

Hunters Hill (Residential) School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Martha Nethaway / Andrew Hewston
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Date of last inspection	10 December 2006

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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

Hunters Hill (Residential) School is a Special School providing residential boarding for a four night and five day educational placement. The school can cater for 75 pupils, girls and boys from the age of 11 to 16 years. The pupils who attend Hunters Hill School have been identified as having moderate learning, emotional and behavioural needs. Some pupils can have other associated health problems. The school is split across two sites and the grounds are attractive in pleasant countryside of the south side of Birmingham. The homes are as follows and accommodate the following number and age range of children: Frobisher is a group home that accommodates five children over the age of 11 years Raleigh is a group home that accommodates six children over the age of 11 years Shackleton is a group home that accommodates five children over the age of 11 years Scott is a group home that accommodates four children over the age of 11 years Cropwood is a large group home that accommodates 27 young people over the age of 14 years.

Summary

This was an announced inspection that concentrated on the 18 key National Minimum Standards. The inspection visit was carried out by two inspectors over two days. Student questionnaires were completed during the pre-inspection visit to the school. Parents, carers and stakeholders were also invited to complete questionnaires about the performance of the school. The inspection focused on health needs, individual support and keeping children and young people safe. The inspection also concentrated on how the school consults with young people. Over the course of the inspection, all of the residential accommodation was visited and time was spent with children and young people, residential staff, team leaders and managers. This inspection did not look at the admission or leaving processes for the young people or how the home prepares young people for adulthood. The inspection did not assess the environmental standards of accommodation. Children and young people are being well cared for and their educational achievement is strongly promoted. Excellent resources are in place for recreational and sporting activities and this is a particular strength of the school. Children and young people are encouraged to be sociable and help each other. There is a strong integrated approach between the educational setting and the residential provision and staff are proud of this achievement. The setting has developed a good partnership in working with families and carers.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the school was required to improve the way in which the service managed the medication arrangements at the homes. In particular, to provide a clear policy and suitable medication training. The area related to staff competence and medication recording mechanisms have significantly improved. This has ensured that staff are well placed to manage medication more effectively. The setting has successfully developed a programme for replacing furniture and soft furnishings to help improve the residential environments.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children and young people's health care is well promoted as the setting takes positive steps to address health needs. However, there are no Controlled Drug registers available at the different residential units. Similarly, some residential staff have not received formal training in safe food handling. Young people's health care needs are identified and assessed prior to admission. Staff gather a full and factual health history from parents and carers and this underpins the placement plan for students. Parents and carers hold primary responsibility for meeting children's health care needs. Young people's health needs are further protected because staff ensure all the necessary parental permissions have been sought. Young people are provided with a health plan and staff are supportive with matters relating to health. There is a policy that addresses how health planning and care is monitored and reviewed. Young people are receiving advice and guidance from staff about a range of health and social issues and students are confident about talking problems over with staff. Students are assessed and staff use the assessment as a basis to build up their self-awareness, social skills and self-esteem. This is particularly evident with the integrated approach used in the personal, social and citizenship meetings, in the out of school activities organised. As a result, the setting performs strongly in this area. Since the last inspection the medication policy has been reviewed and staff are to undertake training on the safe handing of medication. Significant improvements have been added to the recording mechanism of medications given. However, no clear recording system is in place to show compliance with the administration of Controlled Drugs and no running balance of stock controlled drugs is recorded. This action could compromise young people's safety, related to the safe management of medication. The setting responds to accidents appropriately and there are clear arrangements for nominated first aiders on site. First aid boxes are well maintained in the homes. All accidents are effectively recorded in an accident book and these records are monitored by the Head of Care. Young people are encouraged to maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle and they have a good awareness of what food is good for them, for example, nutritious, home cooking and baking features predominantly in the school menus. However, some residential staff have not received formal training in the safe handling of food.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The school has a good focus on the safeguarding and protection of children and young people. Staff follow the operational policies and procedures to promote the safety and welfare of young people. Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection. Staff know what action to take if they have concerns about a child. Young people have a clear understanding of why staff are vigilant and concerned to keep them safe. Staff receive training in child protection that is consistent with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. There are no current safeguarding issues within the setting. Staff make a strong effort to continually supervise and monitor the whereabouts of children and young people. Staff have a clear risk management approach for children and young people who are likely to go missing from the school. Young people's previous histories related to being absent without authority and their vulnerability, are given serious consideration by senior staff. Staff follow clear procedures to look for young people who are missing and inform all the relevant parties, including police, social work team and parents or carers. Effective steps are taking place to ensure the site remains secure. Further improvements are being made for managing visitors to the site. There is a designated staff member to ensure all fire safety checks, drills and risk assessments are up to date. Young people learn how to protect themselves in an emergency because they have regular opportunities to practise the evacuation procedures and staff keep a record of the practice. Staff show respect for the privacy of children and young people and

staff understand when they may share confidential information. Children and young people are encouraged to be independent and responsible for their own personal hygiene. The school provides a clear policy on responding to complaints raised, but it does not include the role of Ofsted and contact details. Children and young people view the process of making a complaint as open and honest. Access to the complaints leaflet is prominently featured around the school. Records demonstrate a responsive approach that is professional and sensitive. Staff feel they listen and learn from complaints. Staff place a strong emphasis on the active encouragement of acceptable behaviour from children and young people. Counteracting bullying is addressed in the procedures. A risk assessment approach is identified and this is underpinned by the policy. Young people readily identified that staff have a zero tolerance to bullying behaviours and everyone is frequently reminded of the expected code of conduct for students. Children and young people regularly discuss their concerns with staff and expressed confidence with the response and action taken by staff. Staff are very positive at giving praise and encouragement to young people to manage their own behaviours. Staff are trained in the use of physical intervention. The use of physical intervention in the residential units is kept to a minimum. Young people are further protected because any injuries sustained as a result of physical intervention are automatically referred onto the Local Safeguarding Board as a child protection event. In addition, the Head of Care uses an analysis tool to evaluate the circumstance in the use of restraint and to monitor any emerging themes or patterns. This action ensures that the tracking of restraint is taking place. However, the physical intervention records were not being stored in the young people's case notes. The young people are protected by the school's recruitment systems which ensure all staff satisfy the appropriate vetting checks prior to commencing work at the setting. All personnel records are held at the school and were available during the inspection visit. All of the recruitment checks are sound. However, following the recruitment check where further enquires have been required no documented evidence exists of this taking place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Young people are receiving excellent support to meet their individual educational needs. The setting provides its own on-site educational facilities. The education policy sets out the principles of the provision. Young people's attainment is recorded and the residential staff support reading for leisure, during children's recreational periods. Children and young people positively benefit from this focussed approach to learning. Staff show a strong commitment to enabling students to reach their full academic potential. Older students are engaged in a wide range of high quality work experiences and vocational courses, such as technology, engineering, social and health education. Excellent links exist between the school setting and the residential home environments. Children can have access to an independent person who provides an advocate role but young people did not mention this when asked about who they can talk to if they have an issue or concern. Young people are developing positive relationships with staff. Staff are clear about the aim to provide a stable, safe and caring environment. Young people are encouraged to be independent and self-motivated. Young people are engaged in a range of activities that encourages them to manage their behaviour in a way that reduces future risks to themselves or others. Children and young people view the range and variety of activities as excellent. Sport has a prominent feature in children and young people's lives and a new sports hall has been built by the school. Very favourable comments were received from student questionnaires about this additional resource. Careful planning is used to ensure that risks are well managed and that young people are able to engage in a full range of activities. Young

people have opportunities to participate in school trips abroad. The school has an effective policy on valuing diversity. The remit of the school is to provide a good quality service for children and young people to overcome their social problems and to learn to live with their peers. Staff place high value on creating opportunities for young people to become sufficiently skilled to live independent lives and to develop positive self-esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Young people's welfare and self-esteem is promoted with positive strategies in place to encourage their development. Staff have a positive attitude to meeting the needs of children and young people and staff succeed in providing good quality care to support their needs. Young people benefit from good placement planning which sets out how the staff will meet their assessed needs. At the initial stage, parents and carers are actively involved in contributing to the assessment and development of the placement plans. Staff set up home visits and fully discuss holistic needs of the child. Staff ensure that the home's records represent the current needs of children and their progress is monitored and reviewed. Children and young people's arrangements for retaining contact with their parents or carers is clearly agreed in the case records. Access to payphones is readily available in all of the houses. Staff pay good attention to how children and young people are consulted. The Student Council acts on behalf of students and helps to bring about change and this was evident with improved sports facilities and equipment available. In each of the houses, staff use informal discussion with children to illicit their views and opinions about arranging activities during the evening periods. Children are provided with opportunities to exercise their choice, for example, in clothing and snacks.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Hunters Hill School is effectively managed, which contributes to having a positive impact on the care and support of young people. Staff know and understand the stated aims and objectives of the service which is consistent with the Statement of Purpose. Young people are well informed about how the school runs and the facilities and the staff support available in the residential provision. The Head of Care is well qualified and skilled and ably supported by the management team. Young people are receiving good support because the staff team are qualified and suitably experienced. The majority of staff are qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Staff commitment and motivation is strong and total inclusion in the care and educational settings helps achieve the best outcomes for children. Children benefit because staff manage their time well and staff are well deployed. The rotas are flexible to meet the busy times of the day and teaching staff are involved in the out of school activities. The setting has not yet considered how the quality assurance function is able to capture children's experiences and demonstrate how the service is being measured and improved. The Head of Care envisages using the Every Child Matters agenda outcomes, as the platform to develop a quality assurance system.

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):

- keep a record of all Control Drugs in a designated Controlled Drug Register. National Minimum Standard 13
- provide residential staff with formal training in the safe handling of food. National Minimum Standard 15
- ensure all records pertaining to physical intervention are available on each child's case records. National Minimum Standard 10
- provide evidence that, where concerns are highlighted within recruitment checks, a full record of the discussion is documented to demonstrate rigour with the vetting procedures. National Minimum Standard 27
- ensure the complaints procedure includes Ofsted contact details. National Minimum Standard 4.
- promote the role of the independent visitor. National Minimum Standard 10
- ensure the quality assurance function captures the children's experiences and demonstrate how the service is being measured and improved upon. National Minimum Standard 32

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)

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- 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.