



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Boarding School

Birchfield School

ALBRIGHTON

West Midlands

WV7 7AF

7th March 2005

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

Birchfield School

Address

ALBRIGHTON, West Midlands, WV7 7AF

Tel No:

01902 372534

Fax No:

Email Address

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

Birchfield Educational Trust Ltd

Name of Head

Mr R Merriman

CSCI Classification

Boarding School

Type of school

Date of last boarding welfare inspection

NA

Date of Inspection Visit		7th March 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:00 am	
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	Lorraine Briggs	072942
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Mike Moloney	
Name of CSCI Inspector	3	Sarah Norman	
Name of CSCI Inspector	4		
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):			
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 MERRIMAN, HEADMASTER	

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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 Birchfield 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.

Birchfield School was founded at Tettenhall, near Wolverhampton in 1935 and moved to its present site, near the village of Albrighton in 1962. In that year the school was established as an educational trust with a board of Governors who have continued to take responsibility for the overall management of the school.

The school is open to boys from the age of 3 – 13 years.

The school is housed in an Edwardian country house and in purpose built modern buildings; the school enjoys a beautiful 20-acre setting in the Shropshire Countryside. The grounds are beautifully maintained.

Birchfield has excellent road, rail and airport access. It is situated only 5 minutes away from the M54. The school operates its own bus service to and from Wolverhampton, Telford, Bridgnorth and surrounding villages.

Boarding at Birchfield School is on a weekly basis, with boys going home every weekend and returning on Monday mornings. Boarding spaces are limited to 19, it is very popular and there is a waiting list. Boarding is provided in one house, on the main school site.

Pastoral care and support are provided to boarders by dedicated housemaster/ mistress.

When the housemasters/ mistresses are not working, the evening duties are covered by boarding tutors who are qualified teaching staff employed within the school. The Headmaster and his wife are directly responsible for pastoral care, monitoring the boarding provision and child protection. He is assisted by a Deputy Head, A Housemaster and Mistress, a Bursar and a Boarding Tutors.

Boarders are provided with many activities and there are systems in place to monitor the safety of these activities.

The school, through the Headmaster, is a full member of the Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS). It is also a member of the Boarding Schools' Association.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

Welfare Policies and Procedures

Birchfield School has written policies in place in relation to all issues. There are clear policies on child protection, bullying and behaviour and discipline and a complaint system is available to both boarders and their parents. There is a Matron, who provides medical support to boarders and day pupils. Records are kept which help to safeguard and promote boarders' health and welfare.

Organisation and Management

Boarding at the school is under the clear leadership of the Housemaster / Housemistress who are supported by a Deputy Head, Bursar, Boarding Tutors and the Headmaster. The manner in which the School is managed and the way all staff work together to meet the needs of the pupils was considered to be commendable. Boarders have access to a good range and choice of activities and in a number of ways contribute to the operation of boarding provision. Boarders, parents and visiting professionals were complimentary regarding the personal support received from staff.

Welfare Support to Boarders

It was considered that the school provides satisfactory health care and support to those pupils who are ill and it was considered that the identified health and personal problems of individual boarders were very well managed.

The school has an equal opportunities policy and there was no evidence to suggest that any boarder was experiencing discrimination.

The standard of catering and all meals during the inspection was commendable.

The school takes the risk of fire seriously and has records in place, which demonstrate this.

There is a professional system of risk assessment in place for high risk activities and hazards around the school and staff have received training and supervision in this field.

Staffing

It was considered that Boarders are more than adequately supervised at all times by staff who have adequate experience and support. A dedicated Housemaster and Housemistress and boarding Tutors support the boarders throughout their weekly stay at the school. The manner in which all staff at the school undertake their duties to meet the needs of, and the stated outcomes for the pupils was considered to be commendable.

At the time of this inspection the relationships between staff and boarders were based on very good personal and professional relationships.

Premises

The School has one designated boarding house which is situated within the school site. The boarding accommodation was considered to meet the needs of the current weekly boarding population.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

Welfare Policies and Procedures

No shortfalls were noted. It was evident that the school is committed to meeting all the standards and to reviewing the policies and procedures on a regular basis.

Organisation and Management

No shortfalls were noted.

Welfare Support to Boarders

No shortfalls were identified.

Staffing

No shortfalls were noted.

Premises

No shortfalls were noted.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

This report and its contents are based on the evidence gained from the three Inspectors from the Commission for Social Care Inspection Team.

The School has been particularly proactive in embracing the National Minimum Standards regarding the accommodation for boarders. They have demonstrated a comprehensive understanding and proactive approach in their application of the standards.

Throughout the inspection the Head and all staff and boarders spoken to were welcoming, helpful and co-operative.

The effective communication between staff and their enjoyment of and commitment to their roles was particularly evident throughout the inspection process. Staff at all levels demonstrated their commitment to their role and mutual support to their colleagues.

All of the boys boarding were involved in the inspection process. They offered their views regarding boarding in a confident and eloquent manner. All boys without exception were extremely polite to the inspection team.

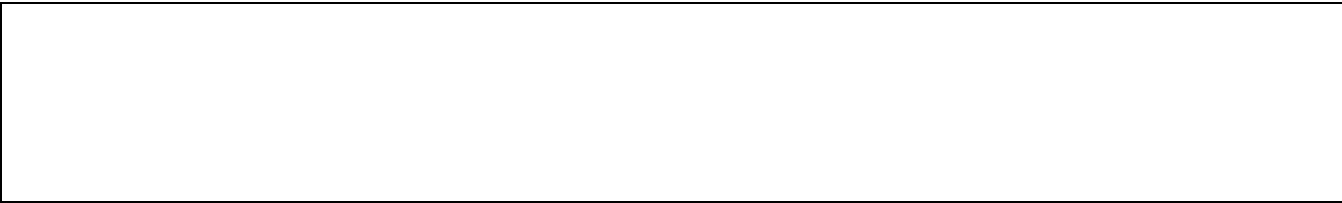
Of the 49 standards that apply to the School, all standards were considered to be fully met, of these 12 were considered to be exceeded.

Parents responses were received as part of the inspection methodology, their comments included:

'Birchfield provides a safe and comfortable boarding environment, with structure and disciplined regime. The facilities are reasonable and provide privacy and the staff are caring.'

'We feel that the school possesses a very homely atmosphere, that it has good, sensible dormitories, its pastoral care is very good, and it undertakes sensible group activities. Certainly our son has no complaints.'

'Boarding at Birchfield is in a small extremely friendly environment. The pastoral care from the house parents is excellent and well supported by the Headmaster and other duty staff. In addition the care provided by the matron is very good indeed. The boys flourish in the relatively small group and build good friendships. Confidence and maturity has improved. The environment is safe yet allowing for individual and group freedom for outdoor play, access to music, library and IT facilities. Communication between the school and home is excellent. In summary we have been exceptionally pleased with how our son has coped with boarding.'



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	

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

*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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Services • Fire Service • Environmental Health • DfES • School Doctor • Independent Person or Counsellor • 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	NA
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	07/03/05
Time of Inspection	09.00
Duration of Inspection (hrs.)	47
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**

9

TO

11

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

Boys	19
Girls	0
Total	0
Number of separate Boarding Houses	1

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)
- 3 - Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
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"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?

3

All of the required elements of this Standard are being met by Birchfield School. The statement is well publicised and elements are included in the Prospectus, Staff Handbook, and information for pupils and parents. This information is given to parents when making initial enquiries and on the boarder's admission to the School. It was considered that the statement reflects the actual current boarding practice.

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?

4

Birchfield has a full policy on countering bullying which covers necessary prevention, response and a definition. This policy is provided to parents, staff and boarders and is displayed around the school. The subject is covered in more than one policy and the procedures, discussions and observations made indicated elements of built in corroboration. Issues of suspected bullying or any problems appear to be sensitively and professionally dealt with without delay. The subject of bullying and policies in place are also brought to the pupil's attention during evening Tutor Sessions and academic lessons. Boarders who were consulted indicated that they would be confident in raising issues with a number of staff members. Excellent communication strategies between all staff at all levels was evident throughout the inspection visit. There was no evidence of 'initiation ceremonies' and all boarders spoken to at the time of this inspection gave no indication, at all, that bullying was an issue at the School.

PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS REPORTING NEVER OR HARDLY EVER BEING BULLIED

100

%

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?**

4

It was considered that the School's approach to the issue of Child Protection are commendable.

All staff who were consulted during the inspection visit stated that they had received training in child protection, and indicated that they knew what appropriate action to take should the need arise.

There is a full policy available which is consistent with local Area Child Protection procedures and it was reported that this policy had been given to all staff members.

The policy includes the requirement that a referral be made within 24 hours in line with Standard 3.2.

The subject has been included in INSET training for all staff.

Mrs Merriman is the designated member to take responsibility for Child Protection issues.

She has undertaken relevant training (BASPCAN) and holds copies of local procedures and guidelines. It was considered that she has an excellent understanding of Child Protection issues.

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?**

4

It was considered that this standard was exceeded.

The culture evident at Birchfield School is positive reinforcement of behaviour. All pupils were very eager to talk about the house point system, and the ways in which points could be earned for their houses, equally as eager to tell the inspection staff that demerits were very rare with some of the pupils not having received any for this term.

Birchfield School has a fair and appropriate procedure on behaviour, discipline and use of punishments, which is well known to boarders, staff and parents. Within the Staff Handbook and in documentation for Boarders, there are full and comprehensive policies and information on the School rules, Code of Behaviour, Demerits, Complaints. Policies and procedures are constantly under review to ensure a consistent approach and an effective and successful system.

Responses to the pupils' questionnaire indicated that 90% of the boarders considered the use of punishments as fair. At the time of this inspection the boarders stated to both inspectors that they considered the punishments to be very fair and they were positive and generally complimentary regarding the treatment and respect they have from all the staff.

Evidence through observations, discussions, inspection of records and the consistently easy, courteous and friendly manner of the boarders, which was observed throughout the inspection, substantiated this. As noted in Standard 36 the relationships between boarders and all staff was considered to be excellent and based on a good personal and professional basis.

It was considered that there are no unacceptable, excessive or idiosyncratic punishments used and that the powers of status boys are clearly defined.

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?	3
<p>Birchfield School has a satisfactory and appropriate policy on responding to complaints and this is given to all parents and boarders.</p> <p>Throughout the methodology used during this inspection it was evident that the staff take the opinions and concerns of the boarders seriously and respond whenever necessary.</p> <p>A written central record would be maintained of all concerns or complaints made and responded to however it was reported that none have been received.</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?	3
<p>Boarders' health is promoted through clear and appropriate policies on countering major risks, including substance abuse.</p> <p>Policies on smoking, alcohol and drug abuse and misuse are clear and available in the staff handbook and are appropriately made known by boarders. Relevant posters were seen around the school.</p> <p>The sanatorium is open and staffed each day by a qualified Nurse and it was evident that pupils are quite happy to visit the staff here to chat and to discuss any relevant issues.</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>Confidential Health Records are available for each boarder. These are developed from information given by the parents as part of the admissions procedure.</p> <p>The Matron regularly updates these records and updated information is also requested from parents.</p> <p>There was evidence of close liaison between the Matron, house staff and teaching staff to ensure that relevant information is given to those staff who need to know.</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

There are very clear details of the management and leadership arrangements at Birchfield. The Headmaster is supported by the Deputy Head, House parents, House Tutors and the Matron. The school's governing body has a system to monitor welfare provision at the school.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.3)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Findings during this inspection indicated that the School would manage any crisis affecting boarder's welfare should the need arise.

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

There is one boarding house at the school catering for boys only.

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?	4
<p>Birchfield School offers a wide range of clubs and activities including orchestra, speech & drama, computing, rugby, stamp, bookworm club, swimming, chess, hockey, judo, war hammer club, badminton. These take place after school in the evening. Additionally activities are arranged in lunch and break times including, choir, guitar and wind band.</p> <p>The School also has excellent sports facilities and opportunities.</p> <p>In the summer the boarders have access to the swimming pool and extensive well-maintained grounds. During the winter and spring they have access to a recreational room, library and IT facilities.</p> <p>Activity outings are arranged by the House parents and Boarding Tutors, recent trips have included bowling, lazer quest and tobogganing at the Snow Dome.</p> <p>Boarders commented that they had sufficient 'free time', which they appreciated.</p> <p>Access to computers appeared satisfactory with clear laid down rules and inappropriate material and use of chat rooms blocked.</p>		

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.2)		
Boarders have opportunity to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Boarders hold regular formal and informal meetings with their housemaster/ mistress in which their views on certain procedures/activities are sought. There is also plenty of opportunity at meal times and free times for the boarders to discuss issues with the Catering and all teaching staff.</p> <p>A parent and boarders questionnaire was undertaken by the school in January 2005.</p>		

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>The school has a status system.</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?

4

It was considered that this standard was exceeded.

The school has a good pastoral system for boarders to communicate their concerns on any issue and it was evident that boarders are encouraged and enabled to approach any member of staff at the School. Discussions and observations indicated that the boarders always felt that they could turn to someone.

Childline telephone numbers are on the notice boards in the boarding house.

The tutoring system at the School appears to work very well, with staff demonstrating a clear commitment to the role.

It was evident that there are excellent communication channels and regular meetings between academic and pastoral staff when relevant information is shared and matters followed up.

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?

3

Medical cover is provided to all school pupils by the Matron, who is a qualified nurse. Because of the boys who are boarding at the school are from the immediate local area, then they remain registered with their family General Practitioner.

The school has a nominated Medical Officer, Dr Dawes. A thorough health screening programme is available to all pupils in addition to general well being. The screening involves measurement and monitoring of growth in the form of height and weight. Visual screening is undertaken as well as audiometry.

In particular the Matron has raised the issue of sun safety within the Health & Safety meetings at the school. Through raising awareness, the School has revisited its policy on the use of sun protection and proposes to amend the uniform to include hats covering the ears and nape of neck and introduce longer sleeved t-shirts.

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?	3
<p>Boarders who are ill during the day report to the Matron, who is a qualified nurse. If a boarder is ill during the night, then Mrs Willerton (House Parent) is on hand.</p> <p>In the main, given the boarding arrangements in place, pupils who are ill are taken home by their parents.</p>		

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?	4
<p>Through inspection methodology it was considered that boarders are cared for by a dedicated team, who have excellent levels of communication between all levels of staff on site at the School.</p> <p>There was much evidence to indicate that communication between the Tutors, Matron, House staff and Ancillary staff is professional and positive and that if a boarder had a problem, or concerns were identified, all staff would observe and liaise.</p> <p>Boarders with medical difficulties appeared to be treated and supported in a entirely satisfactory manner and there was much evidence received to indicate that fellow boarders and staff are fully supportive at times of personal stress and homesickness.</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>At the time of this inspection there was no evidence to suggest that any boarder was experiencing discrimination and a number of boarders indicated that they were mindful of those who required encouragement to integrate.</p> <p>There was evidence that the school demonstrates a commitment to equal opportunities and policy documents on countering discrimination have been developed and are given to all relevant persons.</p> <p>It was evident through observation of pupil interaction that there is a strong culture of pupils 'looking out' and caring for each other at the School.</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>A telephone is available for boarders to make telephone calls to their parents.</p> <p>Boarders may additionally contact their parents via e.mail.</p> <p>All of the boarders go home to their parents or guardians at the weekends.</p> <p>Additionally parents are welcome in school on games afternoons to watch and support</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?	3
Pocket money that is brought in is held by Mrs Willerton (House Parent) for safekeeping.		

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.3) There is an appropriate process of induction and guidance for new boarders.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
<p>It was considered that this standard was exceeded.</p> <p>Boarding at Birchfield is very much aimed at boys who wish to develop their independent living skills including self discipline in preparation for their later academic lives. Findings from this inspection visit indicate that the School do this very well.</p> <p>All boarding is on a weekly basis.</p> <p>The school has guidance for parents that is titled: 'A Picture of Boarding at Birchfield'.</p> <p>Comments received as part of the pre inspection survey of parents included:</p> <p>'Boarding at Birchfield is in a small extremely friendly environment. The pastoral care from the house parents is excellent and well supported by the Headmaster and other duty staff. In addition the care provided by the matron is very good indeed. The boys flourish in the relatively small group and build good friendships. Confidence and maturity has improved. The environment is safe yet allowing for individual and group freedom for outdoor play, access to music, library and IT facilities. Communication between the school and home is excellent. In summary we have been exceptionally pleased with how our son has coped with boarding.'</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
Guardians are not appointed by the school.		

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>All necessary risk assessments are regularly monitored, reviewed and amended by the Bursar. All action is taken to reduce the risks identified wherever possible. Accident records are also monitored and reviewed professionally by the Matron staff and all findings are on the standard agenda items of the Health & Safety Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Punishments are monitored by the Deputy Head and professional records maintained.</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
<p>It was considered that the standard of catering provision at the school is exceeded. Boarders have excellent quality food of adequate quantity and choice.</p> <p>Menus were seen on display, indicating choice, e.g. hot meals, vegetarian option. Meals were sampled throughout the three day visit, breakfast and lunch. Without exception all of the meals were excellent, choices of hot and cold meals were attractively presented and of very high quality. Additionally snack foods are available for the boarders, squash and biscuits and fresh fruit which are replenished daily.</p> <p>There is a designated team of catering staff at the school which is lead by Mrs Suzanne Haywood – Catering Manager. All of the catering staff have at least their food hygiene to basic level, the Head Chef has an intermediate food hygiene qualification and Mrs Haywood holds the Advanced Food Hygiene certificate.</p> <p>Crockery and cutlery seen during the inspection was satisfactory in quantity and clean. When the Environmental Health Officer last visited the School, the Catering Manager indicated that the Environmental Health Officer was entirely satisfied with standards at the school.</p>		

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
<p>Boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals at the school. The House Mistress, Mrs Willerton runs a tuck shop.</p>		

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
<p>Full emergency evacuation procedures are available and have been tested from sleeping and living areas.</p> <p>Fire drills are regularly carried out and take place at the beginning of each term. Emergency lighting, fire alarms and fire fighting equipment are regularly tested and records are maintained. The school has a contract with a local firm who provides 24 hour cover. At the time of the most recent Fire Officer’s Inspection (11/03/04) matters were reported to be generally satisfactory. A response received from the Fire Officer as part of pre inspection survey read: ‘During the in section it was apparent that the standard of fire safety procedures within the organisation was extremely high. This was complemented by an effective and comprehensive testing and record keeping regime. The overall picture indicates the Schools high regard for student and staff safety on relation to fires’.</p>		

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?	3
The housemaster/ mistress and the boarding Tutors are constantly in touch with academic staff regarding the workloads of the pupils in their care. The boarding staff are aware of the demands made of every pupil in their care and intervene when they feel it necessary.		

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
No children are accommodated at the school other than the boarders.		

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
Risk assessments seen were satisfactory. It was considered that adequate and appropriate safety measures were in place and it was reported that parental permission is obtained, in advance, at all times.		

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
Boarders are able to access information about events in the world outside the school in several ways. They all go home each week-end, each boarding house has a television and watching the evening news is part of the boarding routine. Boarders have access to computers. Boarders attend off-site activities and are accompanied by staff. The activities are assessed for age appropriateness and all are authorised by the Head.		

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?

3

Records and discussions with staff and boarders identified no problems with the staffing levels.

There is a set duty rota, duty systems are outlined in the Staff Handbook with details of duty cover also.

It was reported that satisfactory cover for sickness is in place and in addition to this there are members of staff who live on site, who would cover if required.

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.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Visits off site, all school trips and trips abroad are covered by separate full and concise policies that have been given to all relevant staff and boarders.

Policies and procedures appear to fully comply with DfES guidance.

The school has 3 mini buses, which are subject to regular checks and records are maintained by the Bursar.

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
It was considered that there is satisfactory cover at night. In the boarding house Mrs Willerton, the House Mistress is on duty throughout the night and boarders reported and indicated that they were easily contactable and how.		

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?	3
There are systems in place within the school to provide all staff, who have boarding duties, with job descriptions, supervision, staff appraisal and opportunities for training.		

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
There is a full staff handbook available to all staff, which contains all the required elements.		

Standard 36 (36.1 - 36.4) There are sound staff/boarder relationships.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
Throughout the three days of this inspection and through all the methodology used it was considered that this Standard was exceeded. Comments received from boarders, parents, staff and visitors indicated that relationships are based on good professional and personal relationships. Observations indicated that boarders related easily to the staff caring for them in the boarding house and throughout the school. Those boarders who spoke with Inspectors did so in an open, confident and friendly manner, which was taken as an indication that they did not feel inhibited from doing so. Discussions with all staff in the School indicated that they knew the boarders in their care well and that they worked as a team to provide a happy environment. This was confirmed by observations.		

Standard 37 (37.1 - 37.2) Staff supervision of boarders should avoid intruding unnecessarily on boarders' privacy.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Staff supervision of boarders did not appear to intrude unnecessarily on boarders' privacy and no reports were received that there was any perceived intrusion. In the boarding houses, it was evident that boarders considered their bedrooms to be generally their private space during the times that they were in residence. Staff were seen to be supervising, available, but not intruding at inappropriate moments.		

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
Staff files sampled during the inspection visit all met the required standard.		

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
The school has not allowed individuals to work unsupervised with boarders without there being a satisfactory check with the CRB.		

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 boarding house was considered to be appropriately lit, heated and ventilated. The standard of decoration in the main was satisfactory. At the time of this inspection it was considered that the furnishings were suitable for the needs of the current boarders. Breakages and maintenance issues are brought to the attention of the Bursar and are actioned without unreasonable delay. There was no indication the nature of the buildings or the layout of the accommodation was contributing to a 'noisy' atmosphere in the boarding houses. The boarding houses are designed in such a way that boarders with physical disabilities could not be appropriately provided for without major adaptations being made.

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

Boarders sleeping and living areas are for the exclusive use of boarders and other scholars do not enter. Where feasible, given the nature of the site, suitable and adequate security measures are in place to prevent unauthorised access by the public.

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?	3
<p>As previously noted it was considered that the sleeping accommodation is generally sufficient and suitably furnished for the number, needs and ages of boarders. Beds are of sufficient size with acceptable bedding (provided by boarders). All dormitories have windows, are carpeted and generally have sufficient space for clothing and personal items for the boarders currently using the accommodation. Requests from boarders to change bed or dormitory, for good reason, were reported to be considered and pin boards are available in each dormitory for posters etc.</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?	4
<p>It was considered that this standard is exceeded. There is suitable, suitably lit, and reasonably quiet provision for all boarders to undertake organised prep and private study. The Boarding Tutors enable the boys to access facilities within the school campus, such as the library and IT facilities during the evening. This can only enhance the study opportunities open to the boys who board.</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?	3
<p>There are adequate numbers of toilet and washing facilities in the boarding house. The provision was considered to provide reasonable access, was in satisfactory working order, fitted with suitable locks. All were seen to be clean and adequately ventilated with liquid soap and hand drying facilities. Toilet facilities are not inappropriately shared by boarders of widely differing ages or by staff. The baths and shower facilities are all in the same area, these are separated by curtaining.</p>		

Standard 45 (45.1 - 45.3) Suitable changing provision is provided for use by day.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>It was considered that changing facilities were satisfactory and meet the standards. They are situated in the boarding house and main school building.</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?	4
<p>There are a good range of recreational areas at Birchfield School which include a well equipped common room and study in the boarding house.</p> <p>There is a swimming pool, IT suite, adventure playground, extensive grounds, sports fields, library etc</p> <p>Provision is made for quiet relaxation and activities and boarders have reasonable access to boarding houses at all times.</p> <p>Boarders do not access staff accommodation.</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?	4
<p>It was considered that the action taken to protect boarders from safety hazards was commendable.</p> <p>No potential hazards were identified, at the time of this inspection, in sleeping, living or recreational areas.</p> <p>The Bursar has responsibility for Health and Safety Issues and has an excellent understanding of Health and Safety and cascades information to staff.</p> <p>The School has a comprehensive list of health and safety risk assessments, which are regularly amended and updated.</p> <p>Significant hazards are noted and brought to the attention of the Bursar and the maintenance staff and action taken to reduce any associated risks.</p> <p>Boarding houses are risk assessed each term to ensure that boarders are free from reasonably avoidable safety hazards and are checked regularly.</p> <p>A Health and Safety Committee meets regularly to discuss all matters relating to health and safety. The subject is on the standing agenda for all Governors meetings. Following Health & Safety meetings a staff newsletter is produced which disseminates necessary information to all staff.</p> <p>There is also a full Health and Safety Policy in place which is updated as and when necessary by the Bursar in consultation with all relevant staff. This policy is included in the staff handbook, which is given to all staff.</p>		

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?	9
<p>In general, boarders who are ill go home at the earliest opportunity.</p>		

Standard 49 (49.1 - 49.3) Adequate laundry provision is made for boarders' clothing and bedding.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
It was considered that boarders clothing and bedding are adequately laundered by the School.		

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?	9
This standard does not apply as all boarders return home at the weekends.		

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
No such lodgings are arranged by the school.		

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
<p>When boarders require off site accommodation it is checked by staff and may, at times, involve the use of a third party. It was considered that every check possible and risk assessments are undertaken.</p> <p>When boarders are staying in such accommodation it was reported that they are accompanied by school staff at all times and there are satisfactory arrangements in place for boarders to make contact when they are away.</p>		

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Empty box for Lay Assessor's Summary.

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

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 7th, 8th and 9th March 2005 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	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Comments were received from the Head	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Head's comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/> 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	<input type="checkbox"/>

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.

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

Action plan was required	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Action plan was received at the point of publication	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan covers all the recommended actions in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan did not cover all the recommended actions and required further discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Head has declined to provide an action plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: <enter details here>	<input type="checkbox"/>

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I _____ of Birchfield School 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 Birchfield School 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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