



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Cuckmere House School

**Eastbourne Road
Seaford
East Sussex
BN25 4BA**

Lead Inspector
Corrie McKeown

Announced Inspection
5th & 6th December 2005 02:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

Those outcomes are:

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

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

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

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school Cuckmere House School

Address Eastbourne Road
Seaford
East Sussex
BN25 4BA

Telephone number 01323 893319

Fax number 01323 897719

Email address

Provider Web address

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

Name of Head Mr F A Stanford

Name of Head of Care Joe Galvin

**Age range of residential
pupils** 11 –16 years

**Date of last welfare
inspection** 18/10/04

Brief Description of the School:

Cuckmere House School is a specialist SEN (Special Educational Needs) school run by East Sussex County Council Education Department, which offers places to 60 male pupils, aged between 5 and 16 with severe emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. Boarding accommodation is provided at Tower House, which is in a residential area of Seaford, approximately half a mile from the main school site. Tower House is divided into two interconnected units, with segregation by age into Juniors and Seniors. There are places for a maximum of twelve boarders. Pupils either stay overnight, for between one and three nights during the school week, or they have an extended day with evening activities and tea at Tower House. Junior pupils are then usually returned home around 7pm and Seniors at around 8pm, with some making their own way home as agreed. Tower House and the care team are an integral and valued part of the school. A Pupil Referral Unit is also provided within the school for junior pupils and there is an outreach programme to support pupils in other special education or mainstream schools. At the time of the inspection 12 pupils were receiving an overnight service at Tower House for one or two nights per week and a further 10 pupils were participating in the extended day programme.

SUMMARY

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

This announced inspection of the boarding facilities was carried out by one Inspector over two days, together with a review of medication handling undertaken by the local CSCI pharmacist inspector. Pupils, parents and staff were consulted in conversation or by means of a questionnaire and feedback was received from a placing social worker. The pupils were observed taking part in evening activities and records kept by the school were scrutinised. On the day of the inspection two pupils were attending an extended day programme and three were in residence overnight.

The findings of the last inspection, carried out in October 2004 were that the care delivered by Cuckmere House School was of a high standard, consequently this inspection was conducted with 'a lighter touch' concentrating on key standards identified by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), this document should therefore be read in conjunction with the previous report to gain a complete picture.

What the school does well:

The seamless approach to the care and welfare of the pupils by both the education and care staff, continues to be evident and of great benefit to the pupils. Both groups communicate effectively and support each other's work.

Privacy and sensitive issues are handled expertly and the boys clearly value this helpful approach. They say there is no need to make complaints and if they have a problem they just tell the staff. Child Protection matters are the responsibility of the Deputy Head of the school and no concerns have been reported regarding the boarding provision.

Behaviour is managed consistently across the school and boarding facilities and involves good consultation with the pupils and their parents/carers. The pupils resident at the time of the inspection were helpful, well mannered and clearly felt relaxed and comfortable in their surroundings. All the required safety measures are taken to ensure an accident-free environment with one pupil informing the inspector before an outing that 'safety is the number one priority'. The pupils are involved in running the programme at Tower House and appear to understand clearly how and why decisions are made, including how they are kept safe and their responsibilities in this process.

Social care plans are in place for each pupil and include details of how their needs will be met. Individual support is offered to pupils in every area of their care and education and where necessary outside professionals are involved to meet a particular need. Personal responsibility and independence skills are encouraged in age-appropriate stages within both the care and education settings.

The home itself continues to be well maintained and provides the pupils with good facilities.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The close working partnership between the care and education staff has been further strengthened with the introduction of a Cuckmere House Certificate; this is awarded to pupils for skills across both codes. Aspects of the management of medication have been improved, following advice regarding updated methodology. The consequences of poor behaviour are clearly recorded in a bound book and monitored by the Head of Care, who felt they were now more constructive in nature. A member of the Board of Governors is now producing reports following monitoring visits.

What they could do better:

The management of medication and storage of confidential information need small additional safeguards in place to ensure absolute security.

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

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

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

CONTENTS

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

Key standard 14

Health promotion and pupils' health needs are well managed. The practice and record keeping around medicine management has much improved. Further minor adjustments are needed.

EVIDENCE:

Health promotion is jointly managed by the education and care staff within the Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) programme. Links between the two departments are strong, with regular formal and informal meetings to exchange information about health and other issues. Much of the work carried out with the pupils at Tower House supports the more formal delivery of information in the school, for example healthy eating is encouraged in what they select to prepare and eat for their evening meal and breakfast; they are also encouraged to follow an appropriate personal hygiene routine. An active lifestyle is encouraged at the home as part of a general programme of healthy living promoted throughout the school day, giving the pupils plenty of opportunity to exercise and improve their skills in this area. On the day of the inspection this was achieved with a trip to the local zoo park, which has an extensive play area and the provision of a pool and table tennis table in the home.

Alongside general health promotion, pupils' individual health needs are identified and addressed. Close working partnerships with parents and carers enable the school to collect all relevant information and support the family as a whole to achieve good outcomes for individual pupils. This was evidenced in a number of ways. Pupils' social care plans contained details of health needs and how the staff will promote, monitor and meet them. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) on the school staff takes overall responsibility and makes contact with health professionals outside the school. These include a clinical psychologist, who visits the school every week to observe pupils and offer consultancy to staff and good links with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Parents consulted were very

pleased with the manner in which the school helps them, sometimes in very difficult circumstances, to work together with health professionals to offer their children the best and most appropriate care. In one case this involves almost daily contact to share relevant information and the parents reported always receiving a cheerful and positive response. All staff receive first aid and other specific training and advice, to help them understand the particular problems experienced by their pupils. Sensitive issues were observed being well handled during the evening of the inspection.

Regarding the management of pupils' medication, a metal cupboard for storage of medicines has been fitted at Tower House. Medicines for individual pupils are segregated and records are kept for audit purposes. However, records of receipt of medicines are not signed and double signatures were not seen for controlled drugs records. Medicine administration records have much improved and a separate sheet [log format] is used per child. This record gives a running total. Parents sometimes send medicines in an envelope, often not including all the pharmaceutical information although dosage direction is always given. Photographs on the medication profile sheet are not available.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

Key Standards 3,4,5,6,10,26 and 27.

Privacy, complaints and child protection are well managed; information confidentiality is fair but could be improved. The school is alert to any incidents of bullying and handles them well. Behaviour management strategies are consistent and developed with input from parents. The boarding house is safe and secure and staff are appropriately vetted.

EVIDENCE:

Tower house is a spacious building offering private bedrooms and bathrooms; this enables pupils to attend to personal care with plenty of privacy. Staff on duty during the inspection were careful to offer advice and assistance on sensitive issues discretely, avoiding any embarrassment. Pupils' confidential records are held in the staff office that is out of bounds to pupils without

permission to enter. This rule is part of an ethos at Tower House offering respect to others, which the pupils' were observed doing throughout the inspection. The files are generally kept in a filing cabinet, but as an added precaution the staff should consider locking this when they are out of the office.

The pupils showed the inspector copies of the complaints procedure, which is issued to them personally and kept in their rooms for reference when they stay overnight. They said there was no need to complain as the staff were good and sorted out any problems they had. The person responsible for child protection in the school reported there had been no issues raised regarding the operation of Tower House or those staying there. All Staff working at the house have received training in the signs and symptoms of possible abuse and the correct procedures to follow. Bullying occurs from time to time according to the pupils and staff consulted, but mainly during school hours when they say it is well managed; all the boys said they felt safe and relaxed at Tower House. They said that everybody is expected and encouraged to report bullying of any kind and that it is discussed in PHSE lessons and sometimes in the home.

Behaviour management strategies are included in the social care plan for each pupil spending time at Tower House. They are drawn up in consultation with school tutors and parents and reconsidered at any time, but always at reviews. They are reinforced with lots of positive encouragement and age-appropriate reward schemes and pupils are expected to take responsibility for the decisions they make about the way they behave. Pupils felt they were helped with their behaviour and were given the opportunity to talk through any incidents. The behaviour observed at Tower House was excellent with clear consequences if they misbehaved and a general atmosphere of quiet calm. They all seemed to value the opportunity to stay there and did not want to lose it. Sanctions are rarely used with clear recording and monitoring to ensure they are appropriate; no restraints had been recorded in recent months.

The house itself is well maintained and kept safe with regular checks of equipment and fire prevention measures, these include a visit from the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service on 9.9.05 and evacuation practices every term. A building and grounds risk assessment was not available at the time of the inspection. At night the house is kept secure, with two staff sleeping in and able to be called at any time by the pupils. One new part-time member of the care staff team has been appointed since the last inspection and the Headmaster confirmed that all the required recruitment checks had been carried out.

Risk assessments are carried out for all activities and the pupils are involved in this process; this is achieved before each outing when they are asked 'what do we have to be careful about' and as a new member of the group, one pupil informed me how to keep safe on the trip.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

Key Standards 12 and 22

The education and care staff work closely together with shared aims and a consistent approach, supporting each other's work. A high calibre of individual support is offered to the pupils.

EVIDENCE:

The residential staff are on hand at various times of the day to support individual pupils in education, when that is deemed appropriate. After school they ensure any homework tasks are completed and reinforce the pupils' learning in practical ways throughout the evening, as mentioned already in the health section of this report. They also encourage learning in general conversation, for example when discussing interests, popular figures or possible future occupations and commend any new skill or ability. Recently a new Cuckmere House Certificate has been introduced, which is awarded on completion of a range of skills involving both academic and practical tasks that the pupils can work towards during and after school.

The high staffing ratios at Tower House enable the staff to get to know the pupils very well and build up trusting relationships with them; as a result this means the pupils can access a high level of individual support. The pupils say they appreciate their help, not only in the school setting with their behaviour and learning difficulties, but also with a range of other problems. The observations of a visiting social worker are that the pupils 'are encouraged and supported to gain skills and abilities, increasing their confidence and self-esteem'. Health professionals are on hand to deal with any medical needs and identified key-workers for each year group support the pupils within their family setting, if they are experiencing difficulties at home. Parents report this is a particular strength of the school and speak highly of the help they receive.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

Key Standards 2, 17 and 20.

Pupils are encouraged to take personal responsibility and feel part of making Tower House their home for the nights they are there. Written social care plans are in place for residential pupils and contact with parents while they are away from home is facilitated.

EVIDENCE:

There are no formal methods for consulting with pupils at Tower House, as the numbers are very small and there is such a lot of individual contact. Instead the staff involve them in the running of the home and the activity programme at the planning stages, when they decide what to do and how to do it, so they are learning the skills of organisation, co-operation and negotiation as well as preparation. Aspects of safety are also covered and this was obvious during a tour of the premises with one of the pupils, who explained why areas were out of bounds or locked up. The senior pupils also demonstrated a clear understanding of the shared ethos at the school and Tower House and the benefits of choosing to behave appropriately, which sets the tone for any newcomers to the house. As already mentioned clear social care plans are in place covering their needs in the residential setting; many of these are drawn from their educational statements and the plans include how these needs will be met. The pupils are only away from home for one night at a time, but throughout the evening they were making and receiving outside calls.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

Optional Standards 21, 23 and 24.

Pupils are prepared for the transition to independent living in a number of ways and the facilities at Tower House are spacious and well maintained.

EVIDENCE:

Standard 21, which refers to pupils leaving care, does not apply to every pupil, but the school programme, supported for some pupils by the additional experience at Tower House, prepares them for the transition to adulthood in a number of ways. Most of these have been detailed in others contexts within this report; they include the steady introduction of skills enabling pupils to manage their personal care, equip themselves to be a productive member of society and develop the necessary social skills to co-exist happily with others. The latter is arguably the most important and according to the feedback received in the course of this inspection, managed very well.

The facilities at Tower House are spacious and offer pupils plenty of opportunity to enjoy leisure activities, including pool and table tennis, take part in the preparation of meals and learn how to manage their laundry. The house is well maintained and the necessary repairs to the plasterwork have been completed.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

Key Standard 31. Optional Standards 32 and 33.

The pupils receive individual care of a high standard and the service is operated and monitored appropriately.

EVIDENCE:

The staff working at Tower House are qualified, experienced and competent with a particular ability to form very helpful relationships with the individual pupils in their care. The pupils clearly showed respect for their opinions and said they felt able to approach them with any problems. Their work involves a great deal of contact with parents and carers, one of whom commented 'we are full of admiration for their kindness and support, not only for our son but for us as well'. All of the staff have completed NVQ Level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People and additional training that has been provided includes courses on first aid, Aspergers syndrome, autism, ADHD, managing health and safety and mini-bus driving skills. The staff also share training with

their education colleagues on such subjects as speech and language, early years education and child protection.

The care provision is monitored by the Head of Care and this includes any sanctions or consequences following poor behaviour, that are clearly recorded in a bound book. The use of sanctions at Tower House continues to drop and be more constructive; this is in line with the school ethos of rewarding good behaviour and encouraging pupils to make good choices about the way they respond in difficult situations.

Tower House is visited by a member of the Board of Governors. Three visits have taken place in the last year with reports on file detailing the findings. They show no concerns and the visits include talking to the pupils present at the time and the examination of records.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	3
15	x

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	4
4	4
5	3
6	3
7	x
8	x
10	4
26	2
27	3

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	4
13	x
22	4

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	4
9	x
11	x
17	4
20	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	x
21	3
23	x
24	3
25	3

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	x
18	x
19	x
28	x
29	x
30	x
31	4
32	3
33	3

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

NO

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS14	That all records relating to medicine stocks are signed and dated.	05/12/05
2	RS14	That staff ensure medicine received into the home is labelled and identifiable.	01/01/06
3	RS26	That a building and grounds risk assessment is produced.	01/02/06
4	RS3	That the filing cabinet containing confidential information is locked away when not in use.	05/12/06

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