

The Grange Therapeutic School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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Inspector	Christy Wannop / Martha Nethaway
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	The Grange Therapeutic School, 15-17 Somerby Road, Knossington, OAKHAM, Leicestershire, LE15 8LY
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Registered person	Acorn Care and Education Ltd
Head/Principal	Steve Watt
Nominated person	Judy Haslam
Date of last inspection	11/03/2009

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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 Grange School is an residential special school, established in 1976 for up to 80 boys aged between eight and 16 years of age. All the pupils have a statement of special educational need to address their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many pupils have additional learning difficulties. The school aims to promote the healthy physical and emotional development of all pupils through a balanced, progressive and responsive approach to education, care and therapy. Many boys return home at weekends, though some are cared for at the school for longer periods.

Acorn Care and Education acquired the school in January 2005. Most of the school's facilities are at Knossington, a rural setting in Leicestershire. There are six residential houses, five on or very close to the school campus and one senior house in the nearby town of Oakham. In the village of Knossington are two modern buildings, White Gables and The Spinney, for younger pupils. The Manor, a Victorian cottage, is within school grounds, and Northfields and Southfields in the main school building are for intermediate boys. The Hayne, a large Victorian house, is in nearby Oakham, 4 miles away, and is for key stage 4 boys, with a focus on life skills. There are currently 60 boarders, with an additional 14 day boys on the roll of the school.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The overall judgement on the quality of residential provision is good, with outstanding features in the outcome areas of enjoying and achieving and economic wellbeing. All five recommendations made at the last inspection have been met. The school meets the majority and exceeds many of the national minimum standards. There are minor shortfalls that the school has already identified, in the area of fire safety and also in gathering information about children before admission.

Leadership and management of the school is good. Children benefit from excellent communication between residential and educational staff to support their achievement in education. There are highly effective links over welfare matters such as child protection, behaviour and health. This strong liaison underpins the 24-hour curriculum. A parent commented, 'My son has gone from strength to strength since starting at the Grange.'

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Policy, procedure and good practice helps children to know that their individual needs are valued and the service is able to meet their diverse needs in everyday life in the school.

There is very good health care for children, through the combined contributions of qualified nursing staff, health planning and good arrangements for safe delivery of medication and first aid. Staff promote healthy choices and active lifestyles through exercise; and children learn how to take care of themselves. Children enjoy healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary and cultural needs.

There are strong systems to promote the safety and welfare of children. Adults

respect children's privacy and personal space, and handle confidential information properly. Formal and informal complaints are well managed and children get a good response to any issues. There are good arrangements for safeguarding children from abuse, and staff at all levels are trained and know how to respond to any concerns. Staff lessen the impact of bullying on vulnerable children by high levels of supervision and good anti-bullying strategies. Whilst children do occasionally go missing, this is not for long and staff are vigilant in searching for them and working with police to ensure safe return. The school is particularly effective at helping children to manage and regulate their own behaviours, many of which are extremely challenging. Standards of behaviour within the school are good, based on positive relationships and a sense of pride and responsibility to the community of the school. Staff are accomplished and highly sensitive in recognising the triggers for behaviour and in supporting children when they struggle with stress, anxiety and anger.

Children live in a school that is safe and secure because health and safety is well managed. The school generally makes good arrangements for fire safety. However, a recent risk assessment has identified a number of areas for improvement, such as making safe all fire doors. The school has revised and improved recruitment procedures to ensure that staff are suitable to work or have contact with vulnerable children.

The school's residential provision is outstanding at supporting children's educational progress. Children get excellent holistic support from the care, education and health team, and there is an excellent therapeutic psychology and counselling service. They develop confidence and self-esteem through the wealth of opportunities provided by the school, good leisure pursuits in the houses and action and adventure activities for example fishing, mountain biking, Duke of Edinburgh awards, outward-bound excursions, and holidays abroad.

The school helps children to make a good positive contribution. They are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run, through an active school council and daily house meetings. Staff help new children to move in sensitively and prepare them for transition to independence when the time is right. However, staff do not always have sufficient information about children before they move in, in order to plan effective care. A combination of documents make up the plan of care for each child and staff regularly assess children's emotional and behavioural needs carefully, focussing on progress. Children spoke of the trust and confidence they have in key staff. There are positive working relationships with families, and staff recognise these are crucial in furthering each child's development. Contact between family and children is encouraged by phone, e-mail and visits, and children appreciate the close communication about their care. Children want to be at the school and adults know that relationships are the key to progress.

The school provides an outstanding environment for boys to learn and benefit from a residential education. The houses are all different, but equally comfortable, warm and welcoming. As children progress through the school towards young adulthood, staff support them to reach their potential and achieve their personal best. Children

are involved with the local community and society; and learn to contribute and play their part as responsible citizens through voluntary work and fundraising.

Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for residential education. A cohesive team of staff are clearly passionate and committed to the work they do with children. They are well trained, supported and guided by the experienced, imaginative residential management team. Quality assurance functions are well embedded in care practice; and an extensive range of management systems monitors the effectiveness of the whole school provision and the welfare of the children and makes active plans for development.

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...

- keep children safe from risk of fire in accordance with fire legislation and guidance by implementing the action required by the 2009 fire risk assessment. i.e. do not use wedges to prop open fire doors (NMS 26.1)
- ensure the school makes reasonable efforts to obtain all necessary information about a child prior to admission, in order to provide residential staff with the information they need to care safely for each child (NMS 11.3).