



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Lower Lee School

**Beaconsfield Road
Woolton
Liverpool
Merseyside
L25 6EF**

Lead Inspector
Julia Toller

Announced Inspection
7th November 2005 09:30

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

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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 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

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

Name of school	Lower Lee School
Address	Beaconsfield Road Woolton Liverpool Merseyside L25 6EF
Telephone number	0151 428 4071
Fax number	
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Liverpool Education and Lifelong Learning Services
Name of Head	Mr Adrian Larkin
Name of Head of Care	Julie Greene
Age range of residential pupils	13-16
Date of last welfare inspection	2/11/04

Brief Description of the School:

Lower Lee is a Residential Special School owned and managed by Liverpool City Council offering education and residential facilities to boys only. The school is able to take up to 22 day pupils, some of whom make use of the residential facilities.

In addition, a number of children who attend "Hope" school (another City Council special school) utilise the residential facilities, and some children enjoy "extended days", staying at school for their evening meal and participating in the activities.

Since the last inspection, a new care manager has been recruited, and a new post of deputy care manager has been created and filled.

Accommodation is offered in four separate "houses", one of which concentrates on developing the semi-independence skills of the boys who are preparing to leave school.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection was announced, and took place over two days. Inspectors spent an evening with the young people in residence and spent time with them during activities that were available.

An evening meal and breakfast were shared with the young people.

Inspectors joined the residential staff team for their team meeting and also met with the team separately. The head of care, and the deputy head of care, were also interviewed by the inspectors.

Young people showed the inspectors around their residential accommodation.

What the school does well:

The school has developed a strong emphasis upon positive reinforcement of good behaviour, with incentive schemes for children to earn points over the week leading to an award ceremony on a Friday.

Trips out and other activities also play a part in recognising and rewarding positive behaviour and regular attendance by pupils.

Pupils have access to an extensive range of activities, particularly sports, during the school day: residential staff also plan a range of activities and social events for boys to enjoy.

Some children felt that the staff were nice, helpful and kept them safe.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The employment of a care manager and deputy has allowed for systems and procedures to be introduced to monitor the welfare of young people in the residential accommodation.

In particular, staff supervisions have been introduced to monitor the care being provided at the school, and also training requirements of the staff group.

Staff reported that they felt supported by the manager and "listened to", stating that the manager gave their ideas a "try".

Children on the independence unit stated that the unit was “sound” and that it was “well better” than the other houses, as staff offered them opportunities to make their own decisions about bed times (within reason!) and that they are allowed out without staff more often.

What they could do better:

Some of the children that spoke with the inspectors said the following:

Each unit should have it’s own cooking facility
We’d like more independence and to be trusted more
We’d like later bedtimes (older children)
There should be more choice at meal times
We’d like more things to do after school finishes

Following the recruitment of the care manager, the recording procedures in each of the “houses” are under review. Recordings are basic at present: these need to be developed in line with individual care needs with great emphasis on risk assessments of individual and group needs and behaviours.

Complaints made about the quality of care in the residential accommodation, must be handled promptly, with outcomes recorded alongside the relevant complaint. Care must be taken to ensure that children do not suffer as a result of their complaints, and may therefore become reluctant to complain in the future.

The arrangements for ensuring all staff including acillary staff have criminal record bureau checks need to be improved.

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 or by contacting your local CSCI office.

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)

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

The health of young people is promoted. Their welfare is monitored and health needs are well met.

EVIDENCE:

When a child is admitted to the school health and associated information is obtained and kept on file. Individual care records on individual units contain clear details of any health care interventions such as contact with the G.P etc. Discussions with staff indicate the school maintains close links with health agencies including the school nurse, however, there is little information in relation to health care plans. Arrangements must be in place to ensure that each child has a health care plan that covers all aspects of Standard 14.6 NMS. Each individual unit has appropriate first aid equipment in place and most of the staff have recently completed a basic emergency aid qualification.

A comprehensive medication procedure is in place and the school have sought advice from a pharmacist in relation to the formulation of this procedure. Records maintained of medication given were well detailed and clear. In relation to controlled drugs a central store is used for each of the four units. This is not an ideal situation and it is recommended that a controlled drugs cabinet be located on each of the units.

Catering at the school remains an issue. The evening meal shared with the young people was basic, menus were not available for young people, and a choice was not available, should they not like what was on offer. Breakfast was also basic, with cereals and toast with jam: only tea was offered to children, a number of children did not like tea, and therefore did not receive a drink with their breakfast.

The care manager has an appointment to meet with the cook, young people, and the catering company to ensure that young people are receiving the best service they can from this arrangement.

It is recommended that the care manager devises an internal quality assurance system to monitor the quality of food offered to young people and also to log any problems identified.

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)

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

3,4,5,27

The safety and protection of children is promoted through the actions of staff and the involvement of relevant professionals. Records reflect that children are offered advice, and provided with guidance on how to stay safe. There is a careful staff selection procedure in place, although vetting procedures around obtaining criminal record bureau checks for all staff is not consistent.

EVIDENCE:

During the inspection records were found to be kept securely and safely. The inspector observed the children's right to privacy being maintained and promoted. Appropriate records are kept of incidences where it has been necessary to search a child's private possessions and the children are provided

with the opportunity to sign these records. Systems are in place to provide the children with adequate telephone facilities to call relatives and significant others. Records of complaints are maintained and a complaint procedure is in place. It is evident that children are listened too when they make a complaint and action is taken to appropriately investigate any complaints made. However, complaint records should be fully completed to evidence any outcome of a complaint made.

Staff have recently undertaken child protection training. A revised format for recording child protection concerns is to be shortly implemented, although arrangements should be made to ensure that staff receive training around the use of the revised format. Good concise records of restraints are maintained providing clear information regarding the incident leading up to the restraint, the duration and any particular restraint technique used. Records of restraint is evidently monitored by the head of care. Records of sanctions are maintained and children were aware of sanctions that could be imposed. Sanctions usually consisted of early beds or spending time in their bedrooms. Children generally felt that sanctions imposed were fair. Each unit has a behaviour reward system in place acknowledging and rewarding positive behaviour. The inspectors were informed that systems for rewarding positive behaviour are to be reviewed to offer greater incentives for the children.

Since the last inspection there has been a number of staff recruited. Inspection of files indicates that a recruitment and selection process is in place that includes, completed application form, reference checks that are verified, interview which is scored and physical health declaration. Reference request letters should include a statement requesting the referee to state if there are any known reasons why the person should not be employed to work with children and that there should be no material mis-statement or omission relevant to the suitability of the applicant. Sample records inspected indicate that criminal record bureau (CRB) checks are undertaken. However, it was a concern that three residential staff recently appointed and working in the home two of which did not have an evident CRB check on their file and one had an existing CRB check from a previous employer dated April 2004. The inspector was informed that up to date CRB checks had been applied for. None of the cleaning staff or the caretaker has a CRB check in place.

Bullying has been recorded as an ongoing issue with at least one child in residence. The manager is reminded of the need to complete and review a risk assessment following each identified issue of bullying and appropriate action taken to minimise further bullying.

This issue was raised during a discussion with the child protection co-ordinator, who was made aware of the possibility of ongoing bullying becoming a child protection issue. This is perhaps something that could be considered when developing the "new" child protection report format.

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)

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

12,13

Staff promote children's individual needs, through key worker sessions and the close monitoring of children's welfare.

EVIDENCE:

It would be beneficial for staff on the houses to have access to educational records such as Individual education plans, to ensure consistency is in place between educational and residential staff, similarly there should be representatives from both education and residential staff at admissions, and ongoing reviews for young people.

Hand over meetings are held between residential and education staff each morning and evening to discuss behaviours and homework set for young people.

Since the last inspection residential staff have been provided to work along side teaching staff during lessons enabling residential staff to have a greater understanding of children's individual needs and support and also to help foster links between the education and residential aspect of the school. Staff on the units facilitate children's homework with time set aside for the completion of homework as part of the night time routines for children. Study facilities are provided on each unit including individual study space, learning materials and access to computers.

During the inspection children accessed facilities including swimming and football coaching provided by Liverpool F.C Youth Academy coaches. Children

have access to the school gym and are able to access local amenities including the local park. During each year children have the opportunity to benefit from an activity based block holiday. Some risk assessments have been undertaken in relation to activities, although risk assessments in all areas remain an area of significant improvement. The residential staff member's response to the value of activities and free time is encouraging and positive. Although, staff and some children indicated the activity provision for the children could be expanded upon. In consultation with children, staff and other stakeholders arrangements should be made to review the current activity arrangements in place.

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)

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

2,9,11,17

Staff are completing some positive work with regard to key working and the review of young people's individual needs. Staff have begun to have regular contact with families to discuss the progress of children.

EVIDENCE:

Children are provided with opportunities to discuss any issues with staff during key worker sessions and informally on a day to day basis. Records indicate that children's meetings take place on each unit with records being maintained. Records do indicate that some units hold the meeting more frequently than others. Some staff have forged links with education colleagues and attend education review meetings. This area of good practice is recognised and should be developed across each of the units. Inspection of sample care files indicates regular half term, end of term and reports for review meetings are prepared and shared as part of consultation between education and the residential aspects of the school. Staff consult well with parents and carers with staff making telephone contact at the end and beginning of each week to share issues and provide feedback on children's progress. The head teacher

suggested that a boarders committee may help in relation to developing consultation with the children and this aspect is welcomed by the inspectors.

During the inspection positive relations were observed between children and staff on duty. Very recently a new head and deputy head of care has been appointed and it was evident that these staff were working hard to assimilate themselves to the working practices and routines on each unit. Incidences of challenging behaviour appeared to be dealt with appropriately by staff and it is evident that the staff on the units try to adopt a consistent approach to behaviour management.

A telephone contact system has been recently introduced whereby staff contact families on a Friday and Monday, to discuss the progress of children and any potential contact issues.

One situation was witnessed by the inspector, that was reported to the headmaster, who agreed to take appropriate action.

Staff have recently undertaken behaviour management training although from information provided it is not entirely clear that external trainer used is accredited with the British Institute of Learning Disabilities. An enquiry form is completed prior to a child being placed at the school, however the admission processes to the school remain an area of significant improvement. Discussions with staff and inspection of records indicate that basic information is obtained prior to a child being placed and occasions have occurred when children have been placed displaying risk behaviours that have only become known after the child is placed. Arrangements should be made to ensure that all information in relation to standard 11.3 is obtained prior to a child being admitted to the school. A key worker system is in place and all of the children that spoke with the inspectors were aware of their key worker and their role. Staff that spoke with the inspector Each child has a written care plan in place that details their needs and how those needs are to be met. The depth of information provided in the care plans varied from each unit and not all files contained a copy children's statement of educational needs. Arrangements should be in place to ensure that placement plans contain information in accordance with NMS Standard 17.5 and be consistent with any placing authority plan for the child.

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):

Staff are completing positive work with regard to key working and the review of young people's individual needs. Appropriate contact between young people and their families and friends is encouraged to help them maintain relationships.

EVIDENCE:

The environment continues to be an issue at the school, although the temporary decorative work remains well maintained. Plans continue for the re-build to be completed in 2008, which will greatly enhance the care package offered to children at the school.

It is recommended, that through consultation with the fire officer a full risk assessment of the premises is completed and their advice sought over the need for a fire extinguisher in the laundry room.

Some houses have completed art work with children, such as a "wish tree", (made up of hand prints, photographs and children's individual wishes for their future) which has helped to personalise their environment.

The inspector spent time on the semi-independent unit with young people. Individual care plans were detailed and provided targets and goals for young people to work towards, there was evidence of these having been monitored and reviewed, and new targets set as a result.

Young people are expected to collect their own meals from the kitchens and at times shop for ingredients and cook for themselves: they are also expected to completed basic tasks such as washing their own dishes, and completing their own laundry, with assistance from staff where necessary.

Levels of independence are somewhat limited due to a lack of cooking facilities on this house, the kitchen only has a microwave and would benefit greatly from a cooker, this would enable young people to cook on a more regular basis.

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)

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

18,29

Young people are supported by a competent staff team, with adequate staff provided in order that the needs of the young people are met.
Records reflect young people's individual needs, development and progress.

EVIDENCE:

This inspection has been carried out only six weeks after the employment of a new care manager. It would be fair to say that the inspection has seen the residential area of the school at a time of positive change. The next inspection of Lower lee will hopefully see the changes that the manager has highlighted in practice.

The staff group should be commended for their continued positive attitudes following a period of change at the school in recent years.

As identified within this report some information relating to the children is not on their current files. The head and deputy head of care are in the process of reviewing the children's file formats and this aspect is welcomed.

Staff have recently undertaken restraint, emergency aid and child protection training. A training matrix has been devised and the head of care is in the process of implementing a revised induction and staff development programme. The school is in the process of arranging NVQ level 3 caring for children and young people training for staff and some staff have already achieved this award. There are plans for some staff to access GCSC courses and food hygiene training.

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

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	2
15	3

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

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3
13	2
22	3

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	3
21	3
23	2
24	2
25	2

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	X
18	3
19	3
28	3
29	2
30	3
31	3
32	3
33	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	RS4	The registered person should ensure that complaint records are fully completed to evidence any outcome of a complaint investigation made.	
2	RS9	The registered person should ensure that any behaviour management training in place is provided by trainers is accredited with the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD).	
3	RS11	The registered person should ensure that all information in relation to standard 11.3 is obtained prior to a child being admitted to residence. Where the head does not have control of their admissions they must inform the education authority of their reservations about any admission, in writing and maintain a copy of that notification at the school.	
4	RS13	In consultation with children, staff and other stakeholders the registered person should review the current activity arrangements in place.	
5	RS14	The registered person must ensure that each child placed has a health care plan that covers all aspects of NMS Standard 14.6.	
6	RS14	The registered person should ensure that a controlled drugs cabinet be located on each of the units.	
7	RS17	The registered person should ensure that	

		placement plans (care plans) contain information in accordance with NMS Standard 17.5 and be consistent with any placing authority plan for the child.	
8	RS23	The registered person should ensure that a written fire risk assessment is in place. In relation to the laundry facility on one of the units, in consultation with the fire authority, consideration should be given to providing an appropriate type of extinguisher in this facility.	
9	RS27	The registered person should ensure that reference request letters should include a statement requesting the referee to state if there are any known reasons why the person should not be employed to work with children and that there should be no material mis statement or omission relevant to the suitability of the applicant.	
10	RS27	The registered person must ensure that all staff including residential, agency and ancillary have an enhanced criminal records bureau check in place.	
11	RS27	The registered person should have a system in place evidencing that agencies providing sessional staff working at the school have carried out CRB checks.	
12	RS29	The registered person should ensure that a staff training programme is devised that includes all aspects of NMS 29 Appendix 2	

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