

# Furrowfield School

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Steve Pearson
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<b>Date of last inspection</b>	28 March 2008

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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 boys and girls, from 11 years old up to 16 years old, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The residential wing is known as Crossfield House and was purpose built approximately five years ago. It is directly attached to the school and provides residential care for four nights a week on Mondays to Thursdays and for a maximum of 14 young people.

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 nine currently use the residential accommodation. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and they are placed at the school by the local education authority.

At the time of the inspection, six young people were staying in Crossfield House. Each of the young people talked to the inspector about how they are looked after. There were 14 young people who also completed a written survey.

### Summary

The school was given two days' notice of the inspection. It was a full inspection and so all the key national minimum standards were assessed. The inspection also looked at whether a recommendation made at the previous inspection on 28 March 2008 had been completed. This was about the recording of medications.

Overall the school provides satisfactory outcomes for young people. Beneath this overall rating however, there is clear evidence that some outcomes are excellent. For example, the school is very well equipped, the premises are warm, clean and homely and there are excellent facilities for young people. Young people are fully enabled to achieve their potential and they benefit from caring and consistent relationships with the staff. The staff themselves are experienced and knowledgeable and they are well-supported, through regular supervision and training. Young people's health is also promoted well.

However, overall outcomes are weakened by poorer practices relating to the promotion of young people's safety. The recording of sanctions and physical interventions is not adequately detailed and the monitoring of such matters is not adequately thorough. The recording of complaints does not provide adequate accountability. Also, Ofsted cannot monitor serious complaints made against the staff because the school does not notify Ofsted of such matters.

Additionally, a failure to adequately self-assess against the national minimum standards means that shortfalls are not being identified quickly enough and so improvement is likely to be slower.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

The medications administered to each young person are now recorded on separate sheets. This means that the records are clearer and can be monitored more effectively.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The staff are trained to provide first aid and medications are administered adequately. However, such arrangements are not fully robust. For example, written permission from parents for the staff to provide first aid when necessary, has not yet been sought. There is therefore a risk that staff are not acting in accordance with parental wishes. The recording of administration of medication is also not adequately robust. The school is not following the guidelines of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. This suggests, for example, that staff should use signatures on medication records rather than initials. It also advises the use of a hard-bound and page-numbered book, to record the administration of controlled drugs. However, young people's overall health is being monitored appropriately by the staff and young people receive appropriate guidance about personal, health, social and sex and relationship education. The young people also partake in many activities, which involves physical exercise and thereby promote fitness.

Young people are provided with good quantities of wholesome food. They help to decide the menus and can prepare meals as well in their activity time. Staff involved in preparing food have received appropriate training.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Young people's safety is being protected and promoted satisfactorily, although there are some concerns.

Young people's privacy is well-respected. They have their own single bedrooms, access to a private payphone and space for time alone if they wish. Staff know how to respond to allegations, suspicions or evidence of abuse and they receive regular training in such matters. There is a minimal level of bullying and if this does happen, the staff respond quickly and effectively. Young people rarely go missing from residence but if they do, the staff follow clear policies and procedures and they inform parents and the police. The premises themselves are safe. Professional technicians regularly service the electrical equipment, gas appliances and equipment for preventing, detecting and extinguishing fires. This helps to promote the safety of the people in the school. Staff are recruited safely and the identity of visitors is always verified and details of visits are recorded.

The recording of complaints is weak. This leads to poorer accountability for how significant issues or allegations, for example, alleged mistreatment by staff, have been dealt with. Additionally, the school is not notifying Ofsted when such complaints are made about the staff. This means Ofsted is not able to monitor the handling of such matters when they arise, which leaves young people less well-protected.

There are also concerns about the recording of sanctions and physical interventions. Staff do not use sanctions much, but when this does happen they are used fairly. However, there is poor accountability for the use of such measures, because the details are not being recorded in adequate detail. Similarly, although the use of physical interventions in the residential unit are

rare (it is more frequent in class time), the recording of details again does not meet the requirements of the national minimum standards. There is also little evidence to show that the Head Teacher assesses the bound books of sanctions and physical interventions appropriately or adds comments about the use of such measures. This means that the monitoring and accountability about such important matters are not robust.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are fully supported to enjoy and achieve well in life.

Young people are fully supported to consolidate what they have learnt in school and to learn new things when in residence. The staff support young people with homework and there are good facilities for young people to study and learn. Examples include access to the school's cookery and computer facilities and to the school's library.

There is an excellent range of evening activities, which the young people fully enjoy. Some of these include fund-raising events. These help young people to feel fulfilled and they present opportunities for young people to meet other people in the community, which enhances their social development.

Young people have a lot of individual support from the staff, including regular one-to-one time with their key worker. Professional support from, for example, a child psychiatrist is also available to the young people.

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

The provision is good.

Young people are well-supported to contribute their opinions about the running of their own lives and about how the residential unit and the school is run.

There are ample opportunities for young people to have a say in the running of the school and residential unit. Each year has a representative on an elected school council. The young people can then formally raise concerns, whereby the Head Teacher and staff then address these concerns. There are also regular house meetings in the residential unit and these meetings are recorded and acted upon accordingly. Young people said such meetings are effective at bringing about positive changes.

Young people are also appropriately introduced to the school and residential unit, when they first come to the school. They also learn useful independence skills when in residence, for example, how to prepare and cook meals.

Residential plans are in place for the young people in residence. However, it is harder to be assured that staff are all meeting young people's needs in a consistent manner. This is because the plans do not make it clear how the staff are expected to meet the young people's needs on a day to day basis. There is therefore less accountability and less clarity about how assessed needs are to be met.

Young people are fully supported to maintain contact with their families. Families can visit at all reasonable times and young people have ready access to a private telephone, on which they can make and receive calls as required.

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are superbly supported to achieve economic well-being when they are older.

The residential premises are excellent, for example, bedrooms are warm, well-furnished, clean and comfortable and young people can personalise them if they choose. Young people always have the same bedroom each week and this provides consistency and security. There are a wealth of opportunities for young people to meet other people and this enhances their social development and self esteem.

Young people also learn useful skills for living independently and they have excellent support for further education, training and employment. They meet other people in the community at college and learn useful skills of relevance, for when they are older, for seeking employment or if they are in employment.

## Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Outcomes relating to the organisation of the residential service are adequate but there are some significant shortfalls.

The purpose of the school is made clear in its prospectus. Young people and parents receive a copy of this when young people are due to come to the school. However, some information for parents is not provided in an adequately clear manner and so they are not adequately well-informed. There are good levels of staffing. The same staff are on duty each night and so this provides consistency and structure for the young people. Staff receive regular supervision from senior staff and they also receive annual appraisals and they have personal development plans.

The provision of care is not being monitored adequately. Although the Head Teacher and Head of Care do check some of the school's records, this is not done in a systematic and thorough manner, as recommended by the national minimum standards. Furthermore, a failure to self-assess against the broader contents of the national minimum standards as a whole, means that shortfalls in the quality of care are not being identified adequately.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. There is a clear and descriptive set of policies and procedures, which describes how the staff must promote equality and diversity for all young people. The staff clearly enable young people to fulfil their potential and to follow their own choices, for example, in relation to diet, culture, religion. The staff provide equal opportunities for all young people regardless of age, gender, religious beliefs, ability, race or sexual orientation.

## 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):

- obtain and retain on file for each child, prior written permission from a person or body with parental responsibility for that child, for the administration of first aid when required (NMS 14.10)
- follow the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's recommendations about the recording of controlled drugs (NMS 14.20)
- fully record all the relevant details about how any complaint is responded to (NMS 4.3)
- ensure that serious complaints against the school or the staff of the school are notified to Ofsted (NMS 4.7)
- ensure the recording of sanctions meets the requirements of the national minimum standard (NMS 10.9)
- ensure the recording of physical interventions meets the requirements of the national minimum standard (NMS 10.14)
- ensure the Head records any comment on the appropriateness of individual uses of sanctions or physical intervention, together with any subsequent action taken (NMS 10.16)
- specify how the residential staff will care for each child in accordance with his or her assessed needs (NMS 17.1)
- provide the information, required by the national minimum standard, to the parents of each child resident in the school (NMS 31.10)
- ensure that the Head or senior members of staff, delegated by the Head, monitor and sign the records as required by the National Minimum Standard to identify any patterns or issues requiring action (NMS 32.2).