

Maplewell Hall

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Caroline Brailsford
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	10 November 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

The school provides for secondary aged students with moderate learning disabilities. It is situated around two miles from a small village. The age range of the school is 11 to 16 years, apart from in the specialist autism unit where provision can extend to 19 years.

All residential accommodation is in the main building of the school and is organised on two floors with boys' accommodation on the first floor and girls' accommodation on the second floor. Each area has a TV lounge and in addition there is a pool table, a computer room and an arts and crafts area.

Summary

This key inspection was announced and all key national minimum standards were inspected. Each of the outcome areas have been given a judgement rating. Being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving and organisation are judged as outstanding. Economic wellbeing and positive contribution are judged as good.

The school provides an outstanding residential service to the students. Strengths include the strong management team and the competence of the staff. The team are experienced, well established and provide very good quality care to the students. The staff group is small, so they know the needs of the students extremely well. They can also provide consistency and as a result the students make very good progress.

At the last inspection there were six recommendations, all of which have been achieved. Progress includes a comprehensive system for monitoring the quality of care and Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks for the governors.

Two recommendations have been set as a result of this inspection. One is about the electrical testing in the building which is overdue and the second is in relation to the detail in the physical interventions log which does not always describe the event fully.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The six recommendations made at the last inspection are all met. There is now a process so that the governors to the school receive a Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check. Testing is carried out on the fire doors on a regular basis, although this is not recorded. Policies for complaints and safeguarding have been improved so that they fully meet the required standard. Records of physical interventions are now kept in a bound book. In addition the management team have developed a robust quality assurance process. This works well to ensure that the students receive a good quality service.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The students enjoy the food during their stay. They are encouraged to be healthy in their choices and individual needs and preferences are well provided for. All food is freshly cooked

on the premises by staff that understand nutritional issues well and how these impact on individuals. All meals are cooked from scratch with fresh ingredients including bread and cakes, ensuring that optimum nutrition is established and maintained. Mealtimes are also enjoyed as a very pleasant social occasion.

The students receive very good support from staff with regard to their health and emotional wellbeing. This ensures that all aspects of health needs for individuals are met as far as possible. Where individuals have complex health care needs, these are managed well, ensuring safety wherever possible. An established and competent staff team are fully aware of all important information and are conversant with the procedures, which they vigilantly follow. Medicines are also safely managed. Staff are trained in the administration of medicines and specific training is provided to ensure that staff are fully competent in any particular procedures that the students require. The emotional wellbeing of students is also continually assessed and this has a high priority in the care that is delivered. As a result, their health and emotional wellbeing is addressed well.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Students enjoy a high level of privacy and confidentiality in all aspects of their daily living; this helps them to feel safe and protected.

The complaints procedure is easily accessible to students and they are confident that any complaint would be taken seriously by staff. There are good relationships between the students and the staff, and an open culture encourages them to raise any issues they have freely. The complaints process and anti-bullying information are presented in the welcome pack. Students say they can easily talk to staff and they sort out concerns. Staff place great importance on establishing the feelings and views of all students and are very familiar with the communication methods for the young people that might find this more difficult. Staff have a clear understanding and commitment to implementing the school's anti-bullying policy and to ensuring and enabling students to express any concerns they may have. Young people are very well supported in this area.

The safety and welfare of the students has a very high priority in the school and they feel safe and comfortable during their stay. Each individual has their needs and risks identified in documents providing detailed, clear information to staff about how risks can be minimised as far as possible. These risk assessment documents work very well in practice and help to keep the students safe. Compatibility within group situations is well considered to ensure that the students are protected. The staff at all levels, including domestic and office staff understand and are clear about what they should do if there is a safeguarding issue. Staff are also very familiar with the referral process to the local safeguarding board. They are trained in safeguarding issues and are therefore very aware of vulnerability issues for disabled students in residential care.

The staff have built up very positive relationships with the students in residence and see them in an extremely positive light. Their needs and behaviour is well understood by the staff and they know what the 'triggers' are for more challenging behaviour for individuals. Staff have completed training and are competent in diffusing situations to try to avoid the use of physical intervention, which is rare and a last resort. Staff are very clear that their interventions are positive, with the emphasis being on de-escalation rather than physical intervention. There has

been no physical interventions used during residence. However, where physical intervention has been used in the school, the records do not always show clearly what happened during the event. Behaviour management is something that the staff team are consistently good at, and this helps the students to progress in their overall behaviour.

The head and head of care ensure that the building is safe for the students, staff and visitors. Fire drills have taken place regularly as have tests on all fire equipment in the building in line with the requirements of the fire authority. Staff and students are very confident about what they should do should there be a fire. Inspection of the gas and Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) are all up to date ensuring the safety of all who use the building. However there has been some confusion over the periodic electrical test and the three yearly test is out of date. This was booked and due to be completed during the week following the inspection. The lighting in between the pool room and the art room is not sufficient. However the head is already aware of this and plans are in place to put this right.

There is a recruitment system in the school which maintains good levels of safety for the students. This includes Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks at enhanced level, proof of identity and references prior to employment. The overall management of the system is good and therefore the students are well protected.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The staff are extremely familiar with the individual needs of the students, and there is a robust system for ensuring that they receive the relevant personal support. The good relationships between the students and staff ensure that students feel able to talk to the staff about their problems. Physical, emotional and social needs all have a very high priority and all students have targets to work on during their stays. This ensures that their needs can be well addressed and that progress can be made.

There is a very good link between the teaching and the residential staff and there are regular times in residence when the two groups of staff work together to ensure consistency of progress. Residential staff are aware of educational targets and ensure that the students can develop at every opportunity. This enables students to directly benefit from their stay in residence. Although the school makes sure that there is a 24 hour curriculum, the residential time is more relaxed so that young people can enjoy their activities and being with their friends alongside their learning. The students really enjoy a wide range of activities both in the school and out in the community. This gives them the opportunity to experience and learn new skills.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Students are cared for well in residence by a small and established staff team who provide consistent good quality care on a day-to-day basis. This results in some cases, in significant improvement to the welfare, behaviour and safety of individuals. Assessment and care planning informs staff about how to meet students' needs on a day-to-day basis. There are regular changes in the needs of individuals but the systems in place for the exchange of new information are very good.

Students are supported when they move into residence and say that staff make them feel very welcome and try to settle them in, in a pleasant and supportive way. They receive a welcome pack which sets out the rules, how to complain and what to expect. The head of care also ensures that students are individually as prepared as they can be. Students who miss home can freely use the telephone to contact their family and homesickness is monitored well, ensuring that individuals feel comfortable. Students are also supported when they leave the school and have a chance to celebrate their achievements.

Staff spend a lot of quality time with students and this helps to ensure that their views can be established. There are regular questionnaires sent home for students to complete with their family, these work well to establish their views about their stays in residence.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The school provides well-maintained and comfortable areas for the students to use during their stay. They feel comfortable and safe in their environment. The environment is homely and pleasant and also is well suited to the group of students who use it. There are many areas for the students to relax and enjoy including games rooms, lounges and bedrooms. The snooker room has bare and crumbling plaster in places and the window is cracked. However there are already plans to put this right.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The management and organisation of the school is professional and delivers very positive outcomes for the students. The head of care has completed the NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) Level 4 in leadership and management. The management team are very effective, know the needs of the students well, and how they should be met. They have extensive knowledge of operational issues in the school and manage the staff in a way that is competent. Efficient systems are in place to scrutinise the quality of the care being delivered and the strong management team communicate effectively to ensure that the students receive a good service and can therefore progress.

Young people continue to benefit because there is a well-established and competent staff team working at the school who are highly enthusiastic. They are motivated by their enjoyment of working with young people and watching them progress. The team work well together and possess the skills that they need to look after the students. They know the needs of individuals exceptionally well and how they should be met, ensuring that good quality care is delivered. There are enough staff on duty at all times to provide safe care and staff have opportunities to spend quality time with the students.

Training and support to staff is well organised including essential training through a rolling programme which is well monitored. All staff complete their NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) Level 3 and there are regular annual refresher courses for staff. There is a staff induction process and staff benefit from regular support and supervision.

The promotion of equality and diversity in the school is outstanding and the staff ensure that each student is seen as an individual and is treated as such. Each student, whatever their needs or disability has equal access to the services that the residential service provides.

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 the physical intervention book includes the full detail of the nature of the physical intervention used (NMS 10.14)
- ensure that electrical installations are checked at least every three years. (NMS 26.2)