

Brantridge School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Gaynor Moorey
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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 residential special school. It is part of an organisation that runs two schools, one senior and one junior. The school provides education and care for boys of primary age, all of whom have statements of special educational needs. Some children have complex needs including learning disabilities and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school can provide for up to 36 boys from the age of six to 13 years.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This announced key inspection took place over three weekdays. The purpose of the inspection was to undertake a full review encompassing all the key national minimum standards for residential special schools.

The school continues to provide an outstanding standard of care through the work undertaken by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the head of care, and the experienced care staff team. The children are safe at the school and this is maintained by comprehensive and clear guidance, policies and procedures. The school provides the children with excellent emotional support and encourages the children with their education and interests. The school ensures that comprehensive information is available to enable reviews to take place. The children have contact with family and friends while at school and are given many opportunities to express their opinions and make choices about their lives. The school is maintained to an exceptional level, providing a homely environment for the children to stay in. The staff are supported by an experienced head of care and comprehensive systems that include supervision and training. The school is extensively monitored by the senior management team, the governing body and the organisation in order to provide the children with a well run, safe and enjoyable environment to learn in.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the school received one recommendation which related to ensuring all staff are given training in report writing. Training has now been given to all staff on report writing to ensure clear concise reports are produced.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils have comprehensive health plans which detail current health needs so staff are aware of what treatment children need to promote their well-being. Training is provided for staff to ensure they have experience and knowledge when assisting the children to take their medication. A new registered nurse is in overall charge of the medication, first aid and treatment within the school. These systems are robust, cohesive and forward thinking in safeguarding the children's health. All of the children have consent for all forms of medical treatment. Children told the inspector they felt that someone would always look after them at the school.

Children said they enjoyed the food and that having more choices at lunch was good. Kitchen staff are aware of the children's needs, and design and work through a menu across each half term which is varied and offers a range of meals of dietary value and imaginative multicultural design. Children benefit from a professionally run kitchen which has reached the highest levels of health and safety awards and ensures the children receive meals and snacks so they flourish and have energy for their busy lives. Children said they are able to talk to staff in the kitchen about requests for menu changes and have been listened to. Children eat within the dining room with staff serving at each table; it is a sociable and organised event. Over the past year the school has also introduced a nurture lunch for more vulnerable children which works very well and is a very supportive time for meeting the needs of those pupils.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils' confidentiality is respected in the school. Children confirmed they have privacy and space while on the landings. Telephone calls can be made in private on the boys' telephone. Calls in the office are made with staff present. Children confirm they also have mobile phones during certain hours. Children's personal information is stored securely.

Children said they would know how to complain and how they could act upon this if they needed to. Children spoke about the two different systems in place, one of which is less formal and the other being the formal complaints system. Both systems work, with staff supporting children with any problems they may have, whether they be minor or serious. One child said: 'When I complained about another pupil being nasty the head of care helped me.' Parents and carers have access to the complaints system which is in the parents' handbook. Complaints seen had been dealt with appropriately and within the correct timescales.

Pupils are protected at the school and any investigation, either internal or external, is given the same level of comprehensive and effective attention in order to ensure the well-being of the children. Staff follow any internal incident proactively, investigations

are thorough and outcomes are forward thinking to try to avoid further issues. The school has also provided all staff with updated child protection training. Children spoken to said they felt safe at the school and that staff look after them.

Pupils at the school say there is bullying sometimes but staff help them to stop it happening. The school is proactive in dealing with bullying in the school and continues with such initiatives as anti-bullying week. Children say that they often speak about bullying in meetings and discuss it at the school council to look at how they can tackle issues with staff support. The school has a recording system for both bullying and more specifically racism and discriminatory remarks.

Children rarely go missing from the school and if they do the school has a clear procedure in place to deal with any incidents that may occur.

Pupils at the school may be restrained; they say they understand why this happens and incidents are talked through with them. Pupils, if unhappy with what has happened, can and do complain about issues. The school responds to any issues and continues to train staff and works proactively around the area of restraint. The school works very hard to reduce its number of restraints by using techniques such as de-escalation.

The staff work proactively with each pupil around behaviour management and use a reward scheme for the promotion of positive behaviour. Pupils who spent time with the inspector said that they did not like some of the sanctions used, but when asked, said that they felt that they were always treated fairly and understood why sanctions were necessary.

Pupils' well-being at the school is protected; there are numerous comprehensive up-to-date risk assessments in place which cover activities, school trips and all areas of the premises and buildings. Pupils understand the fire safety drills and have reminders in the landings and full evacuations. One young person said: 'I know where to go if the alarm sounds but it's very loud.'

Pupils are safe at the school as appropriate checks are carried out on staff before they start work at the school. A system of risk assessments is in place when a supply teacher is used although one was put in place after the member of staff had started work. The school has a clear system in place for checking visitors in and out.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Staff across both the school and the landings support pupils with their education and their progress. Good communication between the school and care staff enables the pupils to get the best outcomes from their time at the school. This is seen in the joint projects held such as sports week, anti-bullying week, celebrating cultural events and school camps.

Pupils enjoy an excellent activities programme and on each evening they are able to choose between activities at the school on site and going out into the community. During the inspection the pupils were offered go-karts, archery, information technology, gardening and off-site activities including going to the park, adventure playground and swimming. During the course of the year the school has put on several events which the boys have enjoyed immensely. These have included the sports week where various activities and sports were arranged that the children would not always have access to such as horse riding, golf, archery, street dance and squash. The week ended with the pupils' families and carers being invited to the school for sports day.

Pupils are offered the choice of five different camps at the end of the school year. These all offer different experiences such as a boating holiday, holiday camping, an activities-based holiday and going to a holiday camp. Such a choice ensures the children can find an experience they enjoy and feel happy attending. The holidays are a great success and the school is planning similar weeks this year. The school also arranges different cultural events such as celebrating different celebrations. Some of the pupils this year did some fund raising to buy goats for a village in Africa.

Children have their needs for specific support outlined in their placement plans and the school offers support and counselling. Care planning and behaviour programmes are built around the specific needs of each pupil, and can take into account the differing behaviour patterns of each child.

The school employs an independent visitor who the pupils can contact on a confidential basis; contact details are posted around the landings. The inspector observed that the visitor was recognised and acknowledged by the pupils. The family liaison worker works with and supports both the children and their parents and carers. Children receive support from the staff at the school and relationships are warm and caring in a professional manner. Children said they would feel able to talk to the staff and feel listened to.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are elected to and form a school council which meets every half term. The school council collects ideas from other pupils and discusses them with staff who are involved in the meetings. The council said they put ideas forwards such as menu changes and activities which do happen and if they are not possible they are told why. Pupils were very confident in stating their views about the school and what is brilliant and what is not so good.

Parents and carers attend reviews and have weekly contact with the school. The pupils said they are involved with their reviews and what is written about them. One young person said: 'We can go to our reviews if we want to.' Parents also are able to access the family liaison worker with any issues or problems. Pupils say they really like the staff and enjoy spending time with them. The care staff group are able to

offer consistency in their relationships with the pupils. Children feel happy and safe at school and feel looked after and cared for.

The admissions procedure includes a detailed assessment and children can visit the school before admission. All new pupils are given a copy of the children's guide, which is accessible and useful for the children, many of whom said that it told them the things that they needed to know about the school. Pupils are involved in their transition planning in their last year before they move on to their next school. Parents and carers are fully involved and consulted at every stage.

Pupils confirmed they have regular contact with home and are able to use the boys' telephone and office telephone. Pupils said they are allowed mobile phones but do have to give them in at night.

Children have two files; one is the placement file which is comprehensive and holistic in approach. Each file covers all aspects of current care and historical information. The pupils said they are fully involved when review reports are written. The other file is called 'all about me' and it contains details the pupils have written about themselves and their achievements which becomes a record of their time at the school.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Each pupil receives support and comprehensive planning when moving on from the school. The family liaison worker works with both the pupil and family to make the transition a positive experience. The older pupils are provided with independence training including 'licence to cook' appliance skills and an accredited first aid course which they can continue to build on once they have left the school.

The school is set in a large manor house with a variety of outbuildings, secure play areas and large grounds. The environment is conducive to providing the children with an excellent all round experience of school life. The school has security systems and risk assessments to ensure the safety of the children. The school continues to make improvements to the environment to provide the children with an excellent place to live in and go to school.

The boarding facilities are within the main house and divided into three landings which are governed by age group. Each landing is appropriately decorated and themed according to the age of the group living there. The décor is outstanding, child focused and homely. Each landing has different arrangements for bedrooms, with the older children having more space and privacy. Each child has their own place to decorate to their individual choice.

The children said that they can have privacy when showering and this is respected by staff and those around them.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school meets the children's needs through training and learning for both children and staff, health and welfare issues, and protection from racism and discrimination.

The pupils and their families and carers can access a variety of information linked to the Statement of Purpose including the children's guide and the parents' and carers' handbook. The guidance offers a clear picture of the school, its ethos and its daily routines. The staff can access up-to-date policies and procedures which have been produced to guide them in practice to safeguard the pupils. Monitoring of the records and files throughout the school ensures consistent practice when looking after the children.

The overall management of the school is excellent and the senior management team has continued to implement positive changes and improved existing systems to ensure pupils receive the best possible education and care while in placement. Ideas put forward by the care staff, which look at new developments in areas such as promotion of the pupils and their progress through the school, are accepted by the senior management team where appropriate, to increase a full rounded experience for each individual child.

The care staff team comprises a group of people of varying ages, cultures and gender mix, all of whom bring skills and knowledge to the school and offer the children a wealth of experiences and care. The team is supported by the head of care and clear systems of supervision and training that are in place. The staff said they feel supported and happy with the extensive training they are now offered. Staff are able to use this training to increase the positive time the pupils spend at the school.

The school has a comprehensive system in place for the monitoring of practice and safety issues to ensure the well-being of the pupils. The headteacher of the school has continued to work hard, with the support of the senior management team and the staff at the school, to implement the constant change and development. The school is part of an organisation which has a yearly development plan forum which looks to the future initiatives to improve the experience for the pupils.

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 risk assessments for supply teachers are in place before they begin working at the school. (NMS 27.7)

