

# Walworth School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Dennis Bradley
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	14 November 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**

Walworth School provides education and residential care for children of primary and junior school age, who have a statement of special educational needs. The school is located in a residential area on the outskirts of Newton Aycliffe and is easily accessed by road. Acorn House, the school's residential building is located behind the main school and comprises of four residential units, each having its own living and sleeping areas. The number of residential pupils residing at the school may vary during the school week, with some children residing for up to four nights per week. However, the maximum number of children that may reside at the school is 18.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this full inspection was to inspect all the key standards and also to look at the progress the service has made with the recommendation that was set at the last inspection. This related to the decoration and refurbishment of the lounge area in the residential unit.

The quality of the boarding provision is satisfactory but it has some good features. The school meets many of the key national minimum standards but there are shortfalls and some of these could potentially compromise the welfare of the young people. There was evidence of very positive relationships between the staff and the young people who use the service. There are good arrangements for protecting and promoting the health of the young people. However, the arrangements for ensuring the residential unit provides a safe setting for the young people are not fully satisfactory. Staff are good at consulting the young people and involving them in decisions about their stay at the residential unit. They are particularly good at supporting and promoting the education and achievement of the young people and encouraging and supporting them, to participate in a variety of community based activities and outings. The opportunities for staff to take part in relevant training are satisfactory and staffing levels are good. However, the arrangements for providing staff with appropriate support and guidance are not satisfactory.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the previous inspection of the residential service, it was recommended that the school ensures that the decoration and refurbishment of the lounge area in Acorn House be completed. This work has now been completed.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The young people benefit from being cared for by staff who actively promote their health and well-being. Staff are good at monitoring and meeting the diverse health care needs of the young people. They are good at communicating with parents and carers, to support the health and well-being of the young people. The school promotes healthy eating and the young people have appropriate opportunities, to gain experience in the preparation and cooking of meals. Staff encourage and support the young people to take part in healthy activities, such as cycling and swimming.

There are satisfactory arrangements for storing, administering and monitoring the young people's medication. These help to protect their health and meet their health care needs. There are records and procedures covering the administration of medicines for this purpose. However, the school's policy regarding the administration of non-prescription medication is not sufficiently clear. Most of the staff have had relevant training. Staffing arrangements ensure appropriate support is available for the young people at all times. For example, there is always someone on duty who is trained in first aid.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff are good at respecting the privacy of the young people and they try hard to make sure that young people understand the importance of respecting each other's privacy. Staff make sure information about the young people and their families is handled confidentially. There are policies and procedures in place, to help ensure that this happens.

There are procedures for managing complaints appropriately and ensuring young people and their families are listened to. However, the procedures have not been updated to include the contact details of Ofsted. Staff make sure that the young people and their families are aware of who they can go to, if they have any complaints or concerns. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Young people said they would talk to staff, if they had any worries or concerns.

The school has clear procedures for safeguarding young people and all of the staff have had child protection training. This training helps staff protect young people from abuse. However, one allegation of abuse had not been responded to appropriately. The Head has now taken action to address this.

Staff create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable. Young people said they feel safe when staying on the residential unit. There is a clear anti-bullying policy and there is information about bullying and what to do about it, on display throughout the school. Staff feel that staffing levels help to make sure that any bullying behaviour is dealt with promptly. Young people said that when staff are aware of bullying taking place they deal with it. Staff have not received any training covering how to counter bullying.

There have been no incidents involving a young person leaving the residential unit without permission since the last inspection. Only staff can open the external doors of the unit. There are appropriate procedures for when a young person goes missing.

Staff encourage and support the young people to develop and maintain socially acceptable behaviour. They give positive messages to young people, to reinforce acceptable behaviour and there is a system of rewards for good behaviour and achievement. All of the young people have an individual behaviour management plan. The use of sanctions and physical interventions by staff is regularly monitored and the use of physical intervention has reduced over the last year. No concerns were noted in the records checked. However, the records of physical interventions does not fully meet with the relevant national minimum standards. There are clear procedures and guidance for staff, regarding how they should manage the behaviour of young people. All of the staff have had relevant training and this covers how to reduce or avoid the need to use physical intervention. Staff said the reduction in the use of physical intervention,

was in part due to staff using these de-escalation techniques more effectively. Young people feel the rules are fair and one said when staff do use restraint they 'do it properly'.

The systems in place to keep the young people and adults safe from the risk of fire and other potential hazards are not fully satisfactory. There have been regular fire drills in the school, but only one fire drill in the residential unit during the last 12 months. The residential unit's staffing policy states fire drills should be carried out at least twice a term. There are regular checks of equipment, such as fire alarms and electrical appliances. Staff carry out a range of risk assessments regarding the premises, activities and outings, as well as individual risk assessments for each young person. However, some of these risk assessments are not satisfactory. For example, the risk assessments for the residential unit premises do not identify all the potential risks. Also, staff have not reviewed and updated the risk assessments for two young people, following an incident they were involved in.

The school does not have sufficiently robust procedures for making sure it only employs suitable people. The school completes a range of checks on new staff. This includes a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure check. However, documentary evidence was not available, to confirm that all the recommended checks are carried out. For example, there were no written references available in the records for one person and only one reference for another person.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The residential care staff are exceptionally good at supporting and promoting the education and achievement of the young people. For example, they ensure that young people attend school punctually and they work closely with the school staff, to support pupils in the school. Young people's plans of care include specific targets, as part of their 24 hour curriculum. The residential care staff ensure that pupils throughout the school, take part in a range of activities that helps to promote their social skills and development.

The young people benefit from having care plans and risk assessments based on their individually assessed needs. Staffing levels provide good opportunities for staff to give the young people support and assistance, to meet their individual needs and wishes. For example, a member of staff helped one young person to make biscuits and staff regularly read stories to some of the young people at bed-time.

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

The provision is good.

The school is good at consulting pupils and their families. Pupils are actively encouraged and supported, to develop skills in daily living and to have their say, about their day to day lives on the residential unit and how the school is run. Staff take the views and opinions of the young people seriously and where possible and appropriate, act upon them. The school consults parents about how best to introduce their child to overnight stays on the residential unit. This helps to make sure admissions to the residential unit are arranged, to meet the individual needs of each young person.

The young people benefit from having plans of care, that set out how the school will meet their assessed needs. There are good arrangements for reviewing the care and progress made by the young people. The school supports parents to attend meetings concerning their child, by

providing transport if necessary. There is good communication between staff and the young people's families. For example, staff regularly telephone parents, to keep them up-to-date regarding their child's progress. This also helps staff keep up-to-date about any changes needed, regarding the care and support of the young people.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

The residential unit provides appropriate accommodation for the young people. It is pleasantly decorated and is furnished and equipped to a satisfactory standard. Each young person has their own bedroom and there are a number of communal areas for their use.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

The school provides parents and young people with information about the school and the residential service. This includes a statement of purpose and for pupils, a pamphlet about Acorn House. However, the school's statement of purpose does not include information about the electronic monitoring system that is used in the residential unit. Also, the section on complaints, still states that parents or carers can make a complaint directly to the Commission for Social Care Inspection, rather than to Ofsted.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The young people receive an individual service designed, where possible, to meet their personal needs and preferences. Staff have a good knowledge of the young people and try to make sure their needs are being met at all times. There is a commitment to improving equality and diversity in practice.

Staffing levels ensure that sufficient staff are on duty, to meet the individual needs of the young people. The residential unit uses a small number of school staff to cover staff absences. This helps to maintain continuity of staffing and reduces potential disruption to the young people. Staff feel well supported but the arrangements for providing staff with supervision and guidance in safeguarding and promoting the young people's welfare are not satisfactory. Also, the written guidance for staff on policies and procedures has not been kept up-to-date.

The residential care staff are very experienced and knowledgeable and they have satisfactory opportunities for taking part in relevant training. There is a rolling programme of core training, such as child protection and first aid. The majority of staff have a relevant qualification, that confirms they have the competencies needed to care for children and young people.

There are good arrangements for monitoring the residential service and the care and welfare of the young people. For example, every half term, a representative of the local authority carries out unannounced monitoring visits and completes detailed reports on the conduct of the school. The Deputy Head of the school and the Head of Care also monitors the residential unit's records, to identify any issues that they may need to address.

## 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):

- review the protocol on the provision of non-prescription 'household' medicines to children and ensure it is implemented (NMS 14)
- ensure that any allegations of abuse are appropriately responded to (NMS 5)
- provide training for staff in awareness of, and effective strategies to counter bullying (NMS 6.2)
- ensure there is a suitable system in place to notify promptly all the relevant authorities where an allegation has been made which indicates that abuse of a child may have occurred (NMS 7)
- ensure that records of any use of physical intervention are recorded in a bound and numbered book and include the details set out in Standard 10.14 (NMS 10)
- carry out fire drills in accordance with the guidance in the residential unit's staffing policy to ensure that children and staff know the emergency evacuation procedures, including those for use at night (NMS 26)
- ensure risk assessments regarding individual children are regularly reviewed and updated as required. Review the risk assessments regarding group activities to ensure they comply with the council's guidance. Review the risk assessments regarding the residential unit premises to ensure they cover all areas which present a risk to children (NMS 26)
- ensure the system for recruiting staff who will work with children includes all of the elements specified in NMS 27.2 and is verifiable in the recruitment records held at the school (NMS 27)
- update the school's statement of purpose and amend it to include details of the electronic monitoring system used in the residential unit (NMS 1)
- ensure that all staff receive at least one and a half hours one to one supervision from a senior member of staff each half term and that new staff receive one to one supervision at least fortnightly during the first two terms of their employment (NMS 30.2)
- ensure that staff are provided with written guidance on procedures and policies that is kept up to date (NMS 30.7).