



Champions for
Social Care
Improvement

inspection report

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

Priory School

Mount Road

Bury St Edmunds

Suffolk

IP32 7BH

3rd February 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

Priory School

Address

Mount Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP32 7BH

Tel No:

01284 761935

Fax No:

01284 725878

Email Address:

prioryadmin@talk21.com

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

Chair of Governors

Dr Barry Pepper

Name of Head

Mrs Lesley Preece

NCSC Classification

Residential Special School

Type of schoolLocal Authority school for
pupils with Special
Needs.**Date of last boarding welfare inspection:**

04/02/03

Date of Inspection Visit		3rd February 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of NCSC Inspector	1	David Welch	077308
Name of NCSC Inspector	2	Anna Rogers	075145
Name of NCSC Inspector	3	N/a	
Name of NCSC Inspector	4	N/a	
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):		N/a	
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		N/a	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		N/a	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Mrs L Preece	

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) 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 NCSC in respect of Priory 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

Priory School is owned and managed by Suffolk County Council and administered from the Western Area Education Department. It provides education for children between the ages of 9 years (Yr.4) and 16 years (Yr.11), who are subject to a Statement of Special Educational Need. All of the children will have been assessed as having a learning disability at some level and a number will have associated emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The school is located on the northern edge of the town of Bury St Edmunds. More recently built housing is now beginning to surround it. The local authority has other facilities close by.

The site is sloping and this has led to the premises and playing areas having a number of different levels. There are a great number of steps outside the school buildings and inside. Thus, any child, or visitor, with mobility problems would find progress around the school quite difficult. The boarding provision, in particular, is not suitable for children with physical disabilities that might impair mobility. In all other respects the school has a very inclusive culture.

The boarding provision can accommodate up to 25 children and young people in two boarding houses, Abbey and Priory. Because of the large number of boys for whom residential provision is thought to be appropriate, the boarding arrangements are, in Abbey, all male and, in Priory, boys upstairs and girls downstairs. The design of communal areas downstairs is open plan with a separate kitchenette area curtained off. There is space to eat around a dining table and an adjoining television/sitting area. There is an open wooden staircase. The atmosphere can be a little claustrophobic as natural light and view is restricted by the design of the building. There are plans to refurbish the two boarding houses when finance is available. Sleeping accommodation is in single bedrooms and dormitory areas in groups of 4's and 5's. The different levels upstairs, under the eaves, provide an interesting, and possibly quite exciting setting, for children to sleep.

All children, day and boarders, eat in a central Dining Hall with adjacent kitchen, staffed by employees of the County's Catering Team.

The ethos is very much that Priory School is an educational establishment that has some residential provision for children who it is thought will benefit emotionally and socially from the experience. As such, boarders attend school from the residential units as day children would from their own homes and have limited access to the boarding houses during the classroom day.

The approach is one of developing children to their full potential, instilling appropriate routines and habits, teaching the life skills sufficient to enable them to be as independent as possible and encouraging them to flourish.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

The school has a very pleasant 'feel' about it. Visitors are welcomed, yet matters of access are addressed with a Visitor pass system. The children were eager to co-operate with the inspection process. They were very friendly and open in their dealings with inspectors. Staff work hard in delivering good childcare to the children who board either for one night a week or for four nights. Their commitment is clear.

Four parents responded to the parent survey. There was a high degree of satisfaction with Priory School, its staff and with the quality of service. On visits to the school parents found they are met politely and pleasantly. This, too, was the inspectors' impression. Parents commented that the school develops in their children an independence that they welcome. One parent said that the school 'puts such a lot of work into the development of the whole person, not only his education'. The majority of the parents of boarders whose views were canvassed felt involved and informed about life at Priory School. One parent felt that one of the best features of the school was its small numbers and the many grass areas surrounding the school buildings.

The staff were seen as 'caring and considerate' and one parent said that the school 'is a gem in Suffolk local education authority and that it should be held up as a national example'.

There is a happy, caring, relaxed, yet orderly atmosphere. One parent commented on this particularly 'during meetings'. The parent said that the staff show that they know about the children and have thought about his or her needs. That they are happy to discuss things. All four parents confirmed that they go to meetings about their children and their views are listened to.

The school rules are fair and reasonable.

Again this year, only two placing social workers responded to the questionnaire, but they were both very positive about the school and felt that the children with whom they are involved were either 'safe' or 'very safe' there. Both mentioned the importance of life skills training.

The children identified a wide range of staff at the school, but also including their parents and friends, who they can talk to if they are unhappy. There are arrangements for independent listening that are as suitable as anything yet seen by the two inspectors who visited the school.

Staff were aware of child protection procedures and this included those working in an ancillary capacity. Child protection training had been updated before the inspection and there was a repeat session to 'sweep up' those staff who were unable to attend on the first occasion. Care staff confirmed that they have had appropriate training in physical control and restraint procedures. They mentioned that on one occasion they used restraint techniques 'automatically', demonstrating their familiarity.

The care staff team showed its stable nature by retaining the same core members, which provides much needed consistency for the children who board. The team now includes a male carer, which goes some way to redressing the gender imbalance. Duty rosters, although at times punishing for staff, provide continuity of care for children, with the same staff on duty when they go to bed and when they get up.

Care plans had been introduced for each boarder and they have become 'working tools'.

A 'mentoring scheme' for each child, an adapted keyworker scheme, had been introduced.

The training for some staff in British Sign Language (BSL) is to be welcomed.

The boarding arrangements, whereby children return home every weekend and for longer periods during the holidays, allow shared care with family members.

Some of the information provided for parents and children is available in different formats. This is good practice.

Meals looked appetising, balanced and nutritious, with a choice of dishes. Inspectors particularly liked the balance between healthy items and the occasional 'naughty-but-nice' dish such as homemade cakes.

The pupils' personal files had up to date photographs attached. This is good practice, especially as old photos are kept so that changes in physical development can be seen.

All staff, day and boarding, worked collaboratively towards providing an integrated service. Individual needs were recognised and responded to.

Good risk assessments had been made.

It was possible to audit the progress of a child from the first suggestion that boarding might be of benefit to actual admission.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

While inspectors had absolutely no reason to doubt the Head's assurance that efforts are made to inform parents about certain matters, and indeed there was evidence to support this with contact information available in the foyer and some written material in different formats, two parents, otherwise very positive about Priory, said that they had not been given information or a leaflet telling them how to make a complaint. None of the parents said they had been told how to make a complaint to a Commission for Social Care Inspection inspector. Neither of the two placing social workers who responded to the survey said that they had been given information on the school's complaints procedure.

Only one parent said that the school had asked his/her opinion about the way Priory is running.

Only one person recorded any negative thoughts when asked their view on the worst things about the school, this being about the lack of handrails throughout the school, a matter since addressed by the Head.

The school was designed and constructed over 30 years ago and the residential provision does need some updating. The Head confirmed that plans are in train to refurbish the boarding houses, but the finance has not been available to carry out this much needed work.

Some recruitment procedures should be strengthened to include contact with each previous employer where children or vulnerable adults were cared for to check the reason for the applicant's leaving. Also by obtaining two written references in every case, accepting references only on headed notepaper, keeping interview notes and adopting a more consistent approach to including in request letters for references an invitation to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children and if the referee knows of any reason why the person concerned should not be so employed.

At times the staff roster is such that a carer is responsible for a group of 12 very vulnerable children.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

Inspectors found the overwhelming majority of National Minimum Standards to be met, some exceeded. Two recommendations and 7 advisory recommendations have been made in respect of the standards assessed. The quality of the care provision was high. There was generally a high level of satisfaction among the parents of children who board. The two social workers who responded to questionnaires were also very positive about the school.

Inspectors found a more relaxed staff group, perhaps easier with the inspection process and more confident about having their work scrutinised. The addition of a male carer redresses the gender imbalance for the good. The stable staff team who look after children within the residential provision are caring and well informed. Their commitment to the boarders is clear.

The children were generally very well behaved, very polite and good humoured. They provided useful information for inspectors about how the school operates and how, as boarders, they are looked after. They were eager to cooperate with the inspection process.

The school was knowledgeably managed by experienced and committed senior staff.

The welfare of the children was being safeguarded and promoted to a high degree in this much needed resource for vulnerable children with special needs.

NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

Is Notification of any failure to safeguard and promote welfare to be made by the National Care Standards Commission to the Local Education Authority or Department for Education and Skills under section 87(4) of the Children Act 1989 arising from this inspection?

NO

Notification to be made to:

Local Education Authority
Secretary of State

NO

NO

The grounds for any Notification to be made are:

N/a

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION

Recommended Actions from the last Inspection visit fully implemented?

NO

If No, the findings of this inspection on any Recommended Actions not implemented are listed below:

No	Standard	Recommended actions	
6	RS10	Copies of reports of visits made under Standard 33 should be available for inspection at the school.	Immediate and on-going
7	RS25	Refurbishment should include provision of an additional WC for night time use in Priory House.	When finances permit.
9	RS27	Recruitment procedures should include those checks included in the body of the report in Standards 19 and 27.	Immediate and on-going

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended action and any advisory recommendations 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	RS27	Recruitment checks must be as robust as possible and include all the measures identified within the body of the report.	Immediate and on-going.
2	RS27	The governor responsible for residential care, and who visits, sometimes unannounced, must have a CRB check before undertaking further inspection visits.	Immediate.
3	RS33	The governor identified to take responsibility for the residential provision, having visited the boarding houses half-termly, generally unannounced, must write a report of each visit on the conduct of the school and make this available within two weeks to the Head and to each member of the governing body. The report should use an agreed format and include as a minimum the issues identified as 'bullet points' under standard 33.3. The reports should be available to inspectors of the Commission for Social Care Inspection.	On-going.

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
4	RS4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents should be informed again as to how they make a complaint and a copy of the complaints procedure should be given to all placing social workers. • This procedure should inform parents and placing social workers how to complain to an inspector of the Commission for Social Care Inspection.
5	RS5	It is recommended that the governor with special responsibility for residential provision should attend a child protection course as soon as possible.
6	RS10	<p>It is recommended that: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When staff are writing up the details of any incident of physical; control and restraint they use the terminology of School Safe, the programme used in the school. • A work-place trainer should be identified to keep abreast of any changes in School Safe approach and techniques and to pass these on to colleagues during regular practice sessions.
7	RS14	It is recommended that the school obtain some advice on the storage and dispensing of 'controlled' medication such as Ritalin.
8	RS15	It is recommended that attempts are made to 'soften' the atmosphere of the Dining Room for boarders to provide a more homely and domestic experience.
9	RS15	That advice is obtained about whether the CD-Rom on food hygiene and food handling is an acceptable training tool for all staff to equip them with the required understanding of the issues involved.
10	RS30	It is recommended that a supervision contract is drawn up between each supervisee and his or her supervisor, to include the matters identified under Standard 30.4.
11		It is recommended that arrangements are implemented for the Head to receive regular, one to one supervision from a line manager with knowledge of the school and an understanding of the pressures involved in managing a resource of this type.

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	NO
• 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)	YES
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NA

Date of Inspection	03/02/04
Time of Inspection	09.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	21.00
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	7

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 NCSC 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
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The school's Statement of Purpose (Intent) was produced following a whole school Professional development day focusing on the aims and objectives.

At the previous inspection the Head was asked to 'fine tune' the school's Statement of Intent to include those matters described under the banner standard, but particularly in Standard 1.3. These included the range of pupils needs for which the school caters, its admission criteria, the approved number of day and residential pupils, age range and gender accommodated, any special religious or cultural aspects of the school and any special features of the school. They are covered appropriately in the School Brochure.

Pictorial information indicates that the brochure is available in other formats. There is an invitation at the entrance to the school in symbol/sign format and in the foyer there is a manual with useful contact information for parents in a friendly format. This is good practice.

The brochure covers both teaching and boarding aspects and clearly states the admission criteria. The inspectors were told that the school has 'drifted' more towards admitting pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

No therapeutic or 'alternative' models of care are used.

As the school is built on a number of different levels, the school is not suitable for pupils who have physical disabilities that prevent them using stairs reasonably easily.

The standard was met.

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

Parents who responded to the questionnaire were generally very satisfied with the care provided at Priory School. One respondent said that there are steps without handrails throughout the school and this makes it difficult for those with mobility problems. However, at the time of the inspection additional handrails had been fitted throughout the school and white lines painted on the steps. Ramps are also available for access to the school hall.

All the boarders were surveyed for their opinion of the school, who they talk to if unhappy, whether staff listen to them, the rewards and sanctions, the complaints system, bullying and some other matters. Again, the children were very positive about the residential experience.

The parents were particularly pleased that the school attempts to develop the children's independence.

Mrs Preece said that the culture is very much a verbal one with a great deal of contact with parents by telephone and in person. There is, of course, the annual review of the child's Statement of Educational Need.

A quite recent innovation is the Residential Council. This meets regularly and is chaired by a boarder. Of particular interest to children are the school and childrens' rules, especially relating to mobiles and activities. The children wanted more football and this was provided on Monday evenings. Each child is asked for its views. This is good practice. The issues on which the children gave their views during the meeting included suggesting fire drills for new pupils shortly after they arrive, activities, homework, places at meals and a music group. The pupil Chair agreed to have a word with another young person who flicked the lights on and off. Inspectors felt that this was an innovative and suitable response to what was identified by the other children as something they wanted to stop.

Ten boys and four of the girls said that staff listen to what they say. Four boys were unsure of what this question meant. All but 1 child confirmed that staff notice when they do something good. The responses were similar for when they do something naughty.

In addition, there are residential house meetings half termly. The independent living skills programme provides opportunities for young people to make their opinions known.

There is a very effective Independent Listener.

The standard was met.

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

There is procedural guidance on preserving privacy and dignity.

Records are kept securely.

Pupils confirmed that they can use the telephone and some have mobiles.

Staff are aware of the protocols relating to intimate personal care. Male care staff confirmed suitable arrangements when on duty with female boarders. There is always a female carer available. Staff endeavour to give children sufficient privacy at bath times, but do have to assist some children.

Staff are clear about when and under what circumstances information is shared about children.

The standard was well met.

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?**

2

Only 2 pupils said they had not been told how to complain. Several said that they had complained about something and afterwards things had been better. These results are a great improvement on those obtained at the last inspection and reflect perhaps the additional work done with young people in this area.

Two of the 4 parents who responded to the survey said that they had not been given any information about how to complain. Three said they had not been told how to make a complaint to the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The two placing social workers similarly, said that they had not been given a copy of the school's complaints procedure. Whilst this is a very small representative sample it is important that all persons involved are aware of this information. It is recommended that the school reminds parents and provides social workers with the relevant documents.

The procedure does contain contact information for the National Care Standards Commission that should now be amended to take account of the Commission for Social Care Inspection as from April 1st 2004.

The inspectors were particularly impressed with the arrangements for children to have access to an Independent listener.

The standard was not met.

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

Number of above complaints substantiated:

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

Number of above complaints substantiated:

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?

3

All care staff have received child protection training. Those staff who missed a previous session in September 2003 were 'swept up' in a further training session held in January. Staff are very aware of the appropriate responses should a disclosure be made. Children were protected in this environment.

The governor with particular responsibility for residential care said that he would like to undertake a child protection course and it is a recommendation that he does so.

When talking with ancillary staff inspectors were confident that they, too, are aware of child protection issues.

The school do follow accepted practice if a member of staff is the subject of an accusation of abuse.

The inspection included writing to the county's Head of Child Protection who confirmed that in the last two years there have been no allegations of abuse that have resulted in a child protection investigation regarding the children attending the school. He confirmed that in respect of another matter the school had acted entirely appropriately.

The standard was met.

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

X

Standard 6 (6.1 – 6.5)

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.

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

This is a difficult issue for the school as the children's perception of what bullying involves is complicated. Inspectors had to explain during the survey process what bullying might include and what it did not include. On this basis, and despite the explanation attempted, 13 children said they had been bullied. Seven said they had not been bullied and 3 were not sure. The doubt remains that children might think that bullying consists of somebody disagreeing with them, saying something slightly critical of having an argument. There was certainly no evidence to suggest that there is a bullying culture in the school, rather the reverse. This seems like an inclusive and very supportive atmosphere where bullying is not tolerated and, if it does appear, is immediately confronted appropriately. This should be borne in mind when the percentage score below is considered. Inspectors felt that in respect of one pupil others were slightly wary perhaps fearful and they brought this to the attention of the Head who recognised the validity of the feeling.

The school authorities are well aware of the areas where bullying might take place and steps are taken by staff to ensure that children are rarely in small groups in these places. This applies to access to bedrooms during the day and leisure times.

There is evidence that children have been involved in drawing up rules about how they should behave towards others. These are very much related to respect for self and others. Assemblies are also used to reinforce the expectation that everybody at the school will behave towards others in a proper way.

The standard was met.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

21.2 %

Standard 7 (7.1 – 7.7)

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.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Mrs Preece has put in place measures to ensure that the National Care Standards Commission (now the Commission for Social Care Inspection) is notified about events that affect the life of the school, the children or the people working there. There has been 1 accident that was considered serious enough to warrant notification and this was discussed with Mrs Preece during the inspection. The other matters have involved unauthorised access to the campus at weekends by youths on skateboards.

Parents are kept informed of any matter that affects their child at Priory.

Mrs Preece appropriate informs placing authorities, where relevant, but continues to feel that in some respects the school is not given sufficient support by Social Care Services workers. Inspectors were informed that the school should have a designated social worker, but this seems not to have happened.

The standard was met.

NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO NCSC DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:

- **conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children**
- **serious harm to a child**
- **serious illness or accident of a child**
- **serious incident requiring police to be called**

X

X

1

X

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)

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.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Mrs Preece said that she is considering bringing in an additional register procedure to combat school refusal or unauthorised absence. With the comparatively small number of boarders, and the supervision arrangements in place, it is likely that staff will know immediately if a pupil's whereabouts are in doubt.

The Deputy Head outlined the position for dealing with pupils who might be missing during the day. There is written guidance in the school brochure for all concerned. Staff are aware of one child who has a propensity to run away from school.

The standard was met.

Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:

X

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?	3
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Inspectors last year felt that relationships between care staff and children were a little 'stiff', a conclusion that the staff concerned found surprising. On this year's inspection inspectors found staff far more relaxed. The staff relate well to the children in their care. Professional boundaries are maintained. On an early morning visit, waking routines were seen to be sensitive.

The house rules have been developed with the involvement of the children and are displayed. When the inspectors asked the children about what they could and could not do they showed that they understood these areas well.

There was only a small number of boarders who said that they did not like at least 'some of the staff'.

Inspectors observed no favouritism or antipathy towards individual children.

This is a small staff team and they are all on shift for the four nights that children are resident. Continuity of care is achieved.

Each child's targets are displayed on his or her notice board, do not appear to compromise the child's privacy or dignity.

During the previous inspection inspectors were inform that the care team intended to look at the potential for a keyworker system, but utilising the small number of team members to take account of individual roles and responsibilities. This has now been introduced with each child having a named childcare officer and a senior. This appears to be working well. It does not detract from every child receiving attention and input from all staff members.

The standard was met.

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?

3

The overwhelming majority of children reported that staff notice when they do sometimes good and also if they do something 'naughty'.

The staff operate in a regime that encourages good behaviour and recognises achievement – taking into account each individual child's starting point.

Staff confirmed that they have completed a course of 'School Safe', the programme of physical control and restraint. They said that while they have only to use the hands-on techniques but rarely, when they do so they feel that it 'comes naturally'. This demonstrates good knowledge, but inspectors advised that when writing up the incidents the correct terminology is used. Also that a 'peer group trainer' is identified to take staff through the various techniques on a regular basis.

No unreasonable sanctions are used and children generally see staff as being fair in dealing with them.

Inspectors had the chance to observe the Residential Council meeting in progress. Staff managed the meeting sensitively with the children playing a significant role. They were asked for their views especially in relation to school rules. They were asked to make suggestions and did so.

The school has a police liaison officer and a beat officer who visits. Information relating to this is displayed in the school entrance. This is good practice.

On occasions children are excluded and this procedure seems to be used appropriately.

Again, no reports were available from the governor responsible for Standard 33 visits and a recommendation will be made that these are provided.

The standard was met.

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?

4

At the last inspection, inspectors found it difficult to follow the process of admission from the point at which it was suggested that a child would perhaps benefit from a residential place to him or her actually being admitted. While there seemed no doubt that the process was quite well developed, and no child would be placed without a good deal of preparation, a recommendation was made that this was formalised and a written 'audit trail' was established. This appears to have been implemented and inspectors were able to see far more clearly how a child progressed from being a day pupil to a boarder.

The school does not admit children in emergencies.

There appears to be a greater need for places for boys than girls and the make up of the resident group reflects this.

Preparations for leaving the residential provision are well developed. Mostly, this coincides with the end of Yr. 10, but is extended in some circumstances. If this happens, it is arranged at review, with all parties, including the children themselves, being involved.

There is a life skills programme that has been operating for a number of years and is a part of the curriculum. This is well developed and has undergone improvement, fine-tuning and modification to reach its current status. It was well reported on by parents and placing social workers.

Residential pupils are being encouraged to keep more account of their pocket money.

The standard was well met.

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?**

3

The residential provision is integral to the work of the school and pastoral staff support the educational component. There is an effective procedure for sharing information between the day and boarding settings. However, some comment was received from boarders that on occasions what happens in class carried over to the boarding house. And this is 'unfair'. This was discussed with the Head, senior staff and the care staff team at feedback. While care staff act, in some respects in the parental role, they should not be expected to enforce sanctions that teaching staff have imposed for misdemeanours committed during the school day. Mrs Preece said that efforts are made to inform staff that this should not happen. While it is important that care staff know if anything has happened in class that day, if teachers feel that a sanction is necessary, they should take full responsibility for ensuring that it is carried out and not leave this to their colleagues.

Care staff assist with homework functions such as reading and spelling practice.

There is an accredited life skills programme that uses the Flat as a realistic base for practising activities that are necessary for everyday living and which will be needed later on when pupils move to less supported settings.

The standard was met.

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?**

4

The school provides a wide range of activities for boarders, including the opportunity to be involved in things going on outside such as shopping.

Inspectors observed the children in activities during the evening. It was clear that they thoroughly enjoy the activities and pastimes arranged for them by staff both inside and outside the school. There is also time available to simply 'chill out'.

The school is not open at weekends.

There is increasing involvement with the local community.

The selection of any videos watched by children is age appropriate.

Boarders can bring favourite toys to school and inspectors saw evidence of this in the many soft toys in bedrooms. Games are available.

The standard was well met.

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

The school does have access to a Medical Officer and a nurse and while there is no sickbay or Sanatorium on site, both professionals reported in the survey of other agencies involved with the Priory School that they see children and their parents on campus. Referral to the Medical Officer is either through the school direct or from parents, social care services Occupational Therapists or the school nurse.

The school nurse is responsible for health assessments, ADHD assessments, one to one support for older children, hearing tests and the provision of health related education. As part of the health promotion programme of the Primary Care Trust she delivers sex education for an hour a week over five weeks on an annual basis.

Care staff assist one or two children with intimate care such as bathing and showering.

Staff are first aid trained, but it is suggested that the qualification of the Senior Child Care Officer is renewed as soon as possible.

Inspectors observed the administration of daily medication and the procedures were satisfactory, with written records kept. Inspectors advised on the storage and dispensing of 'controlled' medication such as Ritalin or Ritalin substitutes.

Staff do not use any intrusive medical procedures.

Most dental and eye checks would be arranged by parents, but if care staff feel that there might be a difficulty with this then they do so themselves in consultation with parents.

If sick, a child would go home to their family and if taken ill at night staff would monitor and make arrangements for a return home next morning.

The children confirmed during the survey that they had been told about living a healthy lifestyle.

The standard was met.

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

The menu was wholesome and nutritious with a choice of dishes. Children were given drinks at meals. There was a good reaction from boarders to the matter of the school's food.

The school has a healthy eating award. The inspectors saw evidence of fresh fruit and a mixture of items including home made cakes.

Individual dietary requirements are catered for.

Mealtimes were well managed, with a number of sittings. The dining experience seemed a pleasant and relaxed one for pupils. Pupils were not expected to hurry up and finish and if they wanted to socialise over the meal that was allowed.

The children take turns to assist with laying up and clearing away the used crockery and cutlery.

Boarders take their midday meal with other day children, as the approach is one that involves the children who stay overnight being viewed as day children once they leave the boarding house until they return after classes have finished for the day. They eat breakfast and supper as a group in the Dining Hall. The inspectors remained of the opinion that these two meals could be made to feel more cosy and homely affairs, perhaps by changing the environment, using different cutlery and by having tablecloths etc. Mrs Preece said that there are insufficient funds to allow *all* this to happen although different china has been provided.

Inspectors were interested to know whether all staff involved in food handling had received appropriate training. Mrs Preece said that this is covered by means of a CD-Rom. She was asked to enquire from Environmental Health Department the status of this training product to ascertain whether it provides a sufficient level for instruction and qualification.

The standard was met.

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

The Head confirmed that the school generally supplies no clothing, but does maintain spare items in case of hardship or accident. Every child is in school uniform with the items differing slightly in style and colour.

The children do have an opportunity to go shopping in town, accompanied by a member of staff.

The girls are given advice and guidance about sanitary protection by the female staff. Some records are kept in this respect.

The children's pocket money is usually kept by staff and distributed as required, but the Head said that some effort is being made to encourage boarders to take more responsibility for their own money as a life skill.

The standard was met.

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?	3
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At the heart of planning for a child’s placement is the Statement of Educational Need (SEN). But since last year each boarder now has an individual care plan. This is a real development and inspectors were pleased to see the work that care staff have put into this aspect of care practice. Inspectors discussed with the Head of Care and her pastoral colleagues the need for these records to be real ‘working tools’ that provide staff with the framework of care they must deliver for boarders, but also show any changes that have taken place. They must be updated and accurate.

Each personal file has an up to date photograph of the child concerned. Inspectors saw this last year and it remains an example of good practice.

Since last year the Head of Care has introduced a ‘mentoring scheme’ whereby each child has an identified senior and childcare officer to take special interest in him or her. Rostering constraints mean that the keyworker role cannot be developed to the point that care staff routinely write reports and then speak to them at reviews, or take responsibility for contacting parents, negotiating with other professionals etc. These responsibilities remain with the Head of Care and the Senior Child Care Officer (SCCO).

The inspectors felt that from what children said they are consulted and informed of plans being made for, and with, them.

The standard was met.

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

Each child has a personal file that is kept securely. All the required information is recorded. No difficult conceptual understanding was required of children to understand their learning targets. Inspectors felt that this was an improvement on the practice they observed last year.

The Head of Care suggest that a great deal of information is now being kept on computer in the care staff office and while this is acceptable, hard copies should be regularly available so that staff can keep up to date and children can, where appropriate, be shown what has been written about them.

There was evidence of half-termly monitoring by the Head of Care. One matter was brought to her attention where staff had not taken action when she had asked them to do so.

The child's file also contained a behaviour management plan.

Each child has a diary that is currently held on computer.

The new boarder checklist is a useful addition. This is signed by the member of staff and the child and is good practice, but inspectors suggested that this document is also dated.

The standard was met.

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

Inspectors 'tracked' a number of boarders through their school files. These showed all the required information including a care plan, SEN, review details, short-term targets and longer-term objectives, stating how these were to be met on a termly basis. The school file would benefit from being sectioned rather than items simply placed in date order.

Each child has a data collection sheet containing personal information.

The files showed that children had been consulted about what they wanted to happen.

Each staff member has a personnel file. Inspectors examined the personnel files of the ten staff employed since the last inspection. Most of the information was being kept appropriately, but inspectors felt that the carrying out of the required checks was not evidenced as robustly as possible. Making the required checks is specifically dealt with under Standard 27 where a shortfall was noted. Every applicant had completed an application form.

Menus and duty roster are kept. Also an Accident/Incident record.

There is a very secure system for keeping track of visitors to the school. A written record is made and all visitors wear a name badge.

On balance, this standard was met.

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

No child spends more than four nights at school in any one week, as the residential provision is open only from Monday morning to Friday afternoon. The school does not operate at weekends or during the holidays. For these reasons, parental contact is maintained at a frequent level.

There has been some training for staff in British Sign Language. This is to be welcomed.

Children are able to telephone their parents and friends if they wish using the school phone, or in some cases, their own mobiles.

In the rare cases that there may be contact restrictions, staff are aware and act accordingly.

There is quite extensive contact in various forms between parents and staff. This includes telephone, face-to-face meetings and by mail. Senior staff reported that on occasions dealing with some parents has proved difficult and they have developed some coping skills to protect themselves in these situations.

The standard was met.

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?**

4

The school has provided opportunities for all older children to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for their likely future living arrangements. There is a great deal of input by care staff into these aspects. From Yr. 10 onwards there is emphasis on life skills and practising the techniques that will be needed later on. This may include living in the Flat, planning meals and budgeting. Inspectors observed a simple cookery session with older boys and girls.

One boarder lives permanently in the Flat and follows an individual programme. This will provide the vital living experience that will be required later on.

The standard was well met.

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

It was the inspectors' view that the needs of individual children are being recognised and responded to at Priory School.

The School Medical Officer confirmed that specialist medical input is available. The School Community Nurse, similarly, said that wider health care needs can be met by referral to other agencies outside.

Staff knowledge of BSL will be an advantage in some circumstances.

The children confirmed that they have a wide range of people to whom they can talk if they are unhappy.

Only 4 children said they did not feel 'safe' at school, with two more being undecided on this issue.

Support is available to children undergoing particularly difficult periods in their lives.

Older children have appropriate sex education and guidance.

The school have identified an Independent Listener. Inspectors were particularly impressed with her experience and approach to the task in hand. It seemed to represent the best arrangement of its type. The person concerned maintains a suitable professional distance between herself and the staff and explained that she sees herself as 'being there for the children'. In her professional capacity elsewhere she is used to maintaining confidentiality, but aware of what might trigger a child protection referral. It was clear that her professional knowledge informs the skills she brings to the role.

No specific therapeutic techniques are used at Priory School.

The standard was exceeded.

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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It has previously been said that if Priory School was being designed today it might well not be located on this site – on the side of a hill - which introduces tremendous difficulties in terms of the many different levels that have to be catered for. Everywhere one goes in the school, and in the grounds, involves the use of stairs and steps. This means that children with mobility problems cannot easily be admitted. Neither does the physical layout of the school lend itself to easy adaptation by means of ramps, changes in floor levels, stair lifts or shaft lifts.

Notwithstanding the above, the school does at times cater for day children who it feels can cope with the differing levels despite having some physical disability. Everybody is aware of what to do to assist, when required. The Head said that more handrails have been installed and some high visibility features to help children safely and more easily make their way around the school.

The residential provision is certainly not suitable for children with severe mobility problems.

The school maintains appropriate links with the local community and has a good reputation in the community.

The boarding accommodation is due for refurbishment and some change, but lack of finance has not permitted this work to proceed. The current design of boarding houses is somewhat outdated and can feel claustrophobic especially at the back where it can be dark and rather gloomy.

The site is fenced and there is a locking procedure in place that tries to safeguard the security of the school after dark and at weekends when only resident staff are present.

On balance, the standard was met.

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

There school is well maintained both inside and out. The grounds have attention from the county's grounds staff who work in an eco-friendly way in consultation with school.

The school is not used for activities that impinge adversely on the privacy of boarding children.

Both boarding houses have been re-decorated, Priory in consultation with the children, but Abbey without the children's involvement.

The boarding houses do have some single bedrooms.

Staff have completely separate facilities in sleeping in rooms.

The children can personalise their rooms and large pin boards have been provided for this purpose. The Head of Art has been into the boarding houses to advise children on the appropriate use of these pin boards.

There is some study space. Staff assist with reading and spelling practice.

Laundry is done centrally on site, but there are some facilities used by older children as part of the life skills programme. The school provides bedding. The children take turns to carry dirty items to the laundry. Clean clothes are returned to the boarding houses, but the system could be refined so that distribution is less chaotic.

No emergency call system is required.

The standard was met.

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

Priory House had 9 boarders at the time of the inspection. There is 1 bathroom downstairs and another upstairs. For the number of boarders currently accommodated, this is sufficient. If the number goes above 10 an additional bath or shower would be required under the Schools Premises Regulations 1999. There are 2 WC's and a sufficient number of wash hand basins.

In Abbey House the number of facilities is sufficient for the children accommodated.

New curtains have been provided and at the time of the inspection new chairs were on order. There was some muddle with this order and it took some considerable time for the order to be fulfilled.

The standard was met.

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

The person responsible for maintaining risk assessments does a particularly good job.

Children confirmed that fire drills are held and they do know what to do in an emergency.

Last year the water temperatures in the Flat were too high and this was something inspectors checked at this inspection. They were found to be at a safe level. The Caretaker was reminded that it may not be helpful simply to turn down the temperature of the water at source as this would mean that washing up water might not be hot enough.

The standard was met.

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?

2

The recruitment procedures used in respect of ten staff employed since the last inspection were checked. Each had a CRB disclosure or, in two cases, a police check carried over from their service with the local authority. The Bursar confirmed that the date of the Certificate of Disclosure and the number are kept on file at the school and this was the information seen by inspectors. The school keep copies of the documentation confirming identity of staff employed and a record of having seen original certificates and relevant qualifications. This is good practice.

But some loopholes were found in relation to information required when making recruitment checks on staff. These were as follows: -

- In two cases staff had begun working at the school shortly before CRB disclosures had been obtained. While this might have been acceptable when 'transitional arrangements' were in place to allow for clearances taking more than four weeks, staff must not now take up their post until a CRB disclosure has been obtained by the employer
- Staff must attend personally to show the required documents for a CRB check to be made
- Not in every case had two written references been obtained and in one case references had not been taken up until four months after the person concerned had taken up their post.
- Written references must only be accepted on headed paper and must be addressed to Mrs Preece. Testimonials are not acceptable in the first instance as a basis for employing an applicant.
- There must be a consistent approach to including in request letters for references an invitation to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children and if the referee knows of any reason why the person concerned should not be so employed
- Interview notes were not always being kept
- It is a requirement that contact is made, where practicable, with each previous employer of the applicant where children or vulnerable adults were being cared for to check the reasons why the applicant left.
- There was some mis-filing of documents.

It was suggested that the person responsible for making the recruitment checks should keep a matrix for keeping track of the process.

No agency staff are used.

The governor with responsibility for residential accommodation should have a CRB disclosure at enhanced level.

The standard was not met in full.

Total number of care staff:	5	Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:	X
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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

Staffing levels are adequate both day and night and children know how to rouse a member of staff sleeping in. The residential childcare officers work split shifts covering the five mornings and four nights that children are present in the boarding houses. The two senior staff on the team work some hours during the classroom day to enable them to carry out the responsibilities additional to their posts. This involves report writing and some attendance at reviews. For the Head of Care there is a requirement to attend Senior Management Team meetings.

Because staff are on shift at all times during the waking day, with two identified to sleep in or be on call, continuity of care is achieved.

The junior staff are attached to a boarding house, but seniors 'float' between. It is the case that the organisation of shifts often means that one member of staff is alone with up to 12 children with quite 'demanding' needs. Colleagues are not far away, but this can be isolating.

At two previous inspections the lack of a male carer has been highlighted and at this inspection it was pleasing to note that a male had joined the pastoral staff team.

A close note is kept of who is present at night.

Teaching and ancillary staff carry out 'extraneous duties' at times during the week to allow a range of activities to take place. These staff were interviewed by inspectors.

On balance, the standard was met.

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?****3**

There is a staff induction scheme and opportunities for personal development through the local authority Inset days.

Inspectors were given a list of the courses attended by pastoral staff that is impressive.

The standard was met.

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**

All pastoral staff are appropriately supported and they reported a high level of satisfaction in this regard. There is a supervision system now in place and notes of these sessions are kept. Inspectors recommended that a supervision contract is drawn up between supervisor and supervisee detailing the issues to be covered, including the time and place of meetings and whether personal matters are to be on the agenda.

There is a clear staffing structure with oversight maintained by the Western Area Education Office.

However, the Head said arrangements have still to be made for her to receive regular individual supervision from a line manager. This is a very stressful job and suitable arrangements should be made for the Head to receive regular support and supervision from somebody outside the school who understands the pressures involved.

There is a Policies and Procedures folder that inspectors were able to look into.

Care staff meet on a daily basis before the children arrive back in the boarding houses after school has finished.

The school has a non-smoking policy and staff never smoke in front of pupils.

When necessary external specialists are available to children.

The Head meets with, and is immediately responsible to, a Board of Governors. Inspectors met briefly with the Chair and for a longer period with the governor with responsibility for the residential provision.

The standard was met.

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?

3

The pastoral staff are well qualified and experienced in looking after the needs of learning disabled boarders. Qualifications include those from NVQ, Higher National Certificates and Open University. One member of the pastoral team was hoping to be funded through NVQ Level 3 last year, but finances were not available.

The Head of Care is looking to update her training to achieve the required qualification relevant to her post and to supplement her practical knowledge and experience. There is a new 'Manager's Award' for residential seniors, that looks to be very child-focused, that might be appropriate although the Head of Care in a Residential Special school is not required to be a 'registered person'.

The team continue to do 'split shifts'. The school sees this as providing the necessary continuity of care to boarders.

There is no prefect system although children are given the chance to take responsibility, usually for tasks and chores rather than over other children. The Residential Council provides an opportunity for some of them to show leadership.

Contact is maintained with parents and responses to the parent survey confirmed satisfaction with this aspect of management.

The standard was met.

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

60 %

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

The National Care Standards Commission 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

This is a local authority school so is not likely to go into Receivership or liquidation.

Continual oversight is maintained by senior staff on aspects of care such as placement plans, duty rosters, menus, and accidents.

All staff have annual appraisals.

The police are likely only to be involved if there is access to the premises by unauthorised persons, say at weekends.

The standard was met.

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?**

2

The Governing body have identified one of their number who takes responsibility for the residential provision and who visits the boarding houses on a regular basis. Inspectors met with and interviewed the person concerned. At the time of the inspection the residential Governor had made two unannounced visits to the school and observed some of the care practice. He declared himself to be very impressed with what he had seen. However, his reporting on these visits was in embryo form and not formalised. Neither was he sure to whom he should report. There should be an agreed format for reporting. Inspectors emphasised the need to provide for each member of the governing body and for the Head a report of his visits to the school.

The standard was not met.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

A Lay Assessor was not part of this inspecting team.

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

PART D

HEAD'S RESPONSE

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on <enter date(s) of inspection here> and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Comments were received from the provider	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Head's comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Head's comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note:

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

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

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

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

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I **LESLEY PREECE** of **PRIORY 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	<u>LESLEY PREECE</u>
Signature	<u><i>Lesley Preece</i></u>
Designation	<u>Headteacher</u>
Date	<u>30/6/04</u>

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.