



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

St Catherine`s School

**Grove Road
Ventnor
Isle Of Wight
PO38 1TT**

Lead Inspector
David Coulter

Unannounced Inspection
6th November 2006 09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

Reader Information	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
Further copies from	0870 240 7535 (telephone order line)
Copyright	This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI
Internet address	www.csci.org.uk

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

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

Those outcomes are:

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

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

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

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school	St Catherine`s School
Address	Grove Road Ventnor Isle Of Wight PO38 1TT
Telephone number	01983 852722
Fax number	01983 857219
Email address	general@stcatherines.org.uk
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Mr Grenville Shipley
Name of Head	Mr Grenville Shipley
Name of Head of Care	Phillipa Stevens
Age range of residential pupils	8-19
Date of last welfare inspection	27/02/06

Brief Description of the School:

St Catherine's is a non-maintained residential special school approved by the DFES for the education of students aged between seven and nineteen who have needs associated with language and speech disorders. The school is situated in Ventnor. There is easy access into town with Ventnor being a short walking distance from the school campus. The residential accommodation is provided in a number of houses spread across the school campus. The children's accommodation is on the St Catherine's school site whilst accommodation for older students is spread out geographically out of the school site.

SUMMARY

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

This report relates to an unannounced inspection undertaken by two inspectors over a two-day period in November 2006. During the course of the inspection a tour of the boarding facilities within the school was undertaken and a range of records and documents examined. It was also possible to meet with the School Principal, the Head of Care, a number of care staff, the Chair of Governors and a number of young people.

From the information obtained it was clear that the boarding department was operating effectively and addressing the assessed care needs of the young people being accommodated. Staff and young people spoken with talked in positive terms about life within the school. In relation to specific areas of the provision the following was noted:

What the school does well:

- Residential care is provided by a well motivated and enthusiastic staff team
- Staff operate a 'child centred' approach that treats each young person as an individual.
- The care planning programme identifies the specific care needs of each student and provides clear guidance for staff.
- There are good lines of communication between teaching and care staff.
- There are clear policies, procedures and accepted working practices for staff.
- The school offers good support, supervision and training to staff.
- Staff within the school are proactive in developing innovative approaches to working with students.
- Young people are assisted in maintaining contact with parents/guardians.
- Care staff receive regular child protection training.
- The school has a positive approach to discipline and behaviour management.
- Residential staff operate the strategy in a fair and consistent manner.
- The views of students are regularly sought on both an individual and group basis.

What has improved since the last inspection?

- Care staff have accessed a range of training, including NVQ'S.
- A number of new staff have completed their induction and taken up post.
- The school has installed a range of new Fire Protection Measures.
- Both the quantity and quality of food on offer has, according to young

people, improved.

- A number of physical changes have been made to accommodate a young person with mobility difficulties.
- One of the residential units has had new double glazing installed

What they could do better:

None identified during this inspection

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

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

CONTENTS

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

14 & 15

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school.

It was evident that the working practices of care staff ensured that the well-being of young people was monitored on an ongoing basis and that staff were pro-active in promoting healthy living.

EVIDENCE:

Through discussions with care staff, and observations within the residential units, it was evident that staff were engaged in encouraging young people to adopt healthy lifestyles. For example, daily routines were found to promote good personal hygiene, healthy eating and regular physical activity. Records examined indicated that information relating to the health of each young person had been obtained during the initial assessment process. Each young person has a health care plan that is subject to regular review. Health records also contained signed consent forms from parents/guardians for medical interventions.

The school has a designated sick bay and employs a qualified nurse who liaises closely with a local General Practitioner who serves as the School Doctor. During discussions with the Head of Care it was apparent that the assistance of other health care professionals are sought as and when necessary. She explained that accessing services was generally good, however, staff have, in recent times, experienced difficulties in accessing mental health services. The school employs, on a part-time basis, a play therapist. The Head of Care reported that the school nurses offer a 'drop in' service one morning a week for the Further Education students. This service has provided the opportunity for young people to discuss any worries or concerns they have.

During the inspection the inspectors were invited to join students for lunch. During the last inspection an issue arose regarding the quality and choice of food available to young people. According to staff and young people spoken with these issues have been successfully resolved. The school now operates a menu that changes every two weeks and offers each individual a number of choices. The inspectors found the food to be of good quality containing both fresh fruit and vegetables. Staff explained that every effort was made to ensure that the new menus provided each young person with a range of alternatives. Special dietary needs are catered for.

Mealtimes are clearly important times within the daily life of the school and provide many opportunities for social interaction and the development of social and life skills. It was observed that staff sat and ate with the young people. Meals are normally eaten communally in either the school's dining area or the individual residential units. While it was observed that dining facilities provided pleasant environments, there was an acknowledgement on the part of the School Principal and Head of Care that the dining area in the Further Education unit was operating at its full capacity, and other arrangements would be required to accommodate more young people. Staff reported that during evenings and week-ends young people can assist in the production of food.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school. Evidence indicated that each young person was treated as an individual and that their views were regularly sought on both a formal and informal basis. The interaction between young people and care staff was observed to operate on a mutual respect basis.

EVIDENCE:

The school has well established policies and procedures regarding privacy and confidentiality. Staff spoken with were aware of their responsibilities in regard to the handling of confidential information and data protection. Confidential information relating to each of the young people was observed to be kept

within locked facilities. It was noted that staff dealt with issues relating to individual young people separately and in private.

Prior to admission, all young people are provided with written information on life within the school. A separate handbook has been developed for those young people joining the Further Education Unit. The brochures contain, among other things, information about daily routines, leisure activities and home contact. The brochures also contains information on how, and to whom, complaints or concerns should be directed.

Through discussions with young people it was evident that their views were sought by staff formally, through house meetings and reviews, and informally through regular discussions with care staff. There is a well established mechanism for young people to raise concerns via a complaints/concern box. Such complaints/concerns are recorded in a book then passed on to the Principal for his attention. Following investigation the Principal will seek to resolve the issues raised and note the action taken. During a tour of the residential units it was noted that each had a Compliments Book. These books were found to record compliments from both young people and staff to record their appreciation of the behaviours and actions of others.

The Head of Care confirmed that teaching staff, care staff and school governors had recently undertaken child protection training provided by an external trainer. Staff spoken with felt that this training had been very successful and created new levels of awareness. Care staff spoken with were aware of their responsibilities, as they related to dealing with a disclosure and/or whistle blowing procedures.

The school has an anti-bullying policy. Aware of the difficulties that can arise between young people with speech and language problems care staff have developed working practices aimed at minimising the likelihood of verbal and physical confrontations. For example, staff monitor the movement of young people around the residential units and encourage them to spend leisure time together in communal areas. Bullying was not identified as a problem within the school.

Both the school Principal and Head of Care were fully aware of their responsibilities in regard to the reporting of significant incidents concerning the wellbeing of the young people residing in the school. Records demonstrated that the necessary authorities, including the Commission for Social Care Inspection, had been notified appropriately when an untoward incident had occurred. The school has a policy and procedure for reporting young people if they go missing.

During the course of the inspection it was possible to observe the interaction between the young people and a number of care staff. It was evident that house rules were aimed at promoting the concept of respect for people, places

and things. Each of the residential units has developed a set of age appropriate rules that provides clear expectations of what was and was not acceptable behaviour. All the young people spoken with felt that they were dealt with fairly and consistently by care staff. A member of staff explained that while sanctions were used to curb inappropriate behaviour the ethos of the school was to encourage and reinforce positive behaviour. Staff reported that sanctions were, in most instances, based on undertaking a task for the benefit of others in the unit or having a short period of time deducted from participation in a leisure activity, such as playing on the computer.

Observations of the interaction between care staff and young people indicated that relationships were based on mutual respect. Staff and young people addressed each other by their first names and interaction was noted as being both spontaneous and warm.

From an examination of records and documents it was clear that risk assessments form an important role within the school's Health and Safety strategy. Risk assessments are carried out in relation to both the environment and activities. It was good to note that this process did not appear to curtail the opportunities for young people to develop their social and life skills. For example, records demonstrated that young people were introduced to travelling by public transport via a gradual process aimed at building up their self-confidence. At each stage in the process the problems that could arise were identified and strategies developed with each young person.

The principal explained that every effort is made to ensure that the school environment is both safe and secure. For example, all visitors must report to the reception area, provide identity and sign in before gaining entry. Access to the Further Education Units can only be achieved by the use of a key-pad system. At the time of the inspection the school was just completing a comprehensive upgrading of fire safety systems within the main building. Discussions with the local Fire Safety Officer confirmed that the school had invested considerable resources in installing new fire doors, door closures, fire resistant glazing and a new alarm system.

During the inspection the inspectors examined the recruitment files of two new members of staff. Appropriate recruitment practices had been followed and the inspectors saw evidence that enhanced CRB checks had been taken up and references obtained. All new staff undertake a full induction process before assuming their full responsibilities.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

12, 13 & 22

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school.

Evidence indicated that staff were actively engaged in providing a range of opportunities for the personal development of each young person.

EVIDENCE:

Through discussions with a number of young people in both the Main School and Further Education Unit it was clear that life within the school and residential units was providing them with opportunities to develop a range of social and life skills. While care staff do not follow a specific curriculum there is an expectation that each young person residing at the school will be assisted in developing independent living skills. The Head of Care explained that each young person's social and educational needs were identified individually through assessments, and it was noted that the young people's files examined contained education and social care plans, that had been subject to regular review.

Care staff spoken with confirmed that they worked in partnership with teaching staff to support young people with their studies and for example assisted, when required, with homework. Even though residential care and teaching staff worked at different times of the day it was evident that good lines of communication had been established between both.

It was evident that young people lived full and active lives within the school and were encouraged to pursue their own interests and hobbies. Recreational activities are undertaken both within the school and in the local community.

Within the school young people can participate a range of activities including Duke of Edinburgh Awards, football, computer games, table tennis, pool, art and craft and during the summer months swimming. Though local leisure facilities are frequently accessed, staff also make good use of the surrounding countryside and coastline for walking. During the inspection a group of young people were observed setting off for horse riding lessons. While the school does not have extensive outdoor facilities there was a designated playground for football and a gym that can be used during the evening. Staff within the Further Education Unit explained that many of their young people are now involved in activities in the local area. Discussions with a group of Further Education students revealed that between them they were participating in musical activities, football, athletics and netball in the community. It was also explained that the Further Education Unit had two teams that participated in a Youth Club pool league.

During the inspection it was possible to meet with a number of care staff in the different units. All were able to speak with authority on the specific needs of the young people with whom they were working. Even though each residential unit operates a key-worker system, it is implemented flexibly and all staff are expected to respond to any young person requiring individual support. The Head of Care explained that specialist therapeutic support was sought as and when required and records indicated that in recent times assistance had been requested from Child and Family Therapy, Educational Psychology and Adolescent Mental Health Teams.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

2, 17 & 20

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school.

Evidence indicated that all the young people were appropriately placed and that they were regularly consulted about all aspects of their lives within the school.

EVIDENCE:

From observations and discussions with young people and staff it was clear that the views of the young people were regularly sought on both a formal and informal manner, formally through regular 'House Meetings' that take place within each of the units and informally through the social interaction between the young people and staff. A member of care staff explained that as meals were eaten communally, they provided a useful forum for individuals to share their views and plan activities etc. Individuals can also raise issues of common interest through their representatives on the school council. All the issues raised are shared with both the Head of Care and Principal. Records indicated that young people had been consulted during their reviews and their comments noted.

The majority of young people attending the school have received Statements of Educational Need that have identified specific speech and language difficulties. The Head of Care explained that the 'statementing' process provided a detailed assessment from which staff within the school could develop both educational and care plans. All prospective students are invited to visit the school to meet with students and staff. In most cases such visits last a number of days during which the young person will reside in one of the residential units, attend classes and join in social and recreational activities. On admission each individual's physical, social, emotional and educational needs are assessed and risks identified. The information received is used to develop a number of plans that provide guidance for staff on how each individual's needs could best be met within the school. On admission all young people are provided with a Progress File to assist them document their achievements whilst at the school.

Young people's files examined indicated that the aims and objectives of each young person's placement were subject to regular review. Those examined were 'user friendly' and had information collated within different sections that provided easy access. Reports within the files were concise and written in clear unambiguous language. Specific targets and proposed strategies to effect change were clearly stated.

The Head of Care explained that the majority of young people maintained regular contact with their parents and families. She was of the opinion that the increase in weekly boarding had resulted in more contact due to the need to arrange travel arrangements. Each of the residential units has a phone and young people can both make and receive calls. A number of young people spoken with confirmed that they had their own mobile phones that they used to maintain contact with their families, they also indicated that as they had access to computers e-mailing was a popular option. Parents are encouraged to visit and the Principal indicated that attendance at school events and young persons' reviews was good.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

21, 23 & 24

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school.

Evidence indicated that the accommodation was appropriate to meeting the needs of the young people. The facilities provided many opportunities for individuals to develop their social and life skills.

EVIDENCE:

It was evident that within the school many young people were working toward transitions. For those approaching sixteen consideration was being given to arrangements beyond their final school term in the main school and for those approaching eighteen in Further Education planning was underway for life beyond St Catherines. Through discussions with staff it was clear that every effort was made to prepare young people for moving on. Social and life skills training programmes include training in budgeting, cooking, household duties, use of public transport, completing college and job applications, interview techniques and finding housing/ accommodation. Through discussions with staff it was evident that the plans were developed to meet the needs of each young person.

Staff work closely with parents, placing agencies, the Connexions Careers Service and the young people themselves in developing plans. The expansion of the Further Education Unit in recent years has clearly provided another option for young people leaving the main school and has proved a popular destination for a number of young people wishing to continue their education. The school has produced a guide for parents to assist them with the transition process.

During the course of the inspection a tour of the school was undertaken which included visiting a number of the residential units. All the areas visited were observed to be clean, tidy and in good decorative order. All contained a number of communal areas that provided opportunities for both large and small group activities. Care staff reported that maintenance of the units was good and reported problems were normally addressed within a reasonable timescale. Since the last inspection one of the units has had some new double glazed windows fitted. Security around the premises was deemed appropriate.

Due to the location of the school, on a steep site, access for individuals with mobility problems is not easy. The Principal reported that there was only one young person with mobility difficulties and that a number of ramps etc had been installed in key areas to ensure her safe passage. Plans have been drawn up for a major redevelopment of the existing site and it is hoped that this will provide an opportunity to address many of the difficulties inherent within the existing buildings.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school.

From the evidence obtained during the inspection, including comments from the young people, it was clear that the school was providing good quality care within a stimulating environment.

EVIDENCE:

The school has developed a range of information that includes a detailed prospectus and a handbook specifically for the Further Education Unit. The school prospectus contains a Statement of Purpose that accurately describes the nature of the provision. The information produced by the school was clearly written and appropriately illustrated with photographs etc. An information pack is available for interested parties.

The school benefits from a stable and experienced staff team. It was evident through discussions with care staff that their approach was 'hands on' and that the majority of their time was spent in direct contact with the young people. Communication between care staff was assessed by the Head of Care as being good, and weekly unit meetings provide a forum for the discussion of each young person's progress. Staff supervision also provides a mechanism by which staff can discuss, on an individual basis, any issues and concerns. Group supervision sessions are also organised by the Head of Care to examine and discuss practice issues. Care staff also have regular staff meetings.

There is a culture of training and professional development within the school and the Head of Care explained there was an expectation that care staff attain NVQ level 3 qualifications in Child Care and Heads of Unit NVQ level 4. The Head of Care holds a professional qualification in Social Work. Staff confirmed that they undertake regular training in key areas such as Child Protection, Team Teach, Fire Safety, Health and Nutrition and working with families. The Head of Care explained that a number of staff training courses were planned for the near future.

Evidence collected throughout the inspection indicated that residential care within the school was well managed, staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities and there were clear lines of accountability. Staff reported that both the Principal and Head of Care were very supportive and always made themselves available to discuss issues of concern. Sufficient financial resources were available for staff to operate the units effectively and budgetary systems in place to ensure financial accountability.

During the course of the inspection it was possible to meet with the Chair of Governors. He spoke in positive terms about recent developments in the school, including the expansion of both Further Education and weekly boarding provision. He felt the staff had responded well to the changes and were enthusiastic about the proposed redevelopment of the site. He confirmed that the Governors were actively engaged in monitoring the performance of both the school and boarding facilities. It was his opinion that the school was operating effectively and the physical, social and educational needs of the young people were being met by a dedicated team of staff.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

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

BEING HEALTHY	
Standard No	Score
14	3
15	3

STAYING SAFE	
Standard No	Score
3	3
4	3
5	3
6	3
7	3
8	3
10	3
26	3
27	3

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
Standard No	Score
12	3
13	4
22	3

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
Standard No	Score
2	3
9	X
11	X
17	4
20	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
Standard No	Score
16	X
21	3
23	3
24	3
25	X

MANAGEMENT	
Standard No	Score
1	3
18	X
19	X
28	X
29	3
30	3
31	3
32	4
33	3

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? NO

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)

Commission for Social Care Inspection
Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight
Ground Floor
Mill Court
Furrlongs
Newport, IOW
PO30 2AA

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

Email: enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.csci.org.uk

© This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI.