

Furrowfield School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Helen Walker
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Date of last inspection	17 January 2007

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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

Furrowfield School is a residential and day special school for young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school offers education to young people of either gender aged between 11 and 16 years. Crossfield House is a purpose built, single storey building attached to Furrowfield School, providing residential accommodation for male pupils. A maximum of 14 young people can be accommodated at any one time with stays of up to four nights each week during the school term. Crossfield House is accessed through the school building, or by an independent front entrance. The accommodation provides young people with individual bedrooms, bathrooms, two lounges, games room, dining room and a kitchen. The school is set within its own enclosed grounds in the residential area of Felling, Gateshead. To the rear of the school are playing fields which the young people use for sporting activities. The school is well placed for access to public transport systems, local community and leisure facilities. Furrowfield School has 56 pupils on roll of which 15 use the residential accommodation. All pupils have a Statement of Educational Needs and are placed at the school by the Local Education Authority.

Summary

This was the school's annual announced inspection. The inspection considered all the key National Minimum Standards for young people who are provided with accommodation and educated in this type of school. Five of the six outcome areas were judged. Achieving Economic Wellbeing was not judged at this visit. Furrowfield School offers an outstanding level of care to the young people who use the residential provision. The Headteacher provides excellent leadership to enable all staff to work as a team, which results in an effective working partnership between the school and the residential facility. The school has substantial strengths and a sustained track record of providing good outcomes to the young people. Young people have the benefit of care from an established staff team who are committed to and competent in their work. This enables young people to make good progress in their personal, social, emotional and educational development. As a result of this inspection the Headteacher and Head of Care have been asked to review procedures in relation to the recording of medication.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the Headteacher and Head of Care were asked to review the number of documents used to record events and incidents. They were also asked to ensure matters relating to staff recruitment checks and the contact between pupils and their family be improved. Although there is no significant reduction in the number of documents in use, the Headteacher and Head of Care have improved the monitoring systems to ensure they have a better overview of issues more specific to the residential facility. Young people now have more opportunities for friends and families to visit them during their stay at Crossfield House. Appropriate recruitment and employment checks are in place to confirm staff are suitable to work with young people.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Young people's health needs are well met by the school and a healthy lifestyle is encouraged. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award which acknowledges the school is active in promoting the health and well-being of the school community. Staff work hard to maintain this status which overarches the residential setting where young people are supported to take an interest in looking after their health. Young people are provided with nutritious, as well as varied, meals and snacks. Staff give good advice and guidance about health and personal care issues. Young people are enthusiastic about their involvement in different activities. This includes the promotion of physical activities such as karate, swimming and hockey which benefits their wellbeing. Young people's more specific health needs are met through contact with health professionals, for example, the psychologist and school nurse. Young people remain registered with the primary health care services in their home area throughout their stay, which enables their routine health needs to be addressed. Health information is detailed in the young people's Statement of Educational Needs (SEN) and also within an individual plan. Staff are fully aware of this information and use this to ensure the young people's needs are met. Staff deal sensitively with pupils who have particular health needs and are active in seeking the support of health professionals as needed. Staff are trained in the delivery of first aid so that young people are cared for safely in the event of injury or illness. Medication is securely stored in a locked cabinet in the medical room. Staff have a good understanding in relation to the administration of medication. However, the current record of administration details individual young people's medication on one document. This means the recording system is complicated and there is a risk of error when a number of medicines are administered.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The school has robust policies and procedures for the handling of complaints, safeguarding children and bullying which ensure that pupils feel listened to and protected. Young people said they feel safe at the school and that 'staff listen and take all views'. There are clear systems in place to ensure young people's privacy and confidentiality is respected at the school. Staff have a very good understanding about their role in respect of maintaining confidentiality when dealing with young people's personal information. The Headteacher is especially keen that all documents relative to child protection matters are securely stored and accessed only by those with the appropriate authority. There is a transparent complaints procedure in the school to ensure any complaint or concern is taken seriously. Substantial information about how young people can make a complaint is available throughout the school. This makes the young people aware of the action to take if they are unhappy about any aspect of their life at the school. A recent complaint made by a pupil was investigated promptly and thoroughly by the Headteacher. The parent and the young person have been kept up to date with the progress of the complaint. The school has a strong anti bullying culture which is totally accepted by the young people. Throughout the school, information is displayed about preventing and dealing with bullying so that young people's welfare is protected. Young people said bullying is not an issue in the school but it does sometimes happen. Young people said staff deal with this straight away and it is quickly resolved. Staff have guidance available in respect of the action to take if a young person goes missing from the school. This includes searching for the young person and contacting parents and the relevant authorities. Staff have an excellent understanding about keeping young people safe from harm. They know how to respond in the event of any allegation or serious concern about a young person's wellbeing. The Headteacher is the designated child protection person and has established strong links with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). Through this position the Headteacher takes a lead role in providing information and

training on safeguarding within the school. Young people enjoy excellent relationships with staff and show a tremendous amount of respect to them. This in turn is reciprocated by staff who manage behaviours positively. There is clear boundary setting and a consistent use of sanctions. Well established systems of reward in the school encourage pupils to develop behaviour that is socially acceptable. Young people's achievements are celebrated, for example, in the 'praise assembly', which emphasises their successes. Staff are trained in techniques to manage challenging behaviour, including the use of physical restraint. Young people are open and honest about physical restraint, as information about this is readily available to them throughout the school. Sanctions are rarely used and physical restraint is only ever used as a last resort to prevent a young person from causing significant harm to themselves or others. This indicates young people's behaviour is well-managed. Thorough recruitment checks are carried out on staff to confirm their suitability to work with young people. Management are aware of good practice in relation to this and have training in the recruitment and employment of staff, including 'safer recruitment in education'.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

There are excellent links between the school and the residential provision. The care staff actively contribute to pupil's educational progress. They ensure regular attendance and punctuality at school. Care staff work within the education provision and provide support and assistance to the young people throughout the school day. Teaching staff have a good deal of contact with the care facility. The Headteacher and an established member of the teaching staff spend time with the young people in the residential home outside of the school day which enhances the links between care and the school. Good working relationships between care and teaching staff are evident through the in-depth knowledge staff have about the individual needs of the young people. This further promotes the relationships between the school and residential home. Care staff are very much aware of pupils Individual Education Plans (IEP) and contribute significantly to their annual review of educational needs. Young people's plan of care is linked to their educational plan to ensure that specific educational targets are addressed, for example, the support young people receive to complete particular homework tasks. Good information sharing between education and care staff contributes significantly to the young people's educational potential. The teaching and care staff work together to identify means of encouraging the young people's personal, social and educational achievement. Young people praise staff highly for the help they receive and said, 'they encourage me to read', 'I'd rather be at school', 'they help me socialise, have friends and learn manners'. Staff place a strong emphasis on young people's literacy and numeracy skills. Young people keenly express the help the care staff give them with their reading. Young people choose books from the school library and take them back to the residential home where staff support them to improve their reading skills. Within the residential home young people are provided with facilities to support their learning such as computer and internet access, various board games, musical instruments, films and access to books. The young people also use the schools sporting facilities. Young people said 'there's loads of activities', and 'it's brilliant', 'everything is up to date and the computers are fantastic'. Young people receive appropriate and individual support according to their needs and wishes. A consistent and competent team of staff demonstrate they know the young people well and show respect for their diverse care needs. There are extremely good support systems in the residential home. This includes key workers who spend time on a one to one basis with young people, the family liaison officer, visiting governor and children's rights officers. For more specific support the young people are referred for additional services to other agencies, for

example, the educational psychologist. Young people feel that they are able to talk to staff and in particular consider the Headteacher and Head of Care 'easy to talk to'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There are many and varied systems in place to encourage young people to give their views about their care, education and day to day life of the school. The more formal arrangements for young people to give their views through the school council, resident's meetings and educational review meetings. Young people are also asked to take part in surveys of how they think the school is doing and what they consider could be better. Informally the young people can talk to all the staff including their key worker and visitors to the school. Young people continue to work with the office of the Children's Rights Director where their views are sought in relation to many aspects of residential care. Young people take their contact with this office very seriously and have been involved in many projects relating to this. Young people said they are listened to and their views make a difference to their care. Recent changes include those to the breakfast menu when young people asked for 'black pudding' to be served. They are now highly delighted that this is occasionally provided. So that young people's bedrooms are more homely and personalised the young people have been asked to decide on bedding of their choice. Young people consider these things to be important to them and value the opportunities they are given for changes to be made. Detailed planning between the placing authority, parents and young people takes place prior to admission to the school so that young people's needs are effectively assessed. Information is also gathered from their SEN and the visits staff make to a young person's home. This information is incorporated into a placement plan so that staff are aware of the educational, social, emotional and health care needs of the young person. This means staff know what care is to be provided in order to meet these needs. Young people are fully aware of their placement plan and are involved in them from the outset. Young people have detailed risk assessments to address any likely risks to their wellbeing. All these documents are reviewed regularly and the information is up to date and accurate. Young people boarding at the school usually have accommodation for a maximum of four nights a week. They return to their main carers, parents and families at weekends and during school holidays. This means young people continue to have regular contact with people who are important to them. Staff maintain good relationships with the young people's parents and welcome visits and telephone contact. The family liaison officer provides an invaluable service in making and sustaining contact with parents. The Headteacher and Head of Care have an 'open door' policy, giving parents good access and opportunities to discuss matters relating to their child's education and care at the school. The school have made exceptional progress in respect of encouraging friends and family of the young people to visit them at Crossfield House. A young person said they are, 'really pleased because my auntie visits'. Young people have the opportunity to use the telephone and email to keep in contact with their friends and family. Facilities in the residential house enable young people to use a room that allows them to meet with their parents and others in private.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school has a very comprehensive Statement of Purpose. This is integrated within the school's prospectus and contains a great deal of information about Crossfield House. This information is available to parents for them to make an informed choice about the suitability of this provision for their child. Young people confirm they have the residential induction booklet. This contains photographs and details of the residential accommodation, and gives young people a good overview of the care provided. Young people are looked after by an enthusiastic, very caring and competent staff team. They have significant experience and an excellent understanding of the young people's care needs. A minimum of four staff are on duty in the residential home with an increase in staffing according to the needs of the young people. These staff provide sleep over cover during the night. This enables young people to have the support and consistency of care they require. Staff are supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the young people's welfare through the provision of regular supervision from the management team. Young people are cared for by an established staff team providing them with continuity of care. Most of the staff team have worked within the residential home for a number of years. All care staff have achieved or are working towards an appropriate childcare qualification. There is a rolling programme of training that includes updates relevant to the care needs of the young people. Young people describe the care they are provided with as 'heart-warming', that staff want to care for them. Young people also said, 'it's brilliant, staff are just like parents, they really look after us'. The Headteacher provides excellent leadership to the staff team and in turn the Head of Care is effective in her role within the residential provision. The quality assurance systems within the school are many and include systematic monitoring of relevant records by the Headteacher and Head of Care. Staff meetings at all levels give management a good overview of the practice in the school and highlight any areas for improvement. A school governor also visits the school at timely intervals and provides a comprehensive report to the governing body on the conduct of the school. These systems ensure the welfare of the young people is promoted and high standards of care are maintained.

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 there is up to date and clear guidance, implemented in practice for administering medication (NMS 14.17).

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.