

William Henry Smith School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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Inspector	Leonard Hird
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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

The school is a non-maintained special school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and offers education and accommodation to boys aged between 8 years and 16 years. Accommodation is provided in five houses. On the ground floor of each house there is a communal lounge, dining room, kitchen and staff office, with pupil bedrooms and bathroom and shower rooms on the first floor. Each pupil has his own bedroom and bathroom and shower facilities are shared. The school also offers older pupils the opportunity to live for a short time, with staff support in a small self-contained flat within one of the houses, in order to develop their independence skills.

The school is set in several acres of grounds and has facilities for indoor and outdoor sporting activities, such as an adventure playground, all weather sports enclosure and indoor sports hall and gym. It is situated in a semi-rural location in West Yorkshire, with good transport links and access to a local town.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

The purpose of this announced visit to the school was to carry out an inspection of all of the key national minimum standards relating to residential special schools.

Residential pupils are receiving a high quality service which is meeting their diverse needs. Comprehensive policies, guidance and procedures are implemented by a well qualified and trained staff team ensure that young people's welfare is safeguarded. The residential environment is providing young people with a safe and very caring environment. The dedicated staff team are working in partnership with parents, carers and other professionals to ensure that a high quality residential service is available. Excellent planning and assessment by the care staff team is helping in the promotion of young people's welfare and educational needs.

The management of the school is providing very strong, supportive and effective leadership for the residential staff team to enable them to deliver an outstanding service. The three recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed.

The overall quality rating is outstanding

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the school was asked to ensure that double signatures were used when staff were administering medication and that a disposal of medication record was established. The school nurse has ensured that these matters have been addressed. Similarly the recommendations regarding the information to be maintained on individual members of staff training and personnel files has been satisfactorily addressed by the school.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's individual health care and planning is managed by the residential care staff team under the direction of an experienced school nurse. Young people's health is promoted through an excellent range of health policies and procedures. Members of the residential staff help in delivering and supporting the schools personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme. If young people are unwell they attend either the local health centre or make an appointment with their doctor. Young people's health care is enhanced by the close working relationships that have been established between the school and the other local health services. The school has its own qualified therapeutic team that offers excellent opportunities for young people to access specialist services such as speech therapy or more specialist counselling. On each young person's health plan file there is a medical consent form from parents to ensure that emergency medical treatment and medication can be given. The safe storage, administration and disposal of medication helps keep young people safe. Members of staff are trained in first aid and the safe handling of medication. The school's registered nurse can access clinical guidance from a named doctor to assist in their professional development.

The school's catering team prepares and cooks all of the meals, including meals taken in the individual houses. The menus are varied in content and indicate that a nutritional diet is available. The school's menu provides for excellent choice as well as the opportunity for young people to experience many different types of healthy food. Special dietary needs are individually catered for as required. Facilities are available in the houses for making snacks and drinks. Young people confirm that the standard of food provided is very good.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The school's anti-bullying policy and procedure is comprehensive and takes account of cyber and text bullying. Members of staff are aware of these documents and are very clear as to how they would follow them in practice to prevent bullying behaviour. Young people are extremely aware as to what course of action they would take if they had any concerns about bullying either from young people or members of staff. Very low levels of bullying incidents were reported as occurring at

the school by the young people and they confirm that staff would deal with any incident that occurred appropriately. Comments from young people, confirm that they feel protected from bullying by the school's zero tolerance approach towards bullying behaviour.

There is a clear and robust child protection policy and procedure at the school which is consistent with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. The school ensures that any child protection referral is correctly notified to the appropriate agencies. Members of staff receive regular safeguarding training and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in keeping all information about any young person confidential. The qualified designated safe guarding officer, who is also the school nurse, demonstrates an excellent awareness of child protection legislation. The young people spoken with during the inspection confirm that they feel very safe at the school.

Young people develop through the culture adopted at the school to genuinely care and have concern for others. The school has clear policies, procedures, guidance and practice on absence without permission, behaviour and discipline. Members of staff receive regular and recorded training in behaviour management and physical intervention. Sanctions are sparingly given but when given they are recorded and monitored. The positive and caring relationships that are being developed through the residential provision help young people to live safely.

The rights of young people and parents are protected through the schools robust complaints procedure. There is a clear understanding within the care staff team that any concern or complaint will be taken seriously. Young people confirm they know how to raise a concern and that they would be listened to and the issue dealt with appropriately. There have been no formal complaints since the last inspection carried out in March 2010.

Young people are protected from the risk of fire by fire safety precautions and well trained staff. Regular fire practices take place. The fire safety equipment is checked and serviced in line with the requirements of the fire and rescue service, with accurate records maintained. Fire risk assessments are comprehensive and are regularly reviewed. There are no outstanding recommendations from the local fire and rescue service. Young people demonstrate an excellent knowledge of the school's fire procedures.

Young people's privacy is respected by staff who are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area. Particularly if entering bathrooms or bedrooms, by knocking and waiting before entering. All bathrooms, toilets and showers have appropriate locks and are private. Young people have a lockable storage place in which they can store their valuables. The young people have easy access to private landline telephones in their houses.

Members of the residential staff help in delivering and supporting the schools personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme.

The welfare of young people is protected by a rigorous recruitment process for all staff. The school follows a very clear policy on recruitment in accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) guidance. A detailed record of this information is maintained on the school's single central record.

Young people's welfare is protected and safeguarded through comprehensive security measures. The school has a clear policy process on restricting public access that is reviewed regularly. All residential areas are suitably protected by the use of window restrictors, door key pad, locks and other measures. The school has robust health and safety policies, comprehensive risk assessments and well-trained staff to ensure young people are protected from risk. Maintenance issues are prioritised and staff work to ensure that young people are protected from hazards. Young people are protected by effective monitoring of electrical appliances and the safe storage of substances hazardous to health. Young people's welfare is promoted through a variety of comprehensive assessments relating to activities, visits and the school site. Young people express a strong view that they feel safe and secure at the school.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The residential staff and academic teams are making sure high levels of support are available for young people at the school. Assessment and care planning arrangements, which are of a high quality, are well managed by the individual's key worker. The school offers a 24-hour curriculum and young people's individual programmes are tailored to provide a consistency of care and learning support. Support is given in many different ways but most particularly by the way the school has developed very strong links with young people's families and professional agencies. Members of staff are readily available for young people to approach them for support at any time as the school operates an open door policy, for support requirements.

All of the work undertaken by the residential staff team is monitored by the head of care and the senior management team to a high standard. Young people are very clear about how all of the staff make themselves available for giving them the support they need, particularly in preparation for leaving school.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Residential staff proactively encourage young people to take part in the day-to-day management of their residential house. This is achieved by the regular use of questionnaires, regular recorded house meetings, the school council and informal meetings. The head of care confirms that young people can approach any member of staff or senior manager to discuss anything that is of importance to them individually or as a group. Young people confirm that they can influence how the houses are managed through their involvement in both the formal and informal

consultation process.

Admissions to the school are well planned and are based on their statement of special educational needs with young people being fully supported throughout their placement. Parents and placing authorities are provided with comprehensive updates on the progress a young person is making at the school. Statutory and educational reviews take place at the appropriate time intervals and educational statements are updated accordingly. Active encouragement is given to young people by residential care staff to take part in any of these meetings to ensure their 'voice' is listened to. A well structured key worker system supports the young people while attending the school and care planning is comprehensively managed and monitored. The school works closely with the 'Connexions' service to ensure young people are involved in the planning process for leaving school.

The school actively encourages young people to keep in appropriate contact with their family and friends by different means. Young people confirm that they can keep in touch with friends and family in private, if they so wish.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Residential houses are well maintained, comfortable, and homely. Individual young people's rooms are well decorated and often personalised with posters and photographs which are reflective of the young person's interests. Communal living areas are spacious and well equipped with televisions and other recreational equipment. There are excellent levels of security, privacy and bathing provision in all of the houses. The school has an extensive rolling programme of refurbishment and redecoration in place to ensure that the high standards occurring in the houses are maintained. Young people are very proud of their houses and the work that residential and ancillary staff do to ensure their house has a homely atmosphere.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school has clearly written policies and procedures on equality and diversity. Individual young people's rights are respected, promoted and developed. Members of staff demonstrate a professional approach to working with a large group of young people who have diverse needs to ensure that young people are respected.

The school provides a detailed statement of its boarding principles and practices for parents, young people and other interested parties. The organisation and management of the residential houses creates a positive, caring and safe environment for young people to live in.

Residential staff are provided with good levels of training, support and supervision to maintain their professional development and monitor their performance. The staff team is vibrant, well motivated, experienced and demonstrates a clear commitment to meeting young people's diverse needs.

The residential houses are staffed to meet the individual the needs of young people. This is achieved by effective risk assessments and placement planning which reflects the diverse needs of the young people. Young people confirm that they always know who is on duty and how to summon assistance.

There are detailed environmental and fire risk assessments in place for all parts of the school site, including the residential houses. All parts of the school buildings to which young people can access are user friendly.

Young people's care records are well managed and reflect the high standard of care and support delivered. The effectiveness of quality assurance systems within the school ensures that records are well maintained, monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.