

Treloar School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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| Inspector | Brian Mcquoid / Keith Riley |
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| Nominated person | Jane Headford |
| Date of last inspection | 03/02/2010 |

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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

Treloar School is a non-maintained residential special school, approved by the Department for Education for the care and education of young people aged seven years to 19 years with physical disabilities. Students attend the school from all over Great Britain and sometimes from abroad. The students are accommodated in four separate boarding houses or attend on a daily basis. The school site is accessible to all students. The school has a medical centre staffed 24-hours a day and medical professionals also visit the school. There is a team of therapists providing services for students that include physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy. There are also rehabilitation engineers, caterers and a transport department on site.

At the time of this inspection the school was one term away from relocating all of its students to accommodation located on the site of Treloar College in Holybourne. Preparation was well underway for this event.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

The residential provision at Treloar school continues to be outstanding in all areas. Highly individualised care of an exceptional standard is provided for students within an environment which is safe and secure and where they are extremely happy. Excellent leadership provided by the school's senior management team clearly contributes to the child-centred culture that exists throughout the school. Students enjoy remarkably positive relationships with the care staff group who are experienced, well qualified, and skilled at meeting their needs. Students are fully involved in the decision-making processes that affect their daily lives and are fully supported in maximising their ability to be independent. Student behaviour is exemplary and peer support exceptional. There is excellent communication between departments across the school and close working relationships with parents, and with professionals involved with individual students.

The governing body are actively involved in the school's operation and contribute extremely well to the excellent monitoring systems in place. The school development plan shows the continuing emphasis placed upon improving the provision for students across the school.

The inspection was carried out at short notice and the school was inspected against all of the key national minimum standards for residential special schools. There are two recommendations arising from the inspection which relate to the food provided for students on a Friday evening and the provision enabling students to maintain contact with their families and friends.

Improvements since the last inspection

There were no recommendations arising from the school's previous inspection report.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Outstanding health care is delivered to students with a holistic approach to their physical and emotional well-being. The multi-disciplinary team, based at the school, ensures that students receive a comprehensive package of care, not only to meet their needs but to strive for progress and personal development. The senior nurse co-ordinates the medical care provided by the nursing staff to meet individual complex medical needs. Care staff are trained to a very high standard in the particular specialist skills required such as gastric feeding. There is an extensive medication policy in place and sound systems in operation for the management and administration of medication. Healthy lifestyles are promoted through the personal, social and health education curriculum. Individual education plans within the care plan support this with students setting their own personal targets. There is an extensive range of equipment to suit each child's needs. Young people say the medical centre is a 'brilliant facility'.

The catering provided from the main school kitchen is of a very high quality, most meals are home made from fresh ingredients providing nutritious and tasty food. The menus are produced by a dietician and are very detailed according to the individual dietary requirements. Menus are regularly overseen by the nutrition support team. Individual health and diet needs are identified through comprehensive eating and drinking profiles. Meals are an orderly social occasion fully inclusive of all children at the school. Extensive effort is made by the staff to communicate with children about their choice of food on a daily basis and at the school's food forum. Currently the school's main kitchen is closed at weekends. Interim measures put in place include main meals being supplied from Treloar College on Saturday and Sunday and sandwiches being provided in advance by the school kitchen for Friday evenings meal. Some students expressed their disappointment at this interim arrangement and some parents feel that sandwiches are not sufficient as a meal on Friday evenings.

There are robust risk assessments in place and the school is assessed by an external auditor as to its food safety. The systems in place are active and alive to continuously improve the quality of the service being delivered. The recent environmental health audit rated the school as excellent.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

There is outstanding provision at the school for protecting and promoting the welfare of students. The physical environment is safe and secure and there is excellent provision for the management of risk. The safeguarding of students is paramount and robust systems are rigorously applied to ensure students are suitably protected from any harm. All staff have regular training and are well versed in safeguarding procedures. A recent student survey relating to safety saw students report overwhelmingly that they feel safe at the school. An open and child-centred culture sees students being treated with respect as individuals, and their privacy being maintained as much as possible without compromising safety. Staff are able to communicate extremely effectively with individual students and have an acute awareness of their needs which enables them to respond appropriately and to act as advocates when necessary. Complaints to the school are at a very low level with records showing those received to be addressed extremely thoroughly.

A positive and whole school approach is adopted to managing behaviour. Students are clear about the school rules and say they are fairly treated by staff should they break any. Students are remarkably supportive of one another, bullying is not a problem, and the general behaviour of students is considered exemplary. Any behaviour related concerns are discussed at multi-disciplinary meetings with individual behaviour management plans devised when necessary.

Provision for addressing health and safety matters at the school is excellent, and includes annual audits carried out on alternate years by an external specialist company. A health and safety committee meet regularly, staff complete health and safety training, and policies and procedures support and promote good practice. The physical environment is safe and secure and there is excellent provision for managing risk across the school. Comprehensive risk assessments identify strategies for addressing risks associated with both the premises and all activities undertaken by students. This includes those activities on and off site, and residential trips overseas also. Fire safety arrangements are excellent with an up-to-date risk assessment and all checks and tests being carried out and recorded as required. There are trained fire wardens in the boarding houses and fire evacuation procedures are practised regularly. Recruitment procedures provide the necessary safeguards for the protection of student welfare and are being rigorously applied.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Students benefit greatly from a co-ordinated approach across the school to addressing their individual needs. Communication and collaboration between departments is excellent and care staff contribute extremely effectively to students educational progress. Individual education plans identify targets for each student which are supported and monitored by care staff and reviewed every term at multi-

disciplinary meetings. Representatives from the care staff produce detailed reports and attend and contribute to all annual reviews for residential students. Boarding houses provide facilities conducive to studying, there is good access to computers and staff provide support for students whenever necessary.

Providing individual support for students is outstanding and a real strength of the school. Multi-disciplinary assessments identify the needs of each student, and remarkably detailed care plans show how needs are addressed on a very individual basis. Care co-ordinators and key care staff spend individual time with students and closely monitor how they are being cared for. Individual support for all aspects of care is able to be provided by the various departments across the school and in conjunction with external specialist services when necessary. The school has a chaplain and a counselling team who are available to students, and independent listeners who visit regularly. Social interaction is facilitated extremely well for residential students and there is excellent peer support amongst the student group.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Consultation with students and enabling them to be involved in decision-making processes are principles totally integrated into the practice of staff at the school. The consultation with, and involvement of, students in the school's relocation is an excellent example of this. Staff have an acute awareness of individual students and are able to communicate extremely effectively with them. This ability enables them to successfully obtain the views of all students and this was clearly illustrated in the student discussion groups held during the inspection. There is a school council which ensures students views are heard and acted upon. Students routinely contribute to their annual reviews, have regular tutor sessions, are consulted about their individual care plans, participate in a food forum and have designated care co-ordinators who spend individual time with them. The ability to be independent and make choices are areas maximised to the benefit of students at the school.

Relationships between students and staff are excellent with students having opportunities to express their views to a wide range of adults. Individual care plans are remarkably detailed and are being very closely monitored. Students are routinely discussed at weekly staff meetings, which are regularly attended by members of the school's therapy department. Communication and collaboration between departments is excellent and ensures individual plans are meeting the needs of each student. Care plan targets are being reviewed each term and records show that residential students are making significant progress in areas of their lives.

Transition into the residential provision is planned and handled very sensitively according to the needs of students and their parents. The process is gradual and provides opportunities for students and their parents to become familiar with the accommodation and to meet with staff prior to the first overnight stay. Transitions for students moving on from the school are always discussed at an early stage during annual reviews and the school works very closely with parents and external

agencies to support the process.

Care staff work in close partnership with parents and keep them informed appropriately of any welfare matters concerning their children. Students have access to telephones in each boarding house and are able to use these, with support as necessary, to contact their parents and families. A number of parents feel that arrangements enabling them to have contact with their children could be improved upon, with some suggesting the use of visual computer technology.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The school provides outstanding accommodation that is purpose built and ideally suited to meet the needs of its residential pupils. All areas of the school are accessible to students. There are excellent security arrangements covering the site, and the boarding houses provide a safe and secure environment for students. The premises have been assessed by the school's occupational therapy department who continually assess and adapt the environment as necessary to meet the needs of individual students. Boarding houses are made as homely as possible and students rooms are highly personalised. Communal areas provide extremely well for social interaction and there is excellent access to a range of school facilities outside of the school day. Specialist equipment is provided throughout the school to enable the care needs of students to be met and staff have been appropriately trained in its use. The residential provision for students is being very well maintained.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Students benefit greatly from being in a school where established systems ensure the organisation operates effectively and efficiently. The governing body has extremely good oversight and there is excellent leadership of the school's residential provision which ensures the welfare provision for students is maintained at a very high standard. The school works in close partnership with parents and placing authorities and provides them with excellent initial and ongoing information. This includes a very informative website, comprehensive and up-to-date prospectus, newsletters every term and specific guides to the individual boarding houses. Information is provided to students in an accessible format according to their needs. The school's staff and senior management team display a tremendous commitment to students which permeates the school and which contributes greatly to the open and child-centred culture which operates throughout.

The care staff at the school are extremely competent and skilled at meeting the needs of individual students. They complete a comprehensive induction and training programme during their first year and receive excellent ongoing training. Established systems provide staff with extremely good support. This includes regular supervision and all staff being subject to annual appraisal. Staffing levels enable the needs of

students to be met at all times both day and night. There are always suitably experienced managers on duty and there is an established system for summoning senior assistance should it be necessary. The continuity of staffing is excellent with established and designated teams in each boarding house. Sickness and absences are covered by the use of bank staff and regularly used agency workers.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school is a wholly inclusive environment where practice clearly demonstrates a commitment to providing equal opportunities and promoting diversity throughout. An extraordinary wide range of individual needs are successfully addressed by staff, and providing students with access to equal opportunities is an integral aspect of how the school operates. Access to the community is one example of this. Different religions and cultures are studied and celebrated across the school and students take part in special events to raise money for charities.

There is exceptional monitoring carried out of the school's overall operation and the welfare of individual students. This includes very close monitoring by the head of care and other designated staff of all matters required by the national minimum standards. In addition there are annual audits of care against the Every Child Matters headings, regular student surveys, and thorough monitoring visits carried out by the governing body every half term. Communication across the school is excellent with all disciplines collaborating very effectively for the benefit of students. The school is continually striving to develop and improve the service provided for students and has a comprehensive development plan which is reviewed annually. At the time of the inspection the school was preparing for a relocation to the Treloar College site at the beginning of the Autumn term.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- review the provision of meals for students on Friday evenings (NMS 15.1)
- review in consultation with students and their parents the arrangements enabling students to maintain contact with their families and friends. (NMS 20.1)