

# Ashfield School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Address</b>	Ashfield School Broad Avenue LEICESTER LE5 4PY
<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 273 7151
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Leicester City Council
<b>Head of care</b>	Jane Booth
<b>Head / Principal</b>	Jane Booth
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	7 November 2006

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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 outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## 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

Ash Field Residential Special School is a school for boys and girls who primarily have physical disabilities. Some also have a learning disability and or communication difficulties. The residence is sited on the ground floor, running on a flexi-boarding basis, with up to 18 students staying at any one time. Some students stay only for an 'extended school day' visit. These students stay only for tea and activities. All students stay on a voluntary basis. The school is close to bus routes into Leicester and is on the outskirts of the city. The residence also incorporates an independent living flat, where up to two students can reside to practise their independence skills.

### Summary

The outcome areas 'Staying Safe', 'Organisation' and 'Enjoying and Achieving' were judged as 'Outstanding'. The outcome areas 'Being Healthy' and 'Positive Contribution' were judged as 'Good' and the outcome area Economic Wellbeing was judged as 'Satisfactory'.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

The bathroom has been improved since the last inspection and completely refurbished. There is a new bath, shower area, flooring and ceiling track hoist. The students are very pleased with the refurbishment and say that the improvements will benefit them. Several carpets have been replaced since the last inspection and the accommodation has been decorated throughout. The lounge area has been redecorated and there is a new television now mounted on the wall so that all the students can have a good view. (This was requested through the Residential School Council.) The menus have been further improved since the last inspection. There is a new three weekly menu that the children and young people report has improved the food further. (The Residential School Council helped to raise this issue.)

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The health needs of the students are assessed and well met during their stay in residence. There is the required health information presented in a care plan file. There is also further information in a general file for the student. The required information is in one file or the other but some information is a little hard to find in the general file. Where the students have particular health needs, the staff are trained in, and are very familiar with these. They know what should be done to ensure that the needs are met. The staff at the school, in partnership with the parents/carers, ensure that they arrange other services needed to address health needs where appropriate. For example the involvement of Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists. Many of these professionals visit the school on a very regular basis. There is also regular input from the school nurse. Nursing assistants are also employed by the school. Staff actively encourage the students to take an interest in looking after their health and promote healthy ways of living. There is a well developed medication procedure which has been written to suit the needs of the school and its students. The staff who give out and check medicines have all received the relevant training. The staff are vigilant in what at times is a complex task, and take time to ensure that the procedures are followed. There is

no written procedure in the school for staff to use should there be an error. The food provided for the students is enjoyed by them. The menu shows that the staff responsible for the provision and preparation of meals have an understanding of what makes up a good, healthy and balanced diet. Students enjoy their mealtimes as pleasant social occasions and good standards of behaviour are the norm. There is a good range of choices at each mealtime and the students are encouraged by staff to be as healthy as possible in their choices. There is a staff member on each table to monitor the choices that are made and also any dietary concerns about the students. There is evidence that the students are listened to by relevant staff should they have any comments about the food.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The students enjoy a high level of privacy, dignity and confidentiality in the school. There is an effective complaints procedure in the school which is known and understood by the staff and the parents/carers. The students feel able to tell any staff member including the Head or Head of Care if they have an issue, concern or a complaint. Each has their own preferred method of communication documented and the staff ensure that each student has a 'voice' in the school. The students also know that they can raise complaints through the Residential School Council which is an effective group. The parents are confident that all concerns are addressed effectively and in a timely way. There have been no complaints made in the school since the last inspection. There is no reference made to Ofsted in the complaints procedure as the National Minimum Standards require. The students report that they feel safe while staying in residence. There are links with the Local Safeguarding Board and the staff have received training in child protection. Staff at all levels are very clear about the procedure in the school should there be a safeguarding issue in the school. The staff are also aware of the vulnerability of disabled children. There is a very low level of bullying in the school. The students and their parents are confident that if they have a bullying issue, that the staff would deal with it quickly and effectively. There have been no situations where a child or young person has become missing without authority since the last inspection. Should this occur, the staff are clear about what they should do. The student's behaviour in the school is very good. They are regularly praised for their achievements and the positive ethos enables them to develop a good attitude towards behaviour. There are reward structures in place should they do well, and their achievements are celebrated. The staff see the students in a positive light and understand their needs and support them well. Any behavioural issues are taught and dealt with by staff and all are clear about what is acceptable behaviour. Good relationships have been forged between the students and the staff. Where there is a need for a particular approach to a behaviour, this is recorded in the care plan and agreed by the parents/carers to ensure a consistent approach. The school is a safe environment. Safety within the building is overseen by the Business Manager and Premises Officer. They have developed organised and robust procedures to ensure safety in the school. The school has risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds, including fire, and student's behaviour and activities. There have been the required checks on special equipment, gas, electricity and water. There is a fire log and regular checks on fire fighting equipment, emergency lighting, fire doors and the alarm system are up to date. The students and staff know what they should do should the fire alarm go off. There have been recorded fire drills since the last inspection, however there was no drill in the autumn term due to building work, this is not recorded. There are procedures in place to ensure that the appropriate checks take place on all staff before they have any contact with the children and young people. These checks include a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check at enhanced level

and two references. Recruitment records selected can be evidenced within the school. The recruitment of the right person for the job is more important in the school than the filling of a vacancy.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Some of the curriculum assistants work during school hours, as well as in the residential provision, this helps to ensure that the students receive a consistent approach, and that time in residential accommodation directly benefits them. The residential contribution to education and vice versa is very well established involving close liaison with the teaching staff. This contributes to the educational achievement of the students. Each has a Statement of Special Educational Need and Individual Education Plan. There are also particular targets relating to staying in the residential accommodation for each individual student. The students receive a high level of individual support from the staff. The staff are fully conversant with their needs and know how to support them. There are enough staff on duty so that quality time is regularly spent with the students. The students themselves report good relationships with the staff at all levels and felt able to talk to them should they have a problem.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The staff encourage the students to voice their opinions at every opportunity and staff know how to facilitate this with each individual, knowing their communication method well. There are opportunities throughout the day for choices to be made, and also more formal meetings such as the Residential School Council. Students are pleased with the way that this works and feel that the staff at the school do listen and respond to the comments that they make. There are good relationships between parents/carers and the staff. The parents are able to keep in touch with their child or young person during their stay and there are regular telephone calls to and from home. The students can make these call whenever they want. The parents/carer's feel welcome in the school and report that staff are good at keeping them informed. There are written residential care plans which contain information about the student's needs and how they should be met by the staff. These are 'live' documents owned by the student and are kept with them in their rooms during their stay. There is enough information in the plan to inform the staff. In addition, some information is also kept in a more confidential file providing more detailed information. The way which that information was presented makes it difficult to find particular documents. For example more detail about particular needs. The staff are well aware of the information that they need to look after a student and report that the Head of Care, Deputy or Assistant regularly update them if there is new information.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is satisfactory.

The accommodation is appropriately furnished and decorated. The building meets the National Minimum Standards and suits the needs of the students who use it. Some students however, raise issues about space in the corridor and in some of the bedrooms which are smaller. They say that space in the smaller rooms can at times be tight especially if there are two beds in situ. Some wheelchairs are stored in the corridor in case there is a fire and they are needed quickly, however this means that there is not space in the corridor for two students using wheelchairs to pass each other. The students did report however that there is no safety issues connected

to either of the issues above. While the students are in residence, they also have access to other facilities in the school. For example the hall, sensory room and hydrotherapy pool.

**Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The students receive their care from a qualified, experienced and competent staff team. They enjoy their stay in residence and report that the staff are caring and fun, also that they can talk to them if they have any problems. The staff have the skills that they need and are trained in the particular tasks that are required to look after this group of children and young people. The number of staff on duty are always enough to meet the needs of the students. This ensures that they receive the required personal support. Students report that they know the staff well, and that the staff know them well also. The staff team has a balanced mix of male and female staff which the students value. The Head monitors the school records. The Head of Care is also involved in the monitoring process with regular meetings between both. She is aware of the needs of the students and what is happening in residence. The Head of Care is also supported by a Deputy and an Assistant. The monitoring process includes the monitoring of records, and also talking to students, staff and parents/carers on a regular basis. Both the Head and the Head of care are highly thought of by the parents, staff, and the students. The management of the school is efficient and thorough.

**What must be done to secure future improvement?**

**Statutory requirements**

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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**Recommendations**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that children and their parents are told how they can make a complaint directly to Ofsted (NMS 4)
- ensure that any deficiency identified with fire drills is recorded (NMS26)

## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for residential special school

#### Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted (NMS 14)
- children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs (NMS 15)

**Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.**

#### Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled (NMS 3)
- children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration (NMS 4)
- the welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse (NMS 5)
- children are protected from bullying (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (NMS 7)
- children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return (NMS 8)
- children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour (NMS 10)
- children live in schools that provide physical safety and security (NMS 26)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

**Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school (NMS 12)
- children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

**Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run; no child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views (NMS 2)
- children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect (NMS 9)
- children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes (NMS 11)

- children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school (NMS 17)
- in accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while at school (NMS 20)

**Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.**

### **Achieving economic well-being**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money (NMS 16)
- children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- children live in well designed and pleasant premises, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use (NMS 24)
- children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity (NMS 25)

**Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.**

### **Organisation**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils (NMS 1)
- children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of the staff and child groups of the school (NMS 19)
- children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently (NMS 28)
- children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs (NMS 29)
- children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare (NMS 30)
- children receive the care and services they need from competent staff (NMS 31)
- children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools (NMS 32)
- the governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school (NMS 33)

**Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**