

inspection report

Boarding School

Blundells School

Tiverton

Devon

EX16 4DN

21st – 23rd September 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

SCHOOL INFORMATION**Name of School**

Blundells School

Address

Tiverton, Devon, EX16 4DN

Tel No:

01884 252543

Fax No:

01884 243232

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

The Governors, Blundell's School

Name of Head

Mr I. Davenport

CSCI Classification

Boarding School

Type of school

Boarding School

Date of last boarding welfare inspection

Date of Inspection Visit		21 st – 23 rd September 2004		ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am		
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	Michael Lane	071569	
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Patricia Hellier		
Name of CSCI Inspector	3			
Name of CSCI Inspector	4			
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):		Carol Evans		
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.				
Was this inspection conducted alongside an ISI or OfSTED inspection as part of a Joint Whole School Inspection?				NO
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		MR. R. THANE		

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Boarding schools are subject to inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to determine whether the welfare of children (ie those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

Inspections assess the extent to which the school is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, published by the Secretary of State under Section 87C of the Children Act 1989, and other relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 as amended.

Inspections are carried out by the CSCI, and in most cases the inspection team includes a specialist in boarding provision working, or with experience of working, in the boarding sector. Boarding welfare inspections by CSCI may also be carried out in conjunction with a full inspection of the school by the Independent Schools Inspectorate or OfSTED, so that the two inspections together constitute a Joint Whole School Inspection of the school. In such cases, a joint summary of main findings and recommendations from both inspections will also be available.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Blundells School.

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

The report will show the following:

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

INSPECTION VISITS

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

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

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Blundell's is a co-educational day and boarding school for children between years seven and thirteen. It occupies a large site straddling a main road leading in to Tiverton. All pupils, both day and boarding, are attached to one of the seven boarding houses. All pupils in years seven and eight, both girls and boys are in School House. Girls between years nine and thirteen are in either Gorton or North Close and boys within the same age range are in Francis House, Old House or Petergate. In the recent past a new boarding house, Westlake, has been built to accommodate pupils, both girls and boys in the upper sixth form.

The school has a particularly flexible approach to boarding. In addition to full boarding the boarding houses provide flexi-boarding for many pupil attached to the house. This can be for just a few nights each academic year or for several nights each week.

Each boarding house is staffed with either a resident housemistress or housemaster, supported by resident and non resident tutors, a matron and domestic staff.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

- The school has been successful in creating an ethos of purposeful, caring calm.
- The observed conduct of the pupils was exemplary
- The Staff Handbook is a well constructed document and a helpful point of reference for all staff
- Each house produces a helpful boarders' handbook
- The provision of personal, social and health education was exceptionally good
- Medical information on boarders is sought from parents in a well designed format
- The high standard of accommodation and facilities in the newly opened upper sixth form house, Westlake, demonstrates the high standards to which the school aspires
- The system of monitors worked well
- The school sanatorium provided good accommodation for sick pupils and good quality care from nursing staff
- The quality and choice of meals in the dining room was very good and mealtimes were pleasantly relaxed social occasions
- Staffing arrangements in six of the seven boarding houses were good
- Guidance to staff on activities planned to take place away from the school site was good
- Arrangements for addressing Health and safety issues were clear and sound
- Staff recruitment processes were sound
- Good communication processes were in place

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

- Take steps to overcome the anxieties of new boarders in School House
- Ensure that all staff, including ancillary staff, have been trained in child protection procedures and keep a record with dates of the training
- Introduce a formal process through which boarders can contribute their views on the operation of boarding practice
- Ensure that all staff comply with guidance given by the nursing staff in the sanatorium

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

All three inspectors were of the view that Blundells is strongly committed to the welfare of its boarding pupils. Staff with boarding house duties presented as friendly and approachable and were discreet and effective in their work.

Physical standards between the houses varied from excellent to acceptable. It was pleasing to learn that the school had acknowledged this disparity and had introduced a rolling programme of refurbishment to address it.

Meal arrangements and the meals themselves were of a consistently high standard.

Issues relating to Health and Safety were addressed thoroughly, responsibly and well.

The school is to be praised for maintaining the positive and purposeful ethos which generates exemplary conduct from its pupils.

NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

NO

NO

NO

The grounds for any Notification to be made are:

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION					

NA

No	Standard*	Recommended Actions	

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

RECOMMENDED ACTION

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

No	Standard*	Recommended Action	
1	BS17	Take steps to ensure that all staff follow medical guidance given by the qualified nursing staff working in the sanatorium	With immediate effect

ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

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

No	Refer to Standard*	Recommendation
1	BS1	Incorporate the school's admission criteria into the Statement of Boarding Principles and Practice
2	BS2	Encourage year eight boarders in School House to support and assist year seven boarders as they settle into the house and school and deal effectively with any unacceptable behaviour directed by year eight boarders towards year seven boarders.

3	BS3	<p>In relation to the school's child protection policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include a named person to whom staff should go if an allegation is made against the named designated person • advise staff that they can put concerns to the Commission for Social Care Inspection and provide contact details • ensure that all staff members have been trained in child protection procedures and that a record is kept identifying all staff members who have received the training, the date on which it was given and by whom
4	BS4	Incorporate in the written guidance to staff on the use or restraint a statement to the effect that staff should manage situations in a manner that will minimise the need to use restraint
5	BS5	Amend the complaints procedure to advise boarders and their parents that they may put complaints to the Commission for Social Care Inspection and give them contact details
6	BS2	Complete the school's crisis management plan
7	BS12	Introduce formal processes through which boarders are given the opportunity to contribute their views on the operation of the school's boarding provision
8	BS15	Amend the protocol relating to boarders' ability to self medicate to require that boarders who self medicate have lockable storage for their medication
9	BS20	Make arrangements to ensure that each boarder has secure lockable storage for personal possessions
10	BS21	Make arrangements to ensure that new boarders in School House are made fully aware of the school's expectations
11	BS31	Consider increasing the staffing in School House at the beginning of each academic year to ensure that new boarders are helped to familiarise themselves with the school and its expectations of them
12	BS37	Take steps to ensure as far as is reasonably possible that in School House year eight boarders cease to enter the rooms of year seven boarders
13	BS42	Ensure that bunk beds are used for boarders beyond year eight only exceptionally
14	BS44	Refurbish the ground floor W.C. in Old House

*Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. BS10 refers to Standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

The following Inspection Methods have been used in the production of this report.

Direct Observation	YES
Pupil guided tour of accommodation	YES
Pupil guided tour of Recreational Areas	YES

Checks with other Organisations and Individuals

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	YES
• School Doctor	YES
• Independent Person or Counsellor	YES
• Chair of Governors	YES
'Tracking' individual welfare arrangements	YES
Group discussion with boarders	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	YES
Group discussion with ancillary staff	YES
Group discussion with Gap students	NO
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Boarders' survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Invitation to parents to comment	YES
Inspection of policy / practice documents	YES
Inspection of Records	YES
Visit to Sanatorium	YES
Visits to lodgings	NA
Individual interviews with pupil(s)	NO

Date of Inspection	21/9/04
Time of Inspection	09.00
Duration of Inspection (hrs.)	93
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	6

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

SCHOOL INFORMATION:**AGE RANGE OF BOARDING
PUPILS****FRO
M**

11

TO

18

NUMBER OF BOARDERS (FULL TIME + WEEKLY) AT TIME OF INSPECTION:**Boys**

233

Girls

147

Total

380

Number of separate Boarding Houses

7

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the CSCI assessment of the extent to which standards have been met. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The 4-point scale ranges from:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 4 - Standard Exceeded | (Commendable) |
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"0" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

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

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

WELFARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff.
- Boarders are protected from bullying.
- Boarders are protected from abuse.
- Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate.
- Boarders' complaints are appropriately responded to.
- Boarders' health is promoted.
- Safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records.

Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.4)

A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

A 'Statement of Boarding Values at Blundell's' and a statement of 'Boarding Principles and Aims' appear in the booklets 'New Pupil Information', one for pupils in years seven and eight and another for pupils in years nine and above. Both also include an introductory letter from the Head Master addressed to parents which gives helpful information on the school's philosophy and ethos, on the expectations the school has of pupils and their parents and of the sense of partnership the school wishes to generate with them.

These documents give a very clear picture of the organisation of boarding provision in the school, of welfare arrangements and of the expectations that boarders can have of the school and that the school will have of them.

Admission criteria should be incorporated into these documents.

Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.6) The school should have an effective policy on countering bullying, which is known to parents, boarders and staff and which is implemented successfully in practice.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>The school had a sound policy on countering bullying which contains a thorough definition of bullying and which is included in the 'New Pupil Information' booklets and is freely available to staff in the Staff Handbook.</p> <p>Responses to the questionnaire completed by boarders shortly before the inspection revealed that boarders did not identify bullying as a significant problem. The overwhelming majority reported that they were never, or hardly ever, bullied. During the course of the inspection it emerged that in School House, the house for junior boarders, boarders in year seven were unhappy at the manner in which they were treated by boarders in year eight, quoting many instances giving rise to real unhappiness.</p>		
PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS REPORTING NEVER OR HARDLY EVER BEING BULLIED	93.8	%

Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.9) The school should have, and follow, an appropriate policy on child protection and response to allegations or suspicions of abuse, which is consistent with local Area Child Protection Committee procedures, and is known to staff and, as appropriate, to older boarders in positions of responsibility.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>The school had a clear, well written and comprehensive child protection policy, but which requires some fine tuning. Provision should be made for a named alternative should an allegation be made against the designated person and to advise staff members that they can report any concern or allegation to the Commission for Social Care Inspection.</p> <p>The policy is contained in the Staff Handbook and is freely available to all staff.</p> <p>The designated person has trained matrons and heads of department in child protection matters and procedures and has asked that they cascade the training to domestic staff. This training had not been given and there was no documentary evidence to demonstrate who had received training in child protection.</p> <p>Training for newly appointed school monitors had been scheduled for the weekend following the inspection.</p> <p>It is recommended that the school satisfies itself that all staff have received training in child protection and that a record is maintained identifying all staff members whom have received the training.</p> <p>The school had a sound missing persons procedure.</p>		

Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.7)

The school should have, and follow, a fair and appropriate policy on behaviour, discipline and use of punishments, known to boarders, staff and parents.

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

The school behaviour policy is contained in the Staff Handbook and clear guidelines on acceptable behaviour are contained in the booklet 'School Rules and Notes for Guidance' issued to all boarders. Staff members have clear guidance on the punishments they may give and the manner in which they are to be given. No evidence was found of any idiosyncratic punishments and only 3.3% of boarders considered that punishments were unfair.

School monitors may give punishments, but must obtain the approval of the housemaster or housemistress before they can be implemented. They said that they had been given a very good induction into their new role and they were very clear about their powers.

Each boarding house maintained a record of all punishments administered.

The staff handbook contains guidance on the use of restraint, although the inspectors were assured that there had been no instances of restraint being used. The guidance lists 'circumstances when physical intervention may be appropriate':

- Committing a criminal offence
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property (including a pupil's own property)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline

It is recommended that the guidance advise staff of the need to manage situations in a manner that will minimise the likelihood of the need to use restraint

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.7) The school should have, and follow, an appropriate policy on responding to complaints from boarders and parents.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>The school calendar which is issued to all pupils contains a complaints procedure guiding pupils that a formal complaint 'should be addressed to the Head Master, either in writing or personally'. Under the heading 'The last safety net' the names and contact telephone numbers of two people, independent of the school are given.</p> <p>Parents of boarders have been advised of the complaints procedure to follow in a paper dated August, 2004.</p> <p>The Head Master's secretary keeps a record of all serious complaints.</p> <p>Both boarders and their parents should be advised that they can contact the Commission for Social Care Inspection regarding any complaint concerning the welfare of a boarder and should be given the necessary contact details.</p>		
Number of complaints, if any, received by CSCI about the school during last 12 months:		0

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.3) The school should have, and follow, an appropriate policy on countering major risks to health, including substance abuse.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
<p>The inspectors were particularly impressed by the quality of the curriculum covering personal, social and health education for every year group in the school.</p> <p>The staff handbook contained sound and clear guidance on the school's response to alcohol, smoking and the use of illegal substances.</p>		

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.5) Adequate records should be kept in relation to individual boarders' health and welfare needs and issues.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Comprehensive medical information on boarders, using a well devised and comprehensive questionnaire, is sought prior to their admission to the school. It asks for the names of the parents, their contact details and, if appropriate, information on who has parental responsibility.</p> <p>Information on special medical needs and conditions is made available to staff on a 'need to know basis'. It was particularly helpful to have information on some pupils with particular medical conditions available to all staff in their common room.</p>		

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- There is clear leadership of boarding in the school.
- Crises affecting boarders' welfare are effectively managed.
- The school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare.
- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities.
- Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school.
- The operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare.
- Boarders receive personal support from staff.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.3)

There should be clear management and leadership of the practice and development of boarding in the school.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Matters relating to boarding are discussed in various regularly timetabled meetings:

- Every fortnight the Head Master chairs a meeting attended by the Second Master, the Senior Mistress, all Houseparents and the School Chaplain at which matters relating to boarding are addressed.
- Each week there is a meeting chaired by the Head Master and attended by the Second Master, Bursar, Chaplain, Head of Junior Department, Head of St. Aubyn's (the prep school) at which matters relating to boarding welfare are discussed.
- Each week there is a lunchtime meeting of the Senior Management Team at which specific individual matters can be raised.

All senior boarding house staff were well experienced in the management of boarding.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.3)

The school should be capable of satisfactorily managing crises affecting boarders' welfare

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The time of this inspection the school's crisis management plan was in preparation.

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.5)

The organisation of boarding houses or units should operate satisfactorily and provide appropriate protection and separation of boarders by age and gender.

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

Boarding accommodation is provided in seven boarding houses.

School House accommodates both girls and boys in years seven and eight.
 Petergate, Francis and Old House accommodate boys in years nine to twelve.
 North Close and Gorton accommodate girls in years nine to twelve.
 Westlake accommodates both girls and boys in year thirteen.

Westlake is a new, purpose built house with separate wings for girls and boys, linked by shared common room facilities. The accommodation is of a high standard and demonstrates the standard to which the school aspires. The other houses are older and cannot claim parity in physical standards. It was encouraging to note that the school had a medium term development plan for upgrading the older boarding houses.

The inspectors found no evidence to suggest any major disparity in practice between the houses.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

There should be an appropriate range and choice of activities for boarders outside teaching time.

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

Seventy three per cent of boarders considered that the range of activities available to them was either very good or good.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.2)

Boarders have opportunity to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision.

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

In discussion groups older boarders spoke of weekly house meetings at which they were able to express views on any matter they wished to raise. The youngest boarders were unaware of any mechanism through which they could contribute suggestions and views.

House meetings are held each week. Boarders were of the view that they were essentially an opportunity for staff to deal with matters of the moment, but they did present an opportunity for boarders to raise matters important to them.

House staff presented as approachable and were seen by the boarders as such. In consequence there was the opportunity for purposeful informal approaches from boarders to them

There was no school council.

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.7) Any prefect system (or equivalent) should give prefects (or equivalent) appropriate specific duties and responsibilities, with adequate staff supervision and measures to counter possible abuses of the role.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Monitors undertook evening duties in the boarding houses supporting the staff on duty. All prefects had received training for their role and were perceived by the boarders as fulfilling their duties entirely reasonably.</p>		

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.6) Each boarder should have one or more members of staff to whom he or she can turn for personal guidance or with a personal problem.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>From the questionnaire completed by boarders prior to the inspection and from conversations with them it emerged that boarders were very clear that they were able to talk to a wide range of staff members about any matter of concern to them.</p> <p>All boarders have a tutor, whose tutees, for the most part live in the boarding house to which the tutor is attached and where the tutor does evening duties.</p> <p>The school has two independent listeners available to the boarders. Their details are contained in the school calendar. Few boarders knew of them and the nature of their role, but this may well be a reflection of the fact that circumstances had not arisen which could cause boarders to contact them.</p>		

WELFARE SUPPORT TO BOARDERS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- **Boarders receive first aid and health care as necessary.**
- **Boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill.**
- **Boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal problems.**
- **Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination.**
- **Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families.**
- **Boarders' possessions and money are protected.**
- **New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in.**
- **Boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school.**
- **Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders' welfare.**
- **Boarders receive good quality catering provision.**
- **Boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals.**
- **Boarders are protected from the risk of fire.**
- **Boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands.**
- **The welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school.**
- **Boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high-risk activities.**
- **Boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school.**

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.14)

Appropriate first aid and minor illness treatment are available to boarders at all times, with access to medical, dental and optical services as required.

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

First Aid boxes were provided in each boarding house and in appropriate locations in the school. They are checked by the sanatorium sister each half term.

The school's general practitioner with whom all boarders are registered visits daily between 08.00 and 08.30 when boarders can be seen at the school sanatorium. Good arrangements were in place for boarders to have appointments with dentists and opticians. These appointments are made by the sanatorium sister and boarders are accompanied to them by their house matron.

The school had a protocol on the use of household remedies and a protocol for assessing pupils' ability to self medicate. This latter document lists the criteria used to assess the pupil's competence. It should be amended to require that any pupil self medicating should have and use lockable storage for any medication they are taking.

Good records of all treatment given and of all medication administered were maintained by the school sanatorium staff.

The school had obtained written parental permission for the administration of first aid and appropriate non prescription medication and to seek medical, dental or optical treatment when required.

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.3)

Boarders who are ill should be regularly checked and adequately looked after by a member of staff, and be able to summon staff assistance readily and rapidly when necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****4**

The school sanatorium has very good accommodation for boarders who are unwell, where they can be looked after for twenty four hours a day under the care of a qualified nurse. Boarders who are less unwell, but unable to go to school can be looked after within their houses under the care of the house matrons who work closely with the sanatorium sister.

Boarders who are unwell at whatever time of day could contact a member of staff readily and at all times house staff are able to contact one of the sanatorium nurses.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8) Significant health and personal problems of individual boarders should be identified and managed appropriately.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	1
<p>From discussion with the sanatorium sister it became evident that sound processes were in place to deal with individual boarders' needs. There was good communication between the sanatorium staff and houses over the management of specific medical conditions.</p> <p>The school counsellor was based in the sanatorium and was readily available to any boarder. Guidance on how to arrange to see her was included in the school calendar.</p> <p>The school was particularly sensitive towards boarders with specific difficulties. The sanatorium nurse spoke of a wide range of specialist support services both within and outside the school which could be called upon to support and help them.</p> <p>The inspectors were concerned to learn of isolated occasions when written guidance from the sanatorium staff had been disregarded by the school's Games Department. This was a totally unacceptable practice.</p>		

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.6) Within the school, there is no inappropriate discrimination on grounds of gender, disability, race, religion, cultural background, linguistic background, sexual orientation, or academic or sporting ability. These factors are taken into account in the care of boarders, so that care is sensitive to different needs.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The school had an equal opportunities policy.</p> <p>The inspectors took meals with the boarders, spent time in each of the boarding houses, spoke to boarders in discussion groups and observed interactions during the school day. No evidence emerged of any discriminatory practice.</p>		

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.6) Boarders are enabled to contact their parents and families in private.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Access to a telephone in privacy was not a concern to boarders. Very many had their own mobile telephones and each boarding house had telephones for boarders' use. Some house telephones were in public areas and within a hood. These provided limited privacy.</p> <p>The Childline telephone number was printed in the school calendar.</p>		

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.3) Reasonable protection is provided for boarders' personal possessions and for any boarders' money or valuables looked after by the school.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>External security for the boarding houses was good. External doors were fitted with digital locks and the more vulnerable buildings were protected with external closed circuit television.</p> <p>Within the houses there were no locks on bedroom doors and it was for boarders to provide lockable storage if they wished to secure any possessions. The philosophy of the school was that boarders should respect the privacy and property of their peers.</p>		

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.3) There is an appropriate process of induction and guidance for new boarders.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>Before admission new boarders have useful and helpful written information both from the school and from the house they will be joining. On admission an established boarder buddies them to help familiarise them with all aspects of house and school life.</p> <p>School House accommodates the youngest boarders, those in years seven and eight. Here there was evidence to demonstrate that the induction process for new boarders was unsatisfactory. Junior boarders in School House spoke of being uncertain of what was required of them and that in consequence they became distressed and unhappy when they were in trouble for failing to meet the school's expectations. It is recommended that there should be increased input from staff at the start of the new school year to assist and reassure new boarders.</p>		

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.4) Any guardians appointed by the school should be subject to the same recruitment checks as staff, and their care of pupils should be monitored.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
<p>No guardianship arrangements were made by the school.</p>		

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.4) The Head, or a senior member of the school's staff, regularly monitors the school's records of risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents, to identify any issues requiring action.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Within each boarding house the house master or house mistress monitors house records on a daily basis and they attend very regular meetings with the headmaster and senior staff. The bursar chairs the school's Health and Safety Committee and monitors all matters relating to health and safety across the school.</p>		

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

Meals should be provided to boarders, which are adequate in quantity, quality and choice, and provision is made for special dietary, medical or religious needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****4**

Throughout the three days of the inspection the three inspectors took meals with the boarders in the school dining room and joined them for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The dining room was spacious, light and well furnished and all mealtimes were unhurried, pleasant social occasions.

Menus had been well planned and there was a good choice, including vegetarian at each meal.

The quality of the catering was considered to be very good.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.5)

Boarders have access to drinking water in both boarding and teaching areas, and to food or the means of preparing food at reasonable times in addition to main meals.

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

Each boarding house had a kitchen supplied with coffee, tea, milk, sugar, butter and bread in which boarders could prepare a snack or drink during the evenings and at weekends.

The school tuck shop was open and available to boarders at break times during the school day.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

Boarders and boarding staff should be aware of emergency evacuation procedures from boarding accommodation. The school should comply with recommendations of the Fire Service, and should regularly carry out and record risk assessments in relation to fire, together with fire drills and any routine tests recommended by the Fire Service.

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

Boarders were very clear in saying that they were familiar with emergency evacuation procedures and that unannounced fire drills took place in each house each half term and that the timing of the drills varied.

Routine checks of the fire precaution systems were undertaken and recorded regularly in each of the houses.

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3) Schools where there are unusual or especially onerous demands on boarders ensure that these are appropriate to the boarders concerned and do not unacceptably affect boarders' welfare.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
There were no especially onerous demands on any boarders.		

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.2) The welfare of any children accommodated at the school, other than pupils, is protected.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
There were no such children accommodated at the school.		

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6) Identifiably high-risk activities provided for boarders should be competently supervised and accompanied by adequate and appropriate safety measures.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The Staff Handbook contains very clear, detailed and well considered instructions to staff planning activities away from the school site. There are three categories identified with increasing demands as the inherent risks of the proposed activity rise.		

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.5) Boarders have access to information about events in the world outside the school, and access to local facilities, which is appropriate to their age.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Daily newspapers were delivered to each boarding house and each had a television. Arrangements for boarders leaving the school campus were clearly explained in each house handbook.		

STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- **Boarders are adequately supervised by staff.**
- **Staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site.**
- **Boarders are adequately supervised at night.**
- **Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training.**
- **Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice.**
- **There are sound relationships between staff and boarders.**
- **Boarders' personal privacy is respected.**
- **There is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders.**
- **Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises.**

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.7)

The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time should be sufficient in number and deployment for the age, number and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved.

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

Each boarding house is run by either a resident housemaster or resident housemistress supported by a matron, resident tutors and tutors doing sessional work.

Francis House, with fourteen full boarders and forty three flexi-boarders, had a resident housemaster, a resident tutor, a non resident matron and five non resident tutors.

Gorton House, with seventeen full boarders and twenty three flexi-boarders, had a resident housemistress, two resident tutors, a non resident matron, and six non resident tutors.

North Close, with twenty full boarders and thirty nine flexi boarders had a resident housemistress, a resident tutor, a non resident matron and six non resident tutors.

Old House, with seven full boarders and forty seven flexi boarders had a resident housemaster, a resident tutor, a non resident matron and eight non resident tutors.

Petergate, with twenty one full boarders and thirty five flexi boarders had a resident housemaster, two resident tutors, a non resident matron and seven non resident tutors.

Westlake, with eighteen full boarders and fifty flexi boarders had a resident housemaster and housemistress, three resident tutors, two non resident matrons and one non resident tutor.

School House, the junior school boarding house, with seventeen full boarders and thirty three flexi boarders had a resident housemaster and housemistress, two resident tutors, one resident and three non resident matrons and eight non resident tutors.

Staffing levels in the boarding house were considered suitable for the number of boarders. With the exception of School House boarders were clear about which members of staff were on duty and that they were readily accessible. Elsewhere in this report, at Standard twenty one, it is noted that boarders in school house were uncertain of the expectations on them. They also spoke of an occasion when they were uncertain what was required of them and were unable to find a member of staff. In consequence they became very distressed.

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

Boarders temporarily away from the school site remain under the overall responsibility of a duty member of staff, and are able to contact a member of staff in an emergency.

Standard met?**3**

The Staff Handbook gives clear, and sound guidance on the minimum acceptable staff to pupil ratio on a range of activities planned to take place away from the school site and very clear and thorough guidance on the duties of staff toward the pupils for whom they are responsible.

Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.5) Staff should be present, and accessible to boarders as necessary, in each boarding house at night.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Information recorded under Standard thirty one demonstrates that there are adequate numbers of staff sleeping in each house at night, all of whom were readily accessible to boarders.		

Standard 34 (34.1 - 34.7) All staff with boarding duties have job descriptions reflecting those duties, receive induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receive regular review of their boarding practice, with opportunities for continuing training in boarding.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
Clear job descriptions had been written for all staff with boarding responsibilities. The house matron oversees the work of the domestic staff in each house. A staff appraisal scheme was in place. Domestic staff had yet to receive training in child protection.		

Standard 35 (35.1 - 35.4) All staff with boarding duties are provided with up to date written guidance on the school's boarding policies and practice.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Guidance for staff on boarding practice is incorporated into the Staff Handbook. It addresses bullying, child protection, the tutor system, handling boarders' personal problems, complaints from boarders and sanctions. Boarding house routines are contained in each house's handbook.		

Standard 36 (36.1 - 36.4)**There are sound staff/boarder relationships.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

In all boarding houses relationships between the boarders and staff were respectful and friendly. Prior to the inspection proper the boarders were asked to complete a simple questionnaire from which the following quotations come:

“Boy aged fourteen: the staff are very caring and easy to speak to. I am well looked after and couldn't expect more.

Boy aged fourteen: I am very happy at the school and I enjoy it.

Boy aged fifteen: There is a pleasant and friendly atmosphere

Boy aged thirteen: I am looked after well

Boy aged fifteen: (re: the staff) They're nice to pupils and they get on very well with the children.

Girl aged thirteen: Matron and the houseparents are very nice to me. I can ask them anything to sort out my problems.

Girl aged thirteen: I get looked after very well. My houseparents and tutor are brilliant. I always sleep easily and never get homesick because I feel just like I'm at home.

Girl aged fourteen: The houseparents and tutors are really nice. As well as matron.

Girl aged fifteen: My tutor and housemistress are really good. They care a lot about my progress and I know I can always go to them if I have a problem.

Girls aged fifteen: houseparents are really welcoming, they are always there to talk to. Most (staff) are nice, the tutors are really nice and I can always talk to them.

Girl aged eleven: Everyone is friendly especially the matrons and the nurses at the sanatorium. All the teachers are lovely and kind. Weekends are so fun. Because it is fun it stops you from feeling too homesick. I love being here and everyone makes it even better. I was scared about coming, but I am glad I did.

Girl aged twelve: It's really fun and I'm glad I flexi-board.

Boy aged 11: It is the best school there could be.

Girl aged twelve: The staff are very friendly and caring

Boy aged eleven: The staff are friendly and helpful.”

These comments are typical of those written by the boarders and reflect the positive nature of the relationships between staff and boarders observed by the inspectors.

Standard 37 (37.1 - 37.2)**Staff supervision of boarders should avoid intruding unnecessarily on boarders' privacy.****Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

Evidence from discussion groups held with boarders and from time spent in the boarding houses demonstrated very clearly that members of staff did not intrude inappropriately on the boarders' privacy. House staff were seen to knock on doors and to wait for a response before entering a bedroom.

Younger boarders, those in year seven, in School House were, however, unhappy that the older boarders in the house, those in year eight, regularly entered their rooms without permission and disrupted whatever it was they were doing.

Standard 38 (38.1 - 38.10) Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those on a contractual/sessional basis) and volunteers who work with boarders (as defined in the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000) includes checks through the Criminal Records Bureau checking system (enhanced as appropriate), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Blundells operates a thoroughly sound recruitment process for all staff vacancies covering each of the elements of this standard. The inspectors recommended that the school verify the pin numbers of the qualified nurses working in the sanatorium.		

Standard 39 (39.1 - 39.4) The school does not allow any member of staff (including ancillary staff, sessional/contract staff and volunteers) to work unsupervised with boarders unless that member of staff has been satisfactorily checked with the Criminal Records Bureau.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
No person having direct contact with boarders worked at Blundells until a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau check had been received.		

PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- **Boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation.**
- **Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion.**
- **Boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation.**
- **Boarders have satisfactory provision to study.**
- **Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities.**
- **Boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day.**
- **Boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas.**
- **Boarders are protected from safety hazards.**
- **Boarders are suitably accommodated when ill.**
- **Boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered.**
- **Boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school.**
- **The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted.**
- **The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits.**

Standard 40 (40.1 - 40.8)

Boarding Houses (including dormitories and living areas) and other accommodation provided for boarders should be appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, suitably furnished, accessible to any boarders with disabilities, and adequately maintained.

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

The standard of accommodation in the seven boarding houses varies. Westlake, the recently built upper sixth for house demonstrated very clearly the high standard to which the school aspires.

Nowhere was accommodation unacceptable, but there were areas that were becoming shabby and furniture that was looking tired. Cabin beds in which the bed is high and underneath is a desk, were provided in several bedrooms. Some boarders were unhappy at the height of the bed and found working at the desk underneath difficult because there was no desk light and the working space was poorly lit.

The standard of cleanliness and hygiene in all houses was good.

Petergate had been refurbished during the Summer holiday prior to this inspection. All rooms had been freshly painted and carpeting looked relatively new. Much of the furniture was shabby and in the TV room some chairs were in need of repair.

Francis House was generally in poor condition. The lead inspector learned from the bursar that it is scheduled for refurbishment during the Summer of 2006.

Gorton House was in an acceptable condition. It was noted that in the sixth form kitchen the toaster was not working and the seal to the door of the refrigerator was damaged.

Generally the decoration of Old House was looking decidedly tired. The house is scheduled for refurbishment during the Summer of 2006.

The standard of decoration and furnishing in North Close was good.

The decoration and furnishing in School House was in an acceptable.

The inspectors were please to learn that a development plan was in place to ensure that in addition to routine maintenance all boarding accommodation is to be refurbished on a rolling programme.

Standard 41 (41.1 - 41.8)

Boarding accommodation is reserved for the use of those boarders designated to use it, and protected by access by the public.

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

Security arrangements for the boarding houses were good. Closed circuit television was in place to monitor the more exposed outside areas and security locks were fitted to all doors giving access to boarding houses.

Standard 42 (42.1 - 42.14) Sleeping accommodation is suitably furnished and of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of boarders accommodated, with appropriate separation between genders, age groups and from accommodation for adults.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>Bedrooms in all the houses provided at least adequate space for the boarders and many were of a generous size. The standard of decoration and furnishing varied, but nowhere was it unacceptable.</p> <p>Bunk beds, without a ladder to the top bunk, were in use for some boarders in senior boarding houses. The National Minimum Standards advises that bunk beds should be used for boarders beyond year eight 'only exceptionally'. The absence of a ladder should be risk assessed.</p>		

Standard 43 (43.1 - 43.2) Suitable facilities for both organised and private study are available to boarders.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Arrangements for prep and private study were entirely sound.</p> <p>The school should consider how to provide better lighting for those work areas under cabin beds.</p>		

Standard 44 (44.1 - 44.10) Adequate toilet and washing facilities are readily accessible to boarders, with appropriate privacy.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>There was adequate provision of W.Cs. and bathing facilities in all boarding houses. No boarder suggested that there was ever a problem having access to them.</p> <p>In Old House the ground floor W.C. in which there are three urinals and three W.Cs. was not a pleasant room. The floor was bare concrete and there was a faint, but unpleasant odour.</p>		

Standard 45 (45.1 - 45.3) Suitable changing provision is provided for use by day.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Changing rooms, W.Cs. and showers in the main school used by boarders were of a good standard.</p>		

Standard 46 (46.1 - 46.6) Boarders have access to a range and choice of safe recreational areas, both indoors and outdoors.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Each boarding house had common rooms for the boarders, who also had the use of the extensive grounds. Boarders knew what was in and out of bounds.</p>		

Standard 47 (47.1 - 47.9)

Indoor and outdoor areas used by, or accessible to, boarders should be free from reasonably avoidable safety hazards.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The inspectors identified no significant hazards either within buildings or on the campus. Outside pathways were well lit at night.

The school campus is on both sides of a main road into Tiverton and boarders necessarily cross the road throughout the day. At the most used crossing point is a pelican crossing and elsewhere are designated crossing points. The school was very aware of the potential danger and was robust in requiring pupils to cross the road safely. Just as the pupils had to cross this road, so, too, did the inspectors and at no time during the three days of the inspection did an inspector see a pupil do anything other than act totally responsibly.

Standard 48 (48.1 - 48.4)

Suitable accommodation should be available for the separate care of boarders who are ill.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

The school sanatorium has good accommodation for sick boarders.

Standard 49 (49.1 - 49.3)

Adequate laundry provision is made for boarders' clothing and bedding.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

House matrons oversee laundry in each house. Bedding and personal clothing are laundered in a central laundry and each house has its own washing machine which the house matron uses for washing boarders' personal items. Boarders told inspectors that the system worked well.

Standard 50 (50.1 - 50.2)

Boarders are able to obtain minor necessary personal and stationery items while accommodated at school.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school has its own shop selling routine items and boarders can buy other items locally in Tiverton.

Standard 51 (51.1 - 51.11)

Any lodgings arranged by the school to accommodate pupils provide satisfactory accommodation and supervision, are checked by the school before use, and are monitored by the school during use.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

9

The school has arranged no lodgings for any pupils.

Standard 52 (52.1 - 52.8)

Any off-site short-stay accommodation arranged by the school for any of its boarders provides satisfactory accommodation and supervision, is checked by the school before use (although this may not be feasible when accommodation is in private households), and is monitored by the school during use.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Sound arrangements were in place for planning and accommodating extended group activities away from the main school site.

PART C**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY****(where applicable)****Lay Assessor**

Signature

Date

PART D

HEAD'S RESPONSE

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 23rd September 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the Head

YES

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

YES

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

NO

Note:

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

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

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the recommended actions in a timely fashion

YES

Action plan did not cover all the recommended actions and required further discussion

NO

Head has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

NO

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

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

Print Name _____

Signature

Designation

Date _____

Or

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

--

Print Name _____

Signature

Designation

Date _____

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

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