

Lindsworth School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Jackie Callaghan
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Date of last inspection	30/06/2011

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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

Lindsworth is a special school providing day and residential places. All the students have a statement of special educational needs and their predominant difficulties are social, emotional and behavioural. Lindsworth provides up to 14 residential places if two bedrooms are shared or 12 places if all bedrooms are single.

The residential provision operates from Monday until Thursday only with no students accommodated at weekends. Those students whose statements require them to be resident are accommodated in Home two. All students have their own bedrooms with ensuite toilet and shower. There are currently three boarders, all boys. Residential students actively contributed to this report either through a questionnaire or in direct discussion with the inspector.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This is a full announced inspection that concentrated on the key national minimum standards. The overall judgement in this report is based on the standards inspected within the relevant Every Child Matters outcome groups. This inspection also considered the four recommendations made at the last inspection. Three of these recommendations have been fully met; however, one recommendation is to be repeated. The repeated recommendation is to ensure that staff supervision meets national minimum requirements.

The overall quality rating for this setting is good. Students continue to receive good quality care, guidance and support. Students understand the expectations and routines of boarding and establish good routines and positive relationships. Teaching and non-teaching staff relationships are friendly, respectful and supportive of the needs of students. Four further recommendations have been raised as a result of this inspection, in the staying safe and economic well-being outcome groups.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection highlighted four areas in need of development. When incidents of absence without permission occur they are now responded to and fully recorded within the school systems. This now allows for analysis that considers if any patterns or trends are taking place. The residential provision now records physical interventions in a dedicated bound book and the internal monitoring processes have been developed to show if any action has been taken in relation to any concentration, trend or pattern that might be occurring. As a result, students' welfare is being promoted.

Staff supervision sessions are still not covering all the points required by national minimum standards in order to ensure that staff receive effective and supportive processes that help develop their practice.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Health promotion is a prominent feature at the school. The physical, emotional and mental health needs of each student are actively identified on admission and comprehensively supported throughout their school life. Health needs which may impact on future outcomes for students are addressed succinctly and staff, in partnership with parents, actively seek out the services needed to address these, for example, child and adolescent mental health services.

There is a good working partnership between the residential care staff, teaching staff and the healthy schools co-ordinator. This means that students receive appropriate personal, social and health education and as a result, students are enabled to make informed decisions regarding their diet, sexuality, health and exercise.

Students receive a healthy and nutritious diet and good messages about healthy eating. Mealtimes are very pleasant and sociable occasions which enhance the social development of all students. Students are involved in menu planning, ensuring that their likes and dislikes are catered for. One student said, 'food is alright and you get plenty'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff respect student's wishes for privacy and confidentiality. Personal care and particular health issues are dealt with very sensitively and staff recognise that the dignity of students is of great importance. Students are actively supported to raise issues or any concerns that they may have through an accessible complaints process. No complaints have been made since the last inspection.

Students say they can talk to staff about bullying issues. Staff have a clear understanding and commitment to implementing the school's anti-bullying policy. The school recognises that bullying behaviour needs their constant attention and use their electronic systems to record when bullying issues occur. However, staff are more prone to document the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour rather than the student who is the victim of bullying. This means that it is more difficult to track if staff practice is effectively reducing the impact of bullying on those individuals who are more vulnerable. Risk assessments do not explicitly show the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest to alert staff awareness to potential situations. Students are positive about residence and comments include, 'I feel safe at school, staff are good' and 'staff are cool I can talk to them about anything'.

Incidents of absence without permission have decreased considerably for residential students since the last inspection. The school has a policy in place to support staff and students regarding absence without permission. This has been developed in-line with local police protocols. Staff take their responsibilities seriously for keeping the students safe. They receive annual child protection training and have substantial knowledge about safeguarding students. The school's protective strategies are exceptionally strong and enable them to act proactively when welfare concerns are suspected.

Students' behaviour is well understood by staff and they know what the triggers are for more challenging behaviour for individuals. Staff have completed training and are competent in diffusing situations to avoid the use of physical intervention. Incidents of physical intervention are very infrequent within the residential unit, demonstrating that staff are effective in practice. Staff have good relationships with students and see them in an extremely positive light. The emphasis is on positive intervention with rewards that are achievable for students.

Fire drills take place regularly as do tests on all fire equipment in the building. Staff and students are very confident about what they need to do should there be a fire. Inspection of the gas and portable appliance testing are all up to date ensuring the safety of all who use the building.

There is a robust recruitment system in the school which maintains high levels of safety for students. This includes Criminal Records Bureau checks at enhanced level, proof of identity and references prior to employment. The overall management of the system is extremely effective, therefore, the students are actively protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Student's educational progress at the school is enthusiastically supported by the residential provision. Students are actively encouraged to explore their personal interests because staff work in a very encouraging and supportive manner. Residential staff are familiar with the educational needs and progress of students in their care. This ensures that all residential students are effectively assisted to learn to be independent.

Students receive superb individual support when they need it. Considerable effort is put into combining social, education, care and health needs into one package. This not only meets individual identified needs but actively promotes development. The links between school and the residential provision are exceptionally strong. Residential staff are familiar with the educational needs and progress of students in their care. This ensures that students are effectively assisted to learn to be independent.

Students freely initiate interaction and seek help with various staff members on duty.

They are each allocated to a key person to ensure their continual care needs are met. As a result, the residential provision proficiently enables students to develop in confidence. Student's comments include, 'I have lots of fun in residence' and 'I like the staff in Home Two'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Assessment and care planning inform staff about how to meet each student's needs on a day-to-day basis. The documents set out the needs, which the staff are fully conversant with. They know the students extremely well and as a consequence the quality of care is effective.

Students are well supported when they move into residence. They receive a welcome pack which sets out the rules, how to complain and what to expect. Staff also sit with them and spend time explaining what to expect so they are as prepared as they can be.

In accordance with their wishes students are actively enabled and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families when sleeping at school. The school understands the value and importance of communication and contact with parents. The school provides good access to a telephone that students can use freely ensuring that they can speak to their family whenever they wish.

The staff ratio is good enabling staff to have time with students. This helps to ensure that their views about life at the school can be established. A lot of time is spent planning activities and outings with the students to ensure that their needs are fulfilled and that their stay is enjoyable.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The residential accommodation for students is satisfactory. Some decoration has been carried out within the residential area, for example, new blinds have been fitted. However, there are still some areas that are in need of refurbishment which include students' bedrooms which currently have a very dated feel. Some of the students' mattresses do not fit their beds, although the school have now placed an order to replace these mattresses. Overall, and mainly due to the size of the building the unit does not have a particularly homely feel. The grounds of the school, however, offer a pleasant range of areas for students to relax or play.

Currently, day students use the residential unit at break and lunch times; this does not meet national minimum standards. However, the headteacher feels this could be easily resolved and has already beginning to take action to rectify this and make sure that the unit is exclusively for the residential students.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The management and staffing at Lindsworth is undergoing some considerable change. These changes to staffing do not take full effect until September, however, the impact of the changes are already beginning to have a positive effect. The headteacher's main aim for residential staff is to have empowerment and ownership at all levels.

Students' have good information about what they can expect from the school, how they will be cared for and who they are likely to share with. Parents and external professionals have a clear statement on how the school operates. The establishment's staffing policy is included in its Statement of Purpose and is broken down to reflect the minimum staffing expectations in the school.

Staff are supported through a range of meetings with senior staff. However, formal staff supervision is still not routinely covering all the areas as defined by national minimum standards. All new members of staff are required to undergo a process of familiarisation within the work place in order to enable them to function effectively and safely from the day they take up their appointment. Staff are well trained and either have or are working towards the required qualifications.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Evidence supports a consistent commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. Students are receiving a good individual service in the school which is designed to meet their personal needs. Monitoring of the areas as required by the standard is being completed. This takes place by a range of people as designated by the headteacher, with documents being signed once records have been checked.

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...

- develop further the recording systems in order to easily show those pupils who are the victims of bullying (NMS 6.2)
- develop risk assessments to show the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest (NMS 6.5)
- consider ways of ensuring that the residential accommodation for pupils is reserved for their exclusive use, with other pupils only having access by reasonable invitation of pupils living in the unit (NMS 24.4)
- continue to develop the residential provision to ensure it provides a homely environment that is maintained to a good state of decorative and structural repair

(NMS 24.2 and 24.3)

- develop the staff supervision records to fully detail all points in national minimum standard. (NMS 30.4)