

Woodlands Special School

Inspection report for residential special school

Unique reference number	SC038097
Inspection date	12 January 2009
Inspector	Christina Maddison
Type of Inspection	Key

Address	Woodview Learning Community Lancaster Gardens Plymouth PL5 4AA
Telephone number	01752 300101
Email	
Registered person	Plymouth City Council
Head of care	Andrea Hemmens
Head / Principal	
Date of last inspection	5 February 2008

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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

Woodlands school provides residential care for up to 10 children who have physical disabilities. Children usually stay over for between one and four nights. The residential unit occupies one wing of the main school building. Bedrooms are single and a range of manual handling equipment such as hoists and lifts are available to support care.

Nursing care is provided over 24 hours. Children who attend the school have access to onsite services such as physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and occupational therapy.

Summary

The purpose of this announced inspection is to assess the residential provision of the school against key National Minimum Standards. The residence has recently moved to a new purpose built building in the campus of the Woodview Learning Community. The new building has provided some excellent facilities for the children and young people, and some challenges for the head of care and the staff. Despite these challenges, the head of care and the staff have endeavoured to maintain the high standards of care and commitment to the children and young people. The residence has good management systems that have been established through effective leadership and a stable and committed staff team. Feedback from parents and the children and young people was very positive, and parents felt that they had peace of mind that their child was safe and well cared for when staying at Woodlands residence, and the children and young people enjoyed their stay and felt safe and well cared for.

The overall quality rating is satisfactory.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the previous inspection, the complaints procedure has been updated, and staff are now provided with information about what constitutes a complaint and there is a record of all complaints and concerns with actions and outcomes.

Systems for recruiting staff now include a record of verification of identification.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Good health is supported and promoted by the residence staff. The children and young people's health care needs are well managed through close working between care and teaching staff, with the close involvement of the nursing team. Children have access to 24 hour nursing care with additional nursing staff brought in when necessary. All children have a detailed health plan that identifies their health care needs and how these will be met. These include specialist protocols such as how to manage specialist procedures such as managing epilepsy and breathing difficulties. This detail ensures that the health management of the children is safe and robust. The administration of medication is well managed and all medications are safely stored.

Children are provided with ample quantities of nutritious food which they said that they enjoy. Since moving to the new school building the children and young people enjoy lunchtimes with the pupils from the secondary school and primary school who share the dining room. This

inclusion has been very successful and beneficial for the Woodlands pupils and the mainstream pupils.

Mealtimes in the residence are also sociable and relaxed occasions where the staff and children sit around the dining table and discuss the days events. Following concerns from staff about the safety of the food that is blended, a new blender has been purchased and kitchen staff have received training. Children who require assistance with feeding are offered help that is underpinned by clear guidance to staff regarding their individual feeding requirements and specialist equipment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The privacy of the children is protected by the use of appropriate locks on bathroom doors. It was observed that staff knock on the bedroom doors before entering. Safe working practices are in place which aim to ensure that children are protected during intimate care procedures. Written information about children is securely held and shared on a need to know basis. The privacy of the children when changing for the hydrotherapy pool has been enhanced by the recent purchase of thick curtains that entirely screen the cubicles. Staff are aware of the need to promote the privacy and dignity of the children when assisting them with personal care. Following concerns from staff about the effectiveness of the bedroom monitoring system that was put in place in the new building, a new system has been ordered and will be installed in the near future. To ensure the safety of the children, and following risk assessment procedures, additional staffing is in place at night.

A system to manage complaints is in place. Children know how to complain and know who to talk to if they have a concern. The residence has a complaints book that logs any concerns or complaints, and details about how these were resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

Sound child protection procedures are in place. Staff know how to deal with child protection concerns. There are two child protection coordinators for the residence which offers the children increased protection outside of school hours. Any sanctions imposed by staff are appropriately recorded, and the children and young people reported that the sanctions that they were aware of were fair.

Children are aware of anti bullying strategies that are in place at the residence and feel that the staff team would listen and deal with any incidence of bullying.

Much work has been undertaken by the head of the school and the head of care to ensure the health and safety of the children when they stay in the residence. There are ongoing safety issues that have been identified since the move into the new building, and robust risk assessments put in place until the safety issues identified have been resolved. These are the need to make the railings on the first floor safe, as they pose a significant risk of physical injury to children who are wheelchair users. There is also a concern that the grey colour scheme is not helpful for visually impaired children.

A robust intercom system has been installed at the front door so that staff can identify who is there. The residence is able to be made secure from the rest of the campus to ensure the safety of the children.

The ventilation in the kitchen/lounge area is not adequate as the air flow system that has been installed is not yet fully functioning and there are no opening windows in this room. The one opening door in this room leads to a first floor balcony area, therefore it is not safe to be left open without constant vigilant staff supervision of the children. As the evening and weekend meals are cooked in this room, adequate ventilation is essential.

The residence is situated on the first floor, therefore the use of the lift is a necessity for the children who are wheelchair users. There are risk assessments in place, and training is taking place with the children so that they are aware of how to raise the alarm should the lift break down.

A fire safety officer has recently issued a fire safety certificate for the new building, and a fire safety consultant has made a detailed report regarding evacuation plans in the event of a fire. The head of care has written personal evacuation plans for each child, and regular fire evacuation drills have taken place.

Staff recruitment procedures are in place, and all staff files contain relevant identity and Criminal Records Bureau checks. One staff file did not contain a full employment history. The children's safety is ensured by the careful checking and admittance of visitors.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

There are good links between the residence and education in the school. Links with education have been strengthened with the introduction of the 24 hour curriculum. Children and staff set out individual targets using their education plan. Staff support the children to complete home work. Residence staff contribute to education reviews ensuring close links and good communication.

Children receive a good level of individual support. Staff were seen to be providing support to the children in line with their placement plans that set out their individual needs. An independent listener is available for the children to speak with if they wish. Each child has individual time with their key worker, and all children spoken with said that they felt listened to and that their opinions were valued by staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The service operates and develops through consultation with others. The team works closely with families and significant others. They recognise the importance of consultation in providing good quality care. Information provided by parents is used to inform the initial placement plan. Parents commented that their views regarding the care of their child are listened to. Children are fully consulted regarding their care. There are more formal consultation systems such as the key worker system and school council. The gathering and action of this material ensures that the service responds and develops in line with the views of children and relevant others.

Children have their needs regularly reviewed and there are placement plans that reflect these updates and aims and goals for individual children. It was observed that care provided at the service reflects the documented placement plan. Care for the children is delivered in a planned and informed manner.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The young people have opportunities to prepare to live as independently as possible when they leave the school. There are ongoing developments in this area, and the children and young people work with the staff toward agreed targets regarding life skills.

The residence moved to the new campus in late 2008. This was a purpose built building but there has been some practical problems with some of the design features that could compromise the health and safety of the children as outlined in the staying safe outcome area. Staff are working hard to make the new building homely and make the best of the available space. Bedrooms are large and offer very good disability aids and adaptations. There are sufficient well equipped bathrooms and toilets.

The lounge/dining/kitchen area offers limited space, and when there are 14 children and young people in the residence, the staff, children and young people commented that it can feel rather crowded.

As the residence is situated on the first floor, the only dedicated outside space for the residence is a small balcony that is reached through a door from the lounge, but the children are able to use the campus outdoor areas, but their independence is limited as a member of staff has to accompany them in the lift.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of purpose for the residence provides children, their families and placing officers with up to date information. This accurately reflects what is offered at the school.

The residence is staffed by a stable and experienced team. Staffing levels are high and can be increased in order to meet the identified needs of the children. Nurses are on duty 24 hours, and staff receive mandatory training such as manual handling, child protection and health and safety.

There is strong leadership from the head of the school and the head of care, with effective support from the Governors. The staff team feel well supported and supervised, and this enables them to carry out their roles effectively. The care team display great commitment to the children that they care for, and have maintained this commitment through the move from the old school to the new one, and all of the challenges that this has presented. Continual service development is sought, with a view to creating a quality service for the children.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Equality and diversity are implicit within the ethos, practice and culture of Woodlands residence.

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
----------	--------	----------

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the railings on the first floor do not pose a health and safety risk for the children and young people when they are using the residence. (NMS 26)
- ensure that the colour scheme in the residence is appropriate for children and young people who have a visual impairment. (NMS26)
- ensure that there is adequate ventilation in the lounge/dining/kitchen room. (NMS 23)
- ensure that there is adequate space in the lounge/dining/kitchen area for the number of children and young people in the residence. (NMS 23)
- ensure that staff employment history is documented, and any gaps in employment history are explored. (NMS 27)