



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

### **Priory School**

**Mount Road  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP32 7BH**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Cecilia McKillop**

*Key Announced Inspection*  
**27th November 2006      01:00**

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>	Priory School
<b>Address</b>	Mount Road Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP32 7BH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01284 761935
<b>Fax number</b>	01284 725878
<b>Email address</b>	prioryadmin@talk21.com
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	Priory School
<b>Name of Head</b>	Roger Mackenzie
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Georgina Lewis
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	9-16
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	29/11/05

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

Priory School is owned and managed by Suffolk County Council and it provides education for children between the ages of 9 years (Yr.5) and 16 years (Yr.11), who are subject to a Statement of Special Educational Need. All of the children will have been assessed as having a learning disability at some level and a number will have associated emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The boarding provision can cater for up to 24 children. A number of children access the boarding provision on one of two nights each week but a small number of children board between Monday and Friday. A total of 36 children access boarding and 5 children stay at the school into the early evening before being collected by their parents.

There are two boarding houses, Abbey and Priory, and pupils are accommodated in single bedrooms and dormitory areas in groups of 4's.

The design of communal areas downstairs in boarding houses was open plan with a separate kitchenette area curtained off. There was space to eat around a dining table and an adjoining television/sitting area.

All children, day and boarders, eat in a central Dining Hall with adjacent kitchen, staffed by employees of the County's Catering Team.

# SUMMARY

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

The inspection was conducted over two days, and interviews were held with the children, staff and management team to ascertain how the care was provided. The school helpfully provided staff, who were not directly involved in care to assist the children to complete questionnaires. The routines in the boarding houses in the evening and morning were observed.

Questionnaires were sent to parents and to staff to complete.

The findings of the inspection were very positive and the school were found to have exceeded the standards in a number of key areas. At the end of the inspection, feedback was provided to the senior management team and a representative from the governing body. A small number of recommendations were made and the management team responded to the inspector's findings in a constructive manner.

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

The staff were experienced and knowledgeable about children with special needs. The atmosphere in the boarding houses was relaxed and nurturing. Staff were child focused and interacted with the children in a warm and clear way. Children are supported to try new activities and develop their social skills. The parents who completed the questionnaires described the staff as being very caring and highlighted the activities offered as a positive part of the school.

The children were able to identify a wide range of staff at the school, which they could talk to if they are unhappy. Children interviewed reported that they felt safe.

The school has a number of individuals external to the school who visit formally on a regular basis to monitor the care provided. The independent listener visits the school regularly, and spends time with the children. A representative of the governing body and a member of Suffolk County Council staff also undertake visits the school to examine records and speak with staff and children.

The Governing body recently consulted with parents and children about the care provided. The school has established a number of mechanisms to consult with young people, which include a school council and the residential council. Young people spoke positively about these forums and representatives from these groups had participated in a recent staff recruitment process.

The school has a well developed independent living skills programme as part of the residential programme, which uses one of the Flats and builds on young peoples skills in budgeting, cooking and organisation.

The school continues to look forward and develop. The inspector was informed of plans to develop a "well being " centre to expand the services and support offered at the school.

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

There was also evidence of ongoing review of procedures and documentation and inspectors were advised that a range of documentation had updated since the last inspection. A copy of the amended absconding policy has been requested.

The systems in place for the monitoring of children with epilepsy and oversight of medication have improved.

The refurbishment of the accommodation continues and work was due to begin on upgrading the bathroom facilities.

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

The school are very successful at making a distinction between the education and boarding parts of the school, which is clearly important for some pupils. It is however recommended that there is a more formalised handover at the beginning of the afternoon shift to ensure that care staff are fully up to date with events that have taken place in the school day.

It is recommended that the school use the 24hour clock when documenting medication administration arrangements. The member of staff responsible for overseeing the medication would benefit from specific training in this area.

The recording of incidents of restraint is satisfactory however the school does not use a bound book and it is recommended that this is undertaken.

The school have recently introduced emotional and behavioural support plans in the main school and it is recommended that these are expanded and developed for children using the boarding accommodation.

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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Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

# 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):

14, 15 Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

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

The school provides nutritious and appealing meals for the children. Young peoples health is promoted. The medication systems work relatively well.

## EVIDENCE:

Meals are prepared by the county council catering staff and menus were prepared and on display. The meals served during the inspection were nutritious and wholesome and there was always a choice available. Staff eat with young people and the dining was well managed and orderly, second helpings were available. The feedback from young people was positive.

The staff appeared to know the children well and support is provided on an individual and discreet basis. There was evidence from the records examined on ongoing monitoring of the children's health and their height and weight were regularly recorded.

Children with specific health needs have a health plan, which is completed by the school nurse. The management arrangements for the oversight of children with epilepsy have been reviewed since the last inspection and clearer guidance is in place.

Where intimate care is required, guidance is available for staff to follow. Enuresis was managed sensitively.

Medication was found to be securely stored and a written record was maintained of all medication administered. Staff have to manage considerable amounts of medication which can be subject to change between children's visits. The use of the 24 hour clock would provide greater clarity as to the times of administration. A member of the management team takes responsibility for checking the medication and has made improvements to the systems in place but she has not had any formal training in this area.

# 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):**

3,4,5,6,8,10,26,27. Quality in this outcome area is **good**

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

The schools procedures and training offer safeguards to young people.

**EVIDENCE:**

Children's records were securely stored and staff were clear about the practical steps that they take on a daily basis to respect the children's privacy. There was a telephone which young people use to keep in contact with their families and a number have mobile telephones. One of telephones has specific features, which means that children with a hearing loss can use it.

There is a complaints procedure in place and the children who completed the questionnaires were clear that there was someone within the school that they could speak to if they had a concern or a complaint to make. The children who were interviewed expressed confidence that any issues that arose would be sorted out by the adults. A record is maintained of all complaints, which are made, and their outcome. All the parents who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about the school

The school has an independent listener who visits the school on a regular basis and spends time taking with the children. The listener has a background in education and is knowledgeable about the needs of children with special needs.

There is a child protection policy in place, which stresses the importance of reporting concerns to a senior member of staff no matter how trivial. There are clear systems for recording incidents. All care staff have undertaken recent training on how they should respond to an allegation of abuse and where there have been concerns a referral has been made.

The school has comprehensive anti bullying and self assertiveness policy in place which aims to make the school a place where bullying is less likely to happen. The school state that they do this through increased awareness of bullying and the building of the children's self-confidence. Bullying was not identified as a major issue in the questionnaires completed by the children. The inspectors observations was that the school was supportive environment and they were told by children that "they felt safe at the school", and that staff tried to sort out disagreements which arose between pupils.

The inspector was informed that there have been a small number of incidents of young people absconding over the last year during the school day and staff had responded quickly. The Inspector was informed that the educational welfare officer follows up absences and the procedures have recently been reviewed by the County Council.

The interactions observed between staff and the children were warm and relaxed. The house rules have been developed with the involvement of the children and were displayed. The children who were interviewed were clear about what would happen if they did something wrong and staff were described as "strict "but fair. Staff informed inspectors that there was a clear boundary between the residential and school parts of the school and incidents at school were not carried over into the evenings.

Staff confirmed that they have completed a course of 'School Safe', the programme of physical control and restraint. Staff reported that this was only used rarely. The records relating to restraint was examined as part of the inspection and were found to be well maintained but not in a bound book. A senior member of staff oversees the records.

There were no significant hazards to the health and safety of the children noted during the inspection. Risk assessments were in place and all the evidence was that health and safety was taken seriously. There was evidence of water testing, PAT testing, electrical checks and regular testing of fire safety equipment. Young people confirmed that there were regular fire alarms and said that they were clear what they should do in the event of a fire.

A sample of staff appointment records were examined as part of the inspection. There was evidence that references were taken up, criminal record bureau checks were in place and records were maintained of interviews. The inspector was informed that the schools policy had recently changed and staff will not be starting work until a CRB process is complete. The school were provided with details of the latest advice from the DFES regarding the circumstances when a previous CRB(POCA) check can be accepted. Teaching staff are all employed by the local education authority and where a member of staff moves from one local school to another a new CRB, is not undertaken, as there has been no change in position or employer. A number of staff have recently changed their position within the school and a new Criminal Record Bureau Check was being undertaken.

# 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):

12,13,22 Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

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

Education is supported by the residential provision and children are enabled to participate in a wide range of social activities in the local community.

### EVIDENCE:

The residential provision is integral to the work of the school and pastoral staff support the educational component. There is a system for sharing information between the day and boarding settings but it is recommended that this be formalised at the end of the school day.

The school caters for children with a wide variation of needs however the inspectors observations were that the residential staff knew each of the children well and were able to respond to their individual needs. Staff were observed actively worked with the children to develop their social skills and help them integrate them with their peers.

The inspector observed the children participating in activities during the evening. It was clear that the children thoroughly enjoy the activities and pastimes arranged for them by staff both inside and outside the school.

The children confirmed that they have a wide range of people to whom they can talk if they are unhappy and the majority said that they felt safe at the school. As outlined earlier in the report the school has an independent listener who regularly visits the children and spends time with them.

The Inspector was informed that care staff help young people with homework functions such as reading and spelling practice.

There is an accredited life skills programme that uses the Flat as a realistic base for practising activities that are necessary for everyday living and which will be needed later on when pupils move to less supported settings.



## **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**.

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

Children's admissions and their moving on are planned and they are supported to express their views about the care. Staff were aware of and clear as to how to respond to the needs of the children staying at the school.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The school consults with parents in a number of ways including reviews parents evening and the parent partnership initiative. In the pre inspection questionnaire Mr McKenzie, the Head was able to outline a number of changes that had been made to the routines of the school as a result of consulting parents.

Parents who responded to the questionnaire were very satisfied with the care provided at Priory School. The School has a residential school council, which is

run by the children and looks at residential issues. The minutes were made available as part of the inspection. There is also a school council and photographs of the representatives were on display so pupils knew whom to approach. The inspector was informed that pupils had recently participated in a staff recruitment process.

The inspectors observations were that staff related well to the young people, expectations were clear and there were boundaries in place. Staff were observed praising children and drawing attention to their achievements. The children informed the inspectors that they liked being at the school.

The children generally start as day pupils before gradually being introduced to the boarding houses. Admissions appeared to be managed in sensitive way, and at a speed dictated by the child.

All children have statements of education needs and these are reviewed on a yearly basis. In addition the children also have a placement plan and in some cases a health plan and a behavioural management plan. Behavioural/emotional and social support plans have been introduced for some children in school and it is recommended that these are cross referenced with the plans in the residential component of the school.

There is a life skills programme that has been operating for a number of years and is a part of the curriculum. This is well developed and was identified by parents as a very positive part of the school.

Children reside in the boarding houses between one and four nights each week and have opportunities to maintain contact with their families.

# 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):

16,21,23,24,

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

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

The accommodation is of a good standard and staff provide the children with a wide range of social opportunities.

## EVIDENCE:

The children dress in their school uniform for the school day and change into more casual clothing in the evening. The children have an opportunity to in to town, for shopping and other social activities accompanied by a member of staff.

The school has provided opportunities for all older children to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for their likely future living arrangements. There is a great deal of input by care staff into these aspects. From Yr. 10 onwards there is emphasis on life skills and practising the techniques that will be needed later on. This may include living in the Flat, planning meals and budgeting. Inspectors observed staff preparing sandwiches with pupils.

The school premises are well maintained and there is range of areas for young people to play.

There has been some refurbishment of one of the residential houses since the last inspection. The rooms have all been upgraded, recarpeted and repainted in bright appealing colours over the last few years. New furniture has also been provided. The dormitories can accommodate up to four pupils and in each house there is a number of single bedrooms. The school are planning to upgrade the bathrooms, which will increase the choice for young people and may allow easier supervision. An area, which is used by young people preparing for independence, was noted to have a toilet door lock, which could not be overridden in an emergency, and it was agreed that this would be replaced.

Staff have completely separate facilities in sleeping in rooms. The children reported that they were able to access staff should they feel unwell during the night.

There are clear arrangements in place with regard to the provision of personal care.

# 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):**

1,28,29,31,32. Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

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

The children are looked after by experienced and knowledgeable staff who receive regular training. Children's development and progress is recorded and there are systems in place to monitor their welfare.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The school has a brochure, which outlines its admission criteria, and the governing body updates this regularly. There is a document for young people entitled "Information that you need to know about being a boarder", which is presented in written and picture format and provides information about boarding and the rules in place.

Each child has a personal file which contains their statement of educational needs and other key documentation, such as details of who to contact in an emergency and details of their medication. Records are maintained of children's progress and achievements. A sample of staff personal files was examined as part of the inspection and these were all in order. Records of accidents are maintained. The files were all stored securely.

The residential childcare officers work split shifts covering the five mornings and four nights that children are present in the boarding houses. The senior staff on the team work some hours during the classroom day to enable them to carry out the responsibilities additional to their posts. This involves report writing and some attendance at reviews.

Because staff are on shift at all times during the waking day, with two identified to sleep in or be on call, continuity of care is achieved. The inspector noted that staff were having some disturbed nights when undertaking sleep in duties and should this continue in the longer term the rota should be reviewed. There are arrangements in place with regard to staff sickness cover and the inspector was informed that cover is usually provided from within the whole school team.

The levels of staffing on the evening of the inspection were adequate to meet the needs of the children resident. Teaching and ancillary staff also carry out 'extraneous duties' in the early evening to allow a wider range of activities to take place.

The pastoral staff are well qualified and experienced in looking after the needs of children with learning needs. Staff who were interviewed and those who completed the questionnaire reported that they were well supported by the Head of Care and the management team. Staff have annual appraisals.

The Head of care is currently undertaking the NVQ 4 Health and Social Care. Other key management and care staff have also been able to access a range of training. There is a clear procedure in place for the induction of new care staff.

A sample of records were examined as part of the inspection and these were generally well maintained and there was evidence of management oversight and review.

# 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>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	3
<b>15</b>	3

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

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	3
<b>13</b>	4
<b>22</b>	4

<b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>2</b>	4
<b>9</b>	X
<b>11</b>	X
<b>17</b>	3
<b>20</b>	4

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

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

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.

1.	RS28	It is recommended that a more formalised system of handover is established at the beginning of the afternoon duty.	01/02/07
2.	RS14	It is recommended that training on medication administration is provided to the responsible member of staff	01/05/07
3.	RS17	It is recommended that the placement plans and behavioural support plans are further developed alongside the new documentation introduced in the main school.	01/05/07
4.	RS10	The record of the use of physical interventions should be maintained in a bound and numbered book.	01/02/07



## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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