

# Potterspury Lodge School

Welfare progress monitoring inspection report for a residential special school

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<b>DfE registration number</b>	928/6039
<b>Unique reference number for social care</b>	SC012962
<b>Unique reference number for education</b>	122136
<b>Inspection dates</b>	09/05/2012
<b>Inspector</b>	Gwen Buckley

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## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.<sup>1,2</sup>

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

## **Information about the school**

The school is an independent special school for boys aged 8-18 years who have Autism and/or emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and associated learning difficulties. There are currently fifteen resident pupils and thirty six day pupils. The school offers termly boarding, weekly boarding and day provision. All pupils have a statement of special needs and are referred to the school by the local authority.

The main house accommodates some of the school classrooms, one boarding area, the main office and medical room. Three further boarding areas and school facilities are provided in various buildings adjacent to the main house.

The school is set in several acres of land. The boarding accommodation consists of four self-contained units providing accommodation for groups of up to six boys as well as the Stables Further Education Centre. This accommodation is homely and comfortable. Weekly boarding is currently available from Sunday evening to Friday, as well as termly boarding, during term time only.

The school's care provision was last inspected in March 2011.

## **Context of the inspection**

The purpose of the visit was to assess the progress the school has made in implementing the agreed action plan to meet three national minimum standards not met at the last inspection. The last inspection was undertaken on 25 January 2012 when the school received an overall effectiveness grade of 'satisfactory'.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

## **Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan**

At the inspection in January 2012 the school was not meeting three of the national minimum standards (NMS) for residential special schools.

The school was not operating safe recruitment procedures, and to ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school, various changes to policy and practice have been introduced. Senior staff have undertaken safer recruitment and designated persons' training. Appropriate staff have updated training and are aware of the processes and timeframes in which notifications to the Local Safeguarding Children Board are to be made. The 'time out' room no longer exists. Effective monitoring of young people who may be out of class, and actions taken by staff have significantly reduced the number of lessons young people do not attend. Additional risk assessments and action plans are in place, when needed, to help staff monitor and manage unwanted behaviours.

Concerns were raised over the recruitment processes for volunteers at the school. The same recruitment and vetting procedures that apply to staff now apply to volunteers.

These actions ensure that the national minimum standards regarding staff recruitment (NMS 14) and child protection (NMS 11) are now met.

At the last inspection, the school's procedures were not compatible with the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care protocols and procedures applicable to the area where the school is located. The school has finalised their runaway and missing from home and care guidance. Emergency records are on file and the protocol is being taken to local agencies to ensure they are in agreement with it. A response is awaited from them. In line with this statutory guidance the home is updating the information held to ensure the police will be made aware of people or places young people may runaway to. The action taken ensures that NMS 15.7 is now met.

## **National minimum standards**

The school has made good progress and now meets all the national minimum standards for residential special schools.