



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

**Shenstone Lodge School**

**Birmingham Road  
Shenstone  
Nr Lichfield  
Staffs  
WS14 0LB**

*Lead Inspector*  
Christopher Garrett

*Key Announced Inspection*  
16 January 2007      09:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of school</b>	Shenstone Lodge School
<b>Address</b>	Birmingham Road Shenstone Nr Lichfield Staffs WS14 0LB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 480369
<b>Fax number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	Sandwell Local Education Authority
<b>Name of Head</b>	Mr S Butt
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Mr V. Ozers
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	6-11yrs old
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	13/09/2005

## **Brief Description of the School:**

Shenstone Lodge School is a residential special school catering for boys who are experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties and may display behaviour associated with the Autistic Spectrum. The school admits boys who are in Key Stage one and Key Stage two age bands, though the school will occasionally accept those pupils who are already in Year 6. (Ages 6-11) The maximum number that the school can have on roll is 28 of which 16 could be in residence. At the time of the Inspection there were 10 boys in residence and 5 day pupils. The school currently provides a 5-day boarding package. The school has the facility to allow a number of the day pupils remain until the early part of the evening to join in activities organised by the care team.

The school is owned by Sandwell's Department of Long Life Learning and is situated in the village of Shenstone, which is within Staffordshire. The location of the school provides good access to local community services and facilities. The school is set in its own extensive grounds, which consists of play areas in which a range of static play equipment has been installed, an animal enclosure, swimming pool and sports field. The residential provision is situated in a large country house and is spread over its three floors. The house provides a great deal of space all of which is used to great advantage for the children. The building has been extended in the past to provide staff rooms, offices, medical room and resource areas. The purpose built school is detached from the residential facilities. The school is planning to build a gymnasium in the near future.

# SUMMARY

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

This was an announced key inspection and took place over a two-day period. On the first day the Inspector arrived at 09.00hrs and stayed until 20.00hrs on the second day the inspection lasted from 08.00hrs until 17.30hrs. During the first day a second Inspector attended the school with the specific task of examining how the health needs were being met for the children staying at the school.

On the evening of the first day of the inspection there were 10 children staying at school.

Prior to the inspection the Inspector had contacted the school and asked the Head Teacher to arrange for the children (10) to complete a pre-inspection questionnaire. Staff questionnaire were circulated amongst staff and parent's questionnaires sent to their home addresses.

The Inspector undertook a pre-inspection visit to the school to review its responses to the recommendations made following the last inspection. During the visit the Inspector was provided with some of the documentation that had been requested. Pre-inspection questionnaires were received from a number of parents of the children boarding at the school. Unfortunately a number of other parent's questionnaires received by the Commission and forwarded to the Inspector were lost in the post) Pre-inspection questionnaire were also received from 2 of the care staff The Head Teacher provided a pre-inspection questionnaire.

The Inspector completed a inspection record which contained references to information forwarded to the Commission since the school last inspection and to the information received by the Inspector as part of the pre inspection activity.

During the Inspection the Inspector met with the Head Teacher, the Head of Care, Deputy Head of Care, members of the care team, the Administrator, Independent Person and the maintenance team (grounds person and temporary care taker) The Inspector examined some of documentation held at the school and a sample of pupil and staff files. Two of the pupils gave the Inspector a tour of the residential provision. The Inspector was invited to join several meals with the children and observed some of their activities.

## **What the school does well:**

Shenstone Lodge School is a residential special school that is providing a good service and a good standard of care to the children who board there. The Head Teacher, Staff and Board of Governors school have demonstrated that they are committed to the inspection process and use this as a tool to improve and enhance the standard of care within the school the majority of the recommendations, which the school can take responsibility for, have been actioned.

The care team are reflective practitioners and under the leadership of good senior staff continue to explore ways that they can enhance the service that they provide. The school has made considerable effort to ensure that it is a safe place for the children and staff to live and work in. Good systems for safeguarding children are in place though some need further revision and to be tested to judge their overall effectiveness.

All of the children completed a pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they were "always satisfied" with the boarding provision. Comments from the children about why they liked staying at the school included "it is always good" and "we have fun". The children gave indications to the Inspector that they felt safe with the care staff. All of the children indicated in their questionnaires "those who were caring for them always protected them from harm". They explained that they would talk to the care staff if they had any concerns or problems. Comments made included, "they (the staff) know how to calm me down" and "they help us".

The school has developed a comprehensive 5-year training programme that ensures that 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. Care staff undertake core training covering subjects like child protection, fire awareness and physical intervention techniques and specialist training on subjects such as Bereavement and counselling. The commitment shown by the staff and the school to the training programme is commendable. All care staff to have successfully completed their NVQ Level 3 training.

Senior care staff are given training appropriate to their role and responsibilities. The designated people for child protection have undertaken a range of child protection training. Care staff will soon be supervised by senior staff who will both have undertaken training on the delivery of supervision.

The management of behaviour within the school was found to be generally good. This focuses on the recognition and celebration of appropriate and positive behaviour. The children were fully engaged in the programme.

The Inspector formed the view that the school was providing an exceptional programme of activities, The children spoke positively about the range of

activities that they are able to access and in particular enjoyed going to the cubs.

The systems for consultation between the care staff and parents, significant others and the young people continue to be maintained at a high standard. The school has developed a number of systems that ensure that contact is maintained with the parents and that they are regularly informed about any events or incidents. One parent commented how the staff "either phone us up or send home a weekly diary. I know what the children's have been doing and how their behaviour has been". Parents made positive comments about the support that the school and staff provided. Parents comments included "they (staff) are very understanding and helpful " and another " I think they do a great job and we have no faults with the school or the staff ....I am glad that my son is at this school and would recommend it to anyone who is having problems with their child.

The positive and caring relationship between staff and the children continues to be one of the schools greatest strengths. The interaction between them was seen to be good, relaxed, positive and based on mutual respect.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The school has been proactive in addressing a number of the recommendations and advisory recommendations made in the last report. This has helped to improve and enhance the service being provided.

The school has changed its boarding arrangements from 12 day boarding to 5 day boarding. This has had a noticeable positive impact on the standard of care and the service being provided by the school. A consequence of this reorganisation has been the introduction of key working to the school. This has been met with great enthusiasm by the care staff and has had a fundamental effect in how they are able to fulfil their caring roles. Key working responsibilities include holding regular one-one key working sessions, overseeing the children's care plans and being available to escort and support the children as they access any external agencies. The Inspector spoke to a number of the children about their key workers and key working sessions. They all spoke positively about these. One of the boys explained " It a good time to talk about any problems." Another said he thought that his key worker was, "very helpful" and another said that Key Workers " help you with your problems.

Care staff have undertaken home visits and maintain regular contact with parents. Parents spoke positively about the support that the staff and school provide them. One parent said that the " staff are very helpful and understanding and another that " you can always ring them up if there is a problem"



The school has introduced a system of care planning and care plans during the past year. These have yet to become fully established and are under constant review. The care staff spoke enthusiastically about the newly introduced care plans. They felt that these provided a good format in which to record the areas of work that they were undertaking.

The staff rota has been reorganised. Care staff are now more actively involved at different times of the day. Evening homework sessions have been introduced and these are delivered and supervised by the care staff. These changes have helped to promote a better working relationship with the education staff.

The residential care team have now been delegated its own activity budget. This allows the care staff to effectively plan and arrange a varied programme of activities and events. Increased numbers of staffing at night helped ensure that planned activities are not disrupted.

The safeguarding of the children has been further enhanced by the introduction of telephone verification of references as part of the schools recruitment procedures.

The senior care staff have addressed some shortfalls on care policies and guidance (Missing person records, guidance on Room Searches and a Record of Searches).

The school has invested considerable time and resources into responding to the recommendation made regarding medical procedures and health. The school now has access to a school nurse, who is available for advice and undertakes regular health related checks for the children. Significant improvements have been made in the safe management, storage and handling of medication. All staff responsible for the administration of medication have received training.

Additional security to the buildings and grounds has been arranged since the last inspection. A burglar alarm is activated on the ground floor of the residential building at night. A security patrol visits on the school at night and is on call to respond to any of the alarms being activated. Following a consultation with the local Crime prevention Officer protective hedges have been planted around the perimeter of the schools grounds, the main access to the school is to be fitted with a automatic security gate and the CCTV system is going to be upgraded.

The governing body had made arrangements for a person who is independent of the school to visit the school once a half term and to complete a written report on the conduct of the school. This person is also going to make himself available to meet with the children in private or to be contacted by phone.

## **What they could do better:**

The school should give greater consideration to how it can evidence the good practice that it engages in. The regular recording of such events such as children meetings would help this.

The school must ensure that all staff are kept updated on any changes in policy and procedures and are made aware of when new ones have been introduced.

The school should conduct a further review of reflection time; particularly focussing on the threshold of when reflection time becomes a sanction and ensure that this is understood consistently adhered to by all of the staff. When the use of reflection time becomes a sanction then this should be recorded in the sanctions book. The logbook should be monitored by senior staff to ensure that this intervention is being applied consistently and fairly and to be able to make an assessment of its effectiveness.

The safety of the children would be further enhanced if all risk assessments were regularly reviewed. The school has yet to implement a system of undertaking individual risk assessments for the children and the risk related to their participation in specific activities. These are required to help determine the level of risk associated with child's behaviour or medical condition and how this might impact on care package including the activity programme being provided for them.

The school must ensure that a satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau check has been obtained before any staff are able to take up their employment at the school. Arrangements must be made for the independent visitor to have undertaken a CRB check before having unsupervised access with any of the children.

The manner in which care plans are compiled should be reviewed. These must address all of the assessed needs (social) identified in the children's educational statement and or their Looked After Child documentation. The child educational statement and/or Looked after Child documentation. Any issues identified in the initial referral pupil profile or at any other time, that pose some level of risk i.e. epilepsy and sexualised behaviour should be specifically addressed in the child's care plan or in the individual risk assessments.

The school must implement a management monitoring system. An assessment needs to be undertaken to determine whether the current deployment of senior staff allows them with sufficient non-contact time to complete their administrative and managerial responsibilities.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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# Being Healthy

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.(NMS 14)
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.(NMS 15)

## The Commission considers Standard 14 the key standard to be inspected.

### JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

Standard 14

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

The school actively promotes the health care needs of the children, ensuring that they receive the necessary treatment and support to ensure good health. This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

### EVIDENCE:

Since the last key inspection there has been considerable effort to action the recommendations made previously and to further develop the service. The school is commended on the work that it has undertaken.

Each child has a health record and assessment, which clearly identifies individual needs. This information has yet to be transferred to a care plan, which gives clear instruction as to how those needs are to be met. The service has adopted a model of care planning that will support the assessment and give staff the information they required in a user-friendly format. This model has yet to be properly implemented. Since the last inspection the service has also adopted a key worker system and although the role of the key workers was not fully discussed during this visit, this was also felt to be a positive step forward. The deputy head of care have some examples of how key workers had supported individual children and their parents in meeting the health care needs of the child.

At the last inspection the service didn't have a school nurse, since then they have been able to access the service of a school nurse from a local clinic, who is available for advice and undertakes regular health related checks for the children, example height and weight checks, she also supports the service in

providing information for any of the health education sessions that they arrange, such sessions as healthy eating, personal hygiene have already taken place others linked to the PHSE curriculum are being organised. The deputy Head of Care also stated that sex and relationship education would be introduced with the support from the nursing service.

The Deputy Head of Care identified that routine health checks were being undertaken regularly and in partnership with parents, this approach to shared care arrangements should again be recognised as an achievement for the service. At the last inspection there was a recommendation for the service to make adequate arrangements for the children to access dental services. The deputy Head of Care identified that she has liaised with the local authorities dental services who has written to all the parents asking them to identify the arrangements they have in place for the dental care of their child and if they need the school to support them with this. The response was variable, but some parents have replied with a percentage confirming that they have made their own arrangements and other deciding to use the service offered by the health facilitator. The deputy Head of Care and the health facilitator intend to repeat this exercise.

Again since the last inspection the service has considered the difficulties they were presented with when children needed to access GP Service, previously each child would be registered as a temporary resident, this created problem as the local GP would not necessarily have up to date information regarding the child's most recent treatment regime. The service has since revised this and has written to each parent and their local GP; the outcome is that each child is now registered with their own family GP. Any medication is prescribed by them and any treatment, if a child is ill the service know which GP to contact, and can, if necessary support the child and parent or carer to access this service during the residential care period. The deputy Head of Care stated that this system has been much more positive, the outcome for the children has meant that they are receiving a more consistent health care, and their family GP is becoming more familiar with the each child's health needs.

Specific health issues for children using the residential service include asthma, epilepsy, Von Willebrand's syndrome, attention deficit disorder, autism and allergies. It is recommended that where a health problem is identified that this should be included in the children's care plan. A number of children present behaviours that challenge the service; the staff team have been trained in the Team Teach approach to behavioural management.

The service does provide for children from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, and demonstrated that they had liaised with relatives and carers to ensure that they were meeting any specific needs, although at the time of this visit, the deputy Head of Care stated that none of the children had a specific cultural need.

All staff have received first aid training, the manager stated that regular updates are automatically arranged, a list of staff with the qualification was available near the first aid boxes seen at various location in the building. First aid boxes a routinely checked for stock, it was suggested that the service introduces a regular stock check and records which could inform the quality audits undertaken by the service.

Significant improvements have been made in the safe management, storage and handling of medication, the deputy Head of Care also was in the process of revising the policy and procedures. It was agreed to provide a copy to Commission for Social Care Inspection for information. Records showed effective system on place, and it was understood that all staff responsible for the administration of medication had received training, the Deputy Head of Care also discussed the introduction of competency assessment that would be undertaken periodically, it was suggested that these could be linked to annual appraisals. None of the children currently receiving residential care self medicate.

The management and handling of controlled drugs is satisfactory, with appropriate storage provided, records maintained in a CD book, running totals and two staff signing, a sample of medication was checked during this visits these were found to be satisfactory.

The service has also introduced of a cleaning and storage system for managing any spilled blood, the service has a kit" that includes protective gloves, aprons etc for clearing such spillage, it also has contains some sanitising powder, that is not in it's original container, therefore cannot be identified, and does not have the relevant safety or COSSH information near to. The deputy Head of Care was asked to address this matter.

## **Staying Safe**

### **The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.(NMS 3)
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.(NMS 4)
- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.(NMS 5)
- Children are protected from bullying by others.(NMS 6)
- 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.(NMS 7)
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.(NMS 8)
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour.(NMS 10)
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.(NMS 26)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

**The Commission considers Standards 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.**

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**



Standards 3,4,5,6,8,10,26 & 27

Quality in this outcome area is good.

The school has devised and implemented procedures that were known by staff, and the pupils, which ensure that the pupils boarding at the school are kept safe and protected from harm. The procedures are supported by good practice. Some policies and guidance needs to be revised to reflect the requirements of the national minimum standards. Some guidance has yet to be tried and tested and these may require further development to take place once their effectiveness has been determined.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

### **Standard 3.**

Information regarding the issues of privacy and confidentiality within the school has been collated from an examination of a sample of 3 care plans, the school's policy and guidance on Confidentiality and Searching of Pupils Possessions, the parents pre-inspection questionnaires, observations made during the inspection and from discussion with staff and young people.

The Inspector found evidence that staff at the school are fully aware of the need to follow practices that ensure the pupils rights for privacy and confidentiality are respected. Some of the related policies and guidance need to be reviewed to ensure they are fully compliant with the national minimum standards for residential schools and accurately reflect the current practise within the school.

Prior to the inspection the Inspector was provided with a copy of the schools Confidentiality Policy dated December 2005. It was noted that the previous observation about the policy not fully covering all of the points required by the national minimum standards had not been addressed .The policy remains entirely focussed on the issues of record confidentiality and access to files. It does not provide guidance and practical advice on entering the children's bedrooms, toilets and bathrooms.

The school has produced guidance on how searches of children's possessions and belongings would be conducted, if required and a produced a logbook to record when these had taken place. Care staff indicated that they were not aware that this guidance and had been produced. The Head of Care and care staff advised the Inspector that there had not been any recent need to do any searches.

It is advised that the guidance on Privacy and Confidentiality is reviewed to ensure that it adequately covers all of the matters as outlined in NMS Standard 3.2 This guidance should be made available to all staff and included in the Staff Handbook.

The school has a number of rooms and spaces available for the use of visiting parents and significant others. Both of the parents questionnaires received by the Inspector indicated that whenever they visited the school that they were able to meet with their children in a private.

During the pre-inspection visit the Head Teacher advised the Inspector that the school is in the process of updating its telephone system. A feature of the new system is said to be that the children will have access to, and the use of a cordless extension phone. A number of telephone numbers including those of national helplines and the schools independent visitor are to be programmed into it, allowing the children to make free calls to them. The children will also be able use this phone to make and receive calls to parents and significant others.

The Inspector spoke to a number of the children and they all indicated that they were satisfied with the arrangements for making and receiving calls. The phone currently used by the children is also cordless and this allows them to move into a private space if they wish. The new system will continue to offer this accessibility; the pre-programmed numbers will add a further element to the safeguarding the children.

The Inspector is aware that some of the staff have previously completed a skills audit to determine which of the young people were able to independently access and use a phone. It was suggested that this exercise be repeated and that the children are given practical instruction on the use of the new phones.

The Inspector was advised that there is currently a restriction on communication in place for one of the children and that this information had been shared with all of the members of staff.

The Inspector noted that the young peoples residential files are kept in a lockable office and that their educational files are kept within lockable filing cabinets within the administration area.

#### **Standard 4**

Information on the schools complaints procedures has been collated from an examination of the Pupils Handbook, the School Prospectus, information provided in the parents and pupils questionnaires, and from discussion with the Head of Care, Deputy Head of Care and with the a number of the children.

The school has procedures in place for the children, parents and significant others to raise concerns or make complaints and for these to be dealt with in an effective manner.

The children are given some basic information on how to raise concerns with the staff in information provided in the Children's Guide and on notices displayed around the school and residential unit.

The Head of Care and Deputy Head of Care explained that they were able to manage any issue or concerns raised by the children in an informal manner. The children could raise their concerns directly with staff, their key worker or during the regular children's meeting. The absence of minutes to the Children's meeting meant that it was not possible to find evidence of the type of issues being raised and how these were being addressed. However, all of the children spoken to and those who completed pre-inspection questionnaire indicated that they would take any concerns to a member of staff and that they were confident that these would be dealt with. The Inspector met with the Head of Care and the Deputy Head of Care and discussed the possible use of a " Grumbles and Groans Book" in which the children could log any issues and the staff could record their response. The Inspector also advised that all Children's meeting should be minuted.

The Inspector was advised that the school has previously circulated copies of a Children's formal complaints form issued by Sandwell. This has recently been revised and the Head Teacher explained that he has some concerns about the new version. The Inspector advised that whilst this issue was being resolved the school should produce its own children's complaints form and that these should be made freely available to all of the children.

The inspector noted that the school had not acted upon previous advice that it should produce guidance on the children's complaints procedures.

Parents and significant others receive advise on the school's complaint procedure in the school prospectus. Both of the parents whose questionnaires were received by the Inspector stated that they had received information on the school complaints procedure and had been advised that they could raise issues directly with the Commission. Both indicated that they had not had to make use of the complaints procedure.

The Head Teacher keeps a log of complaints received by the school. An examination of this showed than there had not been any recent formal complaints made to the school.

An examination of the staff training records showed that the care staff had recently received training on complaints and representation procedures.

## **Standard 5**

Information on the schools management of child protection issues has been collated from information provided in the Staff Handbook from an examination of staff training records, and from discussions with the designated people and members of staff.

The Inspector discussed the schools arrangements for the management of child protection with the Head of Care and the Deputy Head of Care who both share the role of designated person within the school. The school is unique in as much that it a part of Sandwell's educational provision but is geographically located in Staffordshire. To ensure that the school follows correct procedures there has been a consultation between both authorities and a referral protocol has been agreed. Both of the designated people stated that they had had experience of managing child protection referrals. Records of these and other consultations with the child protection agencies were said to be kept but were not inspected on this occasion.

An examination of the staff training records and the schools Training and Development programme showed that child protection training is a regular part of the whole school training programme. In addition to this both of the designated people had undertaken some additional training to raise their awareness and understanding of child protection issues. Child Protection is also a subject covered during NVQ Level 111 training, which has been completed, by all of the care team.

During an examination of one of the young peoples files, the Inspector noted references to information provided by child about an incident that had allegedly happened at his home. The Inspector felt that this information had met the threshold requiring consultation with the designated people. The designated people advised that they had only been made aware of the incident after it had been acted upon by other members of the school. The Inspector advised the school that it should check that the threshold for involving the designated people is appropriately set and understood by all of the staff. The Inspector formed a view that the current child protection procedures and practice within the school are good and contributes to the safeguarding of the children in the school.

## **Standard 6**

Information of how the school manages bullying has been collated from an examination of the children's pre-inspection questionnaire, information provided in the Head Teacher's pre-inspection questionnaire and during discussions with staff and the children and from observations made by the Inspector.

The Inspector found evidence that the school is aware that bullying is an issue for a number of the children and that it is proactive in creating a culture that does not tolerate bullying and provides support to vulnerable to the young people.

Prior to the inspection all of the children who board at the school were asked to complete a questionnaire. One of the questions specifically asked the young people if they had been bullied at the school. 5 of the children stated that they had never been bullied, four of the children said that they had been bullied and one child was unsure whether he had been bullied or not. Those children who stated that they had been bullied indicated that this primarily occurred at break times. The Inspector discussed bullying with a number of the children including some of those who had indicated in their questionnaire that they had been bullied. All of those spoken to said that they had been bullied on some occasions. With the exception of one, all of the children said that they had reported being bullied to staff who had then dealt with it in a way that had been acceptable to them. One of the children suggested that he had chosen not to take the matter to staff, as he had wanted to deal with the matter himself. However, he acknowledged that the staff were there to help him.

The Inspector observed some low level bullying taking place between three of the children during a break time. Staff were seen to challenge this and dealt with the incident immediately and effectively thus prevent it escalating. The Head of Care and Deputy Head of Care advised that bullying is subject that is openly discussed with the children. Bullies are asked to reflect on their behaviour and if it persists sanctions may be applied. Victims of bullying are given support and encouraged to report any further incidents. The Inspector was advised that bullying is also addressed through PSHE lessons held in school and during the care time and also in children's meetings and in key working sessions. The Deputy Head of Care provided information on the activities that had taken place during the National Anti- Bullying week.

The Inspector became aware that the school has recently taken part in a local authority survey concerning the standards of its schools toilets. The children have completed questionnaire and information provide in this had highlighted that the toilet area as being another hotspot for bullying in the school The Inspector advised by the member of staff compiling the data being collected from the questionnaires that this information is going to be shared with the Senior Management Team and that an action plan is to be drawn up to tackle the issue of bullying in the toilet areas.

Posters displayed around the school encourage the children to report bullying to staff.

The Inspector discussed bullying with some of the staff. They openly admitted that it sometimes took place. They demonstrated an awareness of why some

of the children resorted to bullying and of the need to immediately address this as and when it occurred.

## **Standard 8**

Information relating the schools management of young people who absent themselves without authority has been collated following an examination of, the schools policy on missing children, a sample of children's residential care files from discussions with the Head of Care and the Deputy Head of Care.

In line with other educational settings the school uses the term unauthorised absence to describe when a child is not in attendance at school and the school has not been notified by the parents as to the reason why. It is the Inspector understanding that the responsibility for checking on unauthorised absences during the school day (Failing to turn up at school) is that of the education/administration staff.

The matter of children being absent without authority (running off) is not currently an issue for the school and that there has not been an incident for a number of years. The children are given high levels of supervision at all times and enjoy and positive relationship with all of the staff and this contributes to then feeling safe within the school. Staff spoken to were confident that if an incident were to take place that they would be able to respond to this in an appropriate manner. However it acknowledged that this has yet to be proved.

The Inspector has previously acknowledged that incidents of children running off are unlikely to occur. However the children's safety could be further ensured if staff were able to refer to appropriate and sound guidance if an incident were to take place. The school has previously produced a policy but this was found to be inadequate and this should be revised ensure that it fully complies with the national minimum standards. In response to a previous recommendation the school has produced a " Absconder Record "which would be completed if a young person were to go missing from the school or an activity. The Inspector noted that a copy of the record and the existing guidance had not been put in the staff handbook and it was unclear whether all of the staff were aware that they were in place and of the need to complete a record it if an incident were to occur.

The school is located next to a very busy road. The Inspector was advised of the steps that are being taken to make the access to the school more secure. This will make it more difficult for a child to leave the grounds. However in the meantime a child were to leave the school they would more than likely land up on the roadside.

An examination of a sample of children files showed that the school has yet to introduce a system for undertaking individual risk assessments. Once implemented staff should make an individual assessment of the risk associated

with a child leaving the grounds and or the supervision of staff. The assessment should provide staff with the advice and guidance of the strategies they might need to use to prevent or dissuade a child from leaving the safety of the school or the supervision of staff.

## **Standard 10**

Evidence on the schools management of behaviour was collated by examining parents and children's questionnaires, the Head Teacher 's pre-inspection questionnaire the Staff handbook, Sanctions and Incident (Physical Intervention) Logbooks and from information provided during discussions with the Head of Care, Deputy Head of Care and Head Teacher. The overall management of behaviour within the school was found to be good.

The management of behaviour within the school and residential unit is focussed on recognising and celebrating a child's achievements and progress. An important aspect of this is the acknowledgment of good behaviour, self-control and being helpful to others. All staff are encouraged to praise success and encourage the children to reflect on any inappropriate behaviour. This is reinforced by the effective use of a variety of different schemes that provide instant recognition and rewards for effort and positive behaviour. These include being given stickers house points and merit certificates. It was evident that the children were engaging in the schemes. The Inspector observed them as they were being given their rewards. They expressed their pleasure and delight at being given the rewards and were aware of why that had been given them. The children wore their stickers with pride and joined in the celebration of their peer's success. Feedback on behaviour is provided to all of the children at key points of the day.

Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour can result in sanctions being applied. The school has adopted an incremental response to negative behaviour. Children may be asked to spend a short period of time either sat on a bench or on the stairs. This removes them from any incident and they are then encouraged to reflect on their behaviour. The staff handbook explains that reflection time is a short period away from others during which " the child will be expected to think about their actions and consequences and consider how they could have behaved in more positive and constructive time". The guidance provided to staff is that reflection time should not be for more than 10 minutes and that longer periods of time should be viewed as a sanction. If the child's behaviour persists or is a more serious, then staff have a number of different sanctions that can be applied. The details of which are described within the staff handbook.

The Inspector discussed rewards sanctions with a number of the children. Whilst they were fully conversant with the rewards and why these were given but there was less clarity about the use and purpose of some of the sanctions and what behaviour might result in then from being given to them. The

children described how on some occasions reflection time or sitting on the bench might last over several break times or longer periods of time Staff spoken to felt that the use of reflection time was a positive intervention but were less clear when it crossed the threshold of becoming a sanction. The use of reflection time operates across the whole of the school and care time. The Inspector was concerned that its use was not generally recorded and consequently this did not allow it to be monitored and an assessment of its effectiveness to be made. This also means that there is a possibility that the children might be receiving multiple sanctions An examination of the sanctions book showed approximately 26 sanctions had been given during the past two months. It was noted that only one of these referred to any instances of reflection time. There was some uncertainty amongst some of the staff whether this was an accurate record.

The Inspector acknowledged that the use of reflection time is a positive intervention strategy within the school and that it does meet a number of the objectives that it has been designed to meet. The Inspector is aware that senior staff have previously reviewed the use of reflection time. This had culminated in plans being made for a purposely-designed area being provided for children to use whilst on reflection time. This area will be nicely furnished and decorated with wall murals and be fitted out with white boards so that the children can express themselves in writing or drawings. This area will be located in on a central corridor and the children will not be there on their own. This will provide an interesting space and could produce some interesting results. However the school should conduct a further review of reflection time, particularly focussing on the threshold of when reflection time becomes a sanction and ensure that this is understood consistently adhered to by all of the staff. When the use of reflection time becomes a sanction then this should be recorded in the sanctions book. The logbook should be monitored by senior staff to ensure that this intervention is being applied consistently and fairly and to make an assessment of its effectiveness. Additional benefits and consistency and could be gained if a common agreement were reached on the recording of sanctions by the education and care team.

The school has introduced a new bound sanctions book. The current format of the logbook does not fully comply with the national minimum standards and the Inspector has advised that this should be revised. In particular there is no facility in the current format to record the effectiveness and consequence of a sanction or for the children to add their own views.

The school recognises that there may be occasions that a child's behaviour requires a physical intervention. An examination of the training records showed that all of the care staff and education staff have been trained in the use of de-escalation skills and restraint (Team Teach). The Head Teacher is an approved instructor of the Team Teach method and the Inspector understands that both the Head of Care and the Deputy Head of Care are going to be trained as instructors. The school has also arranged for its ancillary workers to



receive some physical intervention awareness training. They had been invited to attend Team Teach sessions and to observe the physical intervention Training. This is an example of good practice within the school and contributes to the safety of the children.

The school records all physical intervention on an incident log, which have now been put together in, bound and numbered books. An examination of these showed that approximately 60 incidents of physical intervention have taken place since the new book was introduced in March 2006. The inspector noted at although the records have a space for the children to make comments about a restraint that this is not routinely happening. The inspector has advised that the log should record when a child declines the opportunity to add his comments to the record. Staff are provide with guidance on the use of physical intervention and the circumstances that it might be used in the schools policy on Care and Control in the Staff Handbook.

The Inspector spoke to a number of the children whoa had had to be restrained on at least one occasion. They all stated that they felt that that the use of restraint had been fair and had been needed at the time. Parents indicated in their pre-inspection questionnaire that they had been informed about the sanctions and use of physical intervention within the school. One parent stated that punishments in the school were " very reasonable and only used when needed "

## **Standard 26**

The school take positive steps on a day-to-day basis to ensure that the children, staff and visitors are safe from the risk of fire and other hazards. This assessment has been based on an examination of the school's Fire Logbook, Service Records; Risk Assessment files a tour of the building and following discussions with the Head Teacher, the Gardener /Handyperson and temporary care taker

An examination of the Fire logbook showed that the Fire Alarm Systems, Emergency Lighting and Fire Fighting Equipment were being regularly tested and routinely serviced. The Inspector was advised that as part of their weekly fire checks that the maintenance staff completed a visual check on the condition of the portable fire fighting equipment. The Inspector noted that this was not being recorded in the fire logbook and advised that it should be. Records were kept indicated that practice Fire Evacuations were regularly taking place. Some of these had been scheduled to take place either late at night or early morning. The school had reviewed its Fire Risk Assessment in Oct 2006 .The Inspector spoke to a number of the children who demonstrated that they were aware of the schools fire procedure and where the fire assembly point was.

The Inspector is aware that Fire Awareness is part of the staff induction programme and that this is supplemented by further in house training. An examination of training records showed that a number of staff had recently completed the on line "In the line of Fire " training CD. The maintenance staff advised that a practical fire fighting training session is being planned later this year.

Records showed that Portable Appliance Testing (PATS) had been completed in 2006 and that the school boilers had been recently serviced. The Inspector noted that the Environmental Health Officer had visited the school in May 2006 and had made a number of recommendations. The maintenance team advised that all of these had been acted upon.

The school has an established procedure for conducting risk assessment on the environment and on the activities offered by the care staff. It was noted that a number of these had not been reviewed within the agreed timescales. The school has yet to implement a system of undertaking individual risk assessments for the children and the risk related to their participation in specific activities. These are required to help determine the level of risk associated with child's behaviour or medical condition and how this might impact on care package including the activity programme being provided for them.

The school has a mini bus, which can be driven by staff who have completed a mini bus-driving test. The maintenance team advised that it is the driver's responsibility to complete a safety check on the vehicle before it is taken out. The temporary caretaker has the responsibility of completing a weekly check on the vehicle and a record is kept of this. The local authority is responsible for arranging for the vehicle to have regular safety checks and to be serviced at regular intervals.

Visitors to the school have to sign in at the main office and entrances to the school building and the residential building are via locks fitted with security keypads. A burglar alarm is activated on the ground floor of the residential building at night .A security patrol visits on the school at night and is on call to respond to any of the alarms being activated .The school campus is under Closed-Circuit television surveillance. Copies of the recordings are kept for a week. The Head Teacher advised the Inspector that the he has recently asked the local Crime and prevention police officer to review the security of the school and its grounds. As a consequence of this a number of measures have been taken. These include protective hedges have been planted around the perimeter of the schools grounds, the main access to the school is to be fitted with a automatic security gate and the CCTV system is going to be upgraded.

## Health and Safety

- A number of Health and Safety /maintenance issues noted in the last report had been acted upon
- Exposed Heating Pipes. The Inspector was advised that the education authority had conducted its own risk assessment on these and had declared that they did not represent a high risk and would not be continuing with any further boxing in. The Inspector has advised the school that it should get a written copy of this advice.

During a tour of the grounds and the building the following observations relating to Health and Safety/maintenance issues were made.

- Plank on climbing frame loose
- External fire door on top landing (to the rear) bottom rail rotten and should be repaired /replaced
- Number of external lights to the play area not working
- Sleeping bags left on the middle landing (possible fire hazard)
- Art material stored in room that is part of a fire escape on the middle landing (possible fire hazard)
- Access to loft in top floor bathroom. Hasp and staple have been unscrewed allowing the loft access to be opened
- Shower riser broken in shower on top floor
- A unsafe chimney was removed during period of inspection
- The grounds person advised that trees have all been checked by a tree surgeon.

## **Standard 27**

An assessment on the effectiveness of the schools vetting and recruitment procedures has been made following an examination of a sample of staff files, records of Criminal Record Bureau Checks, the Head Teachers pre-inspection questionnaire and following discussions with the Administrator

Three staff files were looked at. These were selected as they represented staff who had recently been employed by the school. There have been no recent appointment made to the care team. It was noted that the files were maintained in good order and were kept in secure cabinets located in the administration area. Records showed that two references had been gained for all persons. The Administrator advised that she had recently started to seek telephone verification with the referees concerning the references that they had submitted. Where this had taken place notes were made on the reference. Files contained copies of application forms, CV's and in one case copy of the interview notes.

The Administrator advised that it was normal practice within the school for Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks to be completed before a member of staff took up their employment. In some circumstances the local authority allowed CRB checks to be carried over from any similar current employment within the county. Occasionally when references had not been received the Head Teacher would conduct a risk assessment and allow the member of staff to work under the supervision of other staff. The Inspector felt that the school's current procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff contribute to the safety of the children and would help to prevent them from being exposed to potential abusers. However the inspector was concerned that there was some evidence of the procedures having not been strictly adhered to. The Inspector identified that a recent employee had been in employment at the school 3 months before satisfactory references and CRB check had been obtained. It was unclear from the record whether any arrangements had been made for the worker to be supervised at all times.

The Inspector is aware that the school has recently appointed someone to conduct the governing bodies monitoring visits. There are plans for this role to be extended to include that of being the children's independent visitor. The school has been advised that it must obtain a satisfactory CRB check at enhanced level before the Independent Visitor has any unsupervised access to the children.

The Inspector noted that some of the staff were first checked by the Criminal Records Bureau just over three years ago. The Commission recommends that all CRB checks should be renewed every three years. The Head Teacher advised that the school was currently in discussion with the local authority on this matter and hoping that an agreement would be reached that all staff CRB checks would be updated every three years.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.(NMS 12)
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

## The Commission considers Standards 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.

### JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

Standards 12, 13 and 22

Quality in this outcome area is good.

The care team actively supports children's educational programme.

The children have access to a activity programme that gives them the opportunity to experience and enjoy a wide range of activities

The school is proactive in ensuring that children receive any individual support when it has been identified as a need.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

### EVIDENCE:

Evidence on how the residential provision actively supports and participates in the children's education at the school has been collated from an examination of a sample of young peoples care plans and following discussion with the Head Teacher, Head of Care, Deputy Head of Care and with members of the care team.

During the Inspector's pre-inspection visit the Head Teacher provided details of a number of recent changes that had taken place at the school. This had included the change from 12 day boarding to five day boarding. As a consequence of the care staff's role had been revised and the role of key worker had been introduced. The care staff now work a new rota, which allows

some of their duties to be undertaken during the school day. Care staff sometimes assist in the school and help to deliver and supervise the recently introduced nightly homework sessions. The Deputy Head of Care advised the Inspector that the care staff share a joint responsibility for delivering the schools PSHE programme.

The Inspector discussed the recent changes with the care team. They spoke enthusiastically about their new role. They explained that as a consequence of the change to their rota they had the opportunity to liaise more closely with the education team. They all felt that communication and understanding of each other's roles had had considerably improved.

As previously noted that school's methods of care and control are focussed on recognising and celebrating the children's successes. An important part of this is the setting of individual behavioural targets, which are jointly worked on by the care or education team.

An examination of a sample of the children's files and information provide by the senior care workers indicated that the care staff are routinely contributing to and attending the children's statutory reviews of their educational statements.

The residential unit has ample educational items such as videos, games, toys and books.

### **Standard 13.**

Information concerning the children's leisure and activity programmes has been collated from information provided by staff, from an examination of the terms activity sheet and from the children's pre-inspection questionnaires.

The Inspector formed the view that a significant improvement to the service being provided by the school had come about by the recent reorganisation to the care activity programme. The care team is now providing an exceptional programme of activities, which is greatly appreciated by the children.

The care team advised the Inspector that one of the care workers had been designated as the member of staff for activities. The delegated person has been provided with a termly budget and is now able to plan and organise a termly programme of activities, trips and events. An examination of the activity planner showed that the school is providing access to a wide variety of activities that take place on and off site. The care staff explained that a further positive consequence to the changes to their rota "was that there are now more staff on duty at night". This ensures that any planned activity can go ahead and is no longer affected or disrupted if any of the children misbehaving and need to be removed from the group.

The Inspector spoke to a number of the children and they all spoke positively about the evening activities and trips. Comments made by the children included " I like riding on the bikes " and ". I like going on the trips" " One child answering a question about what he did at night the school wrote " chill out, treks, flat (playroom) games bowling, MacDonald's and swimming " A number of the children attend a local cub group. This provides a good opportunity for the children to develop new skills as well as providing them with the opportunity to socialise and meet other children of similar age. A number of the boys were keen to give details about the badges that they were working for.

The children have access to a number of external play areas. They were observed enjoying outdoor activities like riding bikes and playing on the outdoor play equipment. The school has an outdoor swimming pool, which is used in the summer. The children are also able to access a number of well-equipped play and games rooms, which are located in the main residential building.

A number of the children advised the Inspector that they are asked about what activities that would like to do.

Appropriate generic risk assessments have been completed for all activities but a number of these need to be reviewed. The school does not currently have a system in place to undertake individual risk assessments. The Deputy Head of Care advised that these are due to be implemented in the near future.

## **Standard 22**

Information concerning the arrangements for the children to receive any individual needs that they might require has been collated from information provided during discussion the Head of Care and Deputy Head of Care and an examination of the Head Teacher pre-inspection questionnaire and a sample of young peoples files.

As previously noted during the pre-inspection visit the Head Teacher gave details of how the role of the care workers has substantially changed. The school has altered its boarding arrangements and the staff are now working over five day. This has provided the opportunity for the school to introduce and develop the role of key worker. This is seen to be a way of providing each of the children additional individualised support within the school. An examination of a sample of the children's files showed that they were regularly meeting with their key worker. These sessions provide the opportunity for work to be completed on the children's care plans. The Deputy Head of Care also explained that the key workers also help to deliver the schools PSHE programmes. The Inspector spoke to a number of the children about their key workers and key working sessions. They all spoke positively about these .One of the boy explained " It a good time to talk

about any problems.” Another said he thought that his key worker was, “very helpful” and another said that Key Workers “ help you with your problems ”

An examination of a sample of the children’s files showed that the school is actively involved in ensuring that the children access any external agencies or additional services that have been identified to help meet with any specific needs. These include Children’s and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Connexions, social workers and medical specialist including Paediatricians Neurophysiologist Occupational Therapist and Oral hygienist. The education authority also provided specialist services, which can be provided in the school. These include speech therapy, play therapy, school nurse and access to an educational psychologist. The key workers are available to help escort and support the children during medicals and any appointment with external agencies.

The governing body has recently appointed someone to undertake these monitoring visits to the school. This role is to be extended so that the person will also act as the children’s independent visitor. It is anticipated that during his monitoring visits he will make himself available to speak to any of three children privately if they request it. Arrangements are also being made for the children to be able to contact the independent visitor by phone. A small card with the name and contact details of the independent Visitor is already on display in and around the school and copies of the card have been given to each of the children. As previously noted the school has yet to arrange a CRB check for the independent visitor. The school has been advised that until this is in place that the Independent Visitor should not have unsupervised access with any of the children.

The key workers also have responsibility for assisting the Schools Family Liaison Officer in maintaining contact with the children parents. An examination of records with the children’s files showed that communication is maintained through regular phone calls and by the use of weekly summary sheets, which are sent home at the weekend. These provide the parents with an overview of their child’s behaviour during the week. Parents are encouraged to return the sheet adding comments about their child’s behaviour over the weekend. The key workers are also available to undertake home visits. Parents spoke positively about the support that the staff and school provide them. One parent said that the “ staff are very helpful and understanding and another that “ you can always ring them up if there is a problem”



## **Making a Positive Contribution**

### **The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.(NMS 2)
- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.(NMS 9)
- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.(NMS 11)
- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.(NMS 17)
- In accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

### **The Commission considers Standards 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.**

### **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

2,17 & 20

Quality in this outcome area is good.

The young people have the opportunity to be involved in key decisions about their future and to be involved in some aspects of the day to day running of the residential unit.

All of the children have a care plan. These have recently been implemented and have yet to become fully established. Staff need to prioritise which needs they are going to address.

The school recognise need for young people to be able to remain in contact with parent's families and significant others.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

### **Standard 2**

Information concerning the opportunities for the children to influence the way that the residential unit is run has been collated from an examination of the information contained in the young person questionnaires, the Head Teacher pre-inspection questionnaire and from discussions with the Head of Care, Deputy Head of Care.

The Head of Care and Deputy Head of Care advised the Inspector that one of the principal forums for the children to be consulted about the day to day running of the unit is via the children's meetings. The Head of Care explained that it is during these meetings, that the children will be advised of any changes happening to the care provision and asked to give ideas about what activities they might want to go on. The meeting also provides the opportunity for the children to raise concerns and to be reminded about the school's responses to bullying and complaints. The children's meeting are no longer being minuted and consequently it was not possible to fully evidence the amount of consultation that was taking place. The Deputy Head of Care advised the Inspector that the children are also routinely asked about the variety, quantity and standard of meals. This takes place either by the Head Cook coming into the dining room and speaking to the children or via the occasional use of a questionnaire. The Inspector was advised that the children had also recently been asked to complete a survey about the activity programme. One of the care staff provided information on a local authority survey that the children were participating in concerning the standard of the toilets in the school and residential area. Information that is being collected as part of this survey is being passed to the Senior Management Team and will be used to review guidance on privacy and bullying.

Care staff advised that the key working sessions were an ideal opportunity for the children's views to be sought. An examination of a sample of the children's files showed that some evidence of the consultation that had taken place were recorded in the key working diary sheets.

The children were asked about consultation in their pre-inspection questionnaire. 5 stated that consultation always took place 4 stated that it usually took place and one said that it happened sometimes. However none of the children were able to cite examples of changes that may have arisen from them being listened to. The Inspector spoke to a number of the children and during these discussions they commented on how they were asked about activities, changes to bedroom occupancy and on the food. They all stated that they were not consulted on environmental issues such as decoration and refurbishment. The Inspector advises that the children's meeting should be

minuted and that consideration be given to how the school can increase the issues that the children are routinely consulted about.

The care staff and the Head of Care advised that the children are routinely invited to attend annual reviews, which gives them an opportunity to be involved in the making key life decisions.

The school has a number of systems in place to ensure it keeps in contact with the children's parents and or significant others and that they are routinely consulted with about any issue affecting their children's care and /or education. Key workers have started to undertake home visits and maintain regular phone contact with the parents. They also receive a weekly key working summary sheet, which provides an overview of their children's behaviour and details the activities that they have been involved in. Parents are encouraged to return the sheet having added comments on how their child has been over the weekend.

The Head Teacher operates an open door policy and parents are invited to visit the school at anytime. There are regular parents meetings. The Head Teacher advised that each of the parents, and/ or significant others and the children are asked to complete an annual school quality questionnaire. The information collected from these is used to help produce the annual School Improvement Plan.

Parents stated in their pre-inspection questionnaire that they are routinely asked to comment on how their children are cared for and are consulted before the school takes any major decisions about their children. One parent stated in response to being asked how she/he was consulted about and then informed about any decisions that had been made stated " they (the staff) either phone us up or send home a diary every week. (I) Know what the children are doing and their behaviour ".

## **Standard 17**

Information on the care planning undertaken by the school has been obtained from examining a sample of the young peoples files (6) and following discussions with the Head of Care, Deputy Head of Care and members of the care team.

The recent reorganisation to the care staff working patterns has allowed the opportunity to introduce key working in the school. This is an interesting and exciting development within the school that has met with the full approval of all of the care staff. The Head Teacher spoke about being " extremely encouraged" about the manner in which the care staff had embraced this new role and how they were continuing to develop and refine their key working responsibilities.

The Deputy Head of Care advised that the children are allocated a key worker during the initial referral. Careful consideration is given to matching the key worker and children together, however changes can be made if a child should request it.

The school has introduced a system of care planning and care plans during the past year. These have yet to become fully established and are under constant review. An examination of a sample of plans showed some inconsistencies, the need to prioritise some areas of work and to clarify how needs were being determined. However the Inspector formed the view that once fully established that these will provide a comprehensive system for identifying the needs of the children and provide a comprehensive record on how the school will meet these needs, care for the children and promote their welfare on a day-to-day basis. The care staff spoke enthusiastically about the newly introduced care plans. They felt that these provided a good format in which to record the areas of work that they were undertaking. The care staff explained that they are able to choose to work on a number of different focal areas. (Communication, Culture, religion, Shopping, Looking after oneself. Activities personal hygiene etc. Staff record the needs that they had identified and the work that they have undertaken to meet these.

The care plans are kept in the children's residential files, which are kept in the recently created key workers office. The Inspector looked in depth at three of the children's care plans and also checked certain areas of in a number of others. The Inspector was advised that work on care plans is scheduled to take place in the regular key working sessions. The Inspector was unclear what criteria was being set to identify the needs that most of the staff were working on. An examination of 10 files showed that in 8 cases, staff had failed to record the child's assessed needs found in the child's educational statement and/or Looked after Child documentation. The Inspector also noted that issues identified in the initial referral pupil profile, as possibly posing some level of risk i.e. epilepsy and sexualised behaviour had not been specifically addressed in the care plan or in the child's risk assessments. Any subsequent risks identified during the child's placement should also be addressed through the child's care plan and individual risk assessment. These shortfalls had been identified by the senior management team and the Inspector was advised were due to be addressed by some additional training and/or during individual supervision during the next few months.

The care staff advised the Inspector that they are routinely asked to contribute to their key children's annual review and to be present at their statutory review meetings whenever practicable to do so.

## **Standard 20**

Contact between the children boarding at the school and their parents, families and significant others is not an issue as the residential unit now only operates for 4 nights a week and all of the pupils return home every weekend.

As recorded elsewhere in this report the children have access to a phone on which they can make and receive calls in private. This facility will be enhanced further by the planned upgrade to the schools telephone system. The Inspector understands that has the provision for contact numbers for a number of national help lines and for the independent visitor to be pre programmed into a handset that will be used by the children.

Parents indicated in their pre-inspection questionnaire that they were allowed to meet with their children in private, during visits to the school if they wished to do so.

As previously noted care staff routinely contact parents regarding any welfare concerns.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.(NMS 16)
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.(NMS 21)
- Children live in well designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- Children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.(NMS 24)
- Children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity.(NMS 25)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

Quality in this outcome area is good.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

23,24& 25

The children live in an environment, which is secure, good and provides them with facilities that help them in their personal and social development.

Overall the standard of accommodation at the school is good. The residential areas are clean, tidy, free from vandalism and comfortable. A number of health and safety issues need to be attended too.

The issue of privacy in bathrooms, showers and toilets should be kept under review.

## EVIDENCE:

Shenstone Lodge School is a residential /day school and is apart of Sandwell's Department for Education and Life Long Learning. It provides education and boarding to pupils aged 6-11 who have emotional behavioural difficulties and children who display behaviour in the autistic spectrum.

The residential provision at the school was previously a large detached country house, which is set in its own extensive grounds and is situated on the outskirts of the village of Shenstone, which is within Staffordshire. The house provides space and facilities for the children's residential accommodation, administration and catering departments. This house has been subject to a "modern "extension to provide staff rooms, offices, medical room and resource areas. The purposely-built school is detached from the residential facilities. Planning permission and planning consent have recently been granted for the school to build a gymnasium.

The location of the school provides good access to local community services and facilities and is close to major roads and motorway links, which are used to help transport, the children to and from the school.

The school is set in its own extensive grounds which consists of an access road with adequate parking facilities, play areas, sandpit, tennis/basket ball court, animal enclosure, outdoor swimming pool and sports field. The residential provision is situated in a large country house and is spread over its three floors. The house provides a great deal of space all of which is used to great advantage for the children. The school continues to update its facilities and since the last inspection work has started on upgrading and refurnishing the "reflection time" area on the bottom corridor. A new key working office has been created and suitably equipped with office furniture, storage facilities and computers. Plans are being made for one of the rooms to be re-designated and equipped as a sensory room.

Good arrangements were in place to ensure the security of the site including coded key locks to all external doors, the fitting of alarms to fire exits and the provision of CCTV cameras covering the entrances to the school. Internally buzzers are fitted to the landing doors within the residential setting. There is in place to alert sleeping in staff if a child leaves the landing area during the night. It has been accepted that this form of electronic surveillance is not intrusive and is in place to help protect and safeguards the welfare of the children. Details of these arrangements have been included in the School prospectus provided to all parents.

Additional security has been arranged since the last inspection. A burglar alarm is activated on the ground floor of the residential building at night .A security patrol visits on the school at night and is on call to respond to any of the alarms being activated. Following a consultation with the local Crime prevention Officer protective hedges have been planted around the perimeter

of the schools grounds, the main access to the school is to be fitted with a automatic security gate and the CCTV system is going to be upgraded.

The Inspector was advised that there are not any outstanding requirements or recommendations that have been issued by the fire service or the environmental health authority.

## **Standard 24**

The residential provision, which is located on all three floors in the old house, is generally well maintained and well equipped and there is little sign of any vandalism. However there has been some recent storm damage, which had unfortunately damaged one of the bedrooms on the top floor, which had just been redecorated. At the time of the inspection the maintenance team were waiting for the walls to dry out before affecting any repairs or attempting any redecoration.

The school has placed a great emphasis in making the spaces within the building comfortable and homely whilst at the same time given the children a number of play spaces that can be used to for different activities and leisure time pursuits. These are very well equipped with a variety of large and small pieces of age appropriate play equipment, toys and books. Several sitting rooms /TV rooms are provided on the bottom middle and top floors. Currently the school is accommodating 10 children but it maintains enough furniture and beds to cater for up to 16.

A number of the bedrooms have between 2 – 4 beds. There is also a one single bedded room. This is equipped with a TV and the children advised the Inspector that they were allowed to have use of this room when they had been particularly good. All of bedrooms had been provided good quality furnishings/fittings. The bulk of the children's clothes are stored in a sewing room on the first floor but there are also storage facilities in a number of the bedrooms. A number of the bedrooms have been provided with wash hand basin and one has a toilet and shower en suite. All of the other bedrooms are close to washing and toilet facilities. All of the bedrooms have been nicely decorated, free from vandalism and have been provided with age appropriate soft furnishings. They are festooned with age appropriate toys books and games. Children's work and photographs of past activities are displayed throughout the whole of the building. A number of the bedrooms have been provided with sitting area and some have of these have been equipped with their own TV. All bedrooms were fitted with a speaker linked to a tape system, which is used to play bedtime stories. Windows are restricted but can be opened to provide ventilation.



The children have previously been provided with a lockable cabinet located on the ground floor. However these are not currently being used as the children have regularly lost keys and the locks have had to be forced so that the cabinets can be opened. The Inspector would advise that the cabinets are equipped with locks or padlocks that are operable by a single master key a copy of which could be given to all members of staff. The children could be provided with a servant key.

Staff 'sleeping in' areas are situated adjacent to children's bedrooms. The school provides a separate single room called the "TLC Room" for when children are ill.

## **Standard 25**

Numerically there are a sufficient number of bathing, showering and toilet facilities provided throughout the residential unit.

A number of the bedrooms have been provided with wash hand basins and one bedroom had an ensuite shower room/ toilet. All of the wash hand basins have been equipped with temperature control valves. In some places the toilet facilities have been subject to some recent refurbishment, which has included the installation of cubicles. These have large gaps below the bottom of the walls. There has been an on going dialogue between the school and the Inspector regarding the level of privacy that these facilities offer. The school has taken the matter up with the education authority's architects. Minutes recorded following a recent governors meeting showed that the architects had advised that the cubicles met with standards as required in all local authority schools.

During the inspection the inspector became aware that the school had recent taken part in a survey regarding the standard of toilets within all Sandwell schools. The Inspector was advised that children at the school had raised concerns about the privacy of some of the toilet cubicles and that the toilet areas were a hot spot for bullying. This information is being presented to the Senior Management Team and the Inspector has been advised that an action plan will follow.

During the tour of the building with two of the children the Inspector was shown by then how easy it was to open a number of the locks on the toilet doors from the outside. The Inspector acknowledges that staff need to be able to open the doors in an emergency but was concerned that the children were able to do this with their bare hands. The Inspector recommends that the security of the toilet locks is reviewed and new ones fitted where necessary. The issue over privacy in the toilets should be kept under review. During the tour of the building the Inspector noted that one of the bathrooms on the middle floor still did not have a lock to it. The Inspector acknowledges that currently this

section of the house is not in use. Nonetheless it should be fitted with a lock so it could be used in the case of an emergency.

All of the toilets, bathrooms and showers were found to be providing with toilet rolls soap and were free from offensive smells.

# Management

## **The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.(NMS 1)
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.(NMS 19)
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.(NMS 28)
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.(NMS 29)
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.(NMS 30)
- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.(NMS 31)
- Children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.(NMS 32)
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.(NMS 33)

**The Commission considers Standards 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**

**JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

1,28,29,30,31, 32 & 33

Quality in this outcome area is good.

The school makes information available to the children, parents and significant others concerning the boarding of pupils, which gives a good description about what, service it offers and the standards of care that the children you can expect to receive.

The staffing levels during the day and night are sufficient to meet the needs of the children

Staff had access to comprehensive programme of training that equips them to meet the needs of the children.

Arrangements for the support and supervision of care staff satisfactory. The quality and frequency of supervision needs to be kept under review.

The school is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers a good standard of childcare. Shortfalls in training undertaken by the senior care workers is being addressed

The school needs to arrange for the effective and regular monitoring of all of the care related records in order to identify patterns or issues requiring action.

The governing body receive written reports on the conduct of the school, which are produced by a person independent of the school.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

## **EVIDENCE:**

### **Standard 1**

Prior to the Inspection the Inspector was provided with a copy of the School Prospectus dated 2006-2007 and the children's Welcome Book. Other information relating to how the school provides information on what it sets out to do for children boarding at the school, has been collated from an examination of parents questionnaires and from discussions with the Head Teacher, Head of Care and the Administrator.

The Administrator advised the Inspector that copies of the School's Prospectus and the children's Welcome book are initially provided to parents and significant others during the referral /admission process. The School

Prospectus is updated each year and the revised copy is sent out to all parents and all significant others. The administrator is confident that all parents receive a copy as it goes out with a number of documents that have to be signed by parents and then returned to the school.

An examination of the School Prospectus showed that it provides a comprehensive and gives a description of what the school sets out to do, However the Inspector felt that it did not accurately reflect the recent change in patterns of boarding and of the reorganisation of the care team e.g. the introduction of Key working. The Inspector was advised that next revision of the prospectus addresses this.

The children are given a copy of the children's guide on admission to the school. This is a colourful document, which includes information about the care facilities, daily routines and activities. The inclusion of photos of staff and children (permission for their inclusion had been given) is a nice touch and is a helpful reference point for both parents and children.

The school has responded positively to a previous recommendation that "consideration is given to the children's guide being made available in alternative formats i.e. symbols; audio and or video tape to ensure that there is equal access to it by all of the children." The Head Teacher advised the Inspector that the school was in the process of producing a DVD, which provides the viewer with visual information about the school, residential unit and the activities that the children can participate in. The Inspector was advised that the children had been asked about what information they would have liked about the school and this has been included in the DVD. The Head Teacher explained that a draft version of the DVD had been shown to parents and the children all of whom had been very excited and complimentary about it. The Inspector was invited to view the DVD, and he formed the view that it was very good, engaging, and informative and had the potential for further development. Providing information in this format will ensure that it is readily accessible to most of the pupils and will also be of great interest to parents, relatives and significant others.

## **Standard 28**

As previously noted the pattern of boarding within the school has recently changed with all boarders now on a five day a week boarding programme. This has had a positive and constructive impact on the way that the school can deploy its care team.

Currently there are 10 children boarding at the school. The care team consists of 9 members and these are occasionally supported by education staff on extraneous duties. This means that the staffing ratio is very good. The manner in which staff are deployed and the numbers of staff was good. It was seen to enable care staff to provide individual attention to boarding.

pupils, it has allowed routines to be changed which has improved the standard of care being provided and is allow for greater flexibility in the arrangements for staff to transport and supervise pupils whilst on trips/activities outside the school. There are sufficient number of staff to cover sickness and other absences by members of the care team.

The changes in boarding arrangements has also enable the school to introduce the role of key working. Key workers have a number of responsibilities, which include the supervision of the children during the care time providing regular individual key working sessions, home visits, maintaining contact with parents and helping to support and supervise the children in school during the day. Two staff are timetabled to provide sleeping in duties on every night.

The current staffing arrangements were sufficient to meet the needs of the number of the children currently boarding in the school.

## **Standard 29**

The staff training and development opportunities within the school continue to be commendable and to exceed those required by the national minimum standards.

Training in the school is coordinated by the Continued Professional Development Officer. The school has just completed its second year of a five year training and development programme. This comprehensive programme covers whole school development in core subjects such as child protection, professional team training in a variety of subjects including first aid, physical intervention, Health and Safety and Food Hygiene, and, meets individual training needs in areas such as bereavement and counselling. All groups of staff are catered for. An examination of the programme for this year showed that the Catering Staff are undertaking an awareness course on Religious and Different Cultural Festivals and the temporary caretaker is receiving training on the use of a chain saw.

Individual training records are kept for all staff and this flags up when training is due to be renewed or refreshed.

The quality of training has been acknowledged by other agencies. The recent commentary provided as part of the "Sandwell Well being Programme" Feb 2006 included following observation "The Head Teacher and Governing Body are undoubtedly committed to the continuous professional development of all staff " and "Training and development activities are well focussed and deliver effective outcomes".

The school was awarded a further " Investors in People award " in May 2006.

### **Standard 30**

A formal programme of supervision has been introduced for all care staff and ancillary staff within the school. Care staff are supervised by the Head of Care and the ancillary staff by the Deputy Head of Care. An examination of supervision records and information contained within the Head Teacher 's pre-inspection questionnaire showed that formal supervision sessions are scheduled to take place twice a year and last approximately an hour. Additional informal sessions are available on request. The care staff indicated that they were satisfied with the current arrangements and that the supervision being provided to them was " good ". The care staff explained that their supervision sessions followed a set agenda and that they were able to add to this with their own items for discussion if they wished to. The Inspector is aware that for the majority of staff these is their first experience supervision and have nothing else to judge it against. The Head of Care advised that he is going to undertake supervision training during the next half term. The Deputy Head of Care advised that she has already completed this training. The Head of Care and the Deputy Head of Care advised that arrangements are in place for them to receive supervision.

The current frequency of supervision and the length of sessions is considerable less than that required by the national minimum standards. It is unclear how this current arrangement has been agreed. Both the Head of Care and the Deputy Head of Care stated that they do not have the capacity to undertake any further supervisions. They already have a full timetable, which includes being on duty on a regular basis and supervising the children. They share key working responsibilities with other members of the care team. The Senior Management team should review the current arrangement for the supervision of staff and review the frequency that this is provided.

### **Standard 31**

An examination of the Head Teachers pre-inspection questionnaire provided details of the Head of Care's experience in working with young people and children with emotional and behavioural problems. The Head of Care confirmed that he has enrolled on a NVQ level 1V course and the Residential Managers Award and is planning to have this completed by June 2007.

An examination of the training details contained within the school prospectus and from information within the training records showed that all of the remaining care staff have successfully completed NVQ level 111 in the Caring and Children and Young people. This is commendable and demonstrates the commitment by the school and individual members of staff to professional development.

Staff are timetabled to be able to attend supervision, staff meetings, annual reviews key working and have time allocated for their record keeping an additional responsibilities.

The school currently does not have a crisis plan .The Head Teacher explained that this is a matter that is currently being discussed with the local education authority.

### **Standard 32**

The school has failed to respond to a previous recommendation that it should set a management monitoring system. The Inspector could not find evidence that the records as listed in the national minimum standards (32.2) were being routinely monitored by a senior member of staff. Monitoring of records is an important aspect of the reviewing the quality of care within the school. The examination and monitoring of records provides the opportunity to identify patterns or issues requiring action and to amend revise or introduce new practice in order to adders these.

The Head of Care was aware of this responsibility but stated that currently neither he nor his Deputy had the capacity deal with this and some of the other issues identified during this inspection.

### **Standard 33**

The governing body had made arrangements for a person who is independent of the school to visit the school once a half term and to complete a written report on the conduct of the school. The Inspector met with the independent person who explained that to date all of his visits had been unannounced. During the visits the independent person undertakes and number of checks, which include looking at children welfare, behaviour, management and environmental issues. Reports are made of his visit and then submitted to the board of Governors. The Inspector has requested that copies of these reports are forwarded to the Commission. As previously noted if the independent person wishes to meet the children has been undertaken. Until this has been successfully completed the Independent Visitor should not have unsupervised access with any of the children.



# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

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

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

“N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<b>Standard No</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>14</b>	3
<b>15</b>	X

<b>STAYING SAFE</b>	
<b>Standard No</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>3</b>	3
<b>4</b>	3
<b>5</b>	3
<b>6</b>	3
<b>7</b>	X
<b>8</b>	2
<b>10</b>	2
<b>26</b>	2
<b>27</b>	2

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<b>Standard No</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>12</b>	3
<b>13</b>	3
<b>22</b>	3

<b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<b>Standard No</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>2</b>	3
<b>9</b>	X
<b>11</b>	X
<b>17</b>	2
<b>20</b>	3

<b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>	
<b>Standard No</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>16</b>	X
<b>21</b>	N/A
<b>23</b>	3
<b>24</b>	3
<b>25</b>	2

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
<b>Standard No</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>1</b>	3
<b>18</b>	X
<b>19</b>	X
<b>28</b>	3
<b>29</b>	4
<b>30</b>	2
<b>31</b>	3
<b>32</b>	2
<b>33</b>	3

Yes

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS8	It is recommended that the Missing pupil procedures be revised to reflect current practice and the observations made in this report. <b>Previous time scale of 27/05/05 and 07/11/05 not met.)</b>	31/03/07
2.	RS10	It is recommended that the school review its use of " time out " and make known the outcome of this to Commission for Social Care Inspection. <b>(Previous time scale of 15/07/05 and 07/11/05 not met</b>	21/03/07
3.	RS26	It is recommended that the school completes individual risk assessments for each of its pupils in relationship to their access and participation in activities <b>(Previous time scale of 07/11/05 not met</b>	31/03/07
4.	RS32	It is recommended the management monitoring system is implemented with immediate effect. <b>(Previous time scale of 07/11/05 not met)</b>	14/02/07
5.	RS10	It is recommend that guidance in provided the threshold of when reflection time becomes a sanction and ensure that this is understood	21/03/07

		consistently adhered to by all of the staff. When the use of reflection time becomes a sanction then this should be recorded in the sanctions book.	
6.	RS26	All risk assessments should be regularly reviewed.	14/02/07
7.	RS26	All Health and safety issues identified within this report should be addressed.	30/06/07
8.	RS27	Criminal record bureau checks must be obtained for all staff before they take up a position in the school	31/03/07
9.	RS27	Arrangements must be made for the Independent visitor to have a CRB check at enhanced level before he has any unsupervised access to any of the children	14/02/07
10.	RS17	Care plans should clearly identify a child's assessed needs and provide details of how these are to be met	31/03/07
11.	RS17	Any identified risks relating to a child's health and or behaviour should be assessed through his care plan and or individual risk assessment	31/03/07
12.	RS30	The Senior Management team should review the current arrangement for the supervision of staff and review the frequency that this is provided.	31/03/07
13.	RS32	An assessment should be made regarding the time allocated to senior care staff to complete their administration and management responsibilities	30/03/07
14.	RS25	The security of the toilet locks is reviewed and new ones fitted where necessary. A lock should be fitted to the bathroom located on the middle floor.	30/03/07
15	RS14	It is recommended that where a health problem is identified that this should included in the children's care plan.	30/04/07

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