

# inspection report

Residential Special School (not registered as  
a Children's Home)

## **Meadows School**

Meadows Memorial School Bungalow

London Road

Southborough

Tunbridge Wells

Kent

TN4 0RJ

14th October 2004

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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

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

### **The role of CSCI is to:**

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

## **Inspection Methods & Findings**

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

### **The 4-point scale ranges from:**

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

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

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

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

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

**Name of School**

Meadows School

**Address**

Meadows Memorial School Bungalow, London Road,  
Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 0RJ

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

Meadows Memorial School

**Name of Head**

Mr Mike Price

**CSCI Classification**

Residential Special School

**Type of school**

**Tel No:**

01892 529144

**Fax No:**

**Email Address:**

**Date of last boarding welfare inspection:**

26/11/03

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		14th October 2004	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		09:00 am	
<b>Name of CSCI Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Sophie Wood	108854
<b>Name of CSCI Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	John Walker	
<b>Name of CSCI Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>	Justine Williams	
<b>Name of CSCI Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>	Jane Vaughan	
<b>Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):</b>			
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> 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.			
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>			
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Mr Andrew Fisk	

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## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. 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 Residential Special 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. Residential Special Schools are not registered as children's homes unless they accommodate, or arrange accommodation for, one or more children for more than 295 days a year.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Meadows 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 SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

Meadows School is situated in Southborough, Kent and is a non maintained residential special school, owned by Barnardo's Children's Charity, catering for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

At full occupancy, the school can cater for 38 boarders and an additional 14 day pupils. The residential provision offers a separate house for girls, situated in a residential area of Southborough and three houses for boys. Two of these buildings are located within the school's grounds and the third is within walking distance of the town centre of Tunbridge Wells.

The school building was completed in 1993 and the provision of an art room, food tech room, science lab, ICT suites, etc means that all of the requirements of the national curriculum are met.

The houses are staffed by individuals who all have a minimum qualification of NVQ 3 in care and staffing levels remain high. Detailed care planning results in individual strategies being implemented and the high staff: pupil ratio ensures that the necessary attention is provided.

## **PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE**

The school continues to ensure that staff receive extensive induction and ongoing training opportunities, thus ensuring that children are cared for by suitably qualified and experienced individuals. Robust recruitment and child protection policies and procedures ensure that the safety of children is not compromised and the behaviour management system in place ensures that the strategies used are appropriate in terms of meeting the needs of individual children. Excellent communication systems ensure that sound links remain between residential and teaching staff, resulting in consistent approaches being maintained. Regular and effective reviewing and monitoring systems ensure that the school continues to keep up to date with good practice and changes in legislation.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE**

Facilities could be further developed with regards working on independent living skills, given the additional space within two of the houses, which is currently underused.  
The staff would benefit from receiving 'accredited' medication training.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE**

The inspectors were pleased to, once again, find overwhelming evidence to support the continued drive, motivation and practice of an established boarding team. Sound, positive relationships were observed between the staff and young people and the boarding and teaching teams continue to view themselves as a 'collective', focussing on collaborative approaches and respecting each others' roles.

Relevant records were securely held and accurately completed and it was overwhelmingly evident that the pupils were very 'well known' to the staff, with attention paid towards understanding and accommodating their individual needs.

One of the most positive aspects noted was the drive and motivation of the Principal and Head of Care, with both presenting a clear vision as to how the school intends to progress. Whilst it was disappointing to be advised of the Head of Care's impending departure within the Organisation, it is anticipated that such an experienced and established team will positively assist the new post holder, once this appointment is made.

## NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

NO

**Local Education Authority  
Secretary of State**

NO

NO

<b>The grounds for any Notification to be made are:</b>

### IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION

YES

No	Standard	Recommended actions	



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

**Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended actions 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 Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare.

No	Standard*	Recommended Action	
1	RS14	It is recommended that 'accredited' medication training be obtained for residential staff.	Action Plan to be received by CSCI by 17/12/04
2	RS14	It is recommended that 'controlled medication' be stored separately from all other medicines.	Action Plan to be received by CSCI by 17/12/04
3	RS14	It is strongly recommended that the school liaises with the parent and GP of one particular individual with regards the current unsafe practice regarding the transportation of controlled medication.	Action Plan to be received by CSCI by 17/12/04
4	RS4	It is recommended that details of complaints are held on separate pages of the complaints logs, in order to maintain 'confidentiality'.  Whereby 'external' complaints are reported directly to the school or 'Head Office', it is recommended that the residential house concerned, be advised and updated about these.	Action Plan to be received by CSCI by 17/12/04

### ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

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

No	Refer to Standard*	Recommendation
1	RS14	The school is advised to review the medication policy to include the use of 'homely remedies' and obtain parental consent for those listed.
2	RS14	The school is advised to review the medical consent / information forms currently used as a number of these encourage 'duplication'.
3	RS14	The school is advised to research other Chemist services in order to have own specific needs better served.
4	RS24	The school is advised to review the currently 'underused' areas of the boarding houses, with regards independence training.
5		The school is advised to consider how the monitoring role of the Head of Care, with regards health and safety, will continue, given his impending departure.

Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. RS10 refers to standard 10.

**PART B****INSPECTION METHODS AND FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods were 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

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	YES
• School Doctor	YES
• Independent Person	YES
• Chair of Governors	YES

Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	YES
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	NA
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	NO
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	14/10/04
Time of Inspection	09:00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	42
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	3

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

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

**Age Range of Boarding Pupils**      **From**       **To**

## NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

**BOYS**

**GIRLS**

**TOTAL**

**Number of separate Boarding Houses**

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 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 scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

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

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

## STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

### Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

The school has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for those children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement can be made up of other documents, e.g., Letter of Approved Arrangements and school prospectus, which are required to include specific information.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The School Prospectus was found to be a comprehensive and detailed document. Key areas, such as the curriculum, policy statements and teaching and residential staffing structure, were clearly explained and the use of colour photographs throughout enhanced its presentation, making it an easy document to read. The inspector was advised that this document is due to be reviewed at the forthcoming Governor's meeting next month. It was pleasing to note that, following a recommendation made from last year's visit, the school now has a 'Young Person's Handbook', which details 'whole school' information and separate guides for each of the four boarding houses. All of this information is held within small booklets, using photographs and pictures and attention has clearly been paid with regards the use of concise language within.</p>		

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way that the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.
- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.

### Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

Children's opinions, and those of their families or significant others, are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and their future. Feedback is given following consultations.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

Evidence was gathered through a variety of ways to demonstrate how young people and their families continue to be encouraged to express their own views and opinions. Examples included; regular newsletters, house meetings and key worker sessions. Once again, parents responded positively through the questionnaires sent by the Commission with regards the liaison between themselves and the school. The 'contact' sections within care files further supported this, detailing numerous calls being made from the care staff in an effort to keep parents updated as to their child's progress.

Review meetings were reported by young people and parents to be a particularly useful forum, during which to consult about educational attainment, personal development and any behavioural issues, thus determining how these can be 'managed' consistently, both at home and at school.

### Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.11)

The school and staff respect a child's wish for privacy and confidentiality so far as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

Policy and procedural guidance for staff was found to include all of the elements as listed under standard 3.2, and the staff spoken with were able to demonstrate a clear understanding as to how such guidance was implemented into practice.

Children's records were securely held; with only key personnel being given access and young people confirmed their understanding as to how they may gain access to the information held about them.

Adequate provision was found in all of the houses in order that young people can receive visitors privately and confirmation was obtained with regards children receiving letters without these being read by staff. It was also noted that facilities exist within all of the houses in order for children to make and receive private telephone calls.

Clear procedural guidance was found with regards the circumstances under which a search of a child's possessions may occur and how this should be conducted.

**Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)**

**Children know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the school, and feel confident that any complaint is addressed seriously and without delay.**

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

The complaints procedure was on display throughout the school site, residential units and was also featured within the Young Person's Guide.

The inspectors spoke with various year groups of boarders and received consistent feedback in terms of individuals confidently stating their awareness, and sometimes use, of this process. Written documentation seen throughout the course of the inspection provided further substantive evidence.

The inspectors provided verbal feedback at the end of the inspection, with regards the recording and 'evidencing' of the actions taken in response to complaints received from external sources; for example, members of the public.

It was recommended that the complaints log, held within the residential provision be reviewed in order that separate complaints are recorded on separate pages, so as to avoid compromising confidentiality and that evidence of the investigation of a complaint is readily available and clearly recorded, so as to demonstrate the process has been followed.

Whereby complaints are sent directly to the school or the organisation, it is vital that the residential unit concerned is kept informed of such events.

**Number of complaints about care at the school recorded over last 12 months:**

**3**

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

**1**

**Number of complaints received by CSCI about the school over last 12 months:**

**0**

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

**0**

## CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.
- Children are protected from bullying by others.
- All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the school are notified by the Head of the school to the appropriate authorities.
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded positively to on return.

### Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

There are systems in place in the school which aim to prevent abuse of children and suspicions or allegations of abuse are properly responded to. These are known and understood by all staff (including junior, ancillary, volunteer and agency staff).

### Key Findings and Evidence

### Standard met?

4

The Head of Care is the school's designated child protection coordinator and his role was clearly known and understood by all of the staff spoken with. Clear liaison was demonstrated to occur between him and the local SS Child Protection Team, in terms of seeking advice and making appropriate referrals.

The school's own policies and procedures were detailed and clear; in line with the written guidance of the local Area Child Protection Committee and further procedural guidance was found to include contact, intimate care and confidentiality.

Evidence was found to support that the topic of Child Protection commences at the beginning of staff's induction and personnel records evidenced that all staff had received child protection training.

Every member of staff spoken with gave sound, informative responses when questioned about this subject and the lines of communication and responsibility with regards reporting concerns and allegations were clearly known.

Number of recorded child protection enquiries initiated by the social services department during the past 12 months:

1



<b>Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)</b> <b>The school has, and follows, an anti-bullying policy, with which children and staff are familiar and which is effective in practice. Where possible children in the school contribute to the development of the policy.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>4</b>
<p>The anti – bullying policy was detailed and clear. Measures were in place both to prevent and ‘deal’ with instances and written records were seen to support that the procedures are implemented in practice.</p> <p>Staff recognise the potential for bullying to occur both within the school itself and the living units and this was evidenced through regular risk assessments and ongoing monitoring of reported instances.</p> <p>Young people spoken with were able to confirm that the experiences they have had have been sensitively and swiftly dealt with. The school advocates a decisive approach in that repeated instances will ultimately result in exclusion.</p>		
<b>Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>%</b>

<b>Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)</b> <b>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.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>As was found at last year’s inspection, sound recording and reporting mechanisms remain in place regarding the notification of significant events. Written evidence was seen to support that residential staff use mechanisms such as handovers, daily logs and supervision meetings to raise any concerns they may have on behalf of a young person.</p> <p>More ‘serious’ issues continue to be relayed to the ‘on call’ person without delay, who subsequently refers to the Head of Care or Principal, in order that ‘outside agencies’ continue to be informed within agreed timescales.</p> <p>The Head of Care has continued to liaise with the Commission regarding issues and concerns that do not fit the ‘reporting criteria’ and this is demonstrative of the school’s open and transparent safe working practices.</p>		
<b>NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO CSCI DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:</b>		
• <b>conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children</b>	0	
• <b>serious harm to a child</b>	0	
• <b>serious illness or accident of a child</b>	0	
• <b>serious incident requiring police to be called</b>	1	

<b>Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)</b> <b>The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>The school's policies and procedures regarding 'absconding' and 'police involvement' were still in place and evidence demonstrated that they continue to be adhered to.</p> <p>Within each of the houses visited, a file was found pertaining to the 'missing person's procedure' and the contents include; the procedure itself, detailing the steps for staff to follow in terms of conducting a local search and informing other parties, a 'pen picture' and photograph of all of the young people in residence, including details of any medical conditions and any known previous instances of absconding.</p> <p>The procedure was well known by the staff interviewed and it was pleasing to be told that although the timescales for instigating the process are clearly stated, the freedom to use own initiative and commence sooner is an option, should the individual staff member feel it necessary.</p>		
<b>Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:</b>		<b>0</b>

## CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour.

### Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

Relationships between staff and children are based on mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries which are effective for both the individuals and the group.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
<p>The inspectors were again impressed to be presented with clear evidence to support the sound relationships that exist between the staff and young people. Written records and direct observation of working practices demonstrated the staff's commitment to reward positive conduct at every opportunity, whilst maintaining safe and appropriate boundaries, as is consistent with 'good parenting'.</p> <p>Time was spent in two of the houses during the evening of day one of the inspection and given some of the behaviours and difficulties observed, staff were again commended for their commitment and professionalism when dealing with such instances.</p>		

### Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.26)

Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour, and where the behaviour of children is regarded as unacceptable by staff, it is responded to by constructive disciplinary measures which are approved by the Head of Care.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
<p>The school's policy advocates the use of a 'Therapeutic Crisis Intervention' (TCI) approach, which has been approved by Barnardo's Council. Supporting policies include; 'disruptions', 'incidents', 'sanctions' and the Care and Educational Plans used.</p> <p>All staff continue to be in receipt of training upon joining the school and subsequent 'refreshers' thereafter.</p> <p>Intervention strategies for pupils are discussed and planned with parents prior to joining the school and the parental questionnaires received by the inspectors were found to endorse and understand the methods used.</p> <p>The system for the recording of the use of physical restraints and sanctions was again excellent and clear evidence was found to demonstrate that both the policies and actual practices in place continue to be regularly reviewed by the school's Senior Management Team and more widely, by Barnardo's council.</p>		

## QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.
- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within school and in the local community.
- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.
- Children 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.

### Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

Admission and leaving processes are planned and agreed with the child – and as appropriate, with parents and carers and placing authorities – as far as possible and handled with sensitivity and care by those concerned.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The school's admission criteria remains clear, in that placements are secured following detailed referral, assessment and planning processes. The school does not take 'emergency admissions'.

Two young people were asked about their own experiences of recently joining the school and confirmation was given with regards visiting the residential units and meeting the staff and other children, before being offered a choice of where to stay. It was again noted that this might not always be possible, given where actual vacancies are at any one time.

Written feedback from Placing Social Workers was very positive and confirmed that the school works in close liaison with them, from the point of referral up until the end of the placement. Written evidence within care files provided further evidence to support how the staff continue to work 'with' named social workers and the local Connexions team.

**Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.7)**

Care staff and the school's residential provision and activities actively contribute to individual children's educational progress, and care staff actively support children's education, ensuring regular attendance, punctuality and a minimum of interruption during the school day.

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

4

It continues to be the practice of the school for 'residential' staff to provide practical support during the school day, by way of supervising break times and where necessary, to give individual support within the classroom and this was again reflected in the rotas seen. Both teaching and residential staff spoke positively about their collaborative approaches and it was very positive to note that everyone spoke of a 'team approach', placing equal value on each other's roles.

The format used for preparing for Review meetings further requires teachers and residential staff to liaise with each other in order that any 'educational' goals set are understood and can be supported within the living environment.

As was found last year, individual Placement Plans continue to include goals and targets that can be supported through both the classroom and living environments.

The continued frequency of whole staff team meetings was again seen to further ensure that any issues or concerns about individuals could be promptly discussed in order that planned interventions can be consistently implemented.

**Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9)**

Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.

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

3

Staffing levels and financial resources continue to ensure that broad ranges of activities are provided for boarding pupils.

Preferred activities described by the young people included swimming, cinema visits, eating out, leisure centres and local youth clubs. Links with other residential schools assist with the provision of extra curricular activities and both the army and air cadets have also been joined.

Popular indoor activities were described to include television, videos, DVD's and Play Stations and it was noted that time spent on such activities is closely monitored and where necessary, restricted.

**Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)**

**The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets any intimate care needs.**

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

Although the school does not employ a 'Nurse', delegated responsibility in terms of the implementation of the health promotion and medication policies is given to a key individual member of the residential staff team, who was interviewed during the inspection and again, on 2/11/04 by a CSCI Pharmacy inspector.

The continued implementation of the school's own 'Health Plan' document was again praised by the inspectors, who noted clear information being recorded in respect of medical needs, allergies, use of medication, routine check ups and medical appointments.

Advice was given with regards the following areas;

**1. 'Controlled Medication':**

This should be stored separate from all other medications and recorded in a dedicated book, demonstrating two signatures and evidence of 'tablet counting'. Examples of how and where to purchase pre-printed formats were discussed at the time of the visit.

**2. Medication Training:**

It was strongly recommended that accredited medication training be provided for the staff team and a list of training providers was left. It was further recommended that the school liaise with these providers, prior to securing their services to ensure the training is tailored to suit the school's own specific needs.

**3. Documentation / Consent:**

It was found that a number of consent forms were in place, with regards new admissions to the residential provision and some of the information was repeated. These particular examples were discussed at the time, with a recommendation that the contents be 'streamlined' into fewer forms.

**4. Medication Policy:**

The inspectors were advised that the section pertaining to 'homely remedies' had been removed as the school had been unable to gain written endorsement from a health care professional, as is described under standard 14.18. It was recommended that the school details its proposed use of paracetamol and diorylite, as its approved homely remedies, and seek parental consent.

**5. Supply:**

Given some of the difficulties described with regards the currently used supplying Chemist; it was recommended that the school liaise with other local agencies in an attempt to receive a service tailored to meet its specific needs. Given the frequency of some pupils transferring between home and school, it may be more appropriate in some instances to receive tablets in bottles as opposed to blister packs.

Further to last year's inspection, the issue of one pupil bringing 'controlled medication' in from home was found to be ongoing. This presents significant risks to both the pupil and the staff. It was strongly recommended that the school liaise with the parent and the pupil's own GP in order to resolve this.

The individual responsible for the implementation of health care policies and procedures was thanked for her helpful assistance with this aspect of the inspection. She used this process positively and requested advice and comment regarding the systems currently used, in an attempt to further improve upon this key aspect of care.

**Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.15)**

Children are provided with adequate quantities of suitably prepared wholesome and nutritious food, having regard to their needs and wishes, and have the opportunity to learn to prepare their own meals. Where appropriate special dietary needs due to health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background are met, including the choice of a vegetarian meal for children who wish it.

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

3

As was found last year, the kitchen was of a good design and well equipped. It was clean and free from any obvious hazards and there were no requirements made from the last environmental health inspection.

The Head Cook and two colleagues have all received Food Hygiene training and menus continue to be planned in advance. The Cook is reliant upon staff from the houses informing her of their menu plans also, in order to try to avoid the duplication of meals.

Special dietary requirements continue to be catered for and the Cook is informed of any known food allergies.

The meals sampled throughout the course of the inspection were found to be wholesome and nutritious and evidence was seen to support that the views of the pupils continue to be routinely canvassed. Sufficient quantities in terms of meal sizes were seen and in addition to the main meal, a salad bar and vegetarian option is provided daily.

During one visit to a boarding house, the inspector noted individual pupils being supported to prepare and cook separate meals of their own choice.

**Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.7)**

Children are provided for adequately on an individual basis and encouraged to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing and personal requisites. Children who require assistance to choose what they wear and/or how they spend their money are provided with the assistance they need, in a way which maximises their choice.

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

3

Young people continue to be provided with a school uniform and parents are requested to provide sufficient amounts of personal clothing for use outside of school. In exceptional circumstances, the school will provide support to assist with this.

During the visits to the houses, it was evident that young people are able to wear clothing of their own choice and personal bedding and possessions from home were seen on many occasions.

The staff were able to demonstrate a sound understanding of their role regarding the safeguarding and distribution of pocket money and the documentation examined during the inspection was seen to 'tally' with the amounts held.

Clear details were found within individual files, describing the support that may or may not be needed in terms of managing own finances.

## CARE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT PLAN

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.
- 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.
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.
- Children receive individual support when they need it.

### Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

There is a written placement plan specifying how the school will care for each boarding pupil in accordance with his or her assessed needs, the school cares for that child in accordance with that plan, monitors progress in relation to that plan, and updates that plan as necessary.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

4

The school's own Placement Plan format was found to be a particular strength last year and remains so.

A uniformed layout was used, with a main central file being held on the school premises and other documentation pertaining to the 'residential elements' being held in the houses.

All of the staff were able to demonstrate a sound understanding as to how the Placement Plan works in practice, as were the young people spoken with.

The Plans inspected were easy to follow and contained evidence of assessment, continued monitoring and regular review. It was clear that these were 'working documents' and the young people were fully aware of their contents and purpose. Entries to daily recordings were legible, signed and dated, with Review meetings occurring within timescales and there was clear evidence to demonstrate that individual young people work on this document themselves in preparation for review meetings.



**Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.5)**

**Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress which can, in compliance with legal requirements for safeguards, be seen by the child.**

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

3

Once again, a selection of care files were inspected at random from different houses.

In terms of standard 18.2, all of the items as listed were found in every file seen and such records were securely held in the 'office' of each house.

Entries within daily records were clearly written, signed and dated and most importantly, were seen to correspond with the requirements of the individual's own Placement Plan.

Such daily logs were seen to be routinely signed by the individual young person and in some instances it was demonstrated that an individual had 'challenged' the contents and been given the opportunity to make own amendments and entries.

The young people spoken with were able to confirm that they can request to see their own files and a number had done so.

**Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.3)**

**The school maintains clear and accurate records on the staff and child groups of the school, and major events affecting the school and children resident there.**

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

3

The school was found to operate a clear system regarding the ongoing maintenance, monitoring and secure holding of pertinent and necessary records.

During the course of the inspection, records made available were found to include, an up to date children's register, employee register and personnel records for every member of staff. Clear guidance was found to be in place, detailing where such records should be held, what they should hold and to whom they should be accessible. The details within were again found to fully comply with the performance indicators as listed under this standard.

**Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.6)**

**Subject to their wishes, children are positively encouraged and enabled by the school to maintain contact with their parents and other family members (unless there are welfare concerns) while living at school.**

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

3

The 'Contact' policy and procedure was found to be concise and informative, aimed ultimately, at securing safe working practices, in the best interests of the child.

All care files were found to hold specific details pertaining to individual contact arrangements regarding family members and friends of the young person. Where required, some visits were seen to be supported, whereas others did not need to be monitored as vigilantly.

On each occasion, visits and telephone calls were recorded in line with the guidance provided for staff and numerous instances were noted whereby the school has continued to provide the practical assistance needed in order for visits to occur.

Parent questionnaires gave the view that staff continue to be accommodating and welcoming when individuals visit their child.

**Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.2)**

Where a pupil is in care and will be leaving care on leaving the school, the school agrees with the young person's responsible authority what contribution it should make to implement any Pathway or other plan for the pupil before the pupil leaves school. These arrangements are in line with that young person's needs, and the school implements its contribution where feasible from at least a year before the pupil is expected to leave care or move to independent living. The school works with any Personal Advisor for the child.

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

3

Although the school is not the 'lead' agency in terms of identifying the young people preparing to leave care, an assurance is given that the residential staff will assist Placing Social Workers when this transition occurs. This practice was again referred to positively within the Placing Officer questionnaires received by the inspectors and evidence was seen, by way of Review meeting minutes to support that such needs are already being thought through, well in advance of the young person reaching school leaving age. Two of the residential houses have facilities in order for young people to work on their independent living skills. One in particular has a ground floor flat, which is currently underused. It was recommended that development of this facility be further explored. It was very positive to note the support being provided to one individual, currently out of school, whereby the residential staff are focussing upon his independence skills and encouraging him to make sensible plans for his future.

**Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.13)**

All children are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes, and children identified as having particular support needs, or particular problems, receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested.

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

4

Given the broad range of difficulties and complex needs of many of the young people accommodated, the school prides itself upon providing packages of care tailored to suit the specific needs of the individual. Once again, clear sources of evidence; namely, the detailed contents of Placement Plans and Review meeting minutes supported continued excellent practice in this area. High staffing levels and a relatively small number of pupils ensures that individual needs are well known by the staff and agreed strategies and interventions were seen to be regularly reviewed in an attempt to ensure that they remain relevant and appropriate. The school has access to bilingual support staff and religious and cultural needs of individuals are explored before joining the school in order to ensure that appropriate provision can be made. Systems were found to be in place with regards making internal and external referrals for SEN support, psychology, psychiatry and counselling services. However, some difficulties were noted from viewing the records of referrals made, in terms of securing professional input from the local CAMHS team. Unfortunately, this has resulted in some children not receiving due services and it is recognised that this deficit is beyond the school's control.

## PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children live in well designed, pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.
- Children live in accommodation that is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.
- Children are able to carry out their ablutions in privacy and with dignity.
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.

### Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. It serves the needs of the children and provides the sort of environment most helpful to each child's development, and is sufficient for the number of children.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The purpose built school building was completed in 1993 and boasts excellent classroom provision including an art room, pottery room, design technology suite, food technology room, ICT suites, science laboratory, dark room, fitness suite and library. The total number of pupils does not exceed 52; therefore classrooms remain small and able to offer extensive individualised support, in line with the school's Statement of Purpose. Two of the residences are on the school site, the girls' house is in nearby Southborough and the remaining boys' house is within walking distance of Tunbridge Wells town centre. Thus, all houses remain within easy reach of local and community resources. The inspector was advised that consideration is being given with regards the future of the two 'off – site' houses, which may be sold and re – provided for within the school grounds. Overall, the accommodation was found to be spacious and well maintained, with evidence seen to demonstrate ongoing repair and refurbishment works. At the time of the inspection, no negative information had been received by the Commission from the local planning, fire or environmental health departments.

**Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.19)**

**The school provides adequate good quality and well-maintained accommodation for boarding pupils, which is consistent with their needs.**

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

The overall standard of accommodation had improved from last year. Whilst some rooms still needed some redecoration, others were in very good condition.

Communal rooms were in particularly good order, with good quality furniture and fittings found throughout.

All of the houses visited were found to be cleaned to a very good standard and the maintenance system, introduced last year was reported to be working well.

As previously stated, two of the houses have the 'space' in order to progress with 'independent living skills' and it was recommended that this provision could be further developed.

**Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.7)**

**The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets, all of good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children. The school has appropriate changing and washing facilities for incontinent children where necessary.**

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

All of the houses visited were found to have a sufficient number of toilets, baths and showers in terms of meeting the needs of the number of young people accommodated.

All such rooms were clean and warm and the inspectors were advised that thermostat controls have now been fitted to all baths and showers accessed by young people.

There were no concerns raised by the young people regarding 'privacy' in relation to bathrooms, either through the questionnaires returned or during group discussions.

One 'standard' comment received was with regards to some of the new bathrooms in one of the boys' houses. It was felt that this provision was of a much better quality. The inspectors reported this and were advised of the ongoing 'Repair / Renewal' Schedule, which endeavours to reach this standard with all bathrooms.

**Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)**

**Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, in accordance with Health and Safety and Fire legislation and guidance.**

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

As was found last year, regular reviewing of generic risk assessments is continuing. Such files were sampled throughout the course of the inspection, with clear supporting evidence found.

The Bursar was interviewed and provided the inspector with very good sources of evidence with regards the 'health and safety' monitoring systems in place.

Fire drills were found to occur regularly and at different times of the day and night and fire fighting equipment and alarms had all been serviced. The inspector was shown the most recent report from the local Fire Office and was advised that the three recommendations therein, had been implemented. Written evidence was seen to support this.

Electrical appliances were recorded to have been PAT tested and certificates were produced in respect of checks and services made to boilers and gas appliances.

The Health and Safety policy was found to be a detailed and comprehensive document, subject itself to ongoing review and amendment. The roles of individuals were clearly outlined and the minutes of Health and Safety meetings were made available for the purpose of this inspection.

CCTV continues to be used within hallways and has now been installed throughout the school building also. Visitors to any area of the school or its accommodation continue to be required to produce identification and sign in and out of visitors books.

The inspector noted that much of the health and safety monitoring continues to be 'overseen' by the Head of Care, who will be leaving shortly. Given the size of this task, it is recommended that careful consideration be given with regards how this work will continue before the new post holder commences.

The inspectors were informed of the school's decision to request that the local Council explores the possibility of re –routing the footpath that currently cuts across school grounds, in the interests of pupil safety.

## STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- There are careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.

### Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those employed on a contractual/sessional basis) and volunteers who work with the children in the school includes checks through the Criminal Records Bureau checking system (at Standard or Enhanced level as appropriate to their role in the school), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

4

This standard was 'commended' last year, following the work that was completed, based upon recommendations made. It was therefore, pleasing to note that this excellent standard of recruitment practice had continued.

Six personnel files were selected at random and the contents were found to be well - indexed, using a uniformed approach. Evidence was seen to demonstrate that robust systems remain in place, ensuring that enhanced level CRB checks and satisfactory references are secured before the commencement of post.

In all instances, original application forms, C.V.'s, proof of identification, job descriptions and contracts were found and the audit form held at the front of the file, ensures that any outstanding documentation is quickly 'chased'.

In all instances, a clear record of the interview was recorded and in the interests of 'equal opportunities', set questions were used. Evidence was seen to be included within the interview process in order for any gaps or omissions within C.V.'s to be explained by the applicant.

It was noted that one 'Agency' member of staff is currently being used and this individual's file was inspected. Clear checks had been made with the agency, prior to any shifts being completed and the inspector discussed the information to be held by the school, regarding such employees, with a Barnardo's H.R. representative during the course of the inspection.

<b>Total number of care staff:</b>	31	<b>Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:</b>	1
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**Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)**

The school is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the minimum level specified under standard 28.2. Records of staff actually working in the school demonstrate achievement of this staffing level.

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

As was found last year, any remaining 'gaps' within rotas were found to be covered by existing staff being offered overtime, as well as some shifts being completed by the educational support staff. Such strategies were seen to ensure that young people continue to be looked after by staff that know them well and safe levels were observed to be in place at the time of the inspection.

Additional 'cover' can be obtained in the event of an emergency by using the 'on call' system, which is 'manned' by senior staff and the Head of Care.

**Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)**

Staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the school.

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

The induction process was found to include core elements of 'initial' training on subjects including child protection, fire awareness and an introduction to the working practices of the Organisation.

Individual staff members spoken with described the induction / probation process as being informative and helpful.

Upon completion of a successful probationary period, the training needs of individuals continue to be tracked through supervision, annual appraisal and the introduction of a Personal Development Plan. Perusal of randomly selected staff files provided clear documented evidence to support that this happens in practice.

Inset training days continue to be planned in advance and the school was seen to be making excellent progress in terms of the provision of NVQ training for staff. Individuals spoke very positively regarding the training provision and it was encouraging to note that individual requests for 'one off' seminars, one day courses, etc, have been agreed if the subject matter is viewed as being pertinent to the needs of the children.

**Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)**

**All staff, including domestic staff and the Head of the school, are properly accountable and supported.**

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

Staff spoken with throughout the course of the inspection again included all levels of residential care staff, teachers, learning support assistants, catering and domestic staff, the Bursar, Head of Care, Principal and Assistant Director. Every individual gave clear descriptions as to own responsibilities and those of others, demonstrating a sound understanding as to the lines of accountability throughout the school and the wider organisation.

Job descriptions were found within every personnel file inspected and last year's recommendation to review these at annual appraisal meetings had been implemented. Rotas were seen to ensure that adequate time is set aside in order for team meetings, supervisions and handovers to occur.

Every member of staff spoken with confirmed their receipt of monthly supervision, which was described as being pre booked, with an agreed agenda and recorded.



## ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.
- Children enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.

### Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

The school is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible childcare.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

4

The sound, respectful relationships existing among all of the school's staff, regardless of hierarchy or position was again viewed by the inspectors as a key ingredient as to why the service delivered remains so positive. Care is taken to ensure that training days, supervision meetings, staff meetings and handovers continue to occur regularly and rotas continued to reflect this.

Children are not given responsibilities for their peers and much of the practice observed was clearly based upon 'good parenting'.

The school's guidance regarding the 'suspension of a member of staff' was found to be in accordance with standard 31.8 and the Principal outlined the clear responses that would result from crises, such as a serious outbreak of illness, media interest, etc.

Parents again confirmed that they are aware of the school's policies and practices and it was noted that the value of working 'with' parents is impressed upon new staff as soon as they join.

Percentage of care staff with relevant NVQ or equivalent child care qualification:

100 %

**Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)**

The Commission for Social Care Inspection is informed within 24 hours if a receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy becomes responsible for the school. Such persons on becoming responsible for the school have ensured that the school continues to be managed on a day to day basis by a Head who meets recruitment and qualification requirements for a Head under these Standards. Such a temporary Head must make sure that the operation of the school meets the requirements of these standards in relation to the day to day running of the school.

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

3

The ongoing monitoring of records and the daily practice of staff was again found to be a particular strength of the school, with clear systems in place, in accordance with all of the items listed under standard 32.2.

The Principal, Head of Care and Assistant Director continue to hold key areas of responsibility in terms of the areas to be monitored by them on a regular basis.

The Statement of Purpose, the general operation of the boarding provision and the overall school's Development Plan were continuing to be regularly discussed and scrutinised at Senior Management meetings and the signatures of the Standard 33 visitors were found on numerous records within the houses, to evidence that these have been inspected.

**Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.7)**

The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body receive a written report on the conduct of the school from a person visiting the school on their behalf every half term.

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

3

The inspectors were advised of the 'new' Standard 33 Visitor and also received a very positive report from Mrs Tricia Greene, who has been visiting two of the houses for a number of years. Throughout the course of the inspection, evidence was seen to demonstrate how these visits and the reports generated, continue to be effectively used at Senior Management and Governor's meetings.

It was also positive to meet with a newly appointed Governor, who demonstrated a keen interest in becoming actively involved with regards the monitoring the boarding provision.

**PART C****LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY****(where applicable)****Lay Assessor****Signature****Date****Lead Regulation  
Inspector****Sophie Wood****Signature****Second Inspector****Signature****Regulation  
Manager****Paul Coop****Signature****Date****23/11/04**

## PART D

## HEAD'S RESPONSE

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 14/10/04 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

NO

Comments were received from the provider

NO

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

NO

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

NO

**Note:**

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

**D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 17/12/04, which indicates how recommended actions and advisory recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.**

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

NO

### D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

**D.3.1 I Mr Mike Price of Meadows 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

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## Signature

---

## Designation

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**Date**

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**Or**

**D.3.2 I Mr Mike Price of Meadows 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:**

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## Print Name

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## 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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S0000024060.V186430.R01

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