislikes. These excellent documents are student centred, many of whom have been involved in producing them through typing information and posing for photographs. Care plans are reviewed regularly by allocated keyworkers, this is in addition to statutory reviews to consider the statement of special education.

Students are supported in maintaining contact with their families during their two week residential stay. Pay phones are available and for those students who need greater assistance, staff can hold the telephone to allow students to hear their parents and siblings voices. Information is passed to parents through telephone contact from the staff, home to school diaries and school newsletters. The school welcomes visits from relatives and can offer a family room with refreshments. A parent group offers support and social events. The lead nurse has introduced herself to the group and spoken about medical care at the school. A visiting solicitor spoke about the implications of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and an independent company is providing advice on assisted technology available.

Parents who contributed to the inspection confirm that they are very satisfied with the care provided. Comments were received such as; 'The staff are very caring and the link of therapies from the school is one of the key reasons we fought to get our

child there'. Another parent reported, 'We are very happy with how the house is run and how our child is treated in all aspects of their life there'. Two parents suggested that information from the residential staff could be improved.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The residential accommodation is currently provided in two buildings, with a third available to meet the demand of future referrals. A wing of the main house provides accommodation over two floors for young people under 16 years and for those older students that require nursing care overnight. Currently all young people have their own bedrooms apart from two who share. Students are able to personalise their space with posters, pictures, toys and their belongings. Bathrooms in the main house have had extensive refurbishment providing options for a specialist bath with use of an overhead hoist or a domestic style bath and shower. This provision has greatly improved since the last inspection and will enhance the bathing experience for students.

The main house has a play room with sensory toys and equipment. In addition there is a television lounge with a games console. Other rooms provide a chapel for prayer and reflection, and a family room for visitors. Students residing in the main house use the school dining room for mealtimes.

The school provides residential accommodation for students attending the post-16 education provision. This purpose built accommodation is on one level with access by a lift to a lower level for the education and therapy rooms. Bedrooms are spacious and personalised with young people's belongings. Most have en suite bathroom facilities with overhead tracking for use of hoists, and there are specialist equipment and aids installed in other bathrooms. A very large living area provides for watching television, using a computer and other activities. At the other end of the room is a kitchen area with access to low level surfaces and equipment to promote independent skills. Young people report that they like their accommodation and enjoyed decorating their bedrooms with their artwork and pictures.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. This is a Catholic school that welcomes children, young people, staff and visitors from other faiths. The school participates in the Comenius programme sponsored by the British Council to develop knowledge and understanding among young people and staff of the diversity of European cultures and languages, and the value of this diversity. The school also participates in a Global Curriculum Project where they have forged links with a school in the Philippines. The equality of opportunity is promoted all the time where staff work hard to ensure students can fully participate as much as possible in opportunities offered to all young people.

The school is currently going through changes in the leadership team following the retirement of the headteacher and the head of care/lead nurse. The prompt appointment of a lead nurse has ensured the smooth transition of the management of the students' health and medical needs. Interim arrangements are working well with the deputy head acting up as interim head and the head of care for the post-16 provision is acting up to cover all the care provision. Care staff report that they feel very well supported and have continued to have regular staff meetings. Care staff report that the interim manager has brought the two care teams together, working as one team for the benefit of the students at St Rose's. Arrangements are now in place for all care staff to have one to one supervision every half term though this did not routinely happen last year. Staff feel that they work closely together and seek guidance and support as required from their colleagues, the nurse, the therapists and the interim head of care. New staff welcome the induction procedure and feel supported in their new role.

There are sufficient numbers of staff to meet the complex needs of the students and to support them in their activities, any absences are covered from within the school staff team to ensure consistency of care. Good arrangements are in place for senior cover for advice and support when needed. Regular training ensures that professional development is on going. Staff report very positively on the training provided covering areas such as; fire safety, first aid, safeguarding, gastrostomy feeding, dysphagia, food hygiene, moving and handling techniques and physical intervention. Ongoing support and guidance is provided by the therapists that may involve a special training session relating to one student.

There are systems in place for senior staff to effectively monitor key records. Monitoring of the care provision is also undertaken by the governors. Each visit has a specific focus and key documents are checked. Governors meet with staff and the students and write a report following each visit.

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...

- ensure that all staff receive at least one and a half hours one to one supervision from a senior member of staff each half term. (NMS 30.2)