



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Vale of Evesham School

Vale of Evesham School
Four Pools Lane
Evesham
Worcestershire
WR11 1BN

Lead Inspector
Martha Nethaway

Announced Inspection
22nd 23rd & 24th May 2006 10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained 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

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school	Vale of Evesham School
Address	Vale of Evesham School Four Pools Lane Evesham Worcestershire WR11 1BN
Telephone number	01386 443367
Fax number	01386 765787
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Worcestershire County Council Education Department
Name of Head	Ann Starr
Name of Head of Care	Wendy Wheeler
Age range of residential pupils	
Date of last welfare inspection	

Brief Description of the School:

The Vale of Evesham School provides education for children and young people with Moderate Learning Disabilities, for those with Severe Learning Disabilities: Autistic Spectrum Disorders and those with Communication Disorders and for those with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities. The majority of children receive day education but there is provision for boarding, always described as the boarding school, which can accommodate 15 children and young people up to the age of 19 years as weekly boarders. The boarding accommodation is placed on the first floor and consists of three suites, one of which is very separate from the other two. Each of the suites is staffed with its own team of care staff under a care officer, all of whom were responsible to the head of care. The school is maintained by the local education authority, Worcestershire County Council Department of Education, and is directly responsible to a governing body.

SUMMARY

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

This inspection was a key inspection visit announced, taking place over three days covering Monday Tuesday and Wednesday, carried out by one inspector. The visit covered the morning, late evening and nighttime routines. All twenty national minimum standards were assessed. During the visit, time was spent with children and young people including observing activities and interactions. Discussions took place with all levels of the staffing group. Some key policies and procedures were also examined. Questionnaires were also circulated to children, parents, carers and staff.

What the school does well:

The school has in place structures that assess children and young people's health care and the provision of health care professionals is good. Record keeping was found to be of a good standard.

The safeguards and protection of children is clearly understood by staff and the frequency of training help to reinforce areas of responsibility. The internal and external procedures are well interpreted by the management and care staff.

The childcare practices and undertaking of the task is good. Children and young people's development and progress is recognised and monitored.

The recruitment practices were assessed as good.

Children's educational needs are being met. Children's communication needs are recognised and each individual's level of ability is well supported.

The day-to-day routines and activities permit children to express their interests and develop confidence. Parents and carer's involvement with children's welfare and educational needs is welcomed.

Staff at all levels have clear lines of accountability.

What has improved since the last inspection?

- All of the recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed.
- The senior management changes have been well planned for and a smooth transition period has been experienced by the care team.

- The care staff have received training in signalong and are using it extensively to enhance communication with children and young people.

What they could do better:

- Quality assurance system needs expanding to reflect the provision provided and identify future areas for development.
- The child protection policy being revised needs to reflect all the recent changes in safeguarding at a local level in Worcestershire. Also, the guidance must reflect the department of education's own advice and recommendations.
- Senior staff should be trained in child protection at level two and three to ensure consistency with the local child protection procedures.
- The accessibility of the complaints system needs to be able to represent the views and opinions of children and young people.
- The care plans need to integrate all aspects of culture, ethnicity and religious needs.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.(NMS 14)
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.(NMS 15)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

14

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The assessment and meeting health care needs well understood and promoted.

EVIDENCE:

A health care policy is available and covered guidance and advice organised by the school nurse. Each child has a health plan that is correlated with the care plan. Children's health needs are assessed and information is detailed and covers key themes related to healthy living.

Case files examined showed children are attending appointments at dentists and opticians. Parents have overall responsibility for accessing primary health professionals. The staff can facilitate children attending the school dentist.

Consultation with psychiatric services was also evidenced. The management and care staff pay good attention to any change in relation to monitoring epilepsy or the management of diabetes. Staff were able to describe practices that promote contact with parents and regular dialogue with all matters related to health. Care staff identified areas for further investigation in a proactive manner.

The system of communication between the nurse and care staff was described positively and was effectively monitored by the head of care. Care staff were diligent with record keeping and observant with any changes.

Appropriate consent for treatment had been obtained from parents or carers. All staff receive training in the administration of medication and this is overseen by the school nurse. To enhance this area, accredited training should be considered and the management team were receptive to this during the inspection feedback session.

The school had obtained the healthy school awards. Additional work needs to take place over the next 18 months to maintain this status. Government guidance on school meals is to be adopted.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.(NMS 3)
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.(NMS 4)
- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.(NMS 5)
- Children are protected from bullying by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(NMS 7)
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.(NMS 8)
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour.(NMS 10)
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.(NMS 26)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 & 27

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The schools internal and external procedures ensure that children are protected and safeguarded.

The quality of care practice and understanding by staff to the task of caring for children, is good. Children and young people's development is recognised and supported within the residential setting.

The recruitment practices were assessed as good.

The area of child protection training for senior managers for level two and three child protection training needs to be organised.

The complaints procedure and how children and young people will be able to use it needs further consideration. Consideration needs to be given to advocacy representation within the process of the complaints procedure.

EVIDENCE:

Children and young people's right to maintain privacy is recognised at the school. Records are appropriately stored and information relating to children is shared in accordance with staff guidance. Overall staff are respectful and adhere to maintaining confidentiality. Staff were clear when matters relating to child protection needed to be referred on to the designated staff.

Children's care plans discussed the level of support and supervision related to personalised care. There is intimate care guidance and discussions with staff demonstrated consistency and a clear understanding. As children progress, the development of independent skills are built upon and extended. Young people are encouraged to take responsibility and verbal prompts reinforce this expectation in relating to appearance and bathing routines.

Children have access to a telephone and contact with their parents is promoted. There was evidence on the case files of staff regularly briefing families in information sharing or updating parents.

The school does not provide a specific area for parents to meet in private but there is enough space to accommodate visitors without impacting on the group of boarders in residence.

The school has a complaints procedure that is consistent with the education setting and the local authority. The school provided the complaints system in an accessible widget format for children. Discussions with the senior management indicate consideration needs to be given on how to secure access to an independent advocate. Additionally work needs to take place to ensure the complaints system functions as a working tool and encourages young people and staff to make use of it, effectively within the residential setting. Staff need to receive training on the principles of the schools complaints procedure and it should cover expectations of standard 4.3 in relation to complaints.

Staff have received ongoing child protection training and there are procedures in place for reporting matters to the relevant authorities. The school's policy and procedure is being amended. During the inspection feedback, discussions emphasised that the school should implement the changes relating to safeguarding as specified by Worcestershire Children's Services. The school's guidance should also reflect the expectations issued with 'Guidance for Safe

Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in an Education Setting' 2005 by DfES. The designated person should receive training organised by the local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC). Both Level 2 and 3 should be considered.

The school has a written anti-bullying policy and a lot of work has taken place in the education setting to reinforce the principles of effective strategies to counteract bullying. There was evidence in the case notes of risky behaviour being assessed and staff guidance in the overall task of management of behaviours with young people.

Children and young people are well supervised and receive appropriate levels of input from staff. There was evidence of staff gauging children and young people's interactions and providing clear boundaries in relation to expected levels of behaviours. Compatibility issues are recognised and the impact of children behaviours on others is equally given attention. The school has worked hard at developing behaviour management plans and interventions that successfully enable children and young people to participate in a range of activities. When noise, crowds or anxiety levels increase there are clear exist strategies in place for children and young people.

In the school setting the new head teacher has introduced a pastoral care team. The underlying premise behind this resource is to provide consistent approaches within the teaching and residential settings. A new monitoring tool has been implemented across both the school and residential setting. The data collected related to triggers is envisaged to aid staffs' insight. The school has a focus on providing more intensive services for challenging behaviours.

The management team have introduced a new recording system that complies with the expectations of the standards in relation to behaviour management and record keeping. Minutes of staff team meetings evidenced that children and young people behaviours were regularly being discussed and explored.

The school has a health and safety policy. The school employs a designated maintenance person. Records relating to domestic installations were up to date. Systems were in place to ensure fire checks, drills and maintenance were taking place. Water temperature testing and portable appliance testing are also in place.

Recruitment records were examined. Two newly appointed members of staff records were sampled. There is a clear recruitment process and all files had an application form, interviewee notes and references. The school had used CRB checks forms within the education setting. It is recommended that all new care employees have fresh CRBs as portability is not permitted due to the Protection of Vulnerable Children Act. (POCA) It is recommended that CRBs for all care staff are renewed at three yearly intervals.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.(NMS 12)
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

12 & 22

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The 24-hour curriculum inclusively supports pupils with their educational, social and emotional needs. Children's communication needs are recognised and met on an individual level.

EVIDENCE:

The school provides a 24-hour education curriculum. The education and care settings are working towards the same targets with children and young people. The targets are set up to spread across the care and teaching settings. This offers a provision that is working towards the holistic needs of children. Teaching staff set the targets termly. There was clear evidence of monitoring and the school uses a colour bar system for targets achieved and for those currently being worked on. Overall, the comments made by parents were favourable about the levels of resources and specialist input from staff.

The dormitories areas had a good range of books, magazines and toys to occupy and stimulate the pupils. Children and young people were observed using some of these items with staff support and guidance.

Staff have made significant progress with children and young people's communication needs. There were several examples of good practices observed in relation to using makaton signalong. This facilitated children's communication to be made known to the staff members. Young people were observed to reciprocate with the use of sign language. The staff also discussed the extensive training programme organised and staff were confident with the use of signs. The other ranges of communication aids include picture

exchange communication (PECS), widget signs and symbols and weekly schedules to aid and assist pupils.

All children and young people have a residential care plan. This covers key areas including health and medication, morning and evening routines, meals, personalised support, behaviour, communication needs, life interests and likes and dislikes. All children and young people are allocated a key worker and co-worker. This is always a senior member of the care group who are experienced and have a good knowledge of the assessed needs.

There was evidence that cultural and religious areas are discussed in the school curriculum and significant events are marked in the calendar year. There is an appointed PHSE coordinator whose role is to oversee student learning and understanding of the wider aspects of multiculturalism. The school had organised an event related to the travelling community and also invited a keynote speaker.

The work undertaken by the care staff relating to transition from the education environment to younger adult services has been significant this year. Three students are leaving and a lot of work has taken place in relation to preparation, multi agency meetings and liaison with the learning disabilities teams. One young person moved on quickly as a local placement had been identified and staff had provided direct support with moving onto the new service. This included visits and overnight stays.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.(NMS 2)
- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.(NMS 9)
- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.(NMS 11)
- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.(NMS 17)
- In accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

2, 9, 11, 17 & 20

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Children are respected and clear structures and routines are maintained.

Care planning was well thought out and established. Parents and carers are actively engaged in the child's welfare.

To enhance the care plans areas related to culture, ethnicity and religion should be explored and discussed.

EVIDENCE:

Children and young people are encouraged to participate in the day-to-day activities and pursuits in the dormitories. There are no formal structures in place to gain children and young people's opinions in the residential settings. But it is implicit in the staff support provided and children's contributions are not taken for granted.

The school operates a student council and this filters through all aspects of student life. The new head has used consultative methods to engage with parents and stakeholders and this process has been recognised as strength of the school.

As discussed earlier in the report, each child has a placement plan and these were found to be coherent and a comprehensive record. There was good evidence of regular review of the plans and documenting areas of change. During the inspection feedback process the only area identify as requiring further refinement related to the cultural, religious and racial needs. These need to be more explicitly integrated in the placement plans.

The arrangement for contact with parents was well defined in the records examined. Staff are recording all events and telephone contacts. Children and young people can talk to parents by phone or in some cases relatives visit during out of school hours. The extent and nature of parental involvement is clearly understood by the care staff team. Parents are highly involved with the education and care needs of their children.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.(NMS 16)
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.(NMS 21)
- Children live in well designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- Children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.(NMS 24)
- Children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity.(NMS 25)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

None of these standards were assessed on this occasion.

EVIDENCE:

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.(NMS 1)
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.(NMS 19)
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.(NMS 28)
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.(NMS 29)
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.(NMS 30)
- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.(NMS 31)
- Children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.(NMS 32)
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.(NMS 33)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

1, 28, 31 & 33

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The components of staff training, supervision and management oversight ensures a clear focus on children and young people.

The area related to quality assurance needs expanding to reflect the provision provided and identify future areas for development.

EVIDENCE:

The school has a statement of purpose that meets with the expectations of the standards. The provision of the service accommodates 15 boarders who are in residence for four nights, Monday to Thursday.

The residential provision is split across three suites. Each of the suites is staffed with its own team of care staff under a care officer, all of whom were responsible to the head of care. During the evening, teaching staff are also involved with the recreational activities organised both on the premises and out in the community. There are two waking night staff working each night, this is an assessed need due to the special medical needs of one young person.

It is apparent that the structures in the school provide clearly defined management roles. The Head of Care is well respected amongst her senior colleagues and likewise favourable comments were also expressed by the care team. Her strong commitment and work ethic is well noted.

Since the last inspection the Headteacher has retired and a new Headteacher was appointed and been in post since September 2005. Feedback from the staff group indicated that the quality of leadership and support is positive. The deputy head is due to retire at the end of the academic year and already plans are in place to ensure a smooth transfer with the appointment to a new deputy head. This demonstrates that the management team are proactive with maintaining the continued management structures and recognising continuity is a key component with transition of the deputy headship.

The care team view the stability of the membership of the staff group positively. This places a strong bearing on the continuity of care being delivered. During discussions, the overall goal of benefiting the children and young people and being mutually supportive was evidenced. Staff are secure and confident with their care practices.

All of the staff team are qualified at NVQ level 3 and the two new staff are enrolled on NVQ training and expect to complete by June 2007. The school has invested heavily in training to ensure the continual professional development of the care teams.

The school has in place a process to monitor the running of the school. During the inspection this area was discussed in detail and the school recognises that a more comprehensive, quality assurance model will need to be developed for the future. The provider's ability to analysis the service's strengths, areas for growth and improvement will be a key priority in the arrangements for future inspections. The school recognises that the development of tools to capture this information will need further consideration.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

4 Standard Exceeded (Commendable) **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls) **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

“N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
Standard No	Score
14	3
15	x

STAYING SAFE	
Standard No	Score
3	3
4	2
5	3
6	3
7	x
8	3
10	3
26	3
27	3

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
Standard No	Score
12	4
13	x
22	3

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
Standard No	Score
2	4
9	4
11	4
17	4
20	4

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
Standard No	Score
16	x
21	x
23	x
24	x
25	x

MANAGEMENT	
Standard No	Score
1	3
18	x
19	x
28	4
29	x
30	x
31	3
32	x
33	3

no

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1.	RS14	The school should consider accredited training for the administration and safe handling of medication in relation to staff training.	
2.	RS4	The complaints procedure should function as a working tool for young people to capture and facilitate feedback. Staff should receive training related to the elements outlined in standard 4.3	
3.	RS5	The child protection policy should be reviewed in light of the changes relating to safeguarding. The school's guidance must also reflect the expectations issued with 'Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Setting' by DfES. Staff child protection training should be consistent with the local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) and senior staff should receive Level 2 and 3 training.	
4.	RS17	The care plans should address comprehensively address children's culture, ethnicity and religious needs.	
5.	RS33	The school's development of quality assurance to review the quality of care should involve the LA and the education department, to assess impact and evaluate staff practice. This includes a cycle of self-monitoring and improvement within the	

		corporate strategy for children services. A quality assurance system appropriate to the needs of children should be established and a report of the outcome provided to the Commission.	
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