

Southfield School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Diane Thackrah
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Registered person	Wokingham Borough Council
Head/Principal	Nick Harvey
Nominated person	Michael Pedley
Date of last inspection	13/05/2010

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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

Southfield school is a purpose built secondary school for boys, aged 11-16, who have experienced behavioural and emotional difficulties. It accommodates up to 69 pupils, at any one time, 16 of whom may be resident in the hostel. Southfield school has its own grounds and is situated in a residential area not far from the Wokingham town centre.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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 outstanding.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Young people receive exceptionally high standards of care which promote their well-being. Staff are motivated to promote the health of young people and committed to finding new ways to help young people enjoy good health. The 'marathon challenge' that young people have recently been involved in has helped to increase their fitness levels. This has also promoted their enjoyment of exercise. The training for staff in a wide range of health care issues helps to ensure that individual needs are well met. Extremely good efforts have been made to young people benefit from good sexual health. This includes easy access to health care professionals for practical and emotional support on an on-going basis. The positive relationships that young people enjoy with staff members also help young people to talk about health issues freely. There is a varied and enjoyable menu and young people benefit from the provision of healthy and nutritious meals.

Young people's safety is highly valued and significant efforts are made to promote this. The strong commitment to staff training in child protection procedures helps to ensure that all staff in the school have the information they need to keep young people safe from harm. Bullying is not tolerated in the school. Considerable efforts have been made by staff so that young people feel safe from bullying and understand its negative effects. This has led to young people contributing to the development of policy in the school and to winning an award for their contribution to anti-bullying week.

The positive attitude towards complaints promotes young people's well-being. Complaints are handled without delay and are well addressed. Young people feel valued and respected as a high value is placed on privacy and confidentiality. In the main, young people are well protected when absent from the school without authority. Staff are clear about what to do, and who to contact, to keep young people safe. Records, however, do not always reflect the practice followed by staff members and this does not fully promote the welfare of young people. The professional approach to behaviour management supports young people to develop positive behaviour. Young people feel fairly treated and understand what is expected of them. Staff are consistent and imaginative in their approach to behaviour and this helps young people to feel safe.

There is a strong commitment to health and safety which ensures that young people live in a safe and secure environment. This includes a comprehensive risk assessment system and regular checks on fire safety equipment. A strong emphasis is also placed on ensuring that young people benefit from living in a well maintained

and homely environment. The robust staff recruitment policies and procedures that are followed also help to keep young people safe.

Young people's rights are valued in this school. Strong efforts are made to ensure that they are able to contribute to the way the school is run and issues that affect their lives. There is an effective school council. Young people are able to give many examples of positive changes being made as a result of their requests. These include: the provision of new alarm clocks; hooks in their bedrooms and a change in the dessert menu. A high priority is given to the care planning process which helps to ensure that there is a consistent and professional approach to meeting young people's needs. Parents and social workers, as appropriate, are fully involved in this process. Staff are committed to providing young people with opportunities to engage in a wide range of leisure activities, and high staffing levels allow young people to follow individual interests. There is a well organised system in place for ensuring that the residential provision actively supports young people's educational progress. This includes twice daily meetings between residential and teaching staff.

High levels of individualised support are provided to young people when they need it. A high number of committed staff are available to young people and support is provided to help young people progress to a successful adulthood. Staff are proactive in helping young people to develop individual identities and to understand and respect diversity. Young people have recently been supported to develop a healthy understanding of issues such as homophobia and disability.

Students benefit from being cared for by a forward thinking staff group that strives to promote their well-being. Learning is valued and excellent opportunities are created for the development of the staff team. There is exceptionally strong management of the service. Good monitoring of quality and a commitment to improvement helps to promote young people's well-being.

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 that written records are made of the circumstances of all incidents of absence without authority, all action taken by staff and the circumstances of the child's return. (breach of national minimum standard 8)