



Champions for  
Social Care  
Improvement

# inspection report

Residential Special School (not registered as  
a Children's Home)

## **Oak Lodge School**

101 Nightingale Lane

London

SW12 8NA

9th, 10th and 11th December 2003

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

### **The role of CSCI is to:**

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

## **Inspection Methods & Findings**

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

### **The 4-point scale ranges from:**

- 4 - Standard Exceeded (Commendable)
- 3 - Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
- 2 - Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)
- 1 - Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

'X' is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

**Name of School**

Oak Lodge School

**Address**

101 Nightingale Lane, London, SW12 8NA

**Tel No:**

020 8673 3453

**Fax No:**

020 8673 9397

**Email Address:**

**Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school**

London Borough Of Wandsworth

**Name of Head**

Mr Peter Merrifield

**NCSC Classification**

Residential Special School

**Type of school**

Residential Special  
School

**Date of last boarding welfare inspection:**

11/2/03

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		9th December 2003	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		10:30 am	
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Emma Dove	071717
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Diane Thackrah	144037
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>	Elizabeth O'Reilly	075052
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):</b>			
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>		Darren Townsend Handscomb	
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Mr P Merrifield, Head Teacher and Ms S Burgess, Head of Care.	

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## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

Inspections assess the extent to which the school is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, published by the Secretary of State under Section 87C of the Children Act 1989, and other relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 as amended. Residential Special Schools are not registered as children's homes unless they accommodate, or arrange accommodation for, one or more children for more than 295 days a year.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the NCSC in respect of Oak Lodge School

The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Recommended action by the school
- Advisory recommendations on boarding welfare
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the lay assessor (where relevant)
- The Head's response and proposed action plan to address findings

## INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections are undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children Act 1989 as amended, with additional visits as required.

The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

Oak Lodge School is a special school which is maintained by Wandsworth Education Department, it provides Education for eighty-eight deaf pupils aged 11-19. It currently offers residential places to twenty-four pupils aged 11-16 in Oak Lodge Hostel, Monday to Friday during term time. There is a sixteen plus facility at the school.

Staff at the Hostel offer pupils who board opportunities to continue learning and gain independence. Pupils who board have access to: table tennis; a pool table; art and craft activities; cooking; sewing; gardening; the schools sports facilities and the ICT facilities.

The Hostel is within the school, it comprises a lounge, games room, quiet room, boys television room, kitchen, play areas, twenty single bedrooms and two three bedded rooms.

The Hostel has four full time and one part time staff with two staff on duty in the morning and three to five staff available in the evening depending on the activities on offer and the number of pupils boarding. Additional waking night staff are provided when required.

## **PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE**

The care plans in the Hostel were observed to be detailed and contain the required information. Pupils individual files were found to be well ordered and up to date. The recording and tracking for child protection is organised and to a very high standard with appropriate links with outside agencies.

All staff who spoke to the inspectors made positive comments regarding communication across the school and in the Hostel. Staff and pupils at the school use British Sign Language with interpreters provided at reviews and meetings.

Pupils are offered a wide range of activities and outings during their stay at the Hostel which they choose.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE**

The policies in the Hostel handbook should be updated. The medication policy should be updated to include recording medication received at the Hostel.  
Staff recruitment should include receiving two written references prior to staff commencing employment at the Hostel.  
The Hostel accommodation should be reviewed, particularly with regard to the bedrooms and bathrooms.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE**

This was a positive inspection, well received by the school.  
All of the recommendations were discussed at the feedback between the inspector, the Head Teacher and the Head of Care.

The inspection was carried out over three days by two inspectors with two interpreters on one afternoon and one interpreter on one afternoon. The inspection covered two evening visits.

The inspectors spoke to the Head Teacher, the Assistant Head Teacher, the Head of Care, four residential social workers, one teacher, the cook in charge, the site officers, the business manager and eight pupils.

The Head of Care has been in post for five weeks.

The inspectors received five completed parents questionnaires, which indicated that two parents are aware of how to make a complaint and three parents were not aware of how to make a complaint. None of the parents reported being aware of how to contact the National Care Standards Commission. One parent reported that they did not feel listened to by the school and one parent raised concerns over their child's friendships with other pupils. The inspector received six completed staff questionnaires during the course of this inspection, which indicated that five members of staff felt supported in their work and one member of staff felt quite well supported in their work. All staff reported that they are aware of how to complain, have read the policies, have received appropriate training and are aware of the purpose of the school.

## NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

**Is Notification of any failure to safeguard and promote welfare to be made by the National Care Standards Commission to the Local Education Authority or Department for Education and Skills under section 87(4) of the Children Act 1989 arising from this inspection?**

NO

**Notification to be made to:**

**Local Education Authority  
Secretary of State**

NO

NO

**The grounds for any Notification to be made are:**

## IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION

Recommended Actions from the last Inspection visit fully implemented?

YES

**If No, the findings of this inspection on any Recommended Actions not implemented are listed below:**

No	Standard	Recommended actions	

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

**Action Plan:** The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended action and any advisory recommendations are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION

Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare.

No	Standard*	Recommended Action	

### ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

Identified below are advisory recommendations on welfare matters addressed in the main body of the report and based on the National Minimum Standards, made for consideration by the school.

No	Refer to Standard*	Recommendation
1	4	The record of complaints should include the outcomes and details of the National Care Standards Commission should be made available to parents/carers.
2	10	The sanctions record should include outcome and pupils should have the opportunity to have their views recorded.
3	14	Records should be maintained of medications received at the Hostel, the full details of medications should be included on the Medication Administration Record Sheets and the medication policy should be updated to include recording medication in and out of the Hostel.

4	19 & 27	Two references should be sought prior to new staff commencing employment at the Hostel.
5	25	The bathroom and shower facilities in the Hostel should be reviewed.
6	26	The water certificates should be available at the school for inspection.

Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. RS10 refers to standard 10.

**PART B****INSPECTION METHODS AND FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods were used in the production of this report

Direct Observation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Accommodation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas	YES

Checks with other Organisations

• Social Services	NO
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	NO
• School Doctor	NO
• Independent Person	NO
• Chair of Governors	NO

Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	NO
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	NO
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	NO
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	9/12/03
Time of Inspection	10.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	37.5
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	5

**Pre-inspection information and the Head's Self evaluation Form, provided by the school, have also been taken into account in preparing this report.**

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

**Age Range of Boarding Pupils**      **From**       **To**

### NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

**BOYS**

**GIRLS**

**TOTAL**

**Number of separate Boarding Houses**

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the NCSC assessment of the extent to which standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

- |                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 4 - Standard Exceeded   | (Commendable)      |
| 3 - Standard Met        | (No Shortfalls)    |
| 2 - Standard Almost Met | (Minor Shortfalls) |
| 1 - Standard Not Met    | (Major Shortfalls) |

"0" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

"9" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not applicable.

"X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

## STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

### Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

The school has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for those children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement can be made up of other documents, e.g., Letter of Approved Arrangements and school prospectus, which are required to include specific information.

### Key Findings and Evidence

### Standard met?

3

The school has a Prospectus, which was found to include the overall purpose of the school, the education and facilities which are available, the specialist provision available to pupils and the care that is provided. It details the admission criteria, the number of pupils for whom the school can cater and the schools principles around individuals culture. The Prospectus is in written format, which is accessible to placing social workers, staff and some parents. The Head Teacher reported that the information in the Prospectus is discussed with pupils and their families on admission to the school. The Head Teacher reported that the school is looking into developing the Prospectus information into a video format for pupils. The Head teacher confirmed that the Prospectus is given to prospective parents and placing authorities. The Governors see the Prospectus annually and this was completed in November 2003.

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way that the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.
- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.

### Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

Children's opinions, and those of their families or significant others, are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and their future. Feedback is given following consultations.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

4

Examination of four pupils case files identified that the individual's religious, cultural and communication details are recorded.

The Head of Care reported that pupils views are actively sought through reviews, hostel meetings and during individual time spent with key workers.

All staff who spoke with the inspectors confirmed that they support pupils to make every day choices and to maximise their opportunities for independence.

The Head Teacher reported that pupils follow any requirements including dress and diet of their religious persuasion.

### Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.11)

The school and staff respect a child's wish for privacy and confidentiality so far as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

Written guidelines are available for staff regarding passing on information with child protection implications and entering pupils bedrooms.

Pupils case files and records were found to be securely stored in the hostel.

A telephone and minicom are available to the pupils who board. A poster is displayed in by the telephone with details of Helplines available for pupils. Staff reported that they are available to assist pupils with using the telephone or minicom if required.

Areas are available at the school and in the Hostel for pupils to meet with parents and others if required.

The hostel comprises separate accommodation, toilet and bathroom facilities for boys and girls.

Staff reported that they are sensitive to issues around caring for pupils of the opposite sex.

**Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)**

**Children know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the school, and feel confident that any complaint is addressed seriously and without delay.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

A complaints procedure is available at the school and Hostel. Records are maintained of complaints received at the Hostel. The record should include the outcome of the complaint. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors confirmed that they are aware of whom they should speak to if they have a complaint about the school or the Hostel.

Staff who spoke with the inspector reported that they are aware of how to respond to complaints.

Five parents questionnaires indicated that these parents are not aware of how to make a complaint to the National Care Standards Commission.

**Number of complaints about care at the school recorded over last 12 months:**

**1**

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

**1**

**Number of complaints received by NCSC about the school over last 12 months:**

**0**

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

**0**

## CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.
- Children are protected from bullying by others.
- All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the school are notified by the Head of the school to the appropriate authorities.
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded positively to on return.

### Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

There are systems in place in the school which aim to prevent abuse of children and suspicions or allegations of abuse are properly responded to. These are known and understood by all staff (including junior, ancillary, volunteer and agency staff).

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

4

Appropriate child protection policies are available at the school and a named member of staff co-ordinates the records, statistics and training for staff.

This is an area in which the school continues to perform extremely well with excellent recording systems in place.

A copy of the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures was found to be available at the school and the in Hostel.

Staff have completed training in child protection and were aware of their responsibilities.

The school has links with placing authorities, social services and doctors as required and again this has been well organised by the school.

Number of recorded child protection enquiries initiated by the social services department during the past 12 months:

25

**Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)**

The school has, and follows, an anti-bullying policy, with which children and staff are familiar and which is effective in practice. Where possible children in the school contribute to the development of the policy.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The school has an anti-bullying policy in place, which includes a definition of bullying, reporting bullying, staffs responsibilities when receiving reports of bullying and the support and guidance available for victims and perpetrators.

The anti-bullying policy is available in the Hostel Handbook.

No issues were raised regarding bullying from pupils or staff.

**Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied**

100 %

**Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)**

All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The Head Teacher and Head of Care confirmed that they are aware of the events which they are required to notify relevant authorities.

As previously mentioned, the school manages recording and reporting in relation to child protection extremely well and the systems for recording notifications are similar, none have been reported since April 2003.

**NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO NCSC DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:**

- conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children
- serious harm to a child
- serious illness or accident of a child
- serious incident requiring police to be called

0

0

0

0

<b>Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)</b> <b>The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>A procedure has been developed identifying actions to be taken when a pupil is absent from the school without authority.</p> <p>The Head Teacher reported that records would be maintained if a pupil was to be missing from the school without authority.</p> <p>The Head Teacher reported that this is not an area in which the school experience issues.</p>		
<b>Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:</b>		<b>0</b>

## CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour.

### Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

Relationships between staff and children are based on mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries which are effective for both the individuals and the group.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Relationships between staff and pupils were observed to be positive. Staff reported being aware of the needs of individuals and the whole group and were observed to demonstrate this during the Hostel meeting, enabling pupils to raise issues and take turns.</p> <p>The school operates a reward scheme which includes pupils receiving certificates for positive behaviour and achievements. Pupils who spoke with the inspectors made positive comments about this reward scheme.</p> <p>The Head Teacher reported that expectations on behaviour for pupils are clearly defined and parents and pupils are informed prior to commencing at the school.</p>		

### Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.26)

Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour, and where the behaviour of children is regarded as unacceptable by staff, it is responded to by constructive disciplinary measures which are approved by the Head of Care.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>Staff were observed to respond positively to acceptable behaviour from pupils. Staff confirmed that they are aware of sanctions they may use. The agreed sanctions were observed to be appropriate for the pupils. Pupils confirmed that sanctions used are acceptable.</p> <p>A sanctions record is maintained at the Hostel. The record includes the date, the sanction, the pupils name, the reason for the sanction and the staff members signature. The sanctions record should also include the outcome, the names of other staff members present and pupils should be given the opportunity to record their view of the sanction. The sanctions record has been checked and signed by senior staff at the school.</p> <p>Relationships between staff and pupils were observed to be positive and enabling. The Head Teacher and staff confirmed that they do not use physical interventions. Examination of staff meeting minutes identified that Hostel staff discuss issues relating to individual pupils and agree ways to manage unacceptable behaviours.</p>		

## QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.
- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within school and in the local community.
- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.
- Children 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.

### Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

Admission and leaving processes are planned and agreed with the child – and as appropriate, with parents and carers and placing authorities – as far as possible and handled with sensitivity and care by those concerned.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

Suitable procedures are in place for introducing pupils to the school and Hostel including visits to the Hostel and meeting other pupils who attend the Hostel. The Head of Care reported that information regarding the Hostel is relayed to pupils by staff and that they are looking into producing a video to assist in this process.

The Head teacher reported that all pupils who use the Hostel attend the school and thus all required information is available to Hostel staff.

One member of staff at the school is responsible for reviews.

The preparation for leaving school and the transition process are completed as required through the school. A meeting was held during the course of this inspection regarding attending college for all year ten and eleven pupils, which was observed to be a positive and useful event.

**Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.7)**

Care staff and the school's residential provision and activities actively contribute to individual children's educational progress, and care staff actively support children's education, ensuring regular attendance, punctuality and a minimum of interruption during the school day.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

4

A multi-disciplinary meeting is held every Monday morning at which all teaching staff and the senior Hostel staff are in attendance. Hostel staff attend pupils Educational Reviews. In addition to these there are informal links between Hostel and teaching staff.

Pupils at the Hostel have an area to study in their bedroom and can study in the lounge or quiet room. On return from school each day, Hostel staff are available to assist pupils with homework.

An assortment of books, games, art and craft activities are available in the Hostel for pupils. Pupils have access to the schools sport and computer facilities outside of school hours with staff supervision.

One of the main aims of the Hostel is to prepare pupils for independent living.

**Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9)**

Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

4

The Hostel operates in this area incredibly well, with a wide variety of activities arranged for pupils outside of school hours. Activities are organised by Hostel staff and pupils, the inspectors observed plans being discussed in a Hostel meeting during the course of this inspection.

Pupils were observed enjoying outdoor ball games, making Christmas decorations and decorating Christmas trees in the Hostel during the course of the inspection. On the second day of inspection, a large group of Hostel pupils visited another school, Hostel staff and pupils reported that this is a regular event which is enjoyed by both schools.

The Head Teacher reported that the school maintains links with London's Deaf Community in the form of attending local events.

Hostel staff reported that pupils have a short period of free time when they have completed homework before tea. Most of the pupils time is structured, with two or three activities available in the evening. The inspectors are of the opinion that this is appropriate for the pupils at the hostel and pupils raised no issues over a lack of free time.

Hostel staff reported that risk assessments are carried out for certain activities and that they consider the group and individuals safety with all activities.

Pupils have access to a range of books and newspapers at the Hostel. Hostel staff reported that they are conscious of age certifications with regard to computer games and videos.

<b>Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)</b> <b>The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets any intimate care needs.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>2</b>
<p>Examination of four individual case files identified that they contain the health information required.</p> <p>The Head of Care reported that Hostel staff can attend appointments although parents/carers usually deal with this aspect of their child's needs.</p> <p>Three Hostel staff and six other staff at the school are trained in the use of first aid.</p> <p>The Head of Care reported that prescribed medication is only administered to the pupil it is prescribed to.</p> <p>A medication procedure is available at the Hostel which requires updating to include recording medication received at the school and returned.</p> <p>Examination of Medication Administration Record Sheets identified that they were signed, they should include details of the medication prescribed to pupils. Medication received at the school should be recorded.</p> <p>Senior staff make regular checks of the medication, storage and administration records.</p> <p>The Head of Care reported that records are maintained of accidents, injuries and illness to pupils while they are at the Hostel.</p>		

<b>Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.15)</b> <b>Children are provided with adequate quantities of suitably prepared wholesome and nutritious food, having regard to their needs and wishes, and have the opportunity to learn to prepare their own meals. Where appropriate special dietary needs due to health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background are met, including the choice of a vegetarian meal for children who wish it.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>A varied menu is available to pupils with alternative vegetarian food at both lunch and evening meal times. The cook reported that the Hostel pupils views are sought regarding the menu for the evening meal.</p> <p>The days menu is displayed in the dining room.</p> <p>All meals are served in the dining room. Sufficient tables and chairs are available for pupils and staff to take meals together.</p> <p>The inspectors remain of the opinion that further investigations should be carried out into the ability to serve breakfast and evening meals in the Hostel.</p> <p>The inspectors took lunch with pupils on one day and an evening meal on one day. Meals provided were of sufficient quantity and quality. Pupils who spoke with the inspectors made positive comments about the food they receive at the school. Meal times were observed to be well managed and orderly.</p> <p>The Environmental Health Officer visited in November 2002 and the cook reported that recommendation made have been actioned.</p> <p>All catering staff at the school have completed training in food hygiene.</p> <p>Sufficient clean and suitable cutlery and crockery is available.</p> <p>Pupils have access to a small kitchen in the Hostel to prepare drinks and light snacks in between meals.</p> <p>Pupils have access to drinking water at the school and Hostel in between meal times.</p>		

**Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.7)**

Children are provided for adequately on an individual basis and encouraged to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing and personal requisites. Children who require assistance to choose what they wear and/or how they spend their money are provided with the assistance they need, in a way which maximises their choice.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

Pupils board at the Hostel on weekdays and were seen to bring their own clothing and belongings from home. Pupils were observed to change out of their school uniform on returning to the Hostel.

The school is situated close to local shops and shopping centres and pupils may go out shopping locally for personal requisites.

Bedrooms were observed to have been personalised with pupils posters, pictures, certificates and belongings.

Staff reported that there is a central supply of sanitary provision although pupils can bring these items from home.

## CARE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT PLAN

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.
- In accordance with their wishes, children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.
- Children receive individual support when they need it.

### Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

There is a written placement plan specifying how the school will care for each boarding pupil in accordance with his or her assessed needs, the school cares for that child in accordance with that plan, monitors progress in relation to that plan, and updates that plan as necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
<p>The inspectors sampled four individual case files all of which contained a care plan. Care plans were found to be comprehensive, updated as necessary and agreed with the pupil. Care plans were found to contain all information required by this Standard. Each pupil is allocated with a key worker who provides individual guidance and support. Pupils informed the inspectors that they knew who their key worker was. The school has recently introduced a Health Information booklet, the inspectors noted these to be in place for two pupils out of the sample of four. Hostel staff informed the inspectors that they attend pupil's statutory reviews.</p>		

### Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.5)

Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress which can, in compliance with legal requirements for safeguards, be seen by the child.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>All information required in Standard 18.2 was contained in the four sampled case files. All written entries in case files were found to be signed and dated. Each pupil has two files, one containing contact details, background information, reviews, child welfare and protection forms, and risk assessments. The second file contains the Hostel care plan, the key workers weekly report and the personal development plan. The inspectors noted a positive improvement in pupils individual case files since the last inspection of the school.</p>		

<b>Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.3)</b> <b>The school maintains clear and accurate records on the staff and child groups of the school, and major events affecting the school and children resident there.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>2</b>
<p>The inspectors examined in detail four staff files and four pupil files all of which were selected at random.</p> <p>All of the pupil files were found to contain clear and accurate records in relation to admission dates, who was responsible for their placements, previous addresses and legal status. Staff files were found to contain some documentation required of this Standard however evidence of appropriate checks, copies of qualifications and references were not available for every member of staff. This is due to the length of time some staff have worked at the school and the changes in legislation regarding appointing staff. The files for two members of staff who had been appointed at the school most recently did contain proof of identity, a copy of the individuals passport, Criminal Record Bureau checks, a contract of employment and details of the probationary period. An advisory recommendation has been made under Standard 27 regarding this.</p> <p>The Head Teacher provided a list of people living at the school.</p> <p>Records are maintained of accidents which were available for inspection.</p> <p>A published staff rota is available at the Hostel.</p>		

<b>Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.6)</b> <b>Subject to their wishes, children are positively encouraged and enabled by the school to maintain contact with their parents and other family members (unless there are welfare concerns) while living at school.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>Hostel staff reported that they remain in contact with pupil's parents and carers regarding welfare issues. At the time of inspection a member of Hostel staff was noted to make telephone contact with a number of pupil's parents.</p> <p>The Head Teacher reported that a newsletter is produced by the Hostel with information on activities and outings which have occurred and those planned for the future, which is sent to parents/carers and placing authorities.</p> <p>Details regarding restrictions on contact with parents were noted to be recorded on individual pupils case files. Hostel staff reported that they would only impose restrictions on pupils when there were welfare concerns and these would be clearly recorded.</p> <p>Areas are available in the school where pupils can meet with parents or any other visitors in private if this is appropriate.</p>		

**Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.2)**

Where a pupil is in care and will be leaving care on leaving the school, the school agrees with the young person's responsible authority what contribution it should make to implement any Pathway or other plan for the pupil before the pupil leaves school. These arrangements are in line with that young person's needs, and the school implements its contribution where feasible from at least a year before the pupil is expected to leave care or move to independent living. The school works with any Personal Advisor for the child.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

Hostel staff attend pupils statutory reviews and would contribute to pathway or other plans produced for pupils prior to them leaving the school.

Hostel staff reported that one of the main aims of the Hostel is to prepare pupils for their future. Pupils confirmed that they are enabled to develop skills for daily living with using washing machines, preparing snacks and drinks, shopping and keeping their bedrooms tidy.

**Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.13)**

All children are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes, and children identified as having particular support needs, or particular problems, receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The school and Hostel include all pupils in social groups and activities. The Head of Care reported that Hostel staff are aware of any pupils who may not readily fit into the group and work with them in this process.

The Head Teacher reported that pupils have access to a pastoral teacher within the school in addition to their key worker at the Hostel.

The school is a specialist facility for pupils who are deaf, all pupils and staff communicate using British Sign Language (BSL). The school arrange interpreters for pupils reviews and meetings.

## PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children live in well designed, pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.
- Children live in accommodation that is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.
- Children are able to carry out their ablutions in privacy and with dignity.
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.

### Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. It serves the needs of the children and provides the sort of environment most helpful to each child's development, and is sufficient for the number of children.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The school is situated in Balham, close to local shops and public transport links. The school was purpose built and acoustically treated. The Hostel was not designed to the same standard, the bedrooms are quite small, the corridors are dark and the bathroom/shower and toilet facilities are small and inadequate.

A minicom is available to pupils in the Hostel. The fire alarm system is fitted with flashing lights.

The Head Teacher reported that the Hostel is only used for school related functions.

Five offices are situated on the ground floor of the Hostel which are used during the school day, the Head Teacher reported that these offices are usually vacated prior to pupils accessing the Hostel.

Closed Circuit Television cameras are in use at the Hostel, which the Head of Care reported were installed following a number of incidents when pupils belongings had gone missing.

The inspectors are aware of a recent ceramics project. Pupils and staff at the school designed and made mosaics with ceramic tiles which have been incorporated into the paving and walls on a local parade of shops. This project was viewed as a positive experience for the school and the local community.

**Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.19)**

**The school provides adequate good quality and well-maintained accommodation for boarding pupils, which is consistent with their needs.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

The interior and exterior of the Hostel were found to be maintained to an acceptable standard of repair and redecoration. The Head Teacher reported that new electrical supply and a new fire alarm system are being installed at the school. Areas will be redecorated when this work is completed.

Twenty single and two three bedded rooms are available at the Hostel. Separate bedroom, toilet and bathroom facilities are provided for girls and boys. An alarm system is used at night to alert staff if pupils leave the bedroom areas.

Pupils who showed the inspectors around the Hostel confirmed that they have personalised their bedrooms with posters, certificates and belongings. Pupils who spoke with the inspectors made positive comments regarding their bedrooms at the Hostel.

Bedrooms all contain a single bed with sufficient bed linen, a wardrobe, curtains at the window, a chair and table to study with overhead lighting and a locker. Carpets are fitted in all bedrooms. New electrical sockets have been fitted in bedrooms since the last inspection.

Three pupils currently use one of the three bedded rooms. The Head of Care reported that the pupils have chosen to share the room. The pupils who spoke with the inspectors confirmed that this is the case.

A telephone and minicom are available in the Hostel for the pupils use. Information on Childline, including the telephone number are displayed by the telephone.

Pupils can study in their bedrooms, in the lounge or the quiet room. The inspectors observed pupils completing their homework in the lounge after school with staff available to assist if required.

Pupils have space to pursue their hobbies whilst at the school in their bedroom, the quiet room and the games area of the Hostel.

Three pupils who spoke to the inspectors confirmed that they were involved in the décor of the Hostel.

Pupils have access to a laundry area which contains two washing machines and two tumble driers at the Hostel.

The heating, lighting and ventilation were observed to be satisfactory and no issues were brought to the attention of the inspectors regarding these services.

Areas are available at the school for pupils to meet visitors in private if this is appropriate and as previously mentioned, contact details are noted on pupils files in the Hostel.

Hostel staff sleep in rooms are close to the pupils bedrooms should they be required at night.

An alarm system is used at night to alert staff if pupils are out of their bedrooms.

**Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.7)**

The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets, all of good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children. The school has appropriate changing and washing facilities for incontinent children where necessary.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

2

Four bathrooms and eight toilets are available to pupils in the Hostel, showers are not available. Toilets and bathrooms are close to the bedrooms and take into account pupils needs for privacy, dignity and safety. Separate toilet and bathroom facilities are available for staff and visitors at the Hostel.

Hostel staff reported that there are insufficient bathroom and toilet facilities at the Hostel, particularly for the boys. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors did not raise any issues with bathroom facilities at the Hostel.

No issues were raised by pupils or Hostel staff regarding the hot and cold water supplies.

**Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)**

Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, in accordance with Health and Safety and Fire legislation and guidance.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

2

Gas installations were inspected in March, July and November 2003. The boilers are maintained annually.

Risk assessments are completed within the school and the Hostel and were available for inspection. A member of staff at the Hostel is responsible for completing monthly health and safety checks.

A fire drill was carried out in November 2003 and have been completed at least once each term. The fire alarm is tested every week by staff at the school and an outside contractor checked the system in March 2003. The Hostel staff and three pupils who spoke to the inspectors were aware of the actions they should take if the fire alarm is activated. As previously mentioned, the fire alarm system is currently being replaced and the electrical supply is being updated.

The business manager reported that the water certificates are not currently at the school, copies of these should be sent to the National Care Standards Commission.

The data sheets for cleaning materials used at the school are available to staff.

## STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- There are careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.

### Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those employed on a contractual/sessional basis) and volunteers who work with the children in the school includes checks through the Criminal Records Bureau checking system (at Standard or Enhanced level as appropriate to their role in the school), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

2

The Head Teacher reported that there is a recruitment process at the school which involves vacant positions being advertised, candidates completing application forms, interviews being held, two references being taken up, contracts of employment being produced and Criminal Records Bureau checks being carried out.

Examination of four staff files identified that this process was not followed in full for all staff currently employed at the school, this is due to the time staff have been employed at the school and the changes in legislation regarding staff recruitment during this time. Two references must be obtained for all staff members. Criminal Records Bureau checks and proof of identity must be sought and qualifications must be checked. The Head Teacher must ensure that all relevant information and checks are in place before staff commence in post.

The school does not use 'gap' students or volunteers.

<b>Total number of care staff:</b>	5	<b>Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:</b>	2
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**Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)**

The school is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the minimum level specified under standard 28.2. Records of staff actually working in the school demonstrate achievement of this staffing level.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The Head of Care reported that the staff numbers in the Hostel reflect the number of pupils and the range of activities on offer at the Hostel.

The published staffing rota identified that the staffing levels are appropriate for the number of pupils.

Four full time and one part time member of staff employed at the Hostel. The Head of Care has been in post for three weeks although she had worked at the Hostel previously. Two other members of staff have been at the Hostel for a number of years, offering continuity for pupils. Staffing levels are reviewed if pupils needs change and waking night staff are available when required for individual pupils.

Guidance is available for staff regarding supervision of pupils when out on journeys. The inspectors observed staff and pupils preparing for an outing with staff reinforcing the schools expectations on pupils while on the minibus and on the visit.

Hostel staff register pupils on arrival at the Hostel after school and a log book in the office is used to note the pupils and staff in the Hostel at night.

**Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)**

Staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the school.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

An induction programme is in place for new staff. One member of Hostel staff who spoke to the inspectors confirmed that they are in the process of completing this.

Policies are available for staff in relation to responding to emergencies, child protection and health and safety.

Three completed staff questionnaires confirmed that staff have received training to assist them complete their work. All Hostel staff have a personal development plan.

**Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)**

**All staff, including domestic staff and the Head of the school, are properly accountable and supported.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

Staff at the Hostel all receive supervision every two weeks from the Head of Care. The Head Teacher has links with another Residential Special School, has meetings each term with an external person and can go to the Deputy for Education in the Borough. Clear lines of accountability are in place within the school and Hostel, which include the different senior staff within the school and ultimately the Head Teacher. Examination of four staff files identified that these staff have a written job description, the business manager confirmed that all staff have a job description. A full school meeting is held every week, senior staff meetings are held weekly and a weekly Hostel meeting for which the minutes were available for inspection. The school has a policy for staff regarding not smoking while with pupils and in relation to not consuming alcohol while on duty.

## ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.
- Children enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.

### Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

The school is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible childcare.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The Head of Care has been in post for five weeks, she has four years previous experience working at the Hostel.

The Head of Care reported that she and three members of Hostel staff are due to commence NVQ training in January 2004.

The published staffing rota confirmed that staff in charge of the Hostel have substantial experience of working at the school and that sufficient time is available for staff meetings and time to spend with individual pupils.

Pupils are not left in charge or responsible for other pupils while at the Hostel although they may be given tasks and responsibilities depending upon their age and ability, which is appropriate.

#### Percentage of care staff with relevant NVQ or equivalent child care qualification:

0 %

### Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

The National Care Standards Commission is informed within 24 hours if a receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy becomes responsible for the school. Such persons on becoming responsible for the school have ensured that the school continues to be managed on a day to day basis by a Head who meets recruitment and qualification requirements for a Head under these Standards. Such a temporary Head must make sure that the operation of the school meets the requirements of these standards in relation to the day to day running of the school.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The Head of Care has developed a self assessment tool referenced to the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The inspectors are of the opinion that this is a good tool for the Hostel. The Head Teacher completes a report for the Governors which includes detailed information on the services provided at the Hostel.

**Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.7)**

The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body receive a written report on the conduct of the school from a person visiting the school on their behalf every half term.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

A representative for the school visited the Hostel in the Autumn term 2003 and Spring term 2004 with a report available for inspection. The inspectors are aware that the Head Teacher expended considerable effort obtaining the services of an appropriate person to carry out these visits each half term and the difficulties this has caused.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

**Lay Assessor** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## PART D

## HEAD'S RESPONSE

### **D.1 Head's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.**

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on <enter date(s) of inspection here> and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

Comments and action plan were received from the provider.

These are available upon request from the SW London office.

**Action taken by the NCSC in response to Head's comments:**

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

YES

Head's comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report

YES

Head's comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate

YES

**Note:**

In instances where there is a major difference of view between the Inspector and the Head both views will be made available on request to the Area Office.

**D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 26/04/2004, which indicates how recommended actions and advisory recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.**

**Status of the Head's Action Plan at time of publication of the final inspection report:**

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

### D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

**Head's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies.**

**D.3.1 I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the recommended actions made and will seek to comply with these.**

<b>Print Name</b>	<u>P MERRIFIELD</u>
<b>Signature</b>	<u></u>
<b>Designation</b>	<u></u>
<b>Date</b>	21/04/2004

**Or**

**D.3.2 I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_**  
**am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:**

--

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Designation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Head both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.