

Lakeside School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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Inspector	Brian Mcquoid
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Date of last inspection	02/12/2009

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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

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

Lakeside School is a day and residential special school, provided by the Local Education Authority, for boys aged 11-16 years, who have emotional, behavioural, and/or social difficulties. Boys are referred to the school from across the county of Hampshire. The boarding house is located on the school campus and can accommodate up-to-18 pupils on a weekly boarding basis only. There is a dedicated team of care staff who are managed by the school's head of care.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

The school's residential accommodation operates very effectively and provides a safe and secure environment for boarders within which they feel safe and where they are very well cared for. The staff group are very experienced and well qualified to meet the needs of boarders, and are being well managed by the head of care. Established systems support and promote good practice across the school and ensure the rigorous application of safeguarding responsibilities. Boarders enjoy positive relationships with the staff caring for them and parents report positively on the progress their children make while boarding. There is excellent communication between the care and education settings and extremely good individual support provided for boarders. Staff receive good support in the form of ongoing training and development. Provision for the monitoring of boarders welfare and the overall operation of the residential provision is good.

The inspection was carried out at short notice and the school was inspected against all of the key national minimum standards for residential special schools.

There are six recommendations arising from the report. These relate to: the administration of medication, the frequency of fire drills, the involvement of boarders in placement planning, the boarders payphone not working, locks on bathroom, shower and toilet doors, and the frequency of supervision for care staff.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no recommendations arising from the school's previous inspection report.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Boarding at the school provides for weekly boarding only, and as such parents retain primary responsibility for meeting their child's health needs. Boarders remain registered with their own doctor and dentist. Established systems provide for obtaining and recording all health related information on new boarders prior to their first overnight stay. Placement plans make provision for addressing individual health needs and staff fully support the involvement of external health professionals involved with individual boarders. Care staff are first aid trained and there is always a member of staff on duty who has a current first aid qualification. Senior care staff are trained in the management and administration of medication and assume responsibility for administering medication to boarders. Medication is stored securely and records of administration are well maintained. The written guidance for medication administration, however, is not being implemented in practice as the administration is not currently being witnessed and signed off by a second member of staff.

The school actively promotes healthy lifestyles for its pupils. A comprehensive personal, social, and health education programme is delivered enthusiastically and covers such topics as healthy eating, fitness, and hygiene as well as the major risks to health, drugs, alcohol, and smoking. The teacher concerned has an extremely good working relationship with the care staff team, and routinely provides lots of health related leaflets which are displayed within the boarding house.

Boarders are provided with healthy meals both within the school and in the boarding house. Breakfast and the evening meal are provided in the boarding accommodation while all pupils have lunch in the school's dining room. Care staff devise menus in consultation with boarders and are careful to avoid any repetition with the school menu. Menus showed meals to be varied and to ensure a balanced diet. There is also access to fresh fruit and drinking water at all times within the boarding house. Boarders are very happy with the meals provided and confirm they are involved in the preparation of meals if they wish. Two separate kitchens and dining areas in the boarding house provide good facilities for preparing and eating meals, and staff are suitably trained in food handling and hygiene.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The school's boarding house provides a safe and secure environment for boarders within which they feel safe and where they are suitably protected from harm. Policies and procedures support and promote good practice across the school and contribute effectively to the protection and promotion of pupils' welfare. Staff are acutely aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and receive annual refresher training. The school has experienced and trained senior staff with responsibility for child protection and there have been no concerns in this area since the previous inspection carried

out in December 2009. There have also been no complaints received which relate to boarding since the previous inspection. Boarders enjoy positive relationships with staff and are encouraged to talk to someone if they have any concerns or personal problems. They report being aware of how to make a complaint and are provided with the contact details of independent help-lines and Ofsted.

Boarders feel safe within the boarding house and bullying is not a concern for any of them. They report that bullying incidents do occur within the school but that they are treated seriously and dealt with effectively when they do. All pupils are subject to an annual bullying survey carried out by the school's social worker and there is active support for the anti-bullying week initiative. Staff provide clear boundaries for boarders and adopt a positive approach which encourages and promotes the development of socially acceptable behaviours. All boarders have individual targets linked to behaviour and parents report positively on the progress their children have made. The use of sanctions is at a very low level and boarders report feeling fairly treated if they break the rules. There has been no use of any physical intervention technique within the boarding house for several years now. The behaviour of boarders observed during the inspection was seen to be extremely good.

There is good provision at the school for ensuring a safe and secure environment is provided for boarders and staff, and for the effective management of risk. Established systems ensure staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to health and safety and there is good oversight provided by the governing body. A health and safety audit was commissioned by the school during October 2010 and a management action plan has addressed the recommendations. Comprehensive written risk assessments are in place for both the premises and for all activities undertaken by boarders, both on and off site. Local authority procedures are followed for residential activity weeks. Fire safety arrangements are good with all necessary checks and tests being carried out and recorded as required. There is an up-to-date fire risk assessment and fire safety management plan. A member of the care staff is a trained and designated fire safety co-ordinator and all staff complete annual refresher fire safety training. Boarders confirmed being aware of the fire evacuation procedures, however records indicated that only two drills had taken place during 2010.

Recruitment procedures ensure the suitability of staff appointed and provide the necessary safeguards for the welfare of pupils. Three senior staff have completed safer recruitment training and procedures are being rigorously applied and effectively monitored.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school's residential facility provides excellent support for boarders which enhances their educational progress. There is extremely good communication across the care and education settings on a daily basis and staff work collaboratively to identify individual targets and ways of working. Close links with the school's literacy

co-ordinator is one example of an area where boarders have greatly benefitted. The boarding house provides facilities which are conducive to being able to study in private and there is excellent computer access provided. There is access to the school library facilities during evenings and care staff routinely provide opportunities for boarders to acquire life skills in preparation for independent living. One care staff member has recently received training which will enable life-skills work carried out in boarding time to be accredited as part of a nationally recognised award scheme.

Boarders benefit from excellent levels of individual support being provided for them. Placement plans identify their individual needs and care staff successfully implement strategies to address them. This includes actively promoting social interaction within the boarding house. All boarders have designated key workers but feel able to approach any staff member with their personal or welfare concerns. Care staff work very closely with parents and fully support the ongoing involvement of specialist external services for individual boarders. The school's social worker provides invaluable support for individual pupils and their families when there is an identified need. Boarders also have good access to persons independent of the school and are supplied with the contact details of independent help-lines.

The school provides pupils with excellent opportunities to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the community which enhance their social development. This includes residential trips that involve adventurous pursuits and activities such as power kiting which are able to take place on the school's playing field, and for which care staff have completed specific training. Swimming, shopping, arts and crafts, forest walks and trips to the cinema are further examples of activities available to boarders.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Boarders have extremely good relationships with the care staff team who look after them. They are able to talk freely to all staff and say that they feel 'listened to'. Consultation with boarders takes place routinely about activities and menu creation. Boarders also contribute to their annual reviews. Designated key workers provide opportunities for boarders to meet individually with staff and there is a suggestion box located within the boarding house. New boarders are provided with a gradual introduction to the boarding house during which they are very well supported by staff and experienced boarders. Year 11 pupils do not board at the school and so care staff do not routinely become involved in the transition process for leavers.

Established systems provide well for the assessment of pupils referred for boarding. The school's social worker works closely with care staff and carries out an initial assessment of need. Detailed placement plans are then devised which identify clearly how the assessed needs are to be met. Plans cover all aspects of a pupils daily life and include specific targets to be worked towards which include behaviour and independent living skills as areas covered. Plans are regularly reviewed in consultation with teaching staff and parents are very positive about the progress

their children make while boarding at the school. There is, however, no clear evidence of consultation with, or of the involvement of boarders in devising individual placement plans.

Boarders have good access to a telephone within the boarding house which enables them to maintain contact their parents and families. They are also permitted access to personal mobile telephones at certain times of the day. Parents describe having very good communication with care staff and say that they are kept informed and consulted about significant welfare matters concerning their children.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarding accommodation at the school is of a good standard and provides a safe and secure environment for boarding pupils. The boarding house is being well maintained, and is well suited to meeting the needs of boarders. Being located on the school campus provides excellent access to school facilities during evenings and contributes greatly to the work being carried out with individual pupils. All boarders have individual rooms which are well furnished and able to be personalised.

The boarding house is centrally heated and carpeted throughout with communal areas being furnished and decorated to reflect a homely environment as much as possible. The accommodation is solely for the use of boarders and there are good arrangements for the security of the building. Staff accommodation and facilities are separate but close by to boarders rooms. There are sufficient baths, showers and toilets for the use of boarders, however they all have locks fitted which are able to be opened from the outside by other children. There is a payphone provided within the boarding house for the exclusive use of boarders which at the time of the inspection was not in working order.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Boarding provision at the school is being well managed and contributes very effectively to the welfare of boarders and the progress they make at the school. Written information provided for prospective boarders and their parents is good and accurately reflects how the boarding house operates. There is a staffing structure which provides clear lines of accountability and the governing body plays an active role in overseeing boarding. The head of care and the care staff team are very experienced and well qualified to be able to meet the needs of boarding pupils. Levels of staffing are good at all times with both male and female staff providing a high degree of continuity for boarders. Newly appointed staff are well supported and undertake a structured induction programme which includes guidance on safeguarding. There is a continual training and development programme in place for the staff group who are also subject to a system of performance management. This includes supervision which at the time of the inspection was not being provided for

all staff at the required intervals.

Care staff meetings are held on a weekly basis and excellent communication across the school contributes very effectively to the work being carried with individual boarders. Up-to-date policies and procedures support and promote good practice across the school and are easily accessible to staff. Established systems provide for close monitoring of all aspects of the boarding provision including the welfare of individual pupils. This includes monitoring visits carried out by a member of the governing body every half term. Reports are presented by the head of care to governor meetings.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. School documentation demonstrates a clear commitment to providing equality of opportunity, celebrating diversity, and tackling all forms of discrimination. The school's personal, social, and health education programme covers the topics of cultural awareness and diversity with pupils, and cultural festivals such as 'Chinese New Year' have been celebrated within the boarding house. Staff also encourage and support pupil involvement in national appeals such as 'comic relief' and 'children in need'. Individual boarders are being treated fairly and equally and are not subject to any form of discrimination. They present a diverse range of needs which are being well addressed by staff.

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 the written guidance for the administration of medication is implemented in practice (NMS 14.17)
- carry out fire drills at the recommended intervals in the boarding house (NMS 26.6)
- evidence the involvement of boarders in the devising of individual placement plans (NMS 17.2)
- ensure that the payphone provided for the exclusive use of boarders is maintained in working order (NMS 24.9)
- provide locks on all bathroom, shower, and toilet doors which are not able to be easily opened from the outside by other pupils (NMS 25.5)
- ensure that all staff receive supervision at the required intervals (NMS 30.2)