

Corley Centre

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Christy Wannop
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Date of last inspection	22 January 2007

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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

Corley Centre was created in September 2005, bringing together the residential school for children aged 11 to 16 years with complex social and communication difficulties, and Coventry Autism Support Service. The school includes extended day and residential facilities which are available four nights a week and a small post-16 unit for twelve students aged 16-19 years. 65% of the pupils have an autistic spectrum disorder. There are significantly more boys than girls. There are currently 74 students at the school and the autism support service works with around 500 children across the city. There is capacity for a maximum of 17 children overnight in residence and currently 26 children make use of the provision. Currently a maximum of 9 children sleep on-site on the busiest night, a Tuesday. The school offers a breakfast club to five children, 54 pupils take advantage of after school clubs and 14 children use the extended day service (i.e., after-school activities up to 8pm) This enables them to stay for after-school activities and have a taste of the residential experience. The decision to use the residential provision is made at the child's annual education review and there is a waiting list for this popular resource. No children at the school have a statement of educational need that indicates a residential placement. Children live with their parents and carers for the majority of their time and stay at the school for only one or two days a week.

Summary

This inspection was announced. Key standards were inspected at this visit, as well as recommendations made at the last inspection. These were in the areas of staying safe, positive contribution and economic wellbeing. The school was advised to introduce a more cohesive system for care planning, however the existing scheme continues. The inspector looked at health, medication systems, protecting children from abuse, bullying and running away, how the service promotes self-respect for children, their education and leisure, manages complaints and children's behaviour. The safety of the environment was inspected, as was staff recruitment, training and how the school is organised and managed. Whilst National Minimum standards for economic wellbeing were not inspected, the school has made some improvements to accommodate visitors to the school with disabilities. At this inspection, there were shortfalls in the arrangements for managing medication and recording and reviewing health information and risk assessments. A recent Ofsted educational inspection, in January 2008, was very positive about the school, citing good links between school and residential staff, promotion of independence and social skills and a good range of enjoyable social activities. This service promotes self-respect, engages positively with young people and senior managers are imaginative, effective and resourceful. Young people are valued within the school and there are good outcomes for care. Staff are committed and longstanding. Roles and responsibilities are clear. The service is committed to parental involvement and working in partnership, recognising that the parents are primary carers and hold responsibility for key decisions for their children. Young people are wholeheartedly enthusiastic about life 'in residence.'

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 continues to organise and develop imaginative strategies to help children who bully and who are bullied. The school is now part of a research and development project for

anti-bullying. The Care Manager has assessed and made a plan to reduce the risk to children who may access to the flat roof in residence and the School has sought Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for several long serving members of staff. There is now better wheelchair access and an adapted toilet in the main school to enable people with physical disabilities to attend meetings on the ground floor.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children clearly benefit from a whole school approach to promoting good health. Children make suggestions for improving their health through the school council. The school is a healthy place for them to be. The school promotes the health care of each child and staff liaise constructively with parents to encourage and secure good health care, advocating in their best interests. Staff are knowledgeable about each child's health needs. Children who need them have health plans, staff are knowledgeable and write protocols for specific health needs. However, information about health is not well organised and one health plan contained crucial out of date and inaccurate information which conflicted with other health documents, including a risk assessment. The school does not have close links with the school's nursing service for advice. Arrangements for giving medication to children are generally safe, however, staff have not been trained to administer general or emergency epilepsy medication by health professionals. Arrangements for ensuring medication is received and administered from original containers and on prescription advice are not sufficiently robust. Whilst there has been no negative impact on children, there is the potential for mistakes. Food is plentiful and wholesome and children with who need a special diet have their needs catered for without fuss. Meals are social occasions which children enjoy.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled. The school and staff respect a child's wishes for privacy and confidentiality in balance with good parenting and the need to protect the child. Children have their voices heard in many ways at the school. Staff show themselves to be very open in responding to the concerns and complaints from children. The service has a highly developed, child friendly complaints procedure and information about this is readily available. One parent said; 'Our child has been at the Corley Centre for five years and has never complained about going to school. We think this says a lot.' Children said they knew how to complain and were confident that they would be taken seriously. The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse. There are systems in place in the school which aim to prevent abuse of children and these are known and understood by all staff, who have had training. Ofsted has had no complaints or concerns about the service. Children are unanimous in the view that they are safe. Children and young people said there was some bullying in school. There is an excellent pupil reporting system which allows them to talk to an adult about any grievance and staff act on any information that bullying might be taking place. Children and young people and staff are clear what the school's policy on bullying is and staff have worked creatively to reach a shared understanding of this. Whilst policy and procedure are in place, children do not go missing from residence because they see staying overnight at school as a good thing. Children understand and sign up to the Corley code of conduct and there is a fair system of merits and rewards. Adults demonstrate positive ways of behaving and talking to

each other and are highly aware of the impact of autism on children's understanding of the world. Young people learn to have insight into their behaviour and the impact it has on others and on how they are perceived. Children are helped to develop the language and skills to advise each other. Children really enjoy the residential provision and see a night in residence as a treat and a good thing. It is one of the rewards children can choose when they achieve excellent behavioural targets. The senior management team analyse information about incidents within the school and take action to focus on significant issues with parents and teachers. Behavioural plans are used where needed in residence. There has been no physical intervention in residence and staff comment that standards of behaviour in residence are generally better than in education, with fewer challenges. Children trust adults to care for them fairly. Children stay in a school that provides physical safety and security. Health and safety organisation is good. The school has risk assessments for all aspects of safety of the premises and grounds including fire, and activities. These assessments are taken into account in the daily activities in the school. A similar process is followed for activities outside of the school, for example holidays, or trips out. There is an excellent format for assessing risk in relation to each child whilst in residence. Whilst staff are knowledgeable about children's needs, and were seen to be keeping children safe; the system for ensuring that Corley staff have formally assessed and updated the risks is not well established. One risk assessment had been written by a child's previous school and not updated with crucial health information. There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers. The school has undertaken CRB checks on existing staff, as well as ensuring this is done for each new recruit. Children and young people are sometimes involved in the recruitment of staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school. The residential contribution to education is very well established and involves close liaison with the teaching staff. Teaching and residential staff work in a consistent and cooperative way and share information about the well-being of children. There is a Learning Mentor who acts as an important link between home, school and takes the opportunity, along with residential staff, of using the leisure focus of the residential experience to promote young people's social inclusion, independence and self-confidence and to carry out one-to-one work with young people. Residential staff give very active practical and emotional support to children and young people as they return from school and go there in the morning. Children and young people confirm that staff are very approachable. The school offers good opportunities for children to enjoy constructive leisure in the after-school clubs and by staying for 'extended days' until 8pm in residence. One parent described the opportunity for her child to stay over, to mix with peers and take part, as 'invaluable.' Children view the great leisure opportunities as the best thing about residence. They go swimming, to Boy's Club, into town, bowling, computer club, model making, friendship club, ICT, food technology, and football club. Children and young people are encouraged by staff to take part in leisure activities both inside the school and in the community. Children confirm that they are involved in planning activities and outings. Young people were enthusiastic about residence and the leisure opportunities they had, saying; 'Like it because you can do things.' Children receive individual support when they need it. The opportunity to use residence is decided at the child's annual review and clear targets are set. It is to the school's credit that young people see the opportunity to sleep at school as intrinsically enjoyable. Key workers talk with children about what they want from staying in residence.

Many staff wished that more children could have the opportunity to stay overnight. All children said that they had an adult at the school they could talk to and staff make sure that children know how to contact external help-lines. Staff are fully open to addressing a wide range of possible needs, including, for example, disability, race, culture, sexuality, language and protecting oneself from exploitation. The school has well-established links with a range of helping agencies such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health advisors (CAMHS), speech and language therapists, NSPCC, and the centre incorporates the Coventry Autism Support Service.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and young people know that adults will listen to them, discuss decisions affecting their welfare with them, talk to them about how the school is run and help them to make decisions on matters that affect them. Consultation with children and parents is fully integrated into the care practice at the school and is a key responsibility of a senior manager. Children expect to be consulted and know they will be listened to and that their views have a value to the adults at the school. The school's quality assurance systems are centred around the experience of children and young people and senior staff have a democratic and enabling approach. Each child has a statement of educational need and a minority of children, who are looked after by the local authority, have a care plan. Children have their educational, independence and health needs assessed and risk assessments detail specific areas of emotional, disability and behavioural need. From the educational review, key workers identify and document some targets promoting independence. Some children with more complex needs have health plans, intimate personal care plans, or 'getting up in the morning plans' and plans to teach them how to travel independently. Each child has a key worker and a review of their residential placement each term by the Care Manager and The Director. This review looks at the effectiveness of the placement but does not include a system for updating and reviewing children's information and risk assessments in residence, and consequently some information is out of date and inaccurate. During the inspection, staff helped young people manage unpredictable behaviour, inappropriate touch and personal hygiene issues with sensitivity and humour. In discussion and from observations of care practice, staff are clearly confident and knowledgeable about the children they care for, however the documentation describing the assessment and placement plans does not reflect the level of consideration, dedication and skill with which they actually care for children, nor the outcomes they effect. Children live for the majority of their time with parents or carers and stay at the school for one or two nights a week. Children can make contact with parents freely on the school phone or on their own mobiles and staff take heed if there are any specific contact arrangements in place. Safe internet access is provided. Parents are welcome at reviews or events and parents' evenings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The statement of the school's purpose has been updated and is clear in setting out what care the school will provide and how this will be organised. This now contains a clear rationale for the residential and extended placements. It is presented in a form that can be understood by children and young people and their families. Children are looked after by staff who understand

their needs and are able to meet them consistently. The number of staff on duty are always enough to meet the needs of the children and young people and to support them in their activities and night time care needs. Children and young people know who will be on duty and that arrangements for their care are never disrupted by a change in staff. The staff team has a balanced mix of male and female staff. Children know that they have the full attention of adults. They trust and like the staff who care for them. Staff are prepared and ready at the start of each residential shift to make the children their priority. Children receive the care and services they need from committed, long-standing staff. There is a competent staff team, with a large amount and range of experience among its members. The staff-training programme includes a good induction. There are training opportunities for staff and they are supported to make use of these opportunities. At least 80% of staff have achieved a qualification equivalent to NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People and the Head of Care at the school meets the qualification standards. Children and staff enjoy the stability of an efficiently run school. The January 2008 Ofsted educational inspection stated there to be a 'strong senior leadership team'. This new senior management team has established good systems to review the operation and resourcing of the welfare provision for residential pupils and all members of the senior management team contribute regular reports to the Board of Governors.

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 children's health plans are updated and staff are properly trained in safe administration of medication and to carry out medical or nursing procedures by the prescribing doctor or responsible nurse. (NMS 14)
- improve policy, procedure and practice for receipt, storage and administration of controlled and other prescribed drugs. (NMS 14)
- ensure that the school's risk assessments and plans for particular risks arising from the health needs of children at the school are regularly reviewed and updated. (NMS 26, 14, 17)

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.