

OWLSWICK PROSPECTUS

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Owlswick Care Home for children has its own Special School specifically designed to meet the Special Education Needs of the children and young people. It is situated in a large country house set in 3 acres of grounds overlooking beautiful scenery at the foot of the South Downs. Owlswick is just over a mile from the County Town of Lewes and 9 miles from the city of Brighton. There is excellent access to road and rail links providing easy access to London and all parts of the South East of England.

FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The accommodation provides a home and school for a total of 11 children and young people aged 10 to 17. The present group is all boys. Each child has their own room in a well maintained environment and a family atmosphere that is warm, relaxed, friendly and welcoming. There is a senior flat to accommodate two young people who are preparing to re-integrate, and this area has its own facilities to encourage greater independence. There are also two separate flats in Newhaven 6 miles away that can be used for similar purposes.

There are 2 well-furnished lounges, a large dining room, country-house kitchen, laundry, large hall and a recreational room with games facilities such as table tennis, pool, and table football.

There are 3 teaching areas in the main house including a library and resource room. In a separate purpose built unit there is a Design Technology workshop, Art and Design studio, and a fitness/conference/meeting room.

A structured homework session is supervised in a suitable study area. Older pupils have adequate opportunities and facilities for private study.

PLACEMENTS AT OWLSWICK

Children at Owlswick are aged 10-17, and usually are subjects of medium/long-term placements. Some young people may be accommodated beyond 17 according to educational and social needs in line with agreed plans and contracts with Local Authorities, Social Services and Education departments. Post 16 students are educated in local Further Education Colleges to suit their interests and academic status.

Owlswick specialises in catering for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties; and a range of specific disorders that may accompany the problems faced by these children. Most children joining Owlswick suffer from delayed education and social development due to a range of traumas earlier in their lives.

Owlswick is set up to provide individual care, education, support and encouragement. There is a high ratio of fully-trained professional staff to meet all aspects of the children's welfare, in an environment where all the children are encouraged to fulfil their potential and to overcome their difficulties. Each child is provided with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Care Plan that are all carefully monitored and regularly re-assessed.

When children are placed by Social Services or a Local Authority Education Department, a contract is formulated, which includes a Care and Education plan as well as any special therapy requirements.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Owlswick is an Independent Residential School and Home established in 1981. It is recognised and approved by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to provide places for up to eleven boys and girls with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) social difficulties (EBS) and moderate learning difficulties (MLD).

The school offers a 24 hour, 52 week curriculum and admits young people countrywide, especially Greater London and the South. The young people usually have Statements of Special Educational Needs that are related to their emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.

Owlswick seeks to provide an effective and supportive school and home, which operates as a large family style unit where young people are encouraged to recognise their difficulties and improve their patterns of behaviour. For some children this residential provision is their first experience of a consistently caring, stable and supportive environment. Through clear routines and a high level of personal encouragement in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere, the staff team aims to provide positive role models being sensitive to the many issues that may affect behaviour and progress. We seek to enable young people who have experienced considerable difficulties and disruption in their lives to feel valued, secure and successful; and to experience an atmosphere that promotes the development of good behaviour and cordial relationships. A spiritual focus underpins the school ethos promoting Christian aims of caring, tolerance and understanding.

EDUCATION

Owlswick is registered by the Department for Education and Science, also by the National Care Standards Commission; as suitable for the admission of statemented pupils with emotional and behavioural problems and moderate learning difficulties. The school offers the National Curriculum, presented in ways appropriate to the needs of the pupils, promoting their personal and educational development so that they gain in confidence maturity and skills.

The initial focus of our work is placed on enabling a child to feel secure and be re-introduced to an educational environment, which promotes success and improvement. School groups are small and support is intensive, aimed at encouraging pupils to understand how their behaviour impacts on others, improving levels of self-esteem and recognising effort and achievement.

The school provides a range of learning opportunities including access to accredited qualifications, which enables young people to achieve certificates of success.

From the age of 14 most are engaged in a variety of programmes of study including work experience placements; link and bridge courses at local colleges; and other learning opportunities. By the age of 16 those who still live at Owlswick move on to full-time further education placements.

SCHOOLS, COLLEGES, INDEPENDENCE PROGRAMMES

One of our educational aims is, wherever possible and appropriate, to re-integrate children to mainstream schools and enable them to pursue courses at local colleges. Some children in our care have been able to finish their education in local Secondary and Day Special schools. We work closely with these schools in devising appropriate timetable needs and supplying a support structure to the placement. For some of our young people this may not be a possible route, in which case we would encourage participation in part-time Link and Bridge courses with colleges in Lewes, Brighton, or Eastbourne. These hopefully lead to Pre-Foundation Courses, two year Foundation, or Employment led courses. Planning, where possible, for re-integration to mainstream education is monitored at each statutory review held with Education and Social Services departments.

Alongside the education plan an independence training programme is followed. Pupils have many opportunities to develop independence and to take responsibility for their own actions. This is achieved through a choice of a wide range of activities, including evening, weekend and holiday programmes. Membership of local clubs is encouraged and facilitated.

The independence programme progresses to a point where older pupils are supported in taking responsibility of care of clothing, laundry, cleaning, cooking, and budgeting. Learning how to successfully live more independently is a core aspect of life at Owlswick.

Over the years Owlswick has developed an independence programme to help meet these objectives, which is specifically designed for those aged 15 and over, designed to meet their needs until they move on to the next stage after Owlswick. Two flats have been established within the main house and two additional flats in a house in Newhaven, some 6 miles away.

HEALTH AND FITNESS

There is a full health-care package, which includes the administering of appropriate medications when prescribed by Specialists; routine checks at the Doctors and Dentist. A dedicated member of staff ensures that these procedures are fully co-ordinated and monitored.

Good health and fitness are promoted at every level at Owlswick. A regular programme of fitness training and leisure activities is provided. This is combined with a healthy diet of freshly cooked health-conscious and appetising home cooking, to enable the children to fully participate and enjoy all the opportunities provided in home and school life.

A varied diet high in whole foods, carbohydrates, protein, fresh fruit, vegetables and salad is offered and a vegetarian option is available.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN

Individual Psychotherapy, funded by local Authorities, is provided for some children by a visiting therapist each week. This aspect of the work is supervised by a Senior

Psychiatrist from South Downs Health Authority, who also functions as a consultant to the staff group.

THE STAFF TEAM

The staff group comprises of both male and female care and teaching personnel. All staff members are integral members of one team committed to providing sound, quality role models.

The various aspects of the work are shared within a structure using a Head teacher; Principal Social Work Co-ordinator; and four Team Leaders to co-ordinate organise and share responsibilities, under the leadership of the Co-Proprietors.

The school and home has developed complementary team, offering a wide range of skills and experience in both teaching and residential work. The teaching is provided by a principal teacher and 4 additional qualified part-time teachers, 3 of whom are graduates, specialists in their fields of the curriculum.

In addition, there are 2 part-time instructors with responsibility for Design & Technology and Music.

The Care team comprises of two Senior Team Leaders and a further two Team Leaders; who all share responsibility, with the Co-proprietors, for the successful running of Owlswick. There are three Care Officers and one part-time Care Officer who fully participate in a flexible teamwork arrangement to promote a consistent approach and ensure smooth transition between shifts.

The staff team are all involved in a planned programme of training to deal with specific issues that arise in home and school life, including anger management, and appropriate methods of control and restraint.

There are full policies to cover all aspects of home and school life. In accordance with these policies all incidents and procedures followed are recorded and assessed, including health and safety issues.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

Child protection issues are covered by following East Sussex Area Protection Committee procedures.

The work at Owlswick, as a whole, is guided by reference to a staff policy manual, which is divided into clearly organised and structured sections covering all aspects of home and school life. This is regularly up-dated and modified in the light of experience and changing legislation.

Regular staff meetings are used to communicate changes to all policies as they occur. Also, as and when required, specific training and qualifications are undertaken by all staff to keep pace with latest developments and career pathways. There are individual staff development plans to co-ordinate these issues.

A Senior Team Leader is responsible for producing Risk Assessments for every activity and area of home and school life.

The overarching monitoring of all these processes is conducted by The National Commission for Social Care Inspections (CSCI) and Ofsted for the Education side. The current report from these two professional bodies is readily available.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEISURE

The principal objective is to establish a balance between organised, supervised activities and free play or individual quiet time.

After school a meeting takes place in the dining room where information is exchanged between children and staff and staff duty teams. Positive features of the day's work are discussed, and recognition and praise is given and received for effort and achievement. Any problems that affect the whole group are shared, together with individual items of news that children or staff members wish to bring to the meeting. These meetings are also used to plan and agree social and leisure activities for the rest of the day.

A homework period follows the meeting on three days of the week. Disciplinary issues are fully supported by the full staff team using the daily log and sanction book as common reference points to ensure that continuity is achieved.

As calm and relaxed an atmosphere as possible is promoted to enable each child to participate in whatever activity is reasonably available. Short evening trips may be organised or simple team games involving the majority of the group will be encouraged at various times. A high priority is to establish a realistic division between home and school while maintaining safe levels of supervision and control in as relaxed and good humoured an atmosphere as possible. Each child is encouraged to participate in outside activities; join an appropriate organisation, and attend a local church. It is essential that children have wide circle of contacts and relationships, that they establish friendships outside of Owlswick, and can be encouraged to extend invitations for others to visit them. It is beneficial to them to participate in structured events organised by committed caring adults in a variety of situations.

All requests by children to participate in clubs and outside activities are considered and wherever possible facilitated. There is a member of staff who helps to co-ordinate these matters and to link with the club leaders so that the care and welfare of children at Owlswick is protected at all times.

Here are some of the clubs and organisations involved:

- Athletics club
- Swimming club
- Air Cadets
- Sea Cadets
- Scouts and Cubs
- Church Youth Clubs
- St John Ambulance
- Table Tennis

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Children admitted to Owlswick will be likely to have found it difficult to respond to different roles and regimes in other situations.

While it is paramount that the children experience a warm, caring and friendly environment it is equally important that a consistent, secure and fair response to disagreements and inappropriate behaviour is clearly and openly shown.

Our principal aim is to encourage young people to internalise realistic and acceptable codes of behaviour in order that they may manage successfully and confidently in a variety of social situations.

There is a clear system of rewards, commendations and extension of choices/privileges as well as sanctions.

Children are encouraged to adopt appropriate social behaviour by staff and by generous use of rewards rather than an extensive imposition of sanctions.

We aim to promote an atmosphere that engenders emotional security, trust and fairness. There is an explicit policy concerning appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. An agreed and understood procedure with clear boundaries defining what is acceptable provides the structure that governs both children and staff.

There are clear guidelines for staff in dealing with difficult and inappropriate behaviour. A framework of sanctions is in place to respond to such behaviour, which may also lead to suspension and exclusion procedures.

Information regarding the following policies is available on request from the school:

- Curriculum
- Bullying
- Child Protection
- Health and Safety
- Promotion of good behaviour
- Sanctions
- Particulars of academic performance in preceding school year, including results of public examinations
- Complaints procedure
- List of Staff

Complaints can be made to the Commission for Social Care Inspection
National Care Standards Commission

East Sussex Area Office
Ivy House, 3 Ivy Terrace,
Eastbourne
East Sussex BN21 4QT
Tel: 01323 636200/636256

COMPLAINTS POLICY PROTOCOL

In the event of a complaint needing to be made there are clear procedures for this to be done which is part of the Children's Guide that is given to them when they first arrive at

Owlswick. Children are able to contact their social worker and families by phone or in writing, and are free to express their opinions both positive and negative viewpoints. To see the positive side of things is always encouraged at Owlswick, therefore children are encouraged to comment on what they have appreciated and enjoyed as well as what they do not like or find acceptable. At all levels the process of encouraging mature age-appropriate responses is central to the work at Owlswick. The spirit of the place is to encourage self-motivation; care and concern for others; and tolerance of others, including those from different cultural and ethnic origins or belief systems.

The following information is from the Children's Information Pack:

Making a complaint, comment or compliment.

We are very sorry if you are unhappy with the way we are providing our service.

Our aim is to provide the best quality service, but there are times when we may get things wrong.

There are also times when you might like to thank our staff for going the extra mile.

Your complaints and compliments are important to us. They help us to improve our services.

Making a complaint:

Step 1

Tell a member of staff immediately.

Very often simple mistakes or misunderstandings can be sorted out straight away.

Step 2

Tell the Team Leader on duty.

If things can't be sorted out straight away the people best able to deal with your complaint are those who manage the service. So the second step is to tell the Team Leader either in person, by telephone, or in writing. They will investigate and resolve your complaint within 10 days or let you know if there's a reason for delay.

Step 3

Review by Proprietors.

If you are still not happy with our response you can write to the Proprietors at Owlswick explaining why, and what you expect from a review. We aim to carry out a full review of your complaint within 15 working days. If the complaint is complicated and other agencies are involved it may take longer but we will keep you informed.

Step 4

Advice from Independent Visitors:

If you feel after taking all the above steps that something else should happen you could contact the Independent Visitors; or the Social Services Inspectorate; or Department for Education and Science (DfES).

Step 5

If you are not satisfied with the response to your written complaint there is provision for a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietors of 3 people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint.

Details of panel and hearing:

The panel will be appointed from Mr D. Lloyd, Dr I. Hempshall, Dr J. Bjorn and Mr R. Gaydon. This panel includes one person who is independent of the management and running of the school.

Parents may attend the hearing and be accompanied if they wish.

The panel can make findings and recommendations and a copy will be given to you, the proprietors and, where relevant, the person being complained about.

Step 6

Written records will be kept of all complaints indicating how they were resolved and at which stage of the proceedings, or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing.

All correspondence, statements and records are kept confidential.