

Dawn House Residential School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Mark Ryder / Caroline Brailsford
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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

Dawn House is a residential school special school for children and young people aged between 5-19 years old who have been assessed as having a communication disability. The school is part of a national charitable organisation known as I CAN. There are 95 places within the school, 40 of which are boarders. Boys represent 31 of these places with 9 placements for girls. Boarding provision helps to support children who live a significant distance away from the area. The school is located in a village and has access to public transport and amenities such as shops and leisure facilities. The children board in three houses, two for children over 16 years and The Chimes. The Chimes is split into four house areas known as Rufford, Chatsworth, Shire and Wollaton, each with its own staff group. All houses are within the grounds of the school.

Summary

This was an annual announced inspection that focused upon key National Minimum Standards (NMS) for the boarding provision of the school. All outcome areas have been inspected and assessed. The residential standard of care continues to be assessed as good with an outstanding judgement made in the Enjoying and Achieving section. The inspection also looked at progress the school has made with the recommendations made at the last inspection. All eight recommendations have been assessed as met.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school responded promptly to the issues identified at the last inspection: Privacy of student's bedrooms is satisfactory. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Bullying behaviour is managed in an appropriate and prompt way. Administration of controlled medication is safe. Menus reflect a healthy range of meals. Behaviour management recording demonstrate staff awareness of the school's policy and practice. All staff have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) before they start to work with the children. Fire precautions are considered safe.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The school ensures that good arrangements are in place to meet the health needs of children. All children have individual health plans that provide comprehensive health and medical details. For example, information regarding children's particular health problems such as asthma and allergies are clearly recorded. There are checks in place to ensure that each child is either registered with a General Practitioner (GP) at the school or within the area the children came from. The school employs a registered nurse who supports both the residential and day children. All staff on duty are first aid trained and have received training on specialist subjects such as autism. Accidents and illnesses are recorded and monitored by senior staff. Staff help children understand health and social issues through the Personal Health and Social Education (PHSE) curriculum as well as information available within the houses. Senior staff and the qualified nurse dispense medication in a safe and practical way. The recording in the Medication Administration Records (MAR) reflects the schools policy and procedures. Children are provided with good, nutritious food that they are consulted about on a frequent basis. Children are encouraged to eat a healthy diet and fresh fruit is always available in the houses. Menus are

on display and children can choose from a selection of meals. Vegetarian and culturally appropriate foods are available. Meal times are seen as social events that help young people with differing communication difficulties to improve their social interactions. The design and layout of the dining areas support this. Staff who prepare food are qualified in food hygiene and in the case of catering staff, have been trained to an advanced level. A young person wrote on their questionnaire: "they provide us with a range of food including a healthy selection of fruit and brown bread".

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff ensure that children's privacy is respected through clear guidance and practice. Examples of practice includes covering the glass bedroom door panels and knocking on children's doors before entering. Confidential information about children is stored in a secure way. Children can read their daily records on request. Children know how to make a complaint and all complaints are addressed in a timely manner. Children confirm that they can discuss any concerns they have with staff. Staff are aware of safeguarding children through regular training and discussion within the teams. The school refers such cases to the appropriate authorities and notifies parents and other agencies as part of their safeguarding procedures. This ensures that the welfare of children is promoted at all times. Children are aware that they can discuss any worries about bullying with staff. They confirm that bullying is quickly addressed and that they feel safe. The school works within its own policy on addressing bullying that is seen as effective. Information from children confirm that there is a low incidence of bullying behaviour at this school. A child commented that: "I have been bullied at times; the care staff have acted quickly when they find out". The school's policy and procedures on unauthorised absences are clear and staff are aware of them. There is a very low-level of children missing from the school. Relationships between staff and children are warm and friendly. The school's behaviour management policy and practice ensures appropriate boundaries are maintained in a fair, transparent and proportionate way. Records on the use of physical intervention and sanctions are regularly monitored and reflect children's age and understanding. Positive intervention plans for children who require a more considered approach towards their behaviour provide a detailed and understandable assessment. Children commented positively about how they are cared for. The school provides a secure and safe accommodation for all boarders. Visitors are signed in and out and staff and children are fully aware of the fire safety procedures. The maintenance of the school is thorough and ensures that boarders and staff are able to work and live safely. It is not clear if water temperatures are monitored on a regular basis as these are not recorded. The school grounds are poorly lit during the evening. As children and staff frequently move from one building to another this could be a potential hazard to safety. The school electronic gates are not in working order. No risk assessment is available to evaluate the possible security issues this may present. The school has a recruitment and selection process which ensures that staff are appropriately vetted to work with children. The selection criteria promotes suitable and competent staff to work with the children. The school does not hold a check of identity for all staff within the recruitment records. It is therefore not possible to verify the identify of staff from these records.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Residential care staff, teaching staff and therapists all contribute in providing children with excellent opportunities in education. There are regular meetings to ensure that children are clear about the targets they are working towards. Parents play an active role in the progress of their children through attending reviews and also through frequent communication with the school. There is suitable quiet areas in the houses for children to do their homework. Children develop independence through a supportive process by parents and staff. There is a wide range of leisure activities that children benefit from. The school makes use of its own facilities as well as the local communities. Children are listened too and encouraged to participate in their own interests and hobbies. A child commented that there was: "always a range of activities on offer. There are lots of things to do such as, swimming, football, going out for meals, cinema and bowling." Children are able to speak to any member of staff about any difficulties or worries they may have. The children are encouraged to speak to their keyworker on a regular basis. An independent listener has been employed to offer children someone from outside the school to visit them and to listen to any issues the children may have. The school provides regular Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) as well as art therapy to help children communicate their wishes and feelings. The local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) team offers further guidance to the school when needed. Care plans document children's gender, race, religion and culture to ensure that staff can help to address their individual needs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are encouraged to discuss their views with staff. Regular student council, house meetings and keyworker sessions support child participation in the running of the houses. The school employs SLT's who are able to assist children to express their views. Children comment positively about how they are supported to make decisions on such things as activities and choice of meals. Staff value the views and opinions of the children ensuring that all are able to make a valuable contribution to their stay at the school. Children's gender, race, culture and communication levels are all taken into account. Parents feel that on the whole communication is good. There are regular telephone calls and information supplied in a diary that residential staff complete for children to take home. The school also produces a newsletter which parents found helpful. Placement plans include details of how a child should be cared for during their time at the school. There is a strong emphasis on communication needs and a risk assessed approach outlining the possible behaviours and actions of children in a number of circumstances. These are regularly reviewed. Responsibilities of key workers and co key workers for the child are clearly recorded. Children confirm that they know about their placement plan and are able to contribute to it. Children are encouraged to keep in contact with their families and staff give practical support to make this contact possible. The school employs a Family and Community Liaison Officer who maintains contact with a number of parents and is able to offer support when required. This is particularly relevant for children who are about to come to the school for the first time and for those young people who have reached leaving age. Parents confirm that they are made welcome when they visit the school. Arrangements for maintaining contact between the child and their family and friends are addressed in their placement plan.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Preparation for children who are about to leave the residential care of the school are supported through planning and encouragement of independent skills. For example, children learn such

skills through the running and financing of their own youth club. The staff help post 16 students to budget, buy their own food and help to cook a meal. There are transition plans for all year 9 students and above. The Family and Community Liaison Officer supports and assists many young people in finding appropriate further education placements as well as work experience with local businesses. The accommodation provides suitable facilities to meet the needs of the children. There is sufficient space for study and relaxation with the further provision of the main school buildings also being accessible to children in residential care. The furnishings and decoration are in a good state of repair. There is a rolling programme of upgrading all the houses over the next few years. The houses are safe, well maintained and conform to local fire and environmental authorities standards.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of purpose accurately reflects the aims, objectives and practice of the school. It is available to all staff and parents and is reviewed every term. It describes the ethos of the school and what it hopes to do for children with communication difficulties. The staff team are experienced, trained and dedicated to the care of the children. All established staff have completed the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) to level three. New staff go through a comprehensive induction programme. Training events are frequent and staff comment positively on the quality of such courses. For example, all staff are trained in first aid, child protection, fire awareness and physical intervention. Staff are supported through regular supervision, team meetings and informal team support. Handover meetings also occur on a daily basis. The staff are aware of the management structure and feel able to discuss any issues they have with the head of care or senior care staff. There are effective management systems in place that ensure children are looked after to a high standard. There is a senior on duty at all times and an 'on-call' system to contact senior managers out of hours. Senior staff monitor the records and practice within the residential area. As an example, a child's behaviour intervention plan was updated through a review of their file and awareness of the child's situation. The board of governors are kept informed of the progress of the school through half termly Standard 33 visits by an experienced independent consultant. The reports from these visits are provided to the governors and staff to continually develop the quality of care within Dawn House.

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 risk assessments are carried out, recorded in writing and regularly reviewed with regard to the poor lighting within the school grounds and the broken electronic front gates. (NMS 26.3)

- ensure that hot water temperature taps accessible to vulnerable children does not exceed 43 degrees celsius and that a record of frequent monitoring takes place to confirm this. (NMS 26.8)
- ensure that the school's system for recruiting staff who will work with children includes a check of identity against an official document which should be verifiable in recruitment records held at the school. (NMS 27.2).

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.