

# Holbrook Centre for Autism

Inspection report for residential special school

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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

The Holbrook Centre for Autism is run by Derbyshire County Council and provides specialist education and care for students with autism aged between five and 19-years-old. The school is situated in the small village of Holbrook. The residential provision can be accessed by students for up to two nights a week in term time dependent on the individual's assessed needs. There are seven bedrooms on two separate self-contained units and a total of 21 students use the residential facility throughout the week. There are two units, Acorn unit is on the first floor and has its own lounge, dining room, small kitchen and bathing and toilet facilities. Oak unit is situated on the second floor and has a kitchen, lounge, dining room, bathroom and toilet facilities. Students have their meals, except lunch, in the units. All bedrooms are single. Students can also access facilities within the school. Students use community resources in the nearby town of Belper and the city of Derby. The school has its own transport. There were seven students in residence during the inspection of which all took part.

### Summary

The inspector visited this school to complete an announced full inspection where all the key standards were inspected. The staff team are highly qualified, caring, competent and well supported by each other and the senior management team. They are passionate and dedicated to the work that they do. Staff are able to provide high quality care for students and meet their individual needs with the knowledge and understanding they have of them. Individual needs are recognised and plans are in place to address them. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding throughout the standards inspected. There are excellent working relationships on behalf of the student across the school, to ensure that the student's needs and aspirations are fully met. There are excellent relationships between the students, their parents and staff. Students are kept active with a wide range of activities. Staff are committed to work in partnership with the students and their families, social workers and external agencies to promote a child-centred approach to care and education. The students are protected by robust recruitment and health and safety procedures. Minor areas for improvement are with regards to medication administration and safeguarding training for all ancillary staff.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

This school has met both recommendations that were made at the previous inspection. The head teacher was asked to ensure the safeguarding policy reflected government guidance and included all the elements of Appendix 1 of the National Minimum Standards and to complete a fire risk assessment.

### Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are focussed and committed to ensuring a high quality provision for health care for all students, working in partnership with parents and carers. A parent said, 'the staff monitor the children for signs of illness and changes in behaviour and report them promptly to parents'. The school also have a close working relationship with healthcare professionals including occupational therapists and speech and language therapists. Students also have access to a

music therapist and shiatsu therapist. Each student has a comprehensive health plan that addresses all the needs of students including those arising from cultural needs. The safe handling of medication is well managed in this school. The school use homely remedies which have been agreed with by parents. Staff receive training in the safe handling of medication during their induction and then receive updates as necessary. Medication is accurately recorded, received and disposed of appropriately. The medication cupboards are secure. However, syrups and creams are not all labelled with the date of opening so that staff know when the medication has reached the end of its shelf life and bottles containing syrups were very sticky. All accidents are recorded and first aid is given as appropriate. There is a high level of staff who are qualified in first aid and so there is always a member of staff on duty who is trained to give first aid. The staff promote healthy eating ensuring students have access to a varied and balanced diet. Staff also provide opportunities for students to try different foods. A teacher said that staff use, 'strategies to encourage and develop healthy eating despite the idiosyncratic eating patterns and behaviour exhibited by pupils'. Students are given the opportunity to discuss and change menus as well as shop for and cook their own meals. The staff patiently encourage pupils to shop and prepare meals using appropriate aids such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACHH). Special dietary needs and preferences are catered for. The school has recently been awarded the Gold Healthy School award again this year from the local authority.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The privacy of students is respected by staff. Staff ensure personal care is carried out sensitively whilst ensuring the safety of students. Confidential information is held securely. Student's issues are not discussed openly. Students are enabled by staff to make complaints. They are encouraged to write in their reflection journals about what they liked and disliked at the end of each day and have an 'emotions board', which depicts different emotions in PECS, so students can easily express how they feel. Complaints are taken seriously and resolved where possible. It is clear from observation and discussion that the school's management team is responsive to issues raised by the students and their parents and ensures measures put in place to resolve issues are effectively communicated. Complaints are appropriately, fairly and sensitively responded to. Students said staff keep them safe. A parent said, 'I feel I can trust the staff to keep my son safe'. The safety and rights of both staff and students are protected. There are no ongoing safeguarding issues, but historically any such issues are quickly referred to the appropriate external agencies. All care staff have received safeguarding training which forms part of the school's internal core staff training programme. Other staff, such as catering, domestic and maintenance staff have not received any formal safeguarding children training although they are given a pamphlet each year, which they are expected to read. Staff are competent in their knowledge of the school's safeguarding children procedures. Students said they have not experienced incidents of bullying. However, staff are pro-active and responsive to any bullying behaviour. The high staffing levels, vigilance and working practices adopted by the school, as well as the nature of the students, ensures bullying type behaviour rarely occurs. Staff work with young people to develop their understanding of the diversity of their community and the importance of tolerance of others. The school has a written procedure for action when students are absent without authority. There are no incidents of absconding from the school. Staff view the students positively and there is a family atmosphere on the residential units. Staff, including catering, domestic and maintenance staff, are given training during their

induction on physical intervention and this is updated at least annually. Support and Intervention plans are comprehensive ensuring all staff are aware of what to do when a student presents behaviour that challenges. Positive Handling Plans detail how and when a student should be restrained and what other strategies should be used before physical intervention. Physical intervention is used as a last resort. There is a minimal amount of physical intervention carried out in this school. Records are clear and concise. Sanctions are not used. Comprehensive risk assessments are in place for all students, covering their activities and behaviour. Boundaries between staff and students are clear and relationships are excellent. Recruitment procedures are robust. Safety checks are completed and staff only commence employment when they have a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure and two satisfactory references. The school has comprehensive risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire. All staff are given fire safety training during their induction and then every six months. Fire drills are carried out on a regular basis and at different times of the day. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and a detailed record kept. All health and safety procedures are robust. All visitors sign into the school and must show identification.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Students have excellent relationships with staff. They said there are lots of activities both in school and in the community. Student's enjoy the many and varied activities, including various clubs that they attend. The student's own individual interests are supported and they are involved in planning and evaluating activities. Staff are positive in their approach to education and its value for students. There is excellent communication between care and teaching staff. They meet at the beginning and end of each day to provide feedback about each student. A 'Link' book is also used between teaching staff, care staff and parents. Specific educational arrangements are in place for each student. Students are working well at the school and look forward to attending. Appropriate educational documentation is held on individual case files. These include individual needs, for example, cultural and religious needs. There is a child-centred approach to care and education. Individual support is comprehensively detailed in each student's file and observations and discussions with staff showed that staff ensure each student's individual needs are met. This includes identifying any religious and cultural needs a student may have. Currently staff are working on the 'All about me' books, which focus on the individual student and who are the core people around them who enable them to progress towards independence. This also provides a group of people who know the student really well who can advocate on behalf of the student but also increase the student's confidence to self-advocate. All staff, including catering staff, have training in PECS and other communication aids and use them competently with students.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are able to provide high quality care for students and meet their individual needs with the knowledge and understanding they have of them. Student's files include a comprehensive care plan. Care plans are 'live' documents, which are under continual review and have been written in partnership with parents. A parent said, 'care plans are implemented and I am given copies and consulted'. Staff are committed to working in partnership with the students and their families, social workers and external agencies to promote individual care programmes, tailored to the student's needs. The school have recently started an outreach programme where

the residential staff can competently support parents in their own home, providing high quality advice, guidance and resources to enable parents to promote independence of students within their home. Students are assessed prior to admission to residence with a clear objective for providing a residential placement and a 24-hour curriculum. Students attend residence a maximum of two nights per week and will complete accredited awards for independent living. Currently older students are embarking on a business enterprise which is proving very successful. Students take a full and active part in the business and clearly enjoy the experience. The school have plans for further developing this. Students are given opportunities to make choices and decisions throughout their residential placement. Decision making is aided with the use of PECS, reflective journals and the 'emotions board'. A teacher said, 'the young people are encouraged to give their views in a range of ways including "reflection sheets" (a diary allowing them to identify what they have liked and disliked) and keyworker time. Those views feed into activity planning, social groups etc'. Questionnaires provided by Ofsted have been competently translated into three different forms to ensure all students have been able to give their views about the residential provision. There is also an active student council.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Students are provided with a homely environment, with good quality furnishings. Communal space in each unit is limited. However, the students have good facilities. Their bedrooms are highly personalised for their stay and examples of cultural choices are evident. Communication aids are prevalent throughout both units and student's work and photographs are displayed on the walls. The school is clean and tidy and well maintained. Students value their school and their surroundings.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The statement of purpose is a comprehensive document and is reviewed on an annual basis. The commitment to promoting equality and diversity is explicit within the information. There are good staffing levels in each of the units. Both units are also staffed at night. There is a balance of cultural backgrounds of staff but currently there is an all female staff team where the majority of students are male. Staff have access to an excellent training programme. The staff team are highly qualified, caring, competent and well supported by each other and the senior management team. They are passionate and dedicated to the work that they do. A parent said, 'all staff are very well trained and informed. They are kind to the children who seem all to enjoy their time there'. All staff are booked onto an equality and diversity course at the end of the year. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Evidence supports a consistent commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice. The quality and detail of student's plans also supports this commitment. Students receive an individual service in the school which is designed to meet their personal needs. All staff have an in-depth knowledge of the students they are working with ensuring their needs are consistently met. Staff work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure a high quality service where the ethos is centred around meeting the individual needs and aspirations of the students. The school ensures the quality of care through continuous monitoring and evaluation of the service. Parents are asked to complete annual surveys to ensure the school captures their views of the school and ensures their views are taken into consideration for future planning. All records are signed by senior managers and the standard 33 visitor (an independent visitor employed by the local authority).

The standard 33 visitor also provides a written report of his visit highlighting areas of good practice and areas for improvement. A member of the governing body also visits the residential unit regularly as does the head teacher and deputy head. The annual development plan sets out the way in which the school wants to develop and how it will be achieved. Success is evaluated at the end of each term. The school also have a comprehensive development plan for training and professional development.

## 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 the policy and written guidance is implemented in practice for administering medication (NMS 14.17)
- ensure all staff, including ancillary staff, are given training on safeguarding children (NMS 5.8).

## 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.**