

Mary Hare Grammar School for the Deaf

Inspection report for residential special school

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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

Mary Hare School is a non-maintained mixed special school near Newbury in Berkshire for pupils aged five to 19 with severe and profound hearing loss. The mixed ability primary centre is on a separate site and offers both day and weekly boarding placements. The secondary school caters for children with the ability to follow a full national curriculum and who might expect to continue with their education at 16+. Pupils from the primary school do not automatically progress to the secondary school. The secondary school admits pupils from all over the United Kingdom and has a small number of pupils from overseas. It offers both day and termly boarding placements. Nearly all pupils board.

The primary school currently has one boarding facility with both themed and more conventional bedrooms to suit the age profile of the school. The secondary school has four boarding houses. Year 7 has its own dedicated boarding house, Years 8 to 11 live in two larger boarding houses and the Sixth Form has separate accommodation of individual and shared study bedrooms.

Summary

The purpose of this visit was to conduct a full inspection of all of the key National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. Some additional standards were also inspected. The inspection was completed over a three day period and was conducted by a lead inspector supported by two colleagues who assisted on two separate days.

The standard of care for the children and young people is good. Relationships between staff and boarders are generally sound and parents express their satisfaction with the communication that they have with the school.

The overall arrangements for their health care and medical support are good. Specific systems for the monitoring of stocks and medication held by the school and in the houses need to be implemented. A number of the care staff have successfully completed some level of first aid training. However, there are insufficient numbers of staff whose training is current to ensure that boarders are able to access a qualified first aider at all times. The children and young people are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. Arrangements have been made to ensure that they are regularly consulted about the quality and quantity of food at the school. The children and young people's rights regarding privacy are generally respected and good practice has been developed to ensure that is observed. However, this is compromised by inconsistencies in some of the houses regarding access to phones and the withdrawal of mobile phones as a sanction. Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in regards to keeping boarders safe. There is evidence that if senior staff are unsure whether the threshold for making a referral has been reached, they will follow correct protocols and consult with external agencies. However, it is unclear whether these protocols are always consistently adhered to. Bullying is not an issue within the school and any concerns are dealt with promptly. The school does not have a policy or guidance for managing young people who go missing without authority from the school. There is a clear expectation of what behaviour is acceptable in the school and there is an emphasis on staff acknowledging, encouraging, praising and rewarding good behaviour. Discipline is generally perceived by the boarders as being fair though a few raised some issues regarding inconsistencies on how this enforced in some of the boarding houses. The school has completed comprehensive fire risk assessments

for all of the houses. Fire equipment and systems are routinely checked and serviced. Specialised alarm systems have been installed, and the evacuation procedures have been designed to assist in the speedy and safe evacuation of deaf children. These arrangements help to contribute to keeping the children and young people safe. Additional levels of safety would be ensured by the school having a cohesive approach to the assessment, monitoring and review of onsite security and safety. The school ensures that the children and young people are protected from abuse by having robust and consistent systems in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff.

The range, scope and level of individual support made available to all of the children and young people is an outstanding aspect of the school. There are established forums in place for the children and young people to express their views and be consulted about key decisions and the day to day running of the school.

The standard of accommodation between the houses is variable. Some boarders describe their accommodation as being drab and feel that it is not homely. Some areas of maintenance, decoration and refurbishment need to be prioritised. Generally, with the exception of the boys' facilities in Manor House, the boarder's toilet and washing facilities were found to be satisfactory and free from offensive smells or odours.

Part of the cellar in Mansell House has recently been converted into a youth club. The area has been totally refurbished in the style of an American diner and is an extremely popular venue for the boarders who also help to run the centre. This is an excellent facility that boarders have helped to create and maintain and is being well looked after.

Parents have access to a wide range of documentation and information that provide them with details of the school's philosophy, vision and objectives and set out the services that the children and young people can expect to receive. The absence of a staffing policy means that there is no clear statement regarding staffing numbers. Care staff and boarders advise that staffing numbers can be lean at times and that this can impact on the children and young people's activities and operation of the houses. Staffing has been recently reorganised in recognition of inconsistencies in practices between some of the houses. The school is in the process of appointing a suitably qualified and experienced Head of Care to manage the care team.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

This section reports only on improvements relating to recommendations set at the previous inspection. The school has been proactive in addressing a number of the recommendations made following the last key inspection held in October 2006.

The school was recommended that it consult with pupils regarding what improvements could be made to supper and to make parents and boarders aware of the availability of special diets for religious needs. In response to this the school has arranged for the school's catering arrangements to be a subject routinely reviewed and discussed at the regular school council meetings. Arrangements have also been made for the Catering Manager to regularly attend the council meetings. Only a small number of boarders (six) raised the quality of supper as an issue during the inspection. The wish for some children and young people to be provided with special diets is now identified as part of the admission process. The Catering Manager now

regularly meets with these children and young people and this has led to changes in suppliers and to the range of food normally available.

The school was recommended that the designated people for child protection should receive specific training and that written logs are kept of all notifiable events. All of the designated people have received appropriate levels of training. Logbooks have been implemented for recording significant incidents and any issues discussed with or referred to the local children's services. However, the information recorded in the logbook is limited and fails to adequately demonstrate the decision making processes that have been followed and whether these are being consistently applied.

The school was recommended that it reviews some parts of its recruitment procedures and in particular ensure that gap students are subject to the same recruitment checks undertaken on permanent staff. Also, that Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks are in place for all staff before they take up employment work, or in exceptional circumstances show how a new member will be supervised until they have been obtained. Amendments have been made to the school vetting and recruitment procedures which meet both of these recommendations and these were seen to work in practice.

A recommendation was made regarding the areas of needs that have to be addressed within the children's and young people's care plans. These have been modified to make a record of specific needs relating to the cultural, religious and racial backgrounds of the boarders.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Care staff and pupils confirm that they generally feel that young people's health is well cared for.

There is one full time and one part time nurse operating from the surgery in the main house. They are in the school from 07.30 to 16.00 hours, as a minimum and are on call Monday evening through to Thursday evening. At weekends, staff can access the local GP or the minor injuries clinic. The nurses ensure that the surgery is locked if they are not in there and otherwise care staff in Manor House have keys to access the room.

The nurses keep any prescribed medications for young people in Manor House in the surgery for Manor staff to access. Care staff keep all other prescribed medication in the relevant houses and record medication administration on one sheet per young person. Care staff know when pupils have received medication in the surgery because they receive phone calls and emails to this effect. The nurse stores all medication neatly and prescribed medications carry the pharmacist's label with the name of the young person it is prescribed to; these are not kept beyond the point where they are out of date. She does not, however, organise the medication into individually named containers. Pupils come to the surgery during the day if they feel unwell. Staff record details of any medicine, whether over-the-counter, for example paracetamol, or prescribed, with all necessary details. Having them all together presents a risk that a dose of prescribed medicine could be missed.

The nurse has not had advice from a pharmacist about how to keep records of medications received, used and returned in such a way as to create an audit trail. This means that it may

not be possible to get clear answers about any irregularities that occur, nor to ensure they do not recur.

Although the nurses attend workshops and conferences to ensure their continuing professional development and registration, they do not have external nursing supervision. They do, however, report very good working relationships with the school community nurses and the school GP, who runs a weekly surgery in the school.

The majority of pupils state that they feel that they are well looked after when they are unwell. Requests for appointments with the GP are made through the nurses and these are recorded on index cards. Some young people report asking for such appointments but not being allowed to see the GP. The nurse is investigating whether this is due to misunderstanding when, after discussion, it is decided that nursing help may be sufficient. If not, she has agreed to identify the source of the problem. The majority of parents offer positive comments and views on the medical services being offered by the school nurse. One parent commented on the 'excellent support provided during the period that (his/her) daughter was feeling homesick'.

A number of care staff have completed a one day training course in first aid and there are four designated first aiders, one for each house, who have had more in-depth training. However, a number of staff advise that their training is out of date. Care staff have access to the nurse during the week (24 hours) but not at weekends. Given the staffing arrangements and the numbers of the current suitably trained staff it is not always possible for the care staff rota to be arranged to ensure that there are suitably qualified first aiders on duty at all times.

There is a teacher responsible for pupil support and the Personal Health and Social Education (PHSE) Curriculum. She includes a module on deafness and hearing to assist pupils in accepting their deafness, but otherwise follows the curriculum laid down by government.

There are four speech and language therapists employed by the school and all young people needing this do get sessions. Therapists provide one-to-one sessions for those needing the most help and other pupils in need of speech and language therapy receive group sessions. There is also a school counsellor, who works closely with the pupil support teacher in relation to helping pupils with anger management.

The school runs a peer mediation scheme whereby older pupils support younger ones to deal with their social and emotional difficulties. The older pupils make themselves available in the playground. Those pupils interested in helping with peer mediation receive training from an organisation called Learning Through Action.

Although the pupil support teacher reports no daily briefings between school and care staff, she and care staff state that relationships between the two groups have improved dramatically.

The children and young people are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs. The catering manager has been in the school for just over a year and has introduced a number of changes to improve the menu and reduce waste. He now meets with pupil representatives on a regular basis during school council meetings. In this way, he can ensure that the menu fits pupil choices, as far as possible, within the constraints of ensuring a healthy balance. He has also met with Muslim pupils to discuss the Halal food. As a result he has located a supplier which can ensure a wider variety of Halal products is on offer. In addition,

he has reduced the amount of salt and fat in cooked foods and increased the amount of fibre and reports no complaints from pupils as a result.

Fresh fruit is available at all three meals each day and the salad bar is available at lunch and supper. Homemade vegetable soup is also available every lunch time. The menus are very varied and nutritious and are on a four weekly cycle. Pupils and staff are less happy with the supper menus although these are also varied and nutritious.

The catering manager takes food safety very seriously, tracking food temperatures from the time they arrive right through to the time they are served. The kitchen is kept clean and orderly and has made a number of improvements in relation to health and safety. As a result they received a silver Food and Hygiene Award last year. The catering department provides all of the main meals for the senior campus and the midday meal at Mill Hall. Care staff in Mill Hall prepare breakfast and the evening meal and have completed food handling training.

Meals are taken in the dining room in Mill Hall and Blount Hall on the senior campus. Both areas are suitably furnished and equipped for the numbers and needs of the children, young people and staff using them. Mealtimes are orderly sociable occasions.

Parents reported one or two concerns about their children not eating well. Staff advise that they keep an eye on those children whose eating habits are a cause for concern. However, it is unclear whether the current arrangements for the supervision of meals in the senior school are robust enough to ensure that all the young people are eating appropriate amounts of nutritious food.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff show a respect for the privacy of the children and young people and for maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality. Staff demonstrate a particular awareness of specific difficulties relating to maintaining appropriate levels of privacy and supervision of deaf people. Staff not only knock on bedroom doors before entering them but initially alert occupants by opening the door part way and calling out before going into the room. The staff are aware of sensitive times, such as showering, washing and changing, and take steps to ensure that their supervision at these and other times is not intrusive. Male staff are not allowed to supervise female sleeping, bathing and washing areas. All personal and confidential information is kept within lockable cabinets. The school provides staff with written guidance on privacy and confidentiality.

Rooms searches occasionally take place to locate missing or misplaced items. Staff are encouraged to do this in a sensitive manner and make a record of the outcome of the search in the daily logbook.

Each of the boarding houses has a pay phone that has been adapted for use by deaf people. The payphone in Manor House is locked during the day and the early part of the evening and requires a member of staff to open it. Most children and young people make use of their mobiles which are stored for them during the day and made available at set periods during the night and at weekends. They are allowed to take their mobile phones to a quiet and private space. The school does not have specific guidance and a policy on the use and access to mobile phones. There is evidence that mobiles with recording facilities have occasionally been used

inappropriately by some pupils. In some of the boarding houses access to mobile phones has been used as a sanction which can prevent a young person from being able to access a phone without first seeking permission from a member of staff. Details of national helplines are displayed in the boarding house and are available in the young people's handbooks.

The school has a clear complaints procedure and information about this is available to the children and young people and parents. The children and young people have a number of routes and forums that they can use to raise or express concerns either publicly or in private. The children and young people indicate that there are a number of staff that they can approach with concerns and worries and are confident that these will be listened to. The children and young people also have access to a Children's Friend (Mill Hall) and to an independent visitor (senior campus). Some of the young people identify their key workers as being someone they can share concerns with. Some boarders identify the school council as a forum in which to raise issues regarding the residential provision within the school.

Most issues are dealt with at an informal level. A number are drawn to the attention of the Head of Care but these are not routinely logged. Formal complaints have occasionally been made by parents and a record of this and the outcome of the school's investigation is recorded in a logbook. An examination of this shows one formal complaint has been received since the last inspection. A number of parents indicate their satisfaction with how the school deals with their concerns. One commented, 'Complaints are dealt with and not shelved'. However, a small number were not as satisfied but their comments are directed at a small number of staff. Senior staff advise that they anticipate that a recent reorganisation of staffing within the houses will address this and other issues raised by parents.

The school has developed and implemented safeguarding and child protection guidance and procedures that are designed to ensure that the children and young people are protected from abuse. The school's child protection procedures have not been submitted for consideration and comment with the local safeguarding board. However, there is evidence that when fully instigated these have been seen to work in practice. It is not easy to determine whether the school is consistent in its response to all potential child protection issues. The absence of comprehensive records and a lack of clarity regarding thresholds for consultation with external agencies means that it is not possible to determine how some decisions have been reached and determined.

The Principal is the designated person for child protection and additional safeguards are provided by this responsibility being shared with two other senior members of staff. All of the designated people have received appropriate levels of training. Each of the designated people are available on an on call basis. This arrangement ensures that staff have access to a designated person at all times. The school delivers regular child protection training to all of its staff. The training has not been designed to address specific issues relating to the deaf children and young people. Care staff spoken to are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding the handling of any disclosures, allegations or suspicions of abuse and the need to pass this on to one of the designated people.

The majority of young people living on the senior campus advise that they have not been bullied whilst at the school. A minority of young people state that they have been bullied but of these a significant number indicate that this has been an issue that has been effectively dealt with by members of staff. One young person explained how, 'teachers talk to bullies and sort it out'.

There is a general feeling amongst the young people that the school takes bullying seriously. The school has developed and implemented a bullying policy and guidance which is directed to all of its pupils. This provides a clear message that bullying is unacceptable and that it is everybody's responsibility to respond to any incidents and to protect children and young people from bullying. The guidance includes definitions of bullying and also provides examples of how this may take place including 'cyber bullying', through the use of text messages and emails. Children and young people are encouraged to take concerns to staff or to use national helplines. The school has developed a number of strategies to help raise the awareness of bullying to help support young people who have experienced being bullied. These include access to an Independent Listener, participation in a national Anti-Bullying Week and holding themed assemblies. Bullying is addressed as part of the school's PSHE programme. The school conducts its own bullying questionnaires and themes, and strategies are discussed with the school council. A number of the sixth formers provide a peer mentoring service which is particularly focused on the younger children in the senior school.

The school does not have a policy or guidance for managing young people who go missing without authority from the school. Senior staff explain that this is not an issue at the school. However, records show that there have been occasions within the last year, that young people have wandered away from the site and the supervision of staff. In each case the matter has been dealt with by the young people advising the school where they are and/or returning by themselves within a reasonable time or having been seen and picked up by staff. The school has accepted the need to develop and implement appropriate policy and guidance to ensure that in the event of a child or young person going missing without consent that all staff are aware of the responsibilities, the procedures that should be followed and the liaison which should take place with external agencies if required.

Measures of control within the school and boarding houses are generally based on encouraging and recognising positive behaviour. The children and young people are aware of what standards of behaviour are acceptable and understand that there are consequences for unacceptable or inappropriate behaviour. Staff are given guidance on the measures of control that can be used within the boarding houses. There is a system of house points which are awarded to individuals for positive behaviours. Children and young people collecting high numbers of house points receive recognition for their efforts through public praise and are given further rewards of extras and/or prizes. Details of the measures of control that can be used to sanction inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour are provided within the individual boarding house's sanction book and in school documentation. There is an expectation that staff will apply the agreed sanctions in an incremental and fair manner. An examination of the individual sanction books shows that the use and application of sanctions varies considerably from house to house. In the primary and younger boarders' houses, sanctions are used infrequently but those used are in line with those endorsed by the school and applied fairly and consistently. Sanctions used in the senior houses are not always within those agreed by the school. There is a lack of consistency as to how these are applied both on an individual basis and across the different houses. This is a cause of some dissatisfaction for a number of the young people. There is no satisfactory system for monitoring the effectiveness of the sanctions used and to determine whether they are acting as appropriate deterrents. The standard of recording sanctions is variable among houses and in some houses falls short of what is required by the National Minimum Standards. Children and young people are not encouraged to add their own comments on the sanctions that they have been given.

Staff advise that they do not have to regularly use any form of physical intervention. There is, however, a recognition that there may be occasions that this may be required. All care staff have received training and guidance on the use of avoidance techniques and de-escalation skills along with two basic holds that may be used on extreme occasions. The circumstances when these may or may not be used is clearly set out in school documents which are shared with staff. Incidents of restraint are recorded and passed to the Principal who records them in the school's Physical Intervention Book. An examination of this and other documentation shows that there have been four occasions that physical intervention has been used during the past year, but only two of these have been transferred into the Physical Intervention Book.

The school has implemented some risk assessments covering aspects of safety within the school and grounds.

There is a good awareness amongst staff and children and young people in regards to the school's fire safety precautions. All of the children and young people and staff are given guidance on the individual boarding house's fire safety instructions. Staff receive training on fire awareness as part of the school's inset programme. Shift Leaders act as Fire Marshalls within their own houses and are responsible for weekly checks on fire alarms and equipment and co ordination of regular practise fire evacuations. Specific training on the role and responsibilities of Fire Marshalls has not been provided. There is a comprehensive fire risk assessment for each of the houses that has been drawn up by the Bursar. Fire drills are carried out on a regular basis in all of the houses and these take place at different times of the day. Specialised fire equipment has been installed so to alert deaf children and young people that an alarm has been triggered. Sleeping in staff are allocated specific areas of the house to check in the case of fire to ensure that a total evacuation has occurred. These procedures are reviewed nightly depending on occupancy. Records indicate that fire alarms, emergency lighting and fire equipment are routinely serviced.

The school has undertaken some measures to improve the security of the sites and the safety of the premises, but these fail to ensure that all areas used by the children and young people are satisfactorily secure and free from avoidable hazards. There is no cohesive approach to the assessment, monitoring and review of on site security and safety. The senior campus covers a large open area, is open and roads that cross through it are occasionally used as a short cuts by motorists not associated with the school. Key pads have been installed to some entrances to the houses but not all. A number of windows that have been in place for some time are not fitted with restrictors. The condition of the furniture in the houses is variable and in some areas constitutes a safety hazard. Each house has a signing in and out procedure but this is not always adhered to.

Positive measures taken by the school include a requirement for all visitors to the site having to sign in. Boarders are made aware of those areas which are out of bounds. Children and young people advise that the school has given them advice about how to keep safe including discussions on stranger danger and the need to alert staff if strangers are seen on site. Parents express their approval about the arrangements for them to have to give consent for their child to go out on trips including local shopping trips. The school allows some outside clubs to make use of some of their facilities. Arrangements are made for these occasions to have little or no impact on the boarders. Good risk assessments are in place for activities undertaken by the children and young people.

The school has robust and consistent systems in place for the recruitment and vetting of staff which are in line with current National Minimum Standards. These include the submission of application forms, the obtaining of Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks, references, and interviews. The 'request for reference' letter specifically includes a statement regarding the applicant's suitability to work with children. Where relevant overseas police checks have been sought. The school does not have a dedicated Human Resources person and responsibility for recruitment is shared between a number of administration staff. A central database is maintained by the Administration Manager which records all of the checks that have been requested and received for each applicant. An examination of this confirms receipt of CRBs for all employees appointed since 2002. The school is in the process of determining when it will renew CRBs and consideration is being given to undertake retrospective checks on staff employed before 2002. There is a system in place to allow the appointment of staff prior to receipt of CRBs. The decision for this to take place is that of the Principal. This is only allowed when all other checks are in place and instructions are issued to relevant staff to ensure that the member of staff is supervised at all times. There is an exception to this rule in relation to waking night staff where all checks, including CRBs, are required to be in place prior to appointment. CRB checks are in place for adults living on premises but not employed by the school. These measures taken by the school are a good contribution to ensuring that the children and young people are kept safe and not exposed to potential abusers.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The residential contribution to education is very well established and involves close liaison with the teaching staff. The residential staff give active practical and emotional support to the children and young people with their homework. The majority of young people indicate their satisfaction with the support given from the care staff and state that they are given enough space in which to complete their school work. Homework for a number of the younger people takes place within their boarding houses. Most bed areas have an allocated desk or table that the young people can use for private study if they wish. Older pupils and students are allowed laptops in their rooms to assist in their study. Care staff contribute to the annual review of the children and young people's educational statements. Care staff are available for consultation during the annual parents' days. Good communication between the different departments is enabled through the school's computer network system which can be accessed by all staff.

The arrangements made by the school to provide individual support to the children and young people are one of its strongest features. The school has ensured that all children and young people are able to have easy access to a range of support services and are clear which members of staff they can go to for personal support. All of the boarders spoken to identified at least one adult within the school that they could approach if they had any personal concerns. Children in the primary school have regular visits from a Children's Friend. Boarders within the senior school can have open access to an Independent Listener who visits on a weekly basis. Both of these adults have experience of communicating with deaf children and young people. Arrangements can be made for the children and young people to have access to an external counselling service where assistance can be provided for those with need of support and guidance with their anger management. The school has developed a peer mentoring service in which older students make themselves available to talk to and help younger people who may be distressed or have concerns. As a part of their PSHE programme members of the sixth form also regularly visit the primary provision to meet and play with the young children. Each of the

boarders are allocated a key worker and regular individual key working sessions take place which provide a safe private environment for the children and young people to raise concerns or discuss issues. Specialist support for deaf children and young people is provided on site by speech therapists and the audiology department.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The school has a number of established forums that provide the children and young people the opportunity to be consulted and involved in making key decisions about their future and their day to day life within the school. A number of the children and young people explained of how they are routinely involved in their annual review and care planning. Older students are involved in meetings with Connexions and the Career Advisory Service.

A number of the children and young identified the school council as a forum in which to express views and bring about change. The school council meets on a regular basis and its agenda covers a wide range of issues that affect the daily life of those living at the school. Recent issues discussed include locks to bathrooms, internet access, the provision of water fountains, and water pressure in showers. The routine attendance of the Catering Manager provides a regular opportunity for discussion to take place on the standard and quality of food. The school council was observed discussing issues that had arisen from a recent bullying questionnaire circulated by the school. Recent changes brought about through the school council include breakfast starting half an hour later, supper being reviewed and improved, and a review of Halal menu. The Principal demonstrates his commitment to this process of consultation by making funding available to support approved ideas. Being a member of the school council provides individual representatives the opportunity to take on responsibility, learn skills including leadership, delegation and negotiation, gain confidence in public communication and to consider issues raised by others in an objective manner.

The school has recently started a process of consulting young people in regards to the decoration of their bedrooms. This has proved successful for those involved and has encouraged the young people to take ownership and pride in their environment. This is clearly demonstrated in the recently decorated rooms in Manor House where the young people are making a considerable effort to ensure that they are personalised, kept tidy and well looked after.

The school has now implemented a written Care Plan which sets out how the school plans to meet the assessed needs for the children and young people. These are completed in consultation with the child or young person by their key worker and include comments on life at school, organisation, relationships, social life, health and hygiene, staying safe and achievements and celebrations. Following observations within the last report an additional section has been included on cultural, religious and racial needs. Additional information is provided in the children and young people's educational statements. Care planning has yet to become fully established within the school and the quality of plans varied across the files examined. The care files are generally well organised and contain copies of incident reports, causes for concern, achievements and reviews.

Each child or young person is allocated a key worker who they meet on a regular basis and this provides the opportunity for the care plans to be reviewed twice a year. It is one of the key workers responsibilities to submit a care report to the annual review. Care plans are not routinely shared with parents as they may contain personal information that the child or young person

wishes to remain private. A number of parents express an interest in seeing their child's care plans and this information has been shared with school.

There is a general recognition of the need for the children and young people to be able to maintain regular contact with their parents and family. Boarders are able to retrieve e-mails from parents on computers based in the school. Rooms are available for children and young people to meet with visitors in private. Onsite accommodation can be arranged for those parents travelling long distances to see and visit the school.

Children and young people can have access to suitably adapted payphones in each of the boarding houses. All phones checked were found to be in working order. The location of payphones provides a good level of privacy. The children and young people are able to bring in their own mobile phones and these are made available to them at a specific time agreed with their care staff. There are no restrictions on contact in place for any of the children and young people at the school. However, access to the payphones and use of mobiles is not always possible. Some phone booths are locked and require unlocking by staff members and the removal of mobile phones is regularly used in some of the houses as a sanction when these phones have been misused. The young people can ask staff if they can use the care mobile phones to contact home when a sanction is in place. However, having to seek permission from a member of staff to access a payphone or their mobiles could present an obstacle which may prevent a child or young person from making contact with a person or agency to express a concern or worry.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The boarding accommodation in the school is located on two sites. The primary school accommodation is located on the top floor of Mill Hall and is reserved for the sole use of the boarders and care staff; the accommodation is extremely child centred and appropriate for the age of the children living there. Bedrooms, communal areas and bathrooms are individually decorated with colourful and imaginative murals and paintings. Each area has its own theme based on fairy tales and characters from children stories. Bedrooms are furnished with bespoke furniture which are in keeping with its theme. The accommodation is clean and well maintained and there is no sign of malicious damage. A number of the bedrooms have ensuite facilities. All bathroom and toilet facilities are clean, tidy and free from offensive smells and odours.

The boarding accommodation for the secondary aged children and young people is on the main school site and consists of four separate areas. Howard House (Year 7 mixed), Mansell (Years 8 to 11 male) and Wroughton Centre (sixth form) are purpose built. Accommodation for girls in Years 8 to 11 and also Year 8 boys is located in separate wings of the old manor house.

The standard of accommodation is variable. Some of the houses show a high degree of wear and tear. Decoration is drab in parts. Some communal areas and common rooms are purely functional and lack any feeling of warmth or comfort. Some of the boarders commented on the lack of a homely feel to their houses.

Levels of occupancy in bedrooms range from between one to four. Boarders are provided with purpose built furniture providing a bed space, storage and working space. Some of the younger children have cabin type beds with their storage facilities underneath. In some of the houses the furniture is not in a good state of repair and shows signs of damage. A number of health

and safety issues including missing bunk bed ladders have been identified during the tour of the premises and these have been shared with the school. Boarders are allowed to personalise their bed spaces. Some boarders have made a great effort to do so whilst some rooms are very sparse and empty of personal belongings. With the exception of Manor House all of the boarding accommodation is reserved for the use by the boarders and their staff. The accommodation in Manor House is located on two wings and shares its space with a number of the administrative offices as well as part of the education facility.

Part of the cellar in Mansell House has recently been converted into a youth club. The area has been totally refurbished in the style of an American diner and is an extremely popular venue for the boarders who also help to run the centre. This is an excellent facility that boarders have helped to create and maintain and is being well looked after.

The bursar explained that the school has a redecorating programme that is partially a rolling programme and partially needs led. It is intended that all areas are painted once in every five years. There is no programme for planned refurbishment. The school has recently started to consult with the young people about how they would like their rooms redecorated. This has been appreciated by those involved and has encouraged them to personalise and look after their bedrooms.

The school has its own maintenance team who are able to undertake most day to day maintenance and smaller projects and use outside contractors for larger complex projects. A review of how the school responds to and processes maintenance issues is currently being undertaken.

A sample of the children and young people's bathing and toilet facilities was inspected during the tour of the houses. Generally with the exception of the boys' facilities in Manor House these were found to be satisfactory and free from offensive smells or odours. Some boarders identify issues with water pressure and temperature of water in some houses. This is a subject that is regularly brought up with the school council. The Facilities Manager has attended council meetings to discuss these issues with them.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Information on the school's philosophy, vision and objectives and organisation of the school and its boarding provisions is contained in a range of different documents including the school prospectus and also available from the school website. All of this information is made available to staff and parents. Specific handbooks are available for different year groups including the sixth form. The information contained in the documentation and information available to parents, staff and pupils reflects the current aims, organisation and boarding practice within the school.

The school does not have a written staffing policy. Therefore there is no clear statement regarding minimum levels of staffing or how to access senior management support. Staffing levels are set at three to four staff each shift. Shifts are led by an experienced member of residential staff. Care staff provide sleeping in cover and a waking night staff member is assigned to each of the houses. The school does not make use of agency staff but has some bank staff that it can call on.

A number of factors have an impact on the availability and allocation of staff. The number of children and young people within the boarding houses range from between 15 and 60. Accommodation in some of the houses is located on a number of floors and spread over a wide area. There is no easy access between the female and male the boarding accommodation in Manor House. Absences may be covered by staff from other houses. There are restrictions on the level of supervision that can be provided by male staff in the mixed units. The school has a limited number of mini bus drivers who are called upon to take children and young people from other boarding houses to off site activities. Some of the care staff in the larger house report that staffing can be lean at time. Some of the boarders indicated some dissatisfaction with availability of staff and feel that there are occasions that more staff would be nice as it would allow more activities to take place.

The school demonstrates a commitment to striving to ensure that the children and young people are cared for by a competent staff team, who have good range of experience. School training records show that of 23 care staff, 12 have completed National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3, and 11 are working towards this. A further two staff have NVQ Level 4, and three others are working towards this. The Deputy Principal whose background is in education currently oversees the work undertaken by the care staff. It has been previously recognised that there would be a benefit to the school if the care team were led by a suitably qualified and experienced Head of Care. The school is currently actively engaged in trying to make this appointment.

The school has recently reorganised and relocated a number of its staff. This was in recognition that there had been some inconsistencies in the standard of care between some of the houses. Minutes of a recent meeting showed that the shift leaders have completed an audit of care practices and are looking to ensure consistency amongst the houses. Care staff are timetabled to attend regular team meetings and there are informal arrangements to access senior managers to discuss any concerns and practice.

There is evidence that a number of the key records are routinely being monitored by the Deputy Principal. However, the current systems are not robust enough nor adequately cover all of the requirements of the standards. The absence of a cohesive approach to assessing risk to security and the safety of premises had not been identified. Although sanctions have been monitored there is no evidence of their effectiveness having been assessed and any potential or actual issues, trends or patterns being identified and used to inform and guide practice. The annual report submitted to governors is largely descriptive, lacks analysis and identifies few areas for development.

The governing body has instigated a system for some of its members to conduct regular monitoring visits to the school. During these visits, governors check on key documents and make an assessment regarding the physical condition of the buildings, furniture and equipment. Reports are made following the visits and these are set out under the every child matters outcomes. Recent reports have identified good practice, and made comments on the refurbishment of the youth club and on shortfalls to the accommodation. One of the governors has arranged for care staff to visit another school to see how they address the issue of making boarding accommodation feel more homely.

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):

- review the system for labelling, recording and monitoring the amount of medication held by the school and stored in the boarding houses. (NMS.14)
- review the availability of care staff who have current first aid qualifications. (NMS.14)
- review the system for monitoring what young people are eating. (NMS.15)
- review the access to payphones and the use of mobile phones. (NMS.3)
- ensure that the school's child protection procedures and protocols are consistently adhered to. (NMS.5)
- maintain comprehensive records of child protection issues. (NMS.5)
- develop and implement policy and procedures for managing occasions when children and young people go missing from the school. (NMS.8)
- ensure consistency in the application and recording of sanctions. (NMS.11)
- implement systems of risk assessment for the security and safety of the premises and grounds. (NMS.26)
- complete an audit of the boarding provision and prioritise maintenance, refurbishment and areas for redecoration. (NMS.24)
- ensure that all shower facilities are free from offensive odours and are in a good state of repair. (NMS 25)
- implement a staffing policy. (NMS.28)
- review the system for the monitoring and evaluation of records. (NMS.32)