

Linden Lodge School

Inspection report for residential special school

Unique reference number	SC010255
Inspection date	9 May 2007
Inspector	Alison Spreadbridge
Type of Inspection	Key

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Date of last inspection	14 November 2006

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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

Linden Lodge is owned and managed by Wandsworth Education Authority. It is a specialist residential resource, which provides education for 99 pupils aged three to 19 years, with residential places for up to 47 pupils aged six to 19 years of age covering the 24 hour curriculum. At the time of the inspection 47 pupils were using the facility. Pupils can reside in the school from Monday to Friday during term time only. There are two residential units: School House and South House. A large number of professionals, in addition to teachers and care staff, are available at the school including: a school nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, school social workers, career staff, mobility officers, classroom support staff, catering, administration and domestic staff. The school has extensive facilities available to the boarding pupils including a soft play room, ball pool, swimming pool, hydro pool, sensory room, a music room, library service with large Braille, Moon and picture symbol books, audio tapes and an all weather play area. A computer room, fitness gym, and woodland walks. The school is close to local shops, public transport and leisure facilities.

Summary

The inspection was carried out over two days on 9 and 10 May 2007. The inspector reviewed some of the children's care plans, staff files school and school policies and procedures. During the two day inspection the inspector spoke with the principle, the head of care, staff, the children resident at the time of the inspection, the chair of governors, a parent, therapists and the school nurse. The school offers the children an excellent education alongside a bright, warm and friendly home environment, which is decorated to a very high standard. The children are fully involved in the running of the school and are encouraged to take part in the school forum meetings. The high staff ratio ensures that the children have choices about after school activities. The children receive very good health support and their needs are being met well beyond the National Minimum Standards and in line with Every Child Matters.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The new Harris Centre building is almost completed and will be used by children with PLD and more complex needs.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The school's approach to the children's health and wellbeing is exceptional. The staff from the school's mobility unit monitor the children and will accompany them around the school to assess any problems they may be encountering. The complex needs of the children is monitored by all of the school staff. Parents state that the children make good progress within the school and that they receive excellent care. Parents feel consulted and part of the ongoing assessment process. The school's approach to healthy eating has been well received by the children and the school has received a number of awards for their new initiatives.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The safety and wellbeing of the children is central to the schools ethos. The school offers the children a safe and secure environment in which to live and learn. The children spoken to said they felt very safe while at school and there are always sufficient staff on duty to help them if they needed assistance. Risk assessments are in place both for the environment and the children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The children who stay in the boarding houses enjoy a lively and stimulating lifestyle designed to maximise their educational and personal potential. The quality of this outcome is excellent. The children are well supported by the staff in the school and in the houses. They are encouraged to try new things and gain in independence. Staff support the children with their homework and activities which increase their independence. On the day of the inspection some of the children were off site collecting first prize in the Young Enterprise Award.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The children are consulted about their views, and their needs and wishes were seen to be paramount. The children's forum was observed during the visit. The forum was competently chaired by one of the senior pupils. Each class was represented and their views heard, with staff assisting those with communication difficulties. The children were seen to be listened to, concerns identified and timescales given for the matter raised to be addressed. The relationship between staff and children was excellent with staff addressing all of the children by name and aware of their personal needs. The admissions process is very sound and ensure every child is assessed and their individual needs are identified.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The children live in spacious and comfortable surroundings where their individual assessed needs are being met and, in most cases, exceeded. The quality of this outcome is excellent. The children have access to a large all weather play area, well kept lawns and gardens.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The school is well managed and is staffed by a dedicated and skilled staff team. The parents are very supportive of the school and the care their children receive. The children are encouraged to develop not only their academic and personal skills but also their social skills both in and outside the school. The staff are receiving supervision and regular training to update their skills.

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 the head of care's supervision takes place on a regular basis and it is formalised in line with good practice.

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.