

Ovingdean Hall School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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Inspector	Gaynor Moorey / Liz Driver
Type of inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	26/02/2009

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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 is a co-educational residential special school for deaf or hearing impaired young people who may have additional complex needs, aged between 10 to 19 years. The school provides excellent specialist facilities for the students and is committed to meeting the needs of each individual student.

The school is located in a rural setting. Residential accommodation is provided during the week and at the time of this inspection there were 22 boarders. The remaining six day pupils also have the opportunity to stay overnight at the school during the week, in order to join in leisure activities with their friendship groups. The boarding houses are all located in the grounds of the school, near to the main school building. A semi-independence unit for a small group of Year 13 college students is incorporated within the boarding accommodation. During the inspection the head teacher was not in school. Two acting principles are at present leading the school.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This announced key inspection took place on a week day. The purpose of the inspection was to undertake a full review encompassing all the key national minimum standards.

The school provides an excellent standard of care which is provided by the head of care and the experienced staff team. The school is maintained by comprehensive and clear guidance, policies and procedures and tries to ensure that the students are safe from harm. The school provides the students with an outstanding level of emotional support and encourages them with their education and interests. The school ensures that information is in place to enable statutory and educational reviews to take place. The students enjoy contact with family and friends and are given opportunities to express their opinions and make choices about their lives. The school is well maintained and provides a positive and homely environment for the students to experience life. The staff are well supported by an experienced head of care and senior management team. The senior management team has comprehensive systems in place that include supervision, training and the overall monitoring of the school.

Improvements since the last inspection

The school received one recommendation at the last inspection which was to ensure risk assessments are in place for all areas of the school and boarding houses. The school have undertaken work on the recommendation and at this inspection risk

assessments have been reviewed and all areas in the school and boarding houses are now covered.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Students receive excellent health care provision that meets their specialist needs. Highly trained and qualified specialist staff are able to provide on site care, support and advice. The school places the highest priority on the audiology centre that provides medical, therapy and audiology services to the students. A school nurse works closely with the other specialist staff, including speech and language therapists, counsellors and the creative therapists. If students require specialist input that the setting does not provide, this is carried out quickly and appropriately due to the good links the setting has with relevant units located across the country.

Each student has a comprehensive health care plan completed to a high standard, showing that individual medical, physical and emotional needs are carefully assessed and met. The plans are subject to regular reviews which parents and students contribute to. All students have access to either a male or female general practitioner on site or at a local surgery. All medical logs and records are maintained to a very high standard. First aid is administered by appropriately trained staff.

Students receive medicines from staff trained to administer medication and who work in accordance with the setting's sound policies and procedures. Medication is safely and appropriately stored in lockable cabinets and checked very regularly by the school nurse. A local pharmacy also visits to carry out checks and give advice. The school actively promotes healthy lifestyles through the personal, social and health education programme. Advice, guidance and support, appropriate to the students age, needs, culture and wishes in relation to health and social issues is also provided.

Students receive a high standard of food provision. A good variety of nutritious food is offered with students having a clear voice in the choice of menus. Menus are varied and specific cultural and dietary needs are met. Catering staff are suitably qualified and trained. The school achieved a silver award healthy schools status in 2008 and a five star environmental health standard for food safety management that takes into account full compliance with food safety legislation; this award was gained in 2007 and again in 2009.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff ensure that students' confidentiality and privacy is respected and safeguarded, by knocking on bedroom doors and ensuring contact with home and friends is confidential. Confidential information relating to each student is kept in an appropriate locked facility. All information is contained in the care staff office. Staff receive guidance on the confidentiality of information.

Policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the children's welfare. Due to effective communication, attentive staff, and close supervision, complaints are dealt with effectively and appropriately. Staff enable students to make complaints. By the use of one-to-one sessions and student meetings, staff are proactive in seeking out the views and concerns of young people. Students said they felt safe within the school and that the adults would always listen to them. The staff have excellent relationships and knowledge of the young people at the school. As a result any problems are dealt with at an early stage.

The school has a comprehensive policy and procedure when dealing with safeguarding and child protection. The policy gives excellent guidance to staff about how situations are dealt with and how incidents are managed through to conclusion. The guidance is written in conjunction with the local authority guidance, and there are clear links between the school and the local safeguarding team. Staff receive child protection training within their induction programme and subsequent refresher courses during their employment in order to have clear insight into dealing with such issues. There have been three child protection investigations since the last inspection, all three incidents were external to the school. The recording of the incidents was detailed leading to a conclusion. The head of care was able to go through each of the incidents with extensive knowledge. This clearly gave a sense of each incident having been looked at in detail and that the safeguarding of young people is of high importance within the school.

The school operates a policy of zero tolerance toward bullying and the children are made aware of the guidance on admission. If bullying does occur staff at the school deal with issues in a sensitive, caring appropriate manner. The students have behaviour management plans which look at any potential issues related to bullying behaviour. The school has in place forums for young people to talk on a one-to-one basis or as a group to look at any issues there may be in the houses or school.

There is a policy and procedure for reporting young people who are absent without authority. Records of young people going missing show that there continue to be no such incidents at the school. Staff are provided with clear guidance to address such situations with robust risk assessments in place to highlight any concerns the students may pose to themselves or others.

Records examined indicated that serious incidents are reported as required. The head of care confirmed that serious incidents are investigated and involve other agencies.

Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour. All sanctions are recorded in different ways for each house. The sanctions given are permissible and mainly relate to early bedtimes and loss of an activity. All staff receive training in the use of physical restraint. The school has a policy which offers guidance to staff in regard to behaviour management and restraint. The young people have risk assessments in place to look at any risky behaviour. An excellent behaviour management system is in place which can be clearly understood by the students. Students can set their own

objectives alongside staff. This is designed to help the students achieve positive behaviour and personal goals. Staff encourage acceptable behaviour and restraint records show that staff respond appropriately in managing these situations. Staff support the students with their behaviour through one-to-one sessions and daily group meetings.

Areas of potential risk for the students are assessed and the students are safeguarded where possible from harm. The school has documentation related to risk assessing activities, holidays, fire risk and the environment. Records demonstrate that the school's fire alarm system is tested regularly and evacuation exercises carried out. Clear systems are in place and checks could be seen from outside agencies and from the school's monitoring systems. The school has good security measures in place to protect students from intruders.

Staff records seen at the school for new staff employed since the last inspection indicate that staff are subject to a comprehensive recruitment process. Such records show that all necessary and required checks are completed prior to staff working with students, checks on overseas employees are fully in accordance with Criminal Records Bureau guidance. Agency staff are vetted by their agency and details forwarded to the school.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Each student's educational needs are assessed pre-admission. All students have a statement of education need. These are reviewed on an annual basis and form the basis of each student's individual care plan. Care plans address educational, social and emotional needs and the agreed strategies are used to help the students fulfil their potential in every area. Communication between the care staff and education staff at the setting is excellent with multi-professional meetings daily to ensure the flow of information is in the students best interest and ensures consistency in strategies that support students at all times. Care staff actively support students education, ensuring regular attendance, punctuality and minimising interruption during the school day.

The level of individual support is outstanding across every aspect of the school and is a key strength of the school. Detailed care plans show great sensitivity to each student's specific needs. Students at the setting have very specific and complex needs and are given support, guidance and help when needed or requested. Excellent communication right across the school identifies any support needed at an early stage. Students are encouraged to be fully involved at every stage of their time at the school. Staff are sensitive, professional and support students in relation to gender, race, culture, disability and sexual orientation. Specialist external support is readily available with on site support for students undergoing times of personal stress.

Students have numerous avenues to raise personal problems or concerns such as the

school nurse, staff, the school council and independent listeners; one of whom is an ex pupil.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The setting places a strong emphasis upon each individual student being able to communicate their views and wishes. This is particularly important as many have often experienced educational and social isolation prior to their admission, due to their profound deafness. When at school they live within an inclusive community of students who know and understand the difficulties they face in the hearing world. Students are given the skills to be confident and are respectful of others views and opinions. Comprehensive admission procedures ensure all aspects of a students needs are assessed prior to admission enabling a smoother transition for both young person and parent. The leaving process is both sensitive and supportive with a transition unit on site that gives students independence but also adult contact, if necessary. Staff are fully committed to ensuring students are integrated into the community.

Students needs are fully assessed with written plans that are organised and are very well maintained. They are reviewed regularly with input from multi-professionals, the young person and their parents or carers. Students are encouraged to maintain contact with family and friends whilst close liaison between staff and parents and carers ensures information is readily shared and considered.

The interaction between staff and students confirm positive and caring relationships. Clear boundaries are set to ensure appropriate, but warm relationships are maintained. Staff communicate effectively with students, are clearly conversant with the particular needs of each young person, and demonstrate very good skills when managing difficult behaviour.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The home has clear input into preparing students for leaving the school. The member of staff who runs the FE house and flat has put together a excellent programme which is broad, interactive and covers issues from the five outcome areas and directly feeds into understanding equality and diversity. The staff ensure that through activities in the unit and education that students are taught life skills such as budgeting, cleaning, hygiene, benefits, cooking and care of their own clothing. Records demonstrated that staff liaised where appropriate closely with local authority after care teams, where appropriate.

The school is in a location that can offer the students lots of facilities which help to meet their diverse and specific needs. Records demonstrate that the school is subject to regular health and safety risk assessments and has up-to-date certification relating

to gas, electrical and fire equipment.

The boarding houses are clean and tidy and provides each students with both communal areas for group living and individualised private areas, such as their bedrooms, where they can spend time alone. Bedrooms are for single purpose, but contain unused furniture from when there was a larger number of boarders, this gives the bedrooms a less personalised feeling. There are adequate bathroom and toilets facilities. Sleeping-in staff have their own dedicated accommodation.

The school is decorated in a appropriate manner and includes lounges, an activities rooms, a computer area and quiet smaller common rooms. Some areas in the school such as the pool room and shared lounges are plain with little decoration such as pictures. The school has a wide range and eclectic mix of facilities and resources for recreational and creative activities. There is a well kept grounds for the students to spend time in. The school offers the young people a positive environment to live in, which is both comfortable and homely.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff ensure through practice and guidance that the rights of the young people are met and they do not face racism or discriminatory abuse. The students have their cultural needs met by individualised care planning and review processes which highlight and guide staff to meet the wishes of the students themselves.

The school has a variety of information linked to the statement of purpose including the student's guide. The student guide has been produced by a young person and is young person friendly. The guidance offers a clear picture of the school, its ethos and its daily routines. Alongside the statement of purpose the school has up-to-date policies and procedures and new policies have been produced to recognise new practice. Monitoring of the records and files was seen to be happening on a regular basis with senior staff undertaking this role. All records are stored safely and securely.

The overall management of the school is very good and the senior management team have implemented positive changes and improved existing systems. The care staff felt that they could suggest and be given the scope to try new ideas.

The school has a long term core of staff in the care staff team with two new members of staff joining this year. New staff are supported by the long term staff when starting their employment. The team offers the students a wealth of knowledge and experience. The team are supported by the head of care and clear systems of supervision and training that are in place. The school undertakes professional development assessments, induction packs and checklists to monitor progress. The staff said they feel supported and happy with the extensive training they are offered. The school have clear lines of induction, mandatory and National

Vocational Qualifications training courses in place which have been inclusive of all staff across the school.

The school has an overall comprehensive system in place for the monitoring of practice and safety issues. The records are used to look at how systems are working and if any specific problems are arising. The acting principals have worked hard with the support of the senior management team and the staff at the school to implement a range of developments in the school.