

inspection report

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

**West Of England School For Children
With Little Or No Sight**

Topsham Road
Countess Wear
Exeter
Devon
EX2 6HA

9 - 11 March 2005

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School

West Of England School and College for young people with little or no sight

Address

Countess Wear, Exeter, Devon EX2 6HA

Tel No:

01392 454200

Fax No:

01392 428048

Email Address:

info@westengland.ac.uk

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

West of England School and College Board of Governors

Name of Head

Mr Paul Holland

CSCI Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Residential Special

School

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

16 – 18/03/04

Date of Inspection Visit		9th March 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	Romana Young	105157
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Jim Palmer	
Name of CSCI Inspector	3	Patricia Hellier	
Name of CSCI Inspector	4		
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):		Not applicable	
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		Not applicable	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		Not applicable	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Paul Holland, head teacher; Paula Lahey, director of care	

CONTENTS

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

Brief Description of the school and Residential Provision

Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings

What the school does well in Boarding Welfare

What the school should do better in Boarding Welfare

Conclusions and overview of findings on Boarding Welfare

Notifications to Local Education Authority or Secretary of State

Implementation of Recommended Actions from last inspection

Recommended Actions from this inspection

Advisory Recommendations from this inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods Used & Findings

Inspection Methods Used

- 1. Statement of the School's Purpose**
- 2. Children's rights**
- 3. Child Protection**
- 4. Care and Control**
- 5. Quality of Care**
- 6. Planning for care**
- 7. Premises**
- 8. Staffing**
- 9. Organisation and Management**

Part C: Lay Assessor's Summary (where applicable)

Part D: Head's Response

- D.1. Head's comments**
- D.2. Action Plan**
- D.3. Head's agreement**

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 West Of England School for young people with little or no sight

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

The West of England School and College is a non-maintained residential special school for children and young people with visual impairment. In main school, students can attend as day pupils or weekly boarders. St David's House provides weekly boarding for students aged under 16 years and weekly or termly boarding for post 16 students. The college provides termly boarding but some college students are part-time or weekly boarders. At the time of the inspection, the school had 99 full-time boarders and 12 part-time boarders.

The school moved to its current campus in 1965 and caters for up to 200 pupils and students aged 2 – 22 years within the four departments – nursery, main school, St David's House and college. Boarding facilities can be provided for up to 150 pupils and students attending main school, St David's House or college.

All pupils and students have a clearly determined visual impairment and approximately one-third of students are registered blind. A significant number of pupils and students have additional needs, for example, complex medical or physical needs or specific learning difficulty. The school provides a wide range of specialist expertise on site, for example, Braille services, mobility education, therapy and nursing care departments, which provide physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, music therapy and 24 hour nursing care. The school G.P. provides a weekly surgery at the school and a clinical psychologist is also employed one day a week to provide a counselling service. Other specialist services, for example, paediatric ophthalmologic consultants, provide a visiting service to the school.

The residential provision consists of four boarding houses – Dinham, Haldon and St David's Houses and the College. Dinham House accommodates up to 23 male students, aged up to 16 years. Haldon House accommodates up to 20 female students, aged up to 16 years. St. David's House, accommodates students with complex needs in three groups - up to 11 male and female students, aged from 5 to 11 years, in Family Group 1; up to 10 male and female students, aged 11 to 16 years in Family Group 2; and up to 14 post 16 students in Family Group 3. The College has accommodation in six flats for post 16 students.

The school has charitable status and is managed by the Board of Governors.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

The school has maintained the commendable practice found in a number of areas in the previous inspections:

- Inter-disciplinary cooperation and liaison is apparent across all the teams, ensuring that individual needs are recognised and met.
- An excellent and imaginative range of leisure and social activities continues to be available, both on campus and in the local community.
- The school continues to provide excellent professional support and expertise for visually impaired children and young people.
- Communication and working with in partnership with parents and placing authorities is a strength of the school.
- Opportunities for staff development and support are good.
- There is a warm, inclusive and caring ethos in the school.
- Children and young people feel that the school is a good place to live.
- The school has a number of excellent facilities which are available to students outside of school time, for example, the swimming pool.
- Boarding accommodation, especially in main school and St David's House, has been enhanced by the ongoing programme of redecoration of bedrooms, and the upgrading of kitchen and bathroom facilities.

Parents are pleased with the standard of care at the school and feel that the school is meeting their child's individual needs very well. Many parents commented on how happy their child is, at the school, and praised the personal and social opportunities, in addition to the educational ones, which the school provides for its students. Parents feel welcomed and valued by the school when they visit and feel that good communication is maintained between home and school. Parents feel that staff are child-centred, caring and dedicated in their care of the children and young people. Generally, parents feel that the school is sufficiently well staffed to care for their child.

Young people welcome the opportunities to socialise with their peer group and enjoy the extra –curricular activities on offer. They also appreciate the specialist equipment and expertise available, at the school, to assist them in their education and the development of mobility and living skills.

Placing officers said they were very impressed with how well the school looks after individual young people and view the specialist knowledge of the staff, their commitment to meeting individual needs and the supportive and caring environment of the school, which encourages young people to extend their experiences and achieve maximum independence as the most positive aspects of the school.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

The ongoing programme of improvements to and upgrading of boarding accommodation should be continued, particularly to improve access and facilities for physically disabled students.

Campus security should be reviewed and risk assessed, particularly in relation to individuals moving alone between locations, especially when it is dark.

Some parents expressed concern that their child's clothing is sometimes left behind or lost and would like the school to take more responsibility for this.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

This inspection was the third such inspection of the school under the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.

The inspectors would like to thank the young people, staff and principal for the warm welcome, co-operation and assistance afforded to the inspectors during the course of the inspection.

51 parents', 26 placing officer's, 15 young person's and seven staff survey questionnaires were returned for this inspection and information collated from these was used to inform the inspection process.

Statement of the school's purpose (Standard 1)

This standard was exceeded.

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 of Purpose is made up of a range of documents - the school prospectus and video, mission statement, annual reports, letter of approved arrangement, strategic plan, young persons' information guide and information supplied to parents/carers and staff. Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

Children's rights (Standards 2-4)

These standards were met.

Young people's opinions and views are actively sought through individual sessions with their key worker and tutor, annual reviews and house and school council meetings. Good communication is maintained between home and school and staff ensure that families and significant others are informed about their child's progress and are involved in making key decisions, through regular telephone calls, home-school diaries, letters and visits and, more generally, through newsletters and school events. Placing officers are very satisfied with the way the school works in partnership with the placing authority and feel that the school works very well with families also.

Staff respect children's and young people's privacy and personal information is confidentially handled and stored securely.

Young people know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the school. They would take a complaint to their key worker, or a member of the care or teaching staff, or a senior manager, and are confident that their complaint would be addressed seriously and without delay. Complaints and issues of a general nature would be raised at a house or school council meeting.

Child protection (Standards 5-8)

These standards were met.

The school has a written child protection policy and procedure which is known to staff. Child protection training is included within the induction training programme and there are refresher training sessions for staff held on a regular basis.

The school has, and follows, an anti-bullying policy, with which children and staff are familiar. Students, generally, did not report bullying as a significant issue within the school. The school uses bullying awareness workshops to highlight this issue, help children and young people express their feelings, recognise bullying behaviour and inform them who/where to go to for help. Care staff have received training on bullying awareness to help them recognise and deal appropriately with this issue.

All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities, by the head of the school, or designated person.

There are written policies in place which staff are aware of, which detail what actions are to be followed if a young person is absent without authority. Staff were fully aware of senior staff on-call arrangements, and who to contact if a young person was thought to be missing.

Care & Control (Standards 9-10)

One standard was met and one was exceeded.

Relationships between staff and young people are based on mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries, which are effective for both the individuals and the group. The school is to be commended for the atmosphere of inclusion, caring and mutual respect it fosters. Parents feel that staff are child-centred and positive in their approach to young people and provide high quality care and support to their child.

Young people are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour.

Quality of care (Standards 11-16)

Two standards were met, three were exceeded and one was almost met.

The school has a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary needs assessment process which is undertaken before an offer of a placement at the school is made. The school has excellent induction and transition planning processes for students in operation.

The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school. There is close, effective liaison and communication between care and teaching staff. Both care and teaching staff assist young people in their preparation for independent living through the individual "living skills" programmes. Formal homework (prep) sessions take place after school and the library and IT facilities are available to young people outside of school hours. Parents view the education and living skills provided by the school as one of the best features of the school. Young people were positive about the specialist input and equipment for visual impairment which the school provides.

The school continues to provide an excellent and varied programme of sporting and social activities for students both on campus and in the community. Staff are to be commended for their enthusiasm and dedication in organising and supporting such excellent opportunities for students to extend their experiences and develop new skills.

The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets intimate care needs. Privacy and dignity are protected when intimate procedures are being carried out. 24 hour nursing cover has now been extended to weekends as well as during the week. The school has good links with the local GP practice. A weekly GP clinic and weekly paediatrician visits are held to review and assess students as need requires. The support of a visiting clinical psychologist is also available for students. All nurses undertake the First Aid at Work course - this is commendable. However, it is recommended that further opportunities for nursing staff, for ongoing professional networking and updating, including specific paediatric training, be developed, that there are regular recorded updates for staff on the procedures for the use of specialist therapeutic equipment used with specific young people and that all protocols are dated and regularly reviewed. The CSCI pharmacist inspector visited the service, regarding the storage, safekeeping, safe handling and safe disposal of medicines, and is sending the school an additional letter, which is available on request, detailing the findings for this area. 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.

Planning for care (Standards 17-22)

Three standards in this section were met and three were exceeded.

Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school. A new individual student care plan format has been developed which specifies how the school will care for all students at the school, both boarding and day pupils, in accordance with their individual needs. Parents and students are consulted in drawing up the plan. The care plan, in conjunction with the individual education plan (IEP) includes all the areas to be covered under this standard.

There is a permanent, private and secure record of each student's history and progress at the school, which can, in compliance with legal requirements for safeguards, be seen by the child.

The school maintains clear and accurate records on the staff and student groups of the school, and major events affecting the school and students resident there.

Children and young people are positively encouraged and enabled by the school to maintain contact with their parents and other family members in accordance with their care plan. The school offers a good welcome and hospitality to visiting parents, which includes overnight accommodation, if required. Practice in this area is commendable.

Students are well supported and prepared for the transition from main school into post 16 education and from there, into leaving school or a move into independent living. Transition planning and preparing young people to move on is one of the school's strengths.

Children and young people are given a high level of individual support. Additional professional support is provided as identified in the care plan or annual review. Each child or young person who boards has an allocated key worker. All students also have an individual tutor. There is good liaison between these groups of staff. Discussion with children and young people confirmed they are able to talk to staff when they feel they need support.

The school also employs a visiting clinical psychologist to provide a counselling service, in addition to the wide range of specialist medical and therapeutic services, such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, music therapy, and mobility provided by the school. Parents commented very positively on the individualised and specialised support their child receives at the school. Practice in this area is commendable.

Premises (Standards 23-26)

Three standards were met and one was almost met.

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. The campus and site are maintained to a high standard. There is a programme of routine maintenance and development of the site, as well as a health and safety action plan. Adaptations to the grounds and premises have been made and continue to be made to improve access for wheelchair users - for example, external doors to boarding accommodation have been fitted with automatic doors. Since the last inspection, refurbishments to boarding accommodation, particularly in main school and St David's House, have improved the environment.

The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets for students, staff and visitors.

The planned programme of refurbishment and improvement of toilet and bathing facilities in main school boarding accommodation, which includes improving facilities for students with physical disabilities, is progressing.

Specialist bathing and toileting equipment is installed in St David's House to meet the complex health needs of the students residing there. Staff were observed to be conscious of and respect the student's privacy and dignity where intimate care was required.

Positive steps are taken to keep students, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, in accordance with Health and Safety and Fire legislation and guidance. The school should ensure that a review of campus security includes the risk to lone individuals moving

from one location to another, in the hours of darkness, particularly in relation to nursing staff carrying medication.

Staffing (Standards 27-30)

All standards in this section were met.

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. The school maintains a record of the recruitment process and checks undertaken.

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.

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.

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

Organisation and management (Standards 31-33)

All standards in this section were met.

The school is well managed and organised with a clear management structure which provides excellent leadership and support to staff and students. The senior management team, care teams and other professional staff groups meet regularly to ensure that good interdepartmental communication is maintained so that individual needs are recognised and met. Staff rotas have time scheduled to ensure that staff supervisions, handover sessions and meetings, record keeping, planning, implementing and reviewing care programmes and spending time interacting with individual children occur without compromising overall care of children and young people. Parents have a high regard for the way in which the school is organised, managed and staffed. Many said that staff should be commended for the high standard of care and education that is provided.

The school has financial monitoring systems in place and a system in place to notify CSCI if a receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy becomes responsible for the school.

The governing body receives a written report on the conduct of the school from a person visiting the school on their behalf every half term.

NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

NO

NO

NO

The grounds for any Notification to be made are:

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION

NA

No	Standard	Recommended actions	

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended 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	

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	14	The school should ensure that opportunities for nursing staff, for ongoing professional networking and updating, including specific paediatric training, are further developed.
2	14	The school should ensure that all staff who dispense and administer medicines to children and young people undertake annual training updates and competency assessments.
3	14	The school should ensure that there are regular recorded updates for staff on the procedures for the use of specialist therapeutic equipment used with specific young people.

4	14	The school should ensure that all protocols are dated and regularly reviewed.
4	26	The school should ensure that a review of campus security includes the management of risks to lone individuals moving from one location to another, particularly in the hours of darkness, and especially for nursing staff carrying medication around the site.

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	NO

Checks with other Organisations

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	NO
• School Doctor	NO
• Independent Person	NO
• Chair of Governors	NO

Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	NO
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	NO
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	YES
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	NO

Date of Inspection	09/03/05
Time of Inspection	09:30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	31
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	9

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?

4

The Statement of Purpose is made up of a range of documents - the school prospectus and video, mission statement, annual reports, letter of approved arrangement, strategic plan, young persons' information guide and information supplied to parents/carers and staff - that describes what the school sets out to do for the children and young people it accommodates and the manner in which care is provided.

The range of needs to be met under the statement of purpose is capable of being fulfilled by the school as it currently operates and the school only admits children and young people whose assessed needs can be met within the purpose of the school.

All policy documents are subject of an annual review process. The inspector was informed that the school prospectus is currently being reviewed and updated by an intra-departmental working group.

The school is to be commended for in the way in which this information is presented and reviewed.

7 staff survey questionnaires were returned. These and discussion with staff confirmed that staff are aware of the purpose of the school.

51 parent survey questionnaires were returned. All but one of the parents who responded confirmed that they had been given a leaflet or some other written information telling them what they needed to know about the school.

Parents are given a copy of the prospectus prior to their child's admission to the school and a copy of the prospectus and annual report are sent to placing authorities each July or as requested.

Evidence: pre-inspection questionnaire, school prospectus and mission statement, annual report, head's self-assessment form, discussion with staff, young persons' information guide, staff and parents' questionnaire survey responses.

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

Staff ensure that families and significant others are informed about their child's progress and are involved in making key decisions, through regular telephone calls, home-school diaries, letters and visits and, more generally, through newsletters and school events, such as sports day, therapy days, annual parents' meeting, and other events.

In the parents' questionnaire survey, over 80% parents agreed that they have been asked how they think their child should be cared for in the school. 94% agreed that staff seek their opinion before any big decisions are made about their child. Parents confirmed that they are able to attend meetings about their child and that they are listened to. 92% agreed that staff are good at letting them know about things that happen with their child.

Young people's opinions and views are actively sought through individual sessions with their key worker and tutor, annual reviews and house and school council meetings.

Young people confirmed to the inspectors that the school supports their religious observances and practices where this applies – for example, students of Christian faith are assisted to attend local church services, the local Christian Union or a church based youth club in Cullompton if they wish.

In the college, there are individual programmes in place to help prepare post 16 students for future independent living, and staff encourage and support young people to making decisions concerning their future plans.

88% of placing officers who responded to the questionnaire survey said that they are very satisfied with the way the school works in partnership with the placing authority. A similar percentage said that they feel that the school works very well with families also.

Evidence: observation, young people's files, discussions with senior management and other staff, pre-inspection questionnaire, discussions with young people, parents', young person's and placing officer survey questionnaire responses.

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 are written policies and practice guidance for staff on privacy and confidentiality and providing intimate care. During the inspection, staff practice was observed to operate within the guidelines. Training on providing intimate care is now included in the induction programme for all staff.

Staff from the various departments within the school – care, teaching, therapeutic and medical staff - work closely together to ensure that individual needs are being met.

Discussions with staff and staff questionnaire survey responses confirmed that staff are very aware of the need to keep personal information confidential and secure – both verbally and in writing - and where and with whom information needs to be/should be shared for the child's welfare and protection.

Staff respect children's and young people's privacy by knocking on bedrooms doors before entering. In discussions, and in the young person's questionnaire survey, young people reported to the inspectors that they felt that their privacy and dignity are respected.

Children and young people are able to use the telephone in private - many also have their own mobile phone.

There is guidance for staff on when and how searches of young people's rooms or possessions should be undertaken. Young people have also been given information regarding this - such as when or why this may be necessary.

Evidence: head's self-assessment form, pre-inspection questionnaire, observation, discussions with staff and young people, staff and young person's survey questionnaire responses, policies and procedures.

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**

Discussions with students and pupil questionnaire survey responses confirmed that students know how to and to whom they could make a complaint if they needed to. Most said that they would complain to their key worker or another member of the care or teaching staff, the director of care or another senior manager.

Students confirmed that they can raise more general issues through their school council representative or at house meetings. Students also confirmed that they had been told how they could make a complaint to an inspector if they wanted to.

In the CSCI parent questionnaire survey, two-thirds of parents who responded agreed that they have received a leaflet or some other written information, from the school, about how to make a complaint if they need to. 27% who returned a CSCI questionnaire said they had not received any written information on how to make a complaint to the school but most of these were confident that any issues or concerns they raised with the school would be appropriately dealt with. The remaining parents who returned a questionnaire were unsure about whether they had received this information or did not reply to the question.

92% of the parents who responded to the CSCI questionnaire survey said that they have never had to make a complaint about the school. Where parents said that they had made a complaint, the majority response was that the matter had been satisfactorily resolved through discussion with the school.

51% of parents who returned a CSCI questionnaire said that they have been told how they can make a complaint to an inspector from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) if they need to. 31% of these said that they had not and the remainder were unsure or did not comment on this.

All parents received advance notice of the inspection in letter from the director of care which informed them that inspectors would at the school on the day of the swimming gala if parents wished to speak to them then and also gave contact details for the lead inspector.

42% of placing officers who responded to the questionnaire survey said that they had information on the school's complaints policy, the remainder said they did not. Only one of the 26 placing officers who responded to the questionnaire survey said that they have had to make a complaint to the school.

Staff survey questionnaire responses and discussions with staff indicated that staff are aware of the school's complaints procedure. Some staff are aware of relevant agencies outside of the school to contact should the need arise, for example, CSCI or Social Services. The complaints record held centrally in the administration office was examined.

Evidence: complaints policy, discussions with students and staff, central complaints record, young person's files, staff, young person's, parents' and placing officer's questionnaire survey responses.

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

3

Number of above complaints substantiated:

2

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?

3

The school has a written child protection policy and procedure, which has been drawn up following consultation with the local authority social services department and the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) child protection handbook. This policy was updated in December 2004.

The principal is the nominated child protection coordinator for the school. The director of care is a member of the local ACPC sub-group and receives two-yearly ACPC training. Child protection training is included within the induction training programme and there are refresher training sessions for staff held on a regular basis.

Staff confirmed in their staff survey questionnaire responses and in discussions that they had received child protection training in the past 12 months.

Staff in all departments confirmed they have received child protection awareness training and displayed knowledge of their reporting responsibilities and the child protection policy.

Evidence: pre-inspection questionnaire, head's self-assessment form, child protection policy and procedure, discussions with staff, staff survey questionnaire responses.

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

1

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

15 young person's survey questionnaire forms were returned. This questionnaire format is not a suitable means of communication for a significant proportion of students, so a whole school survey was not achievable. The results of this small sample survey cannot, therefore, be taken as representative of the school as a whole. However, it was positive to note that 73% of the students who returned a questionnaire said that they are "not at all" or "hardly ever" bullied. 13% reported that they were "sometimes" verbally bullied and cited "name-calling" as instances of this. In contrast, some students commented on how kind, caring and helpful staff and other students are to one another in the school. Students, generally, did not report bullying as a significant issue within the school.

The school uses bullying awareness workshops to highlight this issue, help children and young people express their feelings, recognise bullying behaviour and inform them who/where to go to for help. Care staff have received training on bullying awareness to help them recognise and deal appropriately with this issue. The school's written behaviour policy guidelines for staff has a section on recognising and responding to bullying behaviour.

Evidence: discussions with staff and young people, young person's survey questionnaire responses, behaviour policy guidelines, head's self-assessment form, pre-inspection questionnaire.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

X

%

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**

There is a system in place for the school to notify the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and other relevant statutory bodies, promptly, of events detailed in NMS 7.2 and 7.6. Notifications have been received at the CSCI office in Ashburton.

In the event of an incident, staff would contact the senior manager on call.

Incidents are recorded on incident report forms.

92% of parents who responded to the questionnaire survey said that staff are good at letting them know about things that happen with their child.

Placing officers confirmed that the school does notify the placing authority of significant events.

Evidence: parents' and placing officer's questionnaire survey responses, pre-inspection questionnaire, discussion with the director of care, discussions with staff, notifications received.

NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO CSCI 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**

0

0

2

0

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
<p>There are written policies in place which detail what actions are to be followed if a young person is absent without authority. These are covered in the absence policy, child protection and behaviour management policies.</p> <p>Staff inform the senior manager on-call if a child or young person is thought to be absent without consent. The senior manager on-call is responsible for ensuring that a systematic search of the buildings and grounds is undertaken and that parents and the police are contacted if the student is not to be found on campus.</p> <p>Staff spoken to were fully aware of senior staff on-call arrangements, and who to contact if a young person was thought to be missing. Any incident would be recorded in the boarding house records and on the young person's individual file.</p> <p>In St. David's House, because of the complex needs of the children and young people, additional security locks are placed on external doors. Some bedroom doors are of a "stable-door" design, in order to provide some additional security, by keeping the lower half of the door closed – the use of these doors has been reviewed and they are only used where a need has been clearly identified on the care plan and use of this type of door has been agreed.</p> <p>Evidence: pre-inspection questionnaire, discussions with staff, policies and procedures.</p>		
Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:		0

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 observed that there continues to be an open and nurturing environment throughout the school where everyone, staff and students, are respected as individuals, valued and included. Excellent communication and partnership with parents is maintained. The parents' questionnaire survey responses showed that parents feel that staff are child-centred and positive in their approach to young people and provide high quality care and support to their child. Many commented that their child is evidently happy at the school and that this is a good indicator to them that their child's needs are well understood and are being well met.</p> <p>Staff were observed relating to the children and young people in a calm, caring and professional manner, taking time to talk with and listen to young people. The students were relaxed and comfortable with the adults and one another. The school fosters an atmosphere of inclusion, caring and mutual respect.</p> <p>There is written guidance and training for staff in direct contact with children and young people in positive care and control of children and young people including giving praise for achievements.</p> <p>The young person's survey questionnaire responses show that, generally, students feel that the school is a good place to live.</p> <p>Evidence: observation, discussions with young people, discussions with senior managers and staff, policies and procedures, parents', young person's, placing officer's and staff questionnaire survey responses.</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?****3**

The inspectors were provided with a copy of the school's written behaviour policy guidelines. This includes guidance to staff on the positive reinforcement and rewarding of desired behaviour, the six stages used for dealing with unacceptable behaviour and prohibited sanctions. Discussions with staff and responses in the staff survey questionnaires confirmed that staff are aware of the school's behaviour policy guidelines and the use of positive interventions and behaviour management plans.

Records maintained in each of the boarding houses showed that no inappropriate sanction has been imposed. Responses in the young person's and staff survey questionnaires confirmed that any sanctions used are line with the school's behaviour policy guidelines. Responses in the young person's survey questionnaires showed that young people feel that staff are fair, or very fair, when sanctions are used and that staff discuss behaviour and sanctions used with young people. The use of sanctions is regularly reviewed by senior managers and visiting governors.

Staff receive training in the use of control and restraint techniques. A multi-professional group received training in "Safe Holding Techniques" (described as a "gentle approach to restraint"), delivered by an external, social services approved, trainer in December 2004.

The school hopes to be able to provide this course for more staff in the next academic year. Control and restraint techniques are rarely used and then only to prevent harm - all such incidents are recorded in individual files, and records kept in the separate departments.

The system of recording used was well maintained, and worked well on a multi- disciplinary campus.

The school does not use any form of prefect system.

90% of parents, who responded to the parent questionnaire survey, said that the school has told them about its rules. Parents felt that these were fair and suitable. Some parents were not clear about what sanctions or punishments the school may use – 29% of parents who replied to the parent questionnaire survey said that the school had not told them about what punishments it uses. Parents who said they had been told felt the punishments used were acceptable and fair.

Evidence: policies and procedures, pre-inspection questionnaire, head's self-assessment form, discussions with staff and young people, sanctions records, parents', young person's, and staff questionnaire survey responses.

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**

A full multi-disciplinary assessment of the child's or young person's needs is undertaken during a lengthy visit where the child/young person and parents or carer stay at the school. Following this, a recommendation is made and a placement with planned induction is offered if the school can meet the child's or young person's needs.

As part of the admission process, key staff visit the child and parent at home to ensure that the school has all necessary information about the young person's needs and requirements prior to admission and that their entry into school is as well planned as possible.

The school does not take emergency admissions.

Each young person who boards is allocated a key worker who helps liaise between home and school to ensure that individual needs are being met.

Transition planning for young people progressing from the main school to the college, or perhaps to other further education establishments, or planning to leave full-time education, is good. Young people were aware of these plans and confirmed that they had been involved in the planning process. The school liaises with other agencies, particularly the Connexions advisors in the student's home area and with social workers and other professionals for young people leaving care.

The inspectors had evidence of the planning process in action in relation to some young people whose transfer from main school to the college was being staged to take into account their particular needs and circumstances.

The school maintains very good relationships with other professionals and works well and closely with parents.

Evidence: policies and procedures, pre-inspection questionnaire, head's self-assessment form, discussions with senior managers, staff and students, survey questionnaire responses.

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**

All students have a statement of special educational needs and individual education plans, which are reviewed annually. Targets for each young person to work towards are agreed at annual reviews.

There are daily handover sessions between the teaching staff and the care staff, attended by the director of care, to provide staff with any information which will assist in supporting the child or young person during school time. Regular meetings between tutors and key workers and also held. There is close, effective liaison and communication between the two groups of staff.

Both care and teaching staff assist young people in their preparation for independent living through the individual "living skills" programmes.

Formal homework (prep) sessions take place after school and the library and IT facilities are available to young people outside of school hours.

Parents view the education and living skills provided by the school as one of the best features of the school. Young people were positive about the specialist input and equipment for visual impairment which the school provides.

Evidence: young persons' files, discussions with students, senior managers, care and teaching staff, observation, young persons', staff, parents' and placing officer's survey questionnaire responses.

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 continues to provide an excellent and varied programme of sporting and social activities for children and young people both on and off-site – for example swimming (the school's own on-site swimming pool is a popular resource much appreciated by students), skiing, archery, walking, drama, relaxation, multi-gym, youth club, guides, bowling, cinema and theatre outings, shopping trips, craft activities and cooking.

The school also has its own power boat (with suitably trained staff), which is used for river outings during warmer months. The school's own radio station, VI Radio, which began live broadcasting in May 2003, continues to entertain the students and fosters an excellent sense of community within the school. Students who had been on a recent skiing trip to Colorado, with staff from the school, enthusiastically discussed the trip with the inspectors. Discussion with students and questionnaire survey responses confirmed that staff consult with children and young people about the activities they would like to do in the evenings and weekends and include these requests as far as possible in planned activities.

Staff are to be commended for their enthusiasm and dedication in organising and supporting such excellent opportunities for students to extend their experiences and develop new skills. Many parents commented that the range of activities available to their child within the school and local community was one of the best things about the school.

Evidence: observation, discussions with staff and young people, questionnaire survey responses.

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?****2**

The school has a team of seven nurses that provides 24-hour cover for students during the week. Recently 24-hour cover, at weekends also, has been commenced to coincide with increased boarding facilities within the school.

The nurse inspector spoke with the senior school nurse, five nurses and four care workers. Interactions with the children and young people were respectful of their age and ability, allowing choice as able, and demonstrating good communication. All intimate procedures were carried out with privacy and dignity protected. At present, electric plug-in monitoring devices are used in the sick bay for children and young people to summon help, and elsewhere for those under special observation. The school is researching other monitoring means. There are call bell systems in the boarding houses.

The team of nurses was seen to actively seek to promote the health and well being of the students by accessing specialist advice, support and assessment at the earliest point of need. The school has good links with the local GP practice. With the increased complexity of health care needs, the school has implemented a weekly GP clinic. The paediatrician visits weekly to review and assess students as need requires. Staff said young people could request to see a same gender doctor, or to see them alone, or attend the local surgery. A psychologist visits monthly, or more often if requested.

Ongoing professional networking and updating for the nurses is limited and the nurse inspector recommended the use of current journals as a resource, both individually and within the medical centre. The nurse inspector also recommended that local links, with other

nursing professionals in the community, be developed, for example - with the community paediatric nursing team and nurses from the joint agency team (JAT). The nurse inspector advised that the nursing staff access some specific paediatric training to increase their skills and awareness of current best practice in this area.

Since the last inspection, comprehensive care plans have been implemented and communication of care needs and actions is good. Records were seen of medication, treatment, first aid, doctors' visits and visits of other professionals to children and young people. Communication of these events to parents, through telephone calls and written records, was observed to be good.

Therapists are responsible for instructions for equipment. Regular recorded updates should be given on these procedures to include assessment of competency. Since the last inspection, competency assessment has been implemented for the administration of Stesolid and oral Midazolam. In line with best practice, the nurse inspector recommended annual updates and competency assessments for all staff dispensing and administering medicines. A wide variety of policies and protocols exist. Not all protocols are dated or reviewed regularly, this was recommended.

A list of up-to-date personal identity numbers (PIN) for qualified nursing staff was seen - information is gained from Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) and documentation brought in by nursing staff. Senior staff confirmed that the NMC are contacted to verify the current registration of new staff, keeping relevant evidence in the administration office.

There were first aid boxes around the campus (including on transport and in kitchens). Since the last inspection an established system for regular checking of contents of the various first aid boxes has been established. However the inspector found some of the contents to be out of date. The head of care agreed to look into this. All nurses undertake the First Aid at Work course. This is commendable.

The CSCI pharmacist inspector visited the service, regarding the storage, safekeeping, safe handling and safe disposal of medicines, and although he found shortfalls in the service, at present, the service is putting into place a review of the arrangements. The pharmacist inspector is sending the school an additional letter, which is available on request, detailing the findings for this area.

Evidence: observation, discussions with head of care, senior nurse, nursing and care staff, inspection of records, policies and procedures, tour of the premises.

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 inspectors shared several meals with students in main school and college and observed meals being served in St David's House. The food served was plentiful, wholesome and well prepared and presented with a good range of choice available. A self-service salad bar, with a wide variety of prepared salad options, is also available at lunch and evening meals in main school and the college.

Staff eat meals with the students to encourage socialising at mealtimes and give assistance as required.

Students in main school take main meals (breakfast, lunch and tea) in the separate main dining room. Supper is taken in their boarding houses which also have domestic style kitchen facilities. College and St David's House students have their own dining rooms and kitchen facilities.

St David's House has its own chef responsible for the complex diets for the young people living there. Each young person has a special diet programme. The chef has an excellent understanding of the specialist diets that needs to be prepared for these students.

Care staff liaise with catering staff to discuss individual dietary needs and preferences.

Medical staff also gives advice on special dietary needs. Feedback from student representatives, on catering issues and menu planning is obtained at regularly held catering meetings.

As part of the preparation for independent living programmes offered to older students preparing to move on from college, some of the college students live in small groups with minimum staff supervision and are responsible for preparing their own meals. These students are provided with a fixed budget with which to buy their own shopping and make their own housekeeping arrangements, calling on staff for support as required.

Discussions with main school and college students and young person questionnaire survey responses showed that students are generally satisfied with the food at the school.

The Environmental Health Officer has confirmed to the inspector that currently there are no outstanding food safety requirements for the school.

Evidence: observation, meals taken with students, discussions with the catering manager and other staff, discussions with students, young person's survey questionnaire responses, letter from the Environmental Health Officer.

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 inspectors observed that children and young people are able to bring their own clothing to school, have suitable space to store these and are able to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing outside of school time.

Staff provide assistance in purchasing personal requisites either as part of a group outing or on an individual basis where required.

The school has laundry facilities on site and there are individual washing machines and dryers available for students' use (mainly post 16). However, one flat in college does not have its own laundry facilities and both students and their parents felt that this should not be the case. Some parents also felt that storage space for personal possessions in college should be improved.

Main school children and young people usually take personal washing home at weekends. A few parents commented that clothing is sometimes left behind or lost and feel that the school should take more responsibility when this happens.

Pupil survey questionnaire responses and discussions with students confirmed that students are able to choose how to spend their own money.

Evidence: tour of premises, observation, pre-inspection questionnaire; discussions with students; discussions with staff, pupil survey questionnaire responses.

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

A new individual student care plan format has been developed which specifies how the school will care for all students at the school, both boarding and day pupils, in accordance with their individual needs. Parents and students are consulted in drawing up the plan. The care plan, in conjunction with the individual education plan (IEP) includes all the areas to be covered under this standard.

Young people have an appointed key worker and tutor who, jointly, provide individual support and guidance and monitor the implementation of the placement plan.

Therapy programmes are reviewed half termly as well as at the annual review. The school also contributes to the statutory care review process for children and young people attending the school who are looked after by the local authority. Children and young people are supported and encouraged to be active in making decisions about their lives and, with their parents, are invited to attend reviews.

Young people attending the college also have Personal Development Plans.

Parents are very satisfied with the way the school cares for their child.

Evidence: young person's files, discussions with the director of care, teaching, care, medical and therapeutic staff, discussions with children and young people, pre-inspection questionnaire, head's self-assessment form, young person's, staff, parents' and placing officer survey questionnaire responses.

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**

There are individual case files held for each student. The main file is kept securely in the main admin office. Other specialist files, for example, medical, therapy, education, and care are maintained, in locked offices, by each department.

In addition to this, each of the boarding houses keep diaries, log books and daily recordings. Those records were found to be up to date and accurately completed. Staff discuss entries made with children and young people.

The school has a policy regarding access to information which is made known to students and their parents.

The consolidation and archiving process was discussed – the storage facilities for files is being reviewed.

Evidence: discussions with senior management, administrative and care staff, observation, file tracking.

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 holds centrally, in the admin office, registers of children and employees of the school which holds all the information required under this standard.

Only the principal resides on the school campus.

A random selection of staff personnel files were examined and it was felt that systems were in place in recruitment and employment procedures for staff to meet the standard.

The accident logs were examined and found to be up-to-date.

A record of menus served for the past year is maintained.

Duty rosters showing staff actually working at the school both day and night are maintained.

A diary of events occurring at the school, including the names of visitors to the school and the reasons for their visits is maintained.

Records are kept securely in the main admin office and, where required, stored for at least five years from the date of the last entry.

Evidence: staff files, register of children, register of employees, accident logs, record of menus, discussion with staff, observation.

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?****4**

In main school and for younger students in St David's House, boarding is weekly, Monday to Thursday evenings only. Termly boarding for post 16 students in St David's House has been successfully introduced this year. College students are generally termly boarders but there are some who are weekly or flexi-boarders also.

Students have access to private telephones in each of the boarding houses; many have their own mobile phone.

Any restrictions on contact are as agreed in the placement plan and are recorded in individual files. Staff were aware of individual circumstances and discuss these with young people as necessary.

The school has an "open door" policy and very much welcomes visits by parents, members of the extended family and others significant to children and young people. Overnight accommodation, in a comfortable and "homely" flat, can be provided where necessary.

Responses in the parent survey questionnaires confirmed that parents feel they are very much encouraged to visit the school and that they can see their child in private, if they wish, when they visit. Parents said that staff are "very welcoming", "friendly" and hospitable during their visits to the school. Parents confirmed that staff keep in good contact with them about issues and concerns relating to their child.

Evidence: pre-inspection questionnaire, discussions with staff and students, observation, parents' survey questionnaire responses.

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 maintains good contact with parents and other agencies for students who are leaving the school.

The school is pro-active in supporting young people to move on into the wider community and has developed close and effective links with other agencies, for example, local colleges, Connexions, housing associations and potential employers to assist with this.

There are personal development plans for college students to identify needs and ensure that the individual elements of support required are put into place. This includes identifying other agencies that may need to be involved where appropriate, for example, local social services as well as training and support for all aspects of daily living such as shopping, cooking, mobility, managing finances and benefits, health care, social contacts and accommodation. Young people are actively encouraged to participate in planning for their future.

In main school and St David's House, all young people have a transition plan, which identifies how their individual needs may best be met as they move from the main school to the college, or to other identified arrangements.

Practice in this area is commendable.

Evidence: discussion with the principal and head of care, pre-inspection questionnaire, transition planning policy, discussions with students, observation, file tracking.

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**

Children and young people are given a high level of individual support. Additional professional support is provided as identified in the care plan or annual review. Each child or young person who boards has an allocated key worker. All students also have an individual tutor. There is good liaison between these groups of staff. Discussion with children and young people confirmed they are able to talk to staff when they feel they need support.

The school also employs a visiting clinical psychologist to provide a counselling service, in addition to the wide range of specialist medical and therapeutic services, such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, music therapy, and mobility provided by the school.

Parents and placing officers view the staff expertise and knowledge of visual impairment as one of the greatest features of the school. Many parents commented that the range of specialist services provided on site and the close collaboration between the different departments at the school ensures excellent holistic care and education is provided for their child. Parents commented very positively on the individualised and specialised support their child receives at the school.

Practice in this area is commendable.

Evidence: survey questionnaire responses, discussions with staff and students, young person's files, observation.

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

The West of England School and College is situated in a large, level campus, close to a main road and bus route into the city centre of Exeter.

Residential accommodation consists of four purpose built boarding houses - Dinham and Haldon Houses, for main school male female students, St. David's House, for students with more complex medical and other special needs and the college, for post 16 students.

Richmond House is no longer used for boarding accommodation.

There are also separate therapy and medical centres, a day nursery and other educational facilities, a reception and administration centre, the main school dining and catering facility and support services on site. The college and St David's House have their own dining and catering facilities.

The school has extensive and attractive grounds, with enclosed playgrounds equipped with fixed play equipment, a sensory garden area, horticultural area, running track and sports pitches, a swimming pool and multi-gym. The campus also has its own radio station operated by students.

The campus and buildings are maintained to a high level.

There is a programme of routine maintenance and development of the site, as well as a health and safety action plan. Adaptations to the grounds and premises have been made and continue to be made to improve access for wheelchair users - for example, external doors to boarding accommodation have been fitted with automatic doors. Since the last inspection, refurbishments to boarding accommodation, particularly in main school and St David's House, have improved the environment.

Evidence: tour of premises, discussions with the director of care, maintenance manager, staff and young people, parents', young person's, staff and placing officer survey questionnaire responses, head's self-assessment form.

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 boarding accommodation is clean, well maintained and decorated to a good standard. Young people are able to personalise their bedrooms, if they wish. There is a programme of redecoration and refurbishment of the accommodation throughout the site to ensure that a good standard and homely environment is maintained. Refurbishment of boarding accommodation, particularly in main school and St David's House, has enhanced the environment since the last inspection.

In the main school boarding houses and St David's House most bedrooms are shared (usually double rooms). A few rooms have three beds but these are usually only used by occasional boarders. Where bedrooms are shared, children and young people are consulted about whom they would like to share with. In discussions with the inspector, some students said that they very much enjoyed sharing a bedroom with a friend.

College facilities are of a good standard including communal living areas and the flats in which small groups of young people are able to live, with limited staff support, to enable the development of more independence skills. College students have their own study/bedroom. Bedrooms were seen to have sufficient and suitable furniture, fittings and heating. All bedrooms have windows for ventilation and natural light.

Where needed, the school provides appropriate specialist equipment. St. David's House has a high standard of accommodation, with specialist equipment installed to meet the complex health needs of the students.

All boarding houses have wheel chair access to downstairs areas.

Evidence: tour of the premises, discussions with the director of care and other senior managers, discussion with the maintenance manager, discussions with staff and young people, pre-inspection questionnaire, head's self assessment form, young person's survey questionnaire responses.

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

The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets for students, staff and visitors.

The planned programme of refurbishment and improvement of toilet and bathing facilities in main school boarding accommodation, which includes improving facilities for students with physical disabilities, is progressing.

Specialist bathing and toileting equipment is installed in St David's House to meet the complex health needs of the students residing there. Staff were observed to be conscious of and respect the student's privacy and dignity where intimate care was required.

In questionnaire responses and discussion, students did not raise any issues about privacy in toilets, showers and bathrooms with the inspectors.

Evidence: tour of the premises, observation, discussions with the director of care and other senior managers, discussion with the maintenance manager, discussions with care staff and young people, pre-inspection questionnaire, head's self-assessment form.

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?****2**

The school have employed a firm of independent consultants to undertake a health and safety survey and produce a report on their findings – a copy of which was seen by the inspector. The inspector was told that a health and safety committee has been formed to ensure that the action plan resulting from the health and safety survey is progressed. An asbestos survey has recently been undertaken and the school is awaiting the report. Electrical contractors will be employed during the Easter holiday period to update the electrical circuitry information held on site.

The upgrading of the fire alarm system so that faults can be identified without an activation of the alarm is currently being explored. The programme of installing appropriate automatic door closures, for emergency use, is still ongoing. The inspector discussed with the maintenance manager that some college students were seen to wedge their bedrooms doors open. Another reminder will sent out to students about the dangers of this practice with regard to safe evacuation in the event of a fire. A recent fire drill at the college, on 24/02/05, showed a good response and evacuation time. Staff confirmed that they have received training in fire procedures and that regular fire drills are undertaken.

Budget has been allocated for further hot water temperature control valves to be installed. A rota system to provide maintenance cover for weekends and evenings has been introduced.

During office hours, all visitors are required to sign in and wear badges. The system for signing in visitors when the main reception area is closed was discussed and a reminder to all staff about the procedure will be issued, as some uncertainty about this was uncovered. Campus security and the risks of a lone person, in particular, nursing staff carrying medication, moving from one location to another on campus, especially during the hours of darkness should be reviewed.

Evidence: tour of the premises, observation, discussions with the director of care and maintenance manager and staff, independent consultants' health and safety report, visitors' book.

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?

3

The school recruitment process is set out in the staff recruitment and selection guidelines policy document. Vacancies are advertised internally and externally through the job centre, local and national newspapers and professional journals. Candidates are short listed from their submitted c.v. and letter of application and invited to visit the school before an interview is held.

Discussions with staff and staff file checks confirmed the recruitment, selection and employment process. Staff confirmed to the inspectors that references are sought and that the school made enquiries of previous employers where working with children or vulnerable adults was involved. Proof of identity is obtained and any gaps in employment history are explored. CRB checks are undertaken for all staff and enhanced CRB checks are undertaken for all staff who work directly with children and young people.

Evidence: staff recruitment and selection guidelines, discussions with staff, discussions with senior management, staff file checks.

Total number of care staff:

70

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

X

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

The director of care is responsible for a team of 70 care staff. She is assisted by the head of care and a team leader/senior care officer for the two main school boarding houses, head of care, two senior family group leaders and two family group leaders for St David's House and the head and deputy head of care for college, each of whom are responsible for managing a group of care staff.

Main school boarding houses currently employ five full-time and 11 part-time care officers/assistants and two waking night care assistants. St David's House employs nine full-time and 16 part-time care officers/assistants and three waking night assistants and college employs nine full-time and six part-time care officers/assistants and two waking night care assistants.

The minimum number of care staff for the two main school boarding houses and the college is two. The minimum staffing number for St David's is seven to ten care staff, depending on number of students present. For night-time cover, the two main school houses and college each have a minimum of one night waking staff and St David's House has a minimum of two, plus a night nurse. There is a minimum of two sleeping-in staff in main school, St David's House and college. 24 hour, on-site nursing cover is now available during the week and at weekends. Staffing ratios are increased on the identification of specific needs for individual children and for specific activities.

The school employs relief staff to cover where required for permanent/contracted staff. Agency staff are sometimes used, also.

Observation, staffing rotas and discussions with staff confirmed that adequate staffing numbers are maintained.

The principal or a senior manager is on call each night.

Guidelines to good practice in lone working for staff and volunteers have recently been drafted.

Overwhelmingly, parents who responded to the parent questionnaire survey agreed that they think there are enough staff at the school to care for their child, but two mentioned continuity of care, as being an issue, in some instances.

Evidence: pre-inspection questionnaire, head's self-assessment form, care staffing policy, care staffing team structure: January 2005, staffing lists, observation, questionnaire survey responses, staffing rota, discussions with senior management, discussions with staff and young people.

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
<p>Staff view the training they have received as very useful in equipping them with the skills required to meet the needs of the students and the purpose of the school.</p> <p>Discussions with staff confirmed the induction process and training for care and ancillary staff.</p> <p>Staff have access to relevant policies and procedures.</p> <p>Staff said that, in the past twelve months, they have received in-house training in child protection, epilepsy management, manual handling, administration of medication, infection control, First Aid, control and restraint and behaviour management and communication skills. Professional development is supported by access to NVQ Levels 2 & 3 in caring for children and young people courses and other external specialist courses/conferences in the care and support of people with visual impairment, epilepsy and Batten's disease.</p> <p>There are four main development days for all staff.</p> <p>Parents feel that staff are very caring and professional and look after their child very well.</p> <p>Evidence: discussions with staff and senior management, policies and procedures, staff and parent survey questionnaire responses, head's self-assessment form.</p>		

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
<p>The school has clear management structures in place. Staff spoken to were well aware of that structure and to whom they are accountable.</p> <p>The principal has an annual appraisal involving an external assessor and a sub group of governors with performance targets for the year set which are reviewed six monthly.</p> <p>All staff have a job description and undergo an induction training programme and probationary period. All staff receive supervision and have an annual appraisal.</p> <p>Staff are given practice handbooks and access to and training on the school's policies and procedures.</p> <p>Staff questionnaire survey responses and discussions with staff indicated that staff are aware of key policies and procedures – examples given included child protection, confidentiality, fire procedures, behaviour policy, complaints policy and procedure. Staff questionnaire survey responses and interviews with staff confirmed that staff receive supervision and appraisals. Care staff weekly meetings were also seen as supportive. Staff also said that information systems are good.</p> <p>Evidence: pre-inspection questionnaire, head's self-assessment form, discussions with senior management and staff, policies and procedures, staff survey questionnaire responses.</p>		

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 school is well managed and organised with a clear management structure which provides excellent leadership and support to staff and students. The senior management team, care teams and other professional staff groups meet regularly to ensure that good interdepartmental communication is maintained so that individual needs are recognised and met.

The director of care holds relevant professional qualifications in social care and the support and care of people with visual impairment.

Staff rotas have time scheduled to ensure that staff supervisions, handover sessions and meetings, record keeping, planning, implementing and reviewing care programmes and spending time interacting with individual children occur without compromising overall care of children and young people.

Parents overwhelmingly agreed that staff do an excellent job of caring for their child. Parents have a high regard for the way in which the school is organised, managed and staffed. The majority who responded to the parent questionnaire survey said that they felt that the staff were excellent and should be commended for the high standard of care and education that is provided.

Evidence: pre-inspection questionnaire, head's self-assessment form, discussions with senior management and staff, questionnaire survey responses, observation.

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

X %

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 school has a system in place to meet this standard.

The principal or senior members of staff, delegated by the head teacher to do so, monitor records to identify any patterns or issues requiring action, for example, records are kept of accidents and near misses involving students and members of staff. The principal and senior management check the records to identify any particular patterns or problem areas for which a particular risk management strategy might be needed.

The principal reports to the governing body on the overall monitoring of the management of the school.

Evidence: discussions with the principal and senior managers, pre-inspection questionnaire, head's self-assessment form, record checks.

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

Members of the governing body undertake these visits on a half termly basis and produce a written report on the conduct of the school.

The visits include checks on the school's record of complaints, sanctions and use of physical interventions, and assessment of the physical condition of the buildings, furniture and equipment of the school and provide opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to, to meet the visitor(s).

Copies of previous inspection reports were made available to the inspectors.

Evidence: pre-inspection questionnaire, head's self-assessment form, governors' inspection reports, principal's reports to governors.

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

Signature

Date

PART D

HEAD'S RESPONSE

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 9th – 11th March 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

☐

Comments were received from the provider

☐

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

☐

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

☐

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 5th August 2005 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

☐

Action plan was received at the point of publication

☐

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

☐

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

☐

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

☐

Other: <enter details here>

☐

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

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

Print Name _____

Signature

Designation

Date _____

Or

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

--

Print Name _____

Signature

Designation

Date _____

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

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