

Farney Close School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Liz Driver / Valerie Packham
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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

Farney Close is an independent residential special school for young people aged 11 to 17 years who experience social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The school's stated aim is to provide a well-ordered and stable environment, giving pupils a framework for choice and change in their lives. Farney Close is a limited company and also a registered charity. A Board of Directors, a Board of Governors and a Board of Trustees oversee the running of the school. The school buildings are set in extensive and attractive grounds at Bolney, close to the A23. Farney Close is approved to accommodate a maximum of 72 residential pupils, both male and female. All pupils board on a weekly basis and return home at weekends.

Summary

This was a full key announced inspection. All key National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools were addressed during the inspection. The school operates to a high standard with outstanding outcomes seen throughout the report. The school is led by a very experienced and effective Headmaster with equally experienced and effective Deputy Head and Head of Care. They are supported by a committed and professional staff team. The atmosphere in the school is calm and containing and the young people clearly benefit from the integrated whole school approach to management of their needs. All systems and procedures are operating commendably well and provide evidence of a high quality care programme that promotes the welfare of young people.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The last inspection resulted in no recommendations. The school has continued to develop its practices and procedures and these are reflected in this report text under the appropriate sections.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young people's individual health needs are identified and assessed pre arrival to the school with very regular reviews throughout their school life. This is recorded in a clear, easily accessible plan for each young person detailing how his or her specific and general health issues are to be addressed. The school liaises closely with parents in the drawing up of the health care plans and actively seek out the services needed to address these, for example, involvement of specialist health workers, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), and specialist tutors for dyslexia. Staff actively encourage young people to take an interest in looking after their health and promote healthy ways of living. The school's recent quality assurance survey carried out focusing on the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters document gave some very positive results, evidencing the hard work that has been put into promoting more healthy lifestyles. The percentage of young people at the school who are regular smokers has decreased from 45% in 2006 to 25% in 2007. The school's aim was to reduce this to 35% and have clearly exceeded this. The number of young people who consume alcohol on a regular basis has also decreased significantly since 2006 meeting the school's target. Alcohol or drugs are not permitted

on site and so these results are indicative of their life style outside the school. The results show that the school also exceeded their target for reducing the number of young people who take soft drugs. Staff make sure that young people have access to, and information about health and social issues and support them in using such advice. The school employs a designated senior member of staff with specific responsibility for the health needs of young people. She is knowledgeable and well structured in her work delivering a high standard of care with excellent procedures for staff to follow. Health issues that relate to ethnicity, race, sexuality, faith and belief are fully assessed in respect of each child. Staff have recently undertaken training around diversity and equality that has benefited them. The number of staff who have first aid qualifications is in excess of the recommendations in the National Minimum Standards. The school operates a highly developed and effective medication policy procedure and practice guidance which specifically address the use of both prescribed and non-prescribed medication. Staff who administer medication have received appropriate training. Consents for the administration of medication and first aid are in place for all young people. Very good monitoring systems are in place to ensure practices are maintained to a high level. Excellent systems are in place for all medicines leaving the school site and arriving on site. Medication records are very well maintained with no errors or gaps. The school has put in place their own medication procedures in the absence of any national guidance for social care settings. The current practices are very safe and of a high standard. The school continues to develop their practice following the recent introduction of guidance from the Royal Pharmaceutical Society on the handling of medicines in a social care settings. The food provided for the young people shows that staff responsible for the provision and preparation of meals have a very good understanding of what makes up a balance diet. The school has achieved the "Healthy School" status since the last inspection. Young people are seen to treat meal times as enjoyable social occasions and accept good standards of behaviour as the norm. Flexible arrangements are made for young people with special diets. Food is on the school forum agenda every month, not because there is an issue about it but as part of the healthy school's status and the school's practice in engaging in young people's views. The last Environmental Health inspection carried out resulted in a few minor recommendations that have since been addressed to a high standard.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Robust policies and procedures help to ensure that appropriate levels of confidentiality are maintained. Confidential files are securely stored. The privacy and dignity of all children is managed sensitively and effectively. Staff have a good awareness of the issues of privacy and confidentiality of the young people. Most of the pupils do not have their own room, but they are very pleased with their house arrangements and can usually choose who to share with. There are policies and procedures in place to assure pupils' rights to privacy. Many of them require close supervision, however, the staff are sensitive to their needs and choice to be alone at times. Secure systems are in place to ensure the safety of all young people around the school. The school has a clear complaints policy which is known to children and staff. Children know that any complaints would be dealt with considerately and appropriately. The 'Worries and Complaints' leaflet is displayed on the house notice boards. One child commented that 'you get one when you first come to the school', as it is included in the welcome pack. Policies and procedures are provided to staff in paper and CD format. There are no complaints registered in the complaints book and the head of care confirmed that the staff have a good relationship with the pupils, enabling them to deal with concerns as they become evident. The school focuses on informal resolution of matters wherever possible. The school's quality survey completed by

pupils in November 2007 confirmed that young people were clear about who to speak to if they were worried or wanted to complain. Young people can raise concerns with the school's two independent visitors, who visit regularly without notice, being around during the school day as well as social time. Their photographs and contact details are prominently displayed in each house. A clear child protection and safeguarding policy is held by the school. Staff are aware that the child protection co-ordinators are the Headteacher and the care manager. Links are held with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and meetings are held every half term with a social worker from the local child protection team. Staff are aware of how to keep themselves safe when working with the young people. Records show that the school responds promptly to any allegations or concerns about a child's safety. Staff are all trained in child protection and this is updated at least annually. A quality survey issued to pupils in November 2007 confirmed that 100% of children felt safe at the school. Children confirm there are low levels of bullying at the school. Houses display anti-bullying leaflets. The school continuously works with pupils on changing bullying behaviour. Bullying tends to be spontaneous verbal bullying rather than being premeditated and physical. The school sets targets to reduce the amount of bullying. The exemplary bullying records are reviewed half termly to inform how the school will address bullying in the forthcoming term. Anonymous questionnaires are completed by children and the annual national bullying week also promotes awareness. The latest anti-bullying week provided competitions and the production of a new anti-bullying leaflet. Such initiatives support the school's forthcoming advancement into the final of the Sussex Safe Schools competition run by Sussex Police. The annual review of bullying provides a useful comparison to other years. The 2007 quality survey shows a small increase in the number of young people who do not feel they have been bullied. Any significant events are notified to the appropriate authorities. Any such events are immediately relayed to parents or significant others. Any religious, racial and cultural backgrounds are taken into account at the school. Care staff talked of benefiting from recent diversity training. Clear policy and procedures are in place and each child has a care plan which also details action to be taken when they are absent without authority. During the inspection these guidelines were put effectively into action. Staff are involved in going to look for the children, are involved in collecting them and welcome them back to the school when they return. Appropriate strategies are in place at the school for behaviour management. Staff model and encourage acceptable behaviour. Children know what is expected of them and rules are displayed on house notice boards. One young person commented, 'The expectations of behaviour are fair. They are to keep us safe'. Close supervision ensures potential problems are monitored. Care staff also work in classrooms to ensure continuity. All staff enjoy working with the children and see them in a very positive light. Staff receive training on physical interventions and are provided with frequent refresher courses. Sanctions and restraints are recorded and are only carried out if necessary. Full records are maintained which includes a section for the child to record their comments following restraints. Sanction and physical intervention logs are completed appropriately with regular monitoring undertaken. Restraints are evaluated on a half termly basis, to identify any patterns and to work on how to reduce future restraints. Pupil risk assessments are of an excellent standard and include triggers, locations and strategies for avoiding and managing predicted behaviours. The deputy head oversees health and safety matters and has an excellent knowledge of relevant current legislation. Risk assessments are maintained and regularly reviewed for all aspects of the grounds and premises including fire. Risk assessments are carried out for any activities away from the school site, such as trips out. Permission for activities is obtained and clear records are maintained detailing which activities children cannot participate in. Health and safety policies and procedures are rigorous and are closely monitored. Annual health and safety

inspections are completed. The 2006 Environmental Health Officer's report noted very high standards of cleanliness. The fire safety precautions are effective with appropriate records maintained. Any maintenance jobs are done quickly, with priority given to health and safety matters. A high number of staff have worked at the school for a number of years. Job satisfaction is important and the school ensures a thorough recruitment process to ensure the right person for the job is employed. Criminal Record Bureau checks are renewed every three years with a system in place to monitor when they become due. Although the school follows stringent recruitment processes, it had omitted to evidence that telephone enquiries had been made following the receipt of references. In general all curriculum vitae identify months as well as years with the exception of one viewed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The residential contribution to education is extremely well established involving close liaison with the teaching staff. Residential staff give very active practical and emotional support to young people who have difficulties. The last Ofsted education inspection carried out in May 2006 was outstanding. This inspection echoes what the education inspection commented in regards to how well the school fulfils its aims and significantly improves pupils life chances. It is also successful in making young people feel good about themselves. Staff have a thorough understating of young people's needs and the care is exceptional. All young people have Individual Education Plans that are very regularly reviewed and make up part of their general reviews. Both teaching and residential staff have input into the reviews. All young people have a designated link worker who is available for them to seek individual guidance, support and advice on personal matters. Information regarding an independent listener is also available for young people. Young people are actively encouraged by staff to take part in leisure activities both inside the school and in the community. Young people's own interests are also actively encouraged and supported. Activities on offer are very closely supervised with very good risk assessments in place. During the evening staff carried out a cooking activity that related to healthy eating and in turn fitting in the with the school's 'healthy' status. Other staff were carrying out a quiz that focused on personal safety and celebrating a young person's birthday. All young people were positively engaging in the activities and enjoying themselves. Staff are professional and sensitive with excellent communication skills. Young people confirm they are actively involved in planning activities and outings. Relationships between staff and young people are to be commended. The school has explicitly identified how support to individual young people's needs will be provided and which person or agency will respond to that need. Staff are fully open to addressing a wide range of possible needs, including, for example, disability, race, culture, sexuality, language and personal safety. The school has well established links with a range of agencies who can offer appropriate support. Young people confirm that staff are approachable and they receive the support they need. Information is available for young people to access agencies independently if necessary. The school's recent quality assurance survey relating to the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters document, resulted in the number of young people undertaking sporting activities decreasing between 2006 and 2007. The school has responded by undertaking a study to assess why this has fallen, and are working with parents and young people to ensure the school is offering the appropriate sporting activities for young people in the school at present. Work with parents/carers is also being undertaken to help them establish sporting activities for the young person outside of school, such as in their home area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The children enjoy talking about their experiences at the school. The school emphasises the importance of consulting with children. Families are listened to and are regularly consulted. Children are listened to prior to joining the school as part of the admissions process. Young people's views are sought throughout their time at the school. All decisions about their care are discussed with them. Staff value children's opinions and involve them in making decisions on matters that affect them. Young people can approach house staff or class tutors. Solid quality assurance systems are focused on the children. Young people have appropriate elements of choice in their day-to-day lives, within the constraints of the structured routines. Forum representatives can bring items to discuss to the Forum on behalf of other pupils. Items are thoroughly discussed and an immediate response given if at all possible. The Forum is also attended by the deputy head, care manager, head of catering and a school counsellor. The Forum always looks at bullying and food, as well as other issues raised by the representatives. One young person provided an example of how hot chocolate has been made available with supper since the suggestion had been brought to the Forum. All Forum members agree that most issues brought to the Forum have effected change. The school has recently introduced suggestion boxes to enable children to put forward queries. The annual questionnaire issued to children provided them with a further opportunity to raise any issues. The welcome pack provides new children with important information, such as, how to complain, sanctions, expectations of behaviour and routines. Children are encouraged to complete feedback sheets about the welcome packs. Two independent visitors are available to the young people, as are various therapists and counsellors. Children know they may speak with an independent visitor, but generally they choose not to. One independent visitor thought this was because the children have such good relationships with other trusted adults in the school. The staff maintain excellent relationships with the pupils. There is a good staff/pupil ratio within the houses, which gives adequate supervision and affords the staff to spend quality time with individual pupils. Much thought is given to formation of the residential teams. The school has an 'open door' policy which means young people may approach any member of staff, including the Headteacher, deputy head and the care manager. Regular house meetings are held to enable young people to express their views and listen to those of others. The interaction between staff and children confirm positive and caring relationships. Clear boundaries are set to ensure appropriate, but warm relationships are maintained. The staff communicate effectively with the pupils, are clearly conversant with the particular needs of each pupil, and demonstrate good skills when managing difficult behaviour. Prospective pupils visit the school before they move in and usually they are visited at home by the care manager. Children are involved in the plans for moving on from the school unless exceptional circumstances occur. Prospective pupils and their families are provided with the necessary information and advice following a referral and the school invests much time and effort in ensuring that the pupil, their family and the staff are well informed prior to admission. Very good quality placement plans clearly detail individual needs which have been drawn up and are based upon comprehensive assessments. Children understand the purpose and contents of their care plans and work on them with their link worker every half term. The school has recently introduced independence assessment forms, which will set individual and specific goals relating to independent skills. Contact with family and carers is encouraged at the school. All relatives and carers of the children visiting the school are welcomed. Contact details are contained in placement plans. Some pupils express annoyance that they are not allowed mobile telephones at the school, as they wish to be able to contact

friends and family. The young people are aware that the school does not allow this due to their overall vulnerability and the possibility of text bullying. All children are allowed a free call each week and they may also use a private pay phone. Parents and carers complete an annual questionnaire. Questions include whether they would like more contact and are they kept fully informed of any changes that take place with regards to their child. Records confirm that parents and carers are satisfied with the school and the way information about their child is fed back to them.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

Young people wear a uniform during the school day but are free to wear their own personal clothing after the school day has ended. Acceptable personal appearance and hygiene is promoted by staff. Young people can secure a range of personal requisites from staff. Regular shopping trips enable staff to support the young people in many life skills, including shopping and finances. The recent introduction of independence skills appraisals, introduced in September 2007, enable staff to focus on individual areas for individual young people. The appraisals are incorporated into individual care plans. They cover areas, such as, telling the time, using a bus, cooking, banking, and emotions and are of a high standard. The school works closely with parents/carers and the placing agency through the statutory review and Pathway Plan process. Young people are involved in the plans their reviews. All year 11 pupils have the option of undertaking work experience from home on Fridays, which helps them to find their feet in the world of work away from the school. The location and layout of the school is well suited for its purpose. Young people enjoy the benefits of a historic house and the space to play in the extensive grounds. The layout of the rooms fits very well to the needs of the young people. The accommodation is homely, maintained and furnished to a high standard. Recent upgrading of bathrooms has added to the quality provision. Most bedrooms are doubles. The toilets, bathing, and showering facilities are very good. Young people are able to personalise their own rooms.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school's Statement of Purpose is presented to a commendably high standard. It clearly states the manner in which the residential provision contributes to the whole school approach to meeting young people's needs. It is currently under review. The young person's information pack contains a wealth of information that young people find helpful of excellent quality and in a suitable format. Young people's individual case files are confidentially stored and arranged in a manner that makes them readily useable and accessible for staff. Records are kept in two files, one for day to day recording and kept on the boarding house, and the main file that contains key assessments, planning/review documents and correspondence. Information is routinely transferred with a system that is highly organised and of a high standard. All school files are efficiently and effectively organised and are maintained to a high standard. The school benefits from a high number of established and experienced members of the care team who provide continuity of care. The number of staff on duty more than meets the needs of the young people and to support them in their activities, visits and appointments. The staff team has a balanced mix of male and female staff. There is a thorough induction staff training programme that staff confirmed was thorough in its content. The assistant head of care is responsible for the induction training programme and meets weekly with staff and provides

daily support if necessary. Care staff are provided with extensive training opportunities. Training is viewed very positively by staff. The school invests much time and money in its training programme and is committed to having a highly skilled team of care staff, who are clearly proud of their role in the whole school strategy. All staff, except two, have gained National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, with some staff completing NVQ level 4 in Health and Social Care. The staff team exceeds the recommended 80% of staff having achieved their NVQ level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People. The school are now looking at incorporating the NVQ standards into their current induction programme. Staff receive very regular supervision and yearly appraisals carried out by senior residential care workers. The head of care more than meets the qualifications standards. The school has very effective systems for running the school and for the monitoring of the school. The Standard 33 visitor spends time with staff and young people during his termly visits. The school has a very well developed quality monitoring system that is centred around the experience of young people and whether the school is meeting their needs. Results of surveys are taken seriously and used to develop practice further. Throughout the inspection both staff and young people commented that the headmaster operates an open door policy and is easily accessible. He was highly visible throughout the day and into the evening communicating with staff and young people with ease and sensitivity. The senior management team are well established and very effective. The governors are actively involved in the day to day running of the school and fully support the staff.

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):

- continue with plans to review the current medication policy with the introduction of the new guidance for handling medicines in social care settings, from The Royal Pharmaceutical Society (NMS 14.2)
- ensure direct contact with referees is carried out and recorded on individual staff recruitment files (NMS 27.2 iv)
- ensure months as well as years are included on all staff curriculum vitae so any gaps can be addressed appropriately. (NMS 27.2 ix)

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.