

Fosse Way School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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Inspector	Wilfried Maxfield
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Fosse Way School, Longfellow Road, RADSTOCK, BA3 3AL
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Nominated person	David Gregory
Date of last inspection	19/03/2010

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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 located in the town of Radstock. It provides education for students aged three to 19 years who have a statement of special educational need. In addition, it offers weekly residential provision for 10 students who have autistic spectrum disorders. Whilst the majority of these students will be between 11 and 18 years of age, where appropriate, accommodation may be made available to those aged 19 or 20.

The residential unit is purpose built and provides well designed accommodation and facilities for the students. Local shops and amenities can be easily accessed to provide after-school activities.

Nine students lived in the boarding house at the time of this inspection.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This was an announced key inspection of the school. All of the key national minimum standards for residential special schools were inspected on this occasion.

As part of the inspection process, students and their parents and carers were offered the opportunity to anonymously complete pre-inspection questionnaires. Judgements contained in this report are made from evidence obtained from pre-inspection material, views expressed in questionnaires and from information gathered during the inspection.

This inspection found that the school offers outstanding levels of care to the students living in its boarding house. All of the parents and carers returned a questionnaire on this occasions containing unanimous praise for the school and the residential boarding facilities and staff.

This is the second successive inspection which rates the outcomes for the residential students at Fosse Way School to be outstanding.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made as a result of the last inspection.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The school promotes a healthy environment and offers outstanding levels of health support to its residential students. The staff team's knowledge of individual health care needs is outstanding. Students with particular health needs and complex medical conditions benefit from a well-trained, experienced and caring group of staff. Parents praise the school for providing them with opportunities for ongoing consultation, advice and support regarding their children's welfare. Health needs are identified in individual care plans and reviewed and agreed with parents at every significant developmental step and/or on a termly basis. Multiagency arrangements are in place to secure external medical advice and any behaviour and educational support if and when needed. Residential students with specified needs benefit from an effective range of additional therapies and specialist medical services.

Medication policies and procedures are implemented robustly. All medicines are administered by competent staff and are kept securely. Records are accurate and well monitored and stock controls are good. Safe and reliable hand-over procedures between school and parents are in place. Communication with parents on possible changes and adjustments to medication regimes is excellent.

The school provides students with wholesome and nutritious food. Outstanding levels of expertise are given to special diets in order to meet individual needs. A good range of menus are developed through consultation between the catering department and boarding staff. Nutritional experts are involved if and when needed. Excellent communication between school and parents ensures that students with eating problems and disorders are well monitored and make good progress. Carefully designed independence plans provide young people with opportunities to plan and prepare their own meals.

Comprehensive induction programmes are in place to ensure that staff are familiar with and are trained in key processes such as safe food handling and hygiene, first aid and personal hygiene needs. Staff are given excellent support to access external and professional sources of advice in all areas of health care.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The school and staff respect students' need for privacy and confidentiality. Supervision is sensitive to the right for privacy. Intimate care needs are assessed in very good detail and students are given a choice of staff to support their personal care needs. Staff are aware of individual and gender specific differences and follow well-structured individualised schedules to support personal needs.

The school's complaints procedure enables students with a wide range of communication needs and all other relevant stakeholders to voice their concerns.

The procedure is available in different communication formats for the students, and has been included in a range of internal and external brochures and in the school's student guide. Staff offer students all possible forms of assistance to enable them full access to the complaints procedure and voice concerns.

Students are protected by the school's safeguarding and child protection policies. The school's delegated child protection officers have training consistent with the requirements of the local safeguarding children's board. Boarding managers and staff demonstrate an outstanding awareness of safeguarding issues. Safeguarding awareness training forms a part of their induction and all staff benefit from regular updates and refresher training. Students are protected from bullying. Incidents of bullying behaviour are currently not a problem at Fosse Way House. A range of anti-bullying information is available using preferred methods of communication. The school's missing in care and absent without authority policy protects students in the event of going missing. There is a clear protocol which gives guidance to staff on procedures to follow in the event of such an incident. None of the students have gone missing from boarding since the last inspection.

The management of behaviour is based on establishing positive relationships and a good understanding of the student's emotional needs. Challenging behaviours are assessed in excellent detail and measures of control based on clear and constructive strategies. Behaviour management plans outline the preferred and most appropriate method of de-escalation and are designed to prevent the need for challenging behaviour. The monitoring of plans is outstanding. Regular progress meetings ensure that all plans benefit from constant updating and represent the latest in available information and observations. Staff are able to set clear and meaningful boundaries and are trained in the use of physical intervention and de-escalation as part of their induction. This training is regularly refreshed. Physical interventions and sanctions are documented in satisfactory detail in a bound and numbered book.

Staff and students are provided with good levels of physical safety and security. Fosse Way House is free from avoidable risks and hazards and is regularly monitored and inspected by the school's health and safety officer. Regular fire drills are being conducted. Fire drills and evacuation procedures are known to staff. Emergency lighting, fire alarms and fire fighting equipment are regularly tested and serviced. The environment and all of the equipment specific to students needs, is robustly risk assessed as is the use of the school's swimming pool and other areas in regular use.

Students are protected from people unsuitable to work in this environment. The school's human resources department continues to ensure the best possible implementation of the school's safer recruitment and selection policy and procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Students are actively encouraged and supported to meet their educational potential. Their educational achievement is supported by staff that are able to provide

outstanding levels of residential as well as academic support. The school's structure and employment policy facilitates a strong working together of education and care departments by employing staff in a dual function as education and support workers. Students benefit from staff that have an outstanding knowledge of their educational targets and approaches to progressing these. There is excellent support from staff when undertaking any homework.

The school building offer students a range and choice of recreational areas. This includes access to sports equipment, workshops, theatre, a range of recreational classes and opportunities to go swimming. Students use off-site resources such as the local library and enjoy regular trips and access to the local community. Activities are closely supervised. However, if considered appropriate carefully implemented and unsupervised activities are on offer to promote independence and self-esteem. Individual assessments ensure risks are identified and minimised.

The school offers excellent help, guidance and support. Parents state that support systems for their children and their families are of an outstanding quality. One parent questionnaire returned prior to this inspection stated that, "The staff are very professional, caring and have made such a huge difference to the lives of our whole family through their hard work and commitment to supporting our son and the rest of the family". Staff have received specialist training to be able to support children with a wide range of disabilities and conditions. Key working is of an outstanding quality and plays a central part in ensuring that individual support needs are being met. Key workers monitor and help to review the support available to the students.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Parents rate the residential staff's capacity and ability for consulting with them as outstanding. Students' opinions and views are actively sought and regular progress and review meetings provide formal opportunities for students and families to express their views. A 'link book' promotes the flow of information between school and families. One parent stated that, "Staff are amazing, we have great communication from a link book, telephone conversations and on occasions email. We discuss problems... positive things he has achieved... We can visit him at any time". Students are encouraged to participate and contribute. They are encouraged to give feedback on their day-to-day care as well as on specific areas such the quality of activities, food and their immediate environment.

Students have their needs assessed. The quality of placement planning is outstanding. Written plans identify the needs of the students and how they will be cared for on a day-to-day basis. All care plans contain all of the elements of the national minimum standard 17 and are constructed with the help and assistance of parents and carers.

All students have regular contact with their families throughout the week and all

residents go home at weekends. Students enjoy the facilities at Fosse Way House that enable them to meet their families and friends in private and when they so wish.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Day-to-day activities offer the opportunities for students to develop skills that will enhance their ability to live independently. Young people in transition are well supported and practical arrangements are discussed with parents and the relevant external agencies. The school assesses this in a formal pathway plan and all key staff share information about the placement and transition needs of students from Year 9 onwards.

Fosse Way House serves the needs of the residential students. It is presented as a homely, well looked after and comfortable environment. Rooms are adequately lit, heated and ventilated and kept clean and tidy. There is sufficient space throughout and all areas of accommodation have been furnished, decorated and maintained to a good standard. Bedrooms have been designed and furnished to an excellent standard and in consultation with students and their parents. There are sufficient bathrooms and toilets. Facilities for study, leisure time and activities on and off the residential premises and in regular use by boarders are excellent.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school provides a wealth of information in core documents, brochures and on its website. A written Statement of Purpose describes the overall principles and practices of the school and is available to families, students and staff. Core policies and procedures reflect the current practice and are available for all stakeholders. There is outstanding procedural guidance for education and residential support staff. Secure and confidential records are kept for each student. Young people are provided with a student information pack containing policies, procedures and a wealth of other relevant information relating to Fosse Way House. The information is accessible to young people with differing communication needs.

Students enjoy outstanding levels of continuity of care from an experienced and well-supported staff group. Parents praise the team highly for their professionalism and dedication to the needs of the students. Staffing levels are excellent providing safe levels of supervision and full compliance in meeting the aims of the school's Statement of Purpose. Staff state that they in turn feel well supported by their managers and by the excellent informal systems and good peer support. Levels and quality of formal supervisions are outstanding and meet the frequencies outlined in the national minimum standards.

All members of the staff team are well trained and benefit from continuous performance management. The school maintains a continued program of training

opportunities to ensure staff training needs are identified and met. All long-term staff have the relevant qualifications and the experience expected of staff working in residential child care settings, including a National Vocational Qualification at level 3. New staff join this scheme soon after successful completion of their probationary period.

The school is organised and managed in a way that delivers outstanding levels of child care. The two residential managers are well-trained, highly competent and experienced. Both continue to enhance their professional development through ongoing training. Both benefit from outstanding levels of support from the schools senior management group. A dedicated Assistant Head teacher supervises the residential managers and ensures outstanding outcomes for the residential students and compliance with the school's high standards through ongoing monitoring and support. The senior management group monitors and signs records according to the requirements of the relevant national minimum standard. A trustee carries out unannounced monitoring visits on behalf of the governing body.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff value and respect the individual differences of the residential students and are sensitive to issues of disability, age and gender. Student's individual needs are recognised and met. This is achieved by outstanding assessment procedures and ongoing monitoring of progress. Students are given outstanding placement support specific to their developmental needs.