

Oakhill Secure Training Centre

Inspection report for Secure Training Centre

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Lead inspector Linda Christie
Additional inspector(s) Malcolm Stannard

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About this inspection

The purpose of inspection is to provide assurance to the Secretary of State that secure training centres provide an environment that promotes the safety and welfare of young people and that will help prevent children and young people offending in the future, and in particular that:

- the safeguarding of children and young people is effective
- programmes exist to tackle offending behaviour and meet the citizenship and resettlement needs of children and young people
- the performance of the Secure Training Centre provider meets the quality of service expected in the inspections standards
- there is a purposeful regime in which children and young people are encouraged to take part
- there is effective security and control within the Secure Training Centre
- high standards of social care, health care, education and training are provided for children and young people
- the individual needs of children and young people are fully assessed and there are plans for meeting them as far as possible.

The Secretary of State for Justice causes Secure Training Centres to be inspected in accordance with Rule 43 of the Secure Training Centres Rules (produced in compliance with Section 47 of the Prison Act 1952, as amended by Section 6(2) of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994), Section 80 of Children's Act 1989 and any subsequent legislation. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's power to inspect Secure Training Centres is provided by section 146 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006.

This was a random unannounced inspection carried out in accordance with the service level agreement between the Youth Justice Board and Ofsted. The standards used during the inspection were those agreed between the Youth Justice Board and Ofsted.

The last full inspection was carried out in November 2010 with an interim inspection in June 2010.

Two social care inspectors spent two days on site reviewing standards and the impact of the service on young people.

The key 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

Not judged: this aspect of the provision was not judged

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Service Information

Brief description of the service

1. Oakhill is one of four purpose-built secure training centres that provide secure provision to young people across the country. The centre is one of three secure training centres managed by G4S Care and Justice Services Limited.
2. The centre is situated in Milton Keynes and offers secure provision to young people aged from 12 to 17 years who meet the criteria for a custodial sentence, or who are remanded to a secure setting.
3. Oakhill is designed to accommodate up to 80 young people. The centre is now an all male establishment and during the period of the inspection 79 young men were in residence. The resident population is comprised mainly of older adolescents aged 15 plus.
4. The centre does not have an upper level for remand admissions and is therefore able to take more remanded placements than the other secure training centres.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

5. This is an interim unannounced inspection of the centre, intended to assess progress against recommendations made following the last inspection undertaken in November 2010. All standards included under the Every Child Matters outcome staying safe were also assessed. A site inspection took place to review the quality of the accommodation, security and building maintenance.
6. Young people were once again very positive about the care and service they receive from staff. When asked what they thought about the centre a group of four young people all said 'Staff are good, they really care about you'. One young person said 'They really help you when you first come and make sure you settle in alright'. The atmosphere at the centre was calm and relaxed with many positive and meaningful interactions observed. Young people know exactly what is expected of them and they are consistently encouraged by staff to participate in the full range of daily routines. The outcome is that young people generally benefit from being positively engaged in a wide range of activities, including attending school, offending behaviour programmes and enrichment activities.

7. The centre has a child focused approach which includes identifying and meeting the individual needs of young people. For example, support is available to a group of young people who originate from the same country, and for whom English is not their first language. They are given opportunities to learn English, which will benefit them in terms of their economic well-being in the future.
8. Another example of a nurturing and caring approach is the way all young people are greeted when they leave school at the end of the day. Staff ensure they engage quickly with the young people, asking how their day has gone and letting them know what activities are available during the evening. The chaplain is also available to greet young people after school and provide guidance or support to individuals if that is identified as required. He will also engage with a young person who might be feeling anxious at the end of the school day, giving them an opportunity to talk.
9. Although skin and hair care products are available to young people on admission and as they require them, several young people complained that some residential units did not replenish the stocks quickly enough and they run out. The young people had over a period of time been requesting additional toiletries in their unit meetings. Even though the additional or replacement toiletries have not been made available straight away the young people have not made a formal complaint about this. Their concerns were fed back to managers who addressed the matter immediately.
10. The practices and procedures in relation to safeguarding young people continue to be robust and transparent. There are well established links with the local authority safeguarding officer who continues to provide an excellent external scrutiny of any incidents of restraint or allegations made by young people or external parties. The Director of Children's Services has visited the centre and intends to do so on a regular basis. The next visit is scheduled for August 2011.

What has been improved since the last inspection

11. At the last inspection managers were asked to consider four recommendations. These were not directly related to the education provision.
12. Managers now ensure that the rewards gained by young people when they attain the higher levels of the incentive scheme are available to them in a timely manner. Alternative suppliers have been sourced for some of the items available to young people who achieve the higher levels and the head of care holds a stock of some of the popular items to ensure they are available immediately to young people.
13. Considerable work has been done to ensure young people consistently have opportunities to attend a wide range of forums to influence the development of the services provided at the centre. A staff member has been seconded for

three months to review the trainee council meetings and develop a new format which can be used in all three of the G4S secure training centres. The new format, which is called an XChange forum, is now in place in another secure training centre and will shortly commence at Oakhill. The new format improves a number of aspects of the meetings including providing opportunities for young people to earn accreditation through their involvement with these forums as they are held during education periods. The structure of these meetings allow for external involvement, including local schools or services that work directly with the centre. In the meantime there have been some changes to the meeting structure. The trainee council meeting is now called the young people's forum and is better attended. However, recordings in the unit meeting books have not improved significantly. Although not fully implemented action has been taken to address this recommendation and practice in this area will be explored further during the next inspection.

14. The recommendation relating to the revision of the delivery of the offending behaviour programme has not yet been implemented. There has been progress made in that the centre has a new format for the delivery of the offending behaviour programme. This has been approved by the Youth Justice Board but is awaiting final approval by the relevant stakeholders. A notice of change to the contract has also recently been signed by relevant parties, but the new format has not yet commenced at the centre. The recommendation is therefore repeated.
15. Managers have ensured that the team development days are consistently utilised and provide opportunities for care staff to meet in unit teams. There are also daily opportunities for the team working on shift to meet with their team leader and the deputy residential service manager. These meetings are recorded and are available to staff. The recommendation relating to this has been met.
16. A recommendation was made prior to the last inspection about the young people's access to a telephone to make private calls. Further steps have been taken to improve the telephone system with young people now able to make and receive calls from their bedrooms. This is a much improved telephone system and ensures calls are put through without delay. The only negative comment from young people concerns the cost to their families or friends calling in to the centre. Managers are reviewing this with the line supplier.

The effectiveness of the service

Helping children to be healthy

The provision was not judged.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding

17. The safety of young people, staff and visitors is paramount and practice in this respect is well embedded in daily routines. Safety and security procedures are regularly tested through desktop and live practical exercises which are carried out at least monthly and often more frequently. During June three exercises have already taken place. One of those was a live testing of the procedures dealing with a major incident of a young person breaching the secure perimeter and escaping from custody. The live testing of the procedures involved all staff at the centre during the exercise and the recalling of the duty director back to the centre to activate silver commander control. The incident command suite was set up immediately and all required action taken. Although no major concerns were identified all lessons from the live scenario informed the planned refresher training and update of operational procedures.
18. The well established contingency plans have been agreed with local emergency services. Although the emergency services are not consistently involved in live testing every opportunity is taken to ensure systems and procedures work. For example during a recent visit by the fire service to help new fire officers familiarise themselves with the centre an opportunity was taken to drive the fire engine through the secure gates. This was a larger vehicle than previously used and the exercise ensured that the gates and the turning area continue to provide adequate room for manoeuvre.
19. There are effective and efficient systems in place to ensure that the centre is maintained in good order and is safe for young people to live in. These includes environmental risk assessments and daily checks of the buildings. Health and safety procedures and practices are robust and are consistently implemented. Practice in this respect is recognised by external organisations such as the British Safety Council. The awards held by the centre include the British Safety Council five star and the International Safety Award. Regular meetings take place to consider health and safety matters both within the centre and across the whole of Care and Justice Services. Robust fire and health and safety audits are carried out and findings shared with all staff. A monthly newsletter reminds staff of key procedures and expectations of them and young people in maintaining a safe environment. Young people are informed of the fire procedures at the point of their admission and they are reminded of them at least on a monthly basis through discussions in their unit meetings. Practice in this respect is monitored and any issues highlighted are considered.
20. Young people are kept safe by well embedded procedures to ensure restricted items are not brought into the centre. Young people are made aware of the reasons for searches of their person and possessions. Staff are well trained in

carrying out such procedures and practice in this respect is monitored. The centre has not yet implemented a risk led process for the physical searching of young people as this is subject to discussions with the Youth Justice Board and will require contractual changes. There is an effective and efficient procedure in place for the searching of visitors, and of staff on a random basis. Visitors and escorts have their identification checked prior to access to the centre and young people. This ensures young people are kept safe within the centre and when travelling with adults on visits outside of the centre.

21. The expectations of acceptable behaviour are understood by young people and reinforced to them by staff. Where young people find it difficult to maintain or manage their behaviour there are a range of support plans used which are highly individualised and all departments at the centre have input. The contents of these plans are circulated to all staff who work with the young person. Staff lead by example, and as well as acting as positive role models, ensure that the interactions with young people are of a high standard.
22. An effective reward and incentive scheme is in operation. It is understood by young people and a large number of them reach the higher levels of attainment. Previously some of the rewards gained were not easily accessible due to the centre not having enough available. This problem has now been addressed. Alternative suppliers for some items have been sourced and other rewards are now held in stock to ensure prompt recognition of achievement. This ensures that young people value and have confidence in the scheme.
23. The use of physical restraint remains low and has been consistently so since the start of this calendar year. All physical interventions by staff are recorded and counted, not just those which result in the use of approved physical restraint techniques. Any use is as a last resort following the implementation of diffusion and diversion techniques. All incidents are fully recorded and closed circuit television (CCTV) recordings are reviewed for every occurrence. This ensures that any use of physical intervention has been carried out appropriately. Debrief meetings are held following each event which include the young person. They are able to comment on an incident and have their views recorded. Staff members involved are also invited to view the CCTV recordings to contribute to the assessment of an incident.
24. Randomly selected periods of the working day are also viewed by the senior duty operational manager via CCTV recordings. On average 15 sessions a month are observed, monitoring practice, interactions and organisation during the day. Where any areas of practice observed indicate the need for development or amendment this is addressed with individual staff by managers. This practice enhances the auditing and monitoring of operation at the centre.
25. A robust quality assurance system is in operation at the centre and a wide range of behaviour management data is examined on a monthly basis. A review panel meeting is held which considers trends and any areas of concern

in behaviour management practice. Additional meetings are held with the police, local child protection services representatives and advocates where all incidents are reviewed and examined. Where these meetings identify any areas for practice development these are addressed fully by the centre management. This transparent and open practice enhances the processes which safeguard young people's welfare.

26. There is an extremely low use of separation at the centre and young people are not locked in their rooms inappropriately. Staff are excellent at engaging young people when they are upset or unable to attend education or an activity. Good examples of young people, who had been excluded from sessions interacting with staff rather than being separated, were seen during the inspection. One young person spoken with stated that 'if you are in your room, you are always able to come out when you ask'. Records are held which detail all separations and monitoring is carried out to ensure young people do not deliberately isolate themselves.
27. The use of sanctions at the centre has further decreased since the last inspection. Staff now much more regularly consider reparation as an alternative to a formal sanction and some imaginative use of this has been seen. All occasions where reparation has been instigated in lieu of a sanction are recorded in a separate log. Guidance is in place with regard to permissible sanctions however only one or two types of sanction are regularly used. Where previously a ban from an area or activity would have been given these tend to now be replaced by a method of reparation or negotiation.
28. Monitoring forms are completed on each occasion a young person arrives at the centre. The forms are used to confirm that all relevant information about the young person is available. Where there are gaps in the information provided this is requested immediately and the young person is classed as high risk and supported as such.
29. Strategies in place to keep young people safe continue to be effective. Individual risk assessments are carried out to identify risks to each young person or others. Regular reviews of all assessments and strategies are held by a multi-disciplinary team; this includes the automatic evaluation of all young people new to the centre. Any amendments to assessments or plans are communicated and implemented quickly. The chaplain is involved as part of the multi-disciplinary team and makes sure he meets with all young people who may not have received a visit from their family to offer support.
30. The process of amending and enhancing the centre's approach to bullying has been completed and the new package is now in use. Newly designed tracking logs are available as part of a four stage plan which ensure that any duplication of entries is negated. When a log has been opened these are regularly reviewed enabling clarity about what actions each department at the centre is involved in. The new process includes the opportunity to involve young people's Youth Offending Teams for support. Young people are

informed of the centre's policy on bullying and are aware that it will not be tolerated. All staff are involved in both formally and informally educating young people on the subject.

31. The system in place which enables young people to make a formal complaint remains effective. Complaints forms are freely available and young people know how to use them. All comments received are fully investigated and recorded. Young people receive feedback within a short timescale and are invited to make comment on the outcome or to raise the level of complaint if they are not satisfied. More than one staff member is involved in each individual complaint process which allows young people to raise any further concerns confidently. An overview of all complaints is undertaken by the Local Authority Designated Officer; this ensures a transparent audit and that investigations have been conducted appropriately.
32. Grumbles books have been available on each living unit for a year. These enable young people to raise requests or minor issues without the need to access the formal complaints system. The introduction of these books has seen a fall in the number of complaints received, as young people use these to comment on areas of life at the centre which they feel could be improved. All grumbles books are audited on a weekly basis to ensure that all entries have been responded to. On a few occasions these audits have identified that issues raised by young people have not been addressed as quickly as they could have been. This is then addressed with relevant managers.
33. There continue to be very good arrangements in place for young people to access external independent advocacy. Regular visits are undertaken by advocates who are able to see each young person. Should a young person wish to contact an advocate in between visits they can do so by telephone or by filling in a request form.
34. Child protection procedure and practice continues to be effective, robust and transparent. There are very good relationships in place with the Local Authority Designated Officer and local child protection services. Senior managers from the centre attend Local Safeguarding Children Board meetings. All referrals are made appropriately and comprehensive records are compiled by the safeguarding manager of all developments and actions taken. Regular dialogue is undertaken with external agencies to ensure all practice is kept up to date. Written policies and procedures are available for reference and all staff attend safeguarding training, some of which is provided by external child protection agencies. Duty directors and residential service managers have attended safeguarding training provided by Milton Keynes Safeguarding Children's Board, which has included managing allegations. The excellent practice ensures young peoples safety and welfare is protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

Education

The provision was not judged.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

Welfare

The provision was not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision was not judged.

Helping children achieve economic wellbeing

The provision was not judged.

Management

The provision was not judged.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to the Director of the secure training centre unless otherwise stated.

- implement the revised offending behaviour programme as a matter of priority (Positive contribution - Standards 12/13)