



Champions for
Social Care
Improvement

inspection report

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

Linden Bridge School

Grafton Road
Worcester Park
Surrey
KT4 7JW

19th January 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

| |
|---------------------------|
| SCHOOL INFORMATION |
|---------------------------|

Name of School

Linden Bridge School

Address

Grafton Road, Worcester Park, Surrey, KT4 7JW

Tel No:

020 8330 3009

Fax No:

01999 999999

Email Address:

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

Surrey County Council - E Surrey Adult & Community Care

Name of Head

NCSC Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Autistic Spectrum

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

| |
|----------------------------------------------------|
| 4 th & 5 th March 2003 |
|----------------------------------------------------|

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Date of Inspection Visit | 19th January 2004 | ID Code |
| Time of Inspection Visit | 10:00 am | |
| Name of NCSC Inspector | 1 | Mr R Blades |
| Name of NCSC Inspector | 2 | Ms S Liburd |
| Name of NCSC Inspector | 3 | |
| Name of NCSC Inspector | 4 | |
| Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable): | | |
| Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process. | | |
| Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable) | | |
| Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection | Vincent Docherty, | |

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 National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

Inspections assess the extent to which the school is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, published by the Secretary of State under Section 87C of the Children Act 1989, and other relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 as amended. Residential Special Schools are not registered as children's homes unless they accommodate, or arrange accommodation for, one or more children for more than 295 days a year.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the NCSC in respect of Linden Bridge School

The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Recommended action by the school
- Advisory recommendations on boarding welfare
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the lay assessor (where relevant)
- The Head's response and proposed action plan to address findings

INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections are undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children Act 1989 as amended, with additional visits as required.

The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Linden Bridge School is a Local Education Authority maintained school providing day places and part boarding for boys and girls aged 4 to 19 years who have been assessed as being on the autistic spectrum. At the time of the inspection there were 119 pupils on roll, of which 41 were boarding pupils, comprising 37 boys and 4 girls. This gender difference is mirrored throughout the school, and reflects levels of autism in the general population. At present, the maximum number of boarders who can be accommodated at any one time is 25 and, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, pupils board for no more than two nights a week to enable a greater number to take advantage of this facility.

Boarding accommodation is organised into 4 groupings on the basis of age, gender and behaviours. Bedrooms comprise 7 singles, 5 doubles and 2 four-bed rooms. Education and boarding provision are sited within the same premises, although boarding accommodation is not usually accessed by pupils during the school day. Boarding accommodation has only limited provision to make drinks and snacks, and pupils have breakfast and tea in the main school dining areas.

A Further Education Department building has been constructed for pupils between the ages of 16-19.

This will enable older pupils to have their own self contained accommodation, developing independent living skills and supporting their transition from the school.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

Staff, with clear management and procedural frameworks, combine professionalism and compassion to produce a sense of extended family for boarders at Linden Bridge. Children and parents alike feedback that the program of activities undertaken for boarders is responsive to their needs and is particularly appreciated. The school's work in translating the students' questionnaire into pictorial symbols has paid dividends in that nearly half the boarding group responded. This was in itself an indication of the time and energy spent by staff in overcoming barriers to communication.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

Linden Bridge faces a particular challenge in meeting the requirements for 80% of care staff to have NVQ 3 qualifications by the deadline of 2005. Further work is also required to ensure that waking night staff receive individual supervision at a frequency that is comparable to that of their daytime colleagues. Inspectors were also concerned to discover that two care staff had been allowed to commence employment before their CRB checks had been returned. Management did make it clear that such individuals were not allowed to be with pupils in an unsupervised situation.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

Linden Bridge School has been awarded Beacon Status and this inspection re-confirmed that such an award is justified in that its policies and procedures have been well drawn up, while its staff are manifestly committed and skilled in their dealings with the resident young people. Pupils' opinions are routinely sought and acted upon, and their parents express satisfaction with the boarding regime. Direct observation confirmed the view of the Children's Society independent advocate, who has been instrumental in setting-up the Student Council, that staff are "on the ball" in detecting slight behavioural changes in pupils as "an emotional weather-vane".

| |
|------------------------------------------------------------|
| RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION |
|------------------------------------------------------------|

Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended action and any advisory recommendations are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

| RECOMMENDED ACTION | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare. | | | |
| No | Standard* | Recommended Action | |
| 1 | RS30 | That all staff including waking night workers receive supervision at least half-termly, and that this is recorded | 3 months from receipt of this report |
| 2 | RS31 | That 80% of care staff have NVQ3 or equivalent by 2005 | APRIL 2004 onwards |
| 3 | RS27.7 | Responsible managers should ensure that staff members subject to requirements of 7.2 do not start work at the school until satisfactory receipt of all checks and references. All Criminal Records Bureau checks must have been completed. | With immediate effect |
| | | | |

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 | RS 24.18 & 31.9 | As a planned response to foreseeable crisis it is recommended that swimming pool emergency drills be instituted to test staff capacity to respond to poolside alarm. |
| | | |

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 | NA |
| Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas | NA |
| Checks with other Organisations | |
| • Social Services | NO |
| • Fire Service | NO |
| • Environmental Health | NO |
| • DfES | NO |
| • School Doctor | NO |
| • Independent Person | NO |
| • Chair of Governors | NO |
| Tracking individual welfare arrangements | NO |
| Survey / individual discussions with boarders | YES |
| Group discussions with boarders | YES |
| Individual interviews with key staff | YES |
| Group interviews with House staff teams | YES |
| Staff Survey | YES |
| Meals taken with pupils | YES |
| Early morning and late evening visits | YES |
| Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay | YES |
| Parent Survey | YES |
| Placing authority survey | NO |
| Inspection of policy/practice documents | YES |
| Inspection of records | YES |
| Individual interview with pupil(s) | NO |
| Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments | NO |

| | |
|----------------------------------------|----------|
| Date of Inspection | 19/01/03 |
| Time of Inspection | 09.55 |
| Duration Of Inspection (hrs.) | 15.25 |
| Number of Inspector Days spent on site | 2 |

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 | <input type="text" value="37"/> |
| GIRLS | <input type="text" value="4"/> |
| TOTAL | <input type="text" value="41"/> |

Number of separate Boarding Houses

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the NCSC assessment of the extent to which standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

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

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 3 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---|
| The School has a comprehensive Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes the service that is provided. The Prospectus is attractively presented and uses appropriate pictures and text. The Prospectus and Parent Hand book Documents had relevant, comprehensive detail in it. In line with requirements from the last inspection some areas have been amended. | | |

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

The School works with families to identify the wishes and feelings of its pupils. In order to enable pupils to express their views a Student Council has been developed. The inspectors were able to meet with the Student Council and it was felt that the Council was a fair representation of the pupils as a whole and that the Council were able to voice their opinions, which was clearly listened to. All pupils are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives, various communication techniques are used to aid communication e.g. PECS and makaton.
An independent advocate regularly visits the school; this provides pupils with an outside representative.

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

During the inspection interactions between staff and pupils were observed to be positive and respectful. Staff were seen to interact the children in a relaxed manner, yet they maintained boundaries appropriate to their duty of care, providing clear guidance and direction. In order to underpin privacy for pupils, a policy that addresses privacy and confidentiality has been developed by the Head of Care.
Staff described a sensitive approach to respecting young pupils privacy and confidentiality, indicating a good understanding of the need to balance these rights with issues of protection and safety. Pupils are supported and encouraged to contact their families and others that are significant to them whilst they are at school, staff described an 'open door' policy which works well with most pupils and their families.

Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The complaints procedure in the Prospectus and Parent Handbook, sets out a step-by-step guide on how pupils can seek advice or make a complaint should they wish to do so. There was only one recorded complaint throughout 2003. The high level of communication with parents allowed resolution of potential issues prior to any complaint being made. The one entry was dated 13th January 2003 and concerned a mistake in a letter sent out by the school, which was immediately apologised for. Complaints recording shows actions taken with timescales.

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

Number of above complaints substantiated:

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

Number of above complaints substantiated:

CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The ACPC procedures are available in the school, together with 'in house' child protection guidelines for staff. Staff also showed a commitment to keeping pupils safe. Staff interviewed were clear about the need to report child protection concerns to senior staff within the school. Discussion with management indicated that all staff had a fundamental understanding of child protection issues. Child protection training is provided by the Head of Care to all care and ancillary staff.

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

X

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)

The school has, and follows, an anti-bullying policy, with which children and staff are familiar and which is effective in practice. Where possible children in the school contribute to the development of the policy.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school has written policy guidance for staff about working with bullying behaviour, and it is also addressed in the Prospectus and the Parents Handbook. The Staff team are and have been, very consistent for some years, it is therefore felt that issues of bullying would be picked up immediately and would be responded to promptly. The newly approved Anti-bullying Policy was issued to staff at the end of 2003. The children's' survey indicated that two respondents felt that they had been bullied by other children and The Head of Care immediately responded by discretely exploring the issues raised.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

89 %

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

The school is aware of the requirement to report significant events to various bodies including the NCSC.

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

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

X

X

X

X

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9) | | |
| The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance. | | |
| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 3 |
| The school has a policy and guide for staff for children and young people who were absent without consent. This was implemented satisfactorily. | | |
| Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months: | | 1 |

CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 3 |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|
|---------------------------|---------------|---|

During the inspection staff were observed to work positively and respectfully with pupils. The life of a boarder is structured with clear routines, within which there is a degree of flexibility to allow individual needs to be met. Staff appeared skilled in balancing the needs, wishes and preferences of individual boarders, against those of the group. All staff have undertaken training in the Positive Options behaviour management approach, and in their interventions with pupils demonstrated clear expectations of behaviour, with a focus on positive care, encouragement and praise.

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 |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|
|---------------------------|---------------|---|

There is a clear behaviour management policy that appears understood by staff and is appropriately implemented in practice. Sanctions are recorded accurately, entries reflected appropriate use of permissible sanctions.

QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

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

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 3 |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|
|---------------------------|---------------|---|

A multi-disciplinary panel considers all admissions to the school. Before the panel meeting staff visit the prospective student's home as part of the process of deciding the suitability of placement.

Plans to become boarders are discussed and drawn up at students' annual review meetings. Linden Bridge has a written Admission and Reception of Boarders policy that makes clear criteria for making such decisions. Staff have guidance as to how to introduce new boarders, although the boarders themselves do not have an induction program.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.7)
Care staff and the school's residential provision and activities actively contribute to individual children's educational progress, and care staff actively support children's education, ensuring regular attendance, punctuality and a minimum of interruption during the school day.

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 3 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---|
| <p>Direct observation and file scrutiny indicate that care staff work very closely with school staff to underpin and support boarders education programs. Annual reviews and IEP targets are used to formalise this relationship, but communication on a day-to-day informal basis ensures that the young peoples' experience of school-based education and the objectives of work in the boarding house are seamless.</p> <p>After the school day, boarders join small groups in which the activity program for the evening is discussed and social skills are gently emphasised. Staff exhibit creativity, communication skills and understanding of young people's needs during these discussions, which holistically support each boarders educational targets.</p> | | |

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 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---|
| <p>Children are encouraged and supported to access a wide range of leisure activities both on and off the school site.</p> <p>On site activities include cooking, art and craft, games and swimming, there are also off site trips e.g. bowling, cinema, laser quest, and horse riding. The leisure activities observed on young people's files demonstrated that these were individual to their particular interests and needs.</p> <p>On the evening of inspection, children were engaged in leisure activities outside of the school. Student questionnaires enforce the perception that the range and type of activity, whether on-site or not, are much valued by young people, who emphasise the value they place on these activities alongside an appreciation of the opportunity to socialise with peers.</p> | | |

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)
The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets any intimate care needs.

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 3 |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|---|
| <p>See specialist pharmacy inspection report.</p> | | |

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

Menu sheets provided and direct observation showed that children are provided with a varied range of nutritious meals. Children are given ample opportunity to prepare their own foodstuffs, with children's questionnaires indicating that cooking is a popular activity. Vegetarians are catered for and consideration is given to children's cultural backgrounds. Special diets are paid particular attention to with individual prompt cards on display by the serving area.

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

All boarders, with one exception, stay overnight for two days a week. Consequently, items such as clothing and toiletries tend to be provided by parents. There have been on-going issues about clothing going missing in circumstances where parents have felt unable to mark individual garments with their children's names. Staff regularly re-enforce the need for such marking of clothing and the last complaint about lost clothing dates back to 2002. Valuables and pocket money can be kept safe by staff on request and staff make every effort to support children's choices in spending pocket money outside the school.

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 are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.
- In accordance with their wishes, children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.
- Children receive individual support when they need it.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

File scrutiny shows that the high standards identified in the last report are being maintained. All pupils have annual reviews of their Statement of Special Educational Needs. There were copies of IEP targets on file. Boarding students have comprehensive care plans, which are developed by key workers in consultation with parents and the young people themselves. Linden Bridge has a written Care Plan Policy, which underpins the high standard of planning that informs daily practice.

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

File scrutiny shows that pupil records meet standards, including all relevant material. The files are well maintained, being clearly organised and up-to-date.

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 |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------|

File scrutiny showed that personnel files held in the school hold relevant information. Generally, school records are well maintained and comprehensive. They are secured in locked cabinets

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 |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------|

File scrutiny and discussion with staff and children showed that parental contact is facilitated and encouraged continually. A 'drop-in' philosophy is in place, whereby parents are actively supported in making spontaneous visits to the Boarding House – this has been confirmed by a letter to the inspectors by a parent. Most boarders also speak to their parents by phone on a daily basis.

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.2)
 Where a pupil is in care and will be leaving care on leaving the school, the school agrees with the young person's responsible authority what contribution it should make to implement any Pathway or other plan for the pupil before the pupil leaves school. These arrangements are in line with that young person's needs, and the school implements its contribution where feasible from at least a year before the pupil is expected to leave care or move to independent living. The school works with any Personal Advisor for the child.

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 3 |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|----------|

During the inspection conversations took place with students at the school, these indicated that students are consulted about their aspirations and needs prior to moving on.

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

Individualised support and planning is evident through direct observation, records and feedback. Records of annual reviews indicate the involvement of other agencies in meeting specialist needs appropriately. Documentation underpins the implementation of individual plans and staff members' individualised approach to each pupil. This is a particular strength of Linden Bridge. As the independent advocate from the Children's Society's SCRIPT project expressed to inspectors, this is the school "with the least concerns than all the schools" that she works with.

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 boarding area of the school is accessed up a staircase leading from the dining room. Although self-contained, it is part of the main school building. The newly built unit for young people aged 16 or over is across an open playground beside the main building. This unit will alleviate to some extent the slightly cramped feeling of the boarding area. An issue still to be resolved is the number of beds in each room of the new unit, so that privacy can be maintained.

Issues identified in the previous report concerning the busy drop-off parking area at the front of the school are still relevant. The safeguarding of pupils is under constant monitoring by school staff.

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 area has a homely feel, being well maintained and furnished. Young people are able to display their own posters and pictures on the walls of the bedrooms. The two rooms with four beds in feel a little cramped, but in general the accommodation feels comfortable and appropriate.

The responsible Governor conducts a termly audit of the boarding department and a rolling maintenance program, in conjunction with the Instant Reporting Procedure, means that building defects are usually remedied quite promptly. An example of this recently was the work done on making school radiators safe.

There are also imminent plans to modernise the swimming pool area of the school, which at the moment does seem to be a little run-down.

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 boarding area does have sufficient baths and toilets. The boarders morning routine tends to be dominated by the unit having just three showers. Staff report that it can be difficult to instil an orderly sequence of showering, although the older children are allowed more scope to use the showers at their own discretion. Showering in the morning was described as “a bone of contention” and “a conveyor belt” by staff. One male pupil expressed his concern at female staff being able to see him in the showers, but inspectors were convinced that staff attempt to manage these processes as best they are able in the circumstances. During the inspection, a female pupil was able to bring to staff’s attention a fault in the girls’ swimming pool showers and a broken lock on the toilet door, which staff undertook to remedy immediately.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The deputy head of care is responsible for Health and Safety and has carried out a range of risk assessments on the building and activities. Fire drills, including evacuation, have been carried out twice a term, along with an extra night time drill. Symbolised fire alarm procedures are posted in each student bedroom. Records show that the fire alarm systems are serviced every three months and the emergency lighting systems every six months. When the Fire Officer recommended that the unit’s hose reels should be replaced by portable extinguishers, action was swiftly taken to comply.

STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Staff records show that in the case of one member of staff employed in 1981 there was only one reference on file and no record of a police check prior to 27/03/03. Of greater concern was evidence that another member of staff, who commenced work on 8/12/03, had not had their identity verified or their CRB form sent off until their start date. The school does have written recruitment procedures.

Total number of care staff:

11

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

1

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Staffing levels are maintained at appropriate levels for the number of children boarding. The need for staff continuity in the lives of their pupils does place a burden on their goodwill however, in that sickness or other absences often means that staff cover for each other by doing additional hours, rather than using agency staff. Staff records and rotas show that staffing levels are maintained at all costs.

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?**

2

Inset days are used for staff training and supervision identifies staff training needs. The Deputy Head of Care who is responsible for risk assessment and health and safety processes has had some training relevant to his role, but identifies that he "could do with more". The outstanding shortfall, however, is in the arena of NVQs. The Deputy Head of Care is undertaking an NVQ4 at present, but the target of 80% of staff having NVQ3 presents a considerable challenge to the school. From January 2004 onwards there is a regulatory expectation that new staff will undertake an NVQ3 course within 3 months of commencing work. With no internal verifier at the school this target seems out of reach. The school management has been debating this issue with Surrey County Council and understands that these processes may have to be financed and organised by the school itself, if they are to meet these standards in time.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Staff records show that supervision of care staff is happening effectively and regularly, with the exception of the waking night staff who receive group supervision. Staff report that they do feel supported by each other and by their managers. Lines of accountability are clearly delineated in the school.

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

Records, policies and observation all show that the school and its boarding service are well organised and managed. The Head of Care, and his deputy, are to be commended for the informed energy and attention that they have put into responding to the demands of the regulatory framework and the findings of the previous report. The senior management team, in conjunction with the Board of Governors, have achieved Beacon Status for their school, and staff morale in the boarding service seems high. Inspectors were convinced that the best possible childcare was being delivered, albeit through the commitment of staff and the interest of parents in the life of the school.

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

0 %

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

As identified in the previous report, the Head of Care monitors documentation and processes regularly.

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

As described above, the governor with oversight of boarding conducts an annual audit of the service, along with termly checks. The Standard 33 visitor monitors on a half-termly basis and it is evident that issues raised are responded to promptly; with the exception of the shortfall in being to implement NVQ3 training for sufficient numbers of staff (24/11/03). The chair of the PTA also makes spontaneous visits to the boarding area. The SCRIPT advocate visits on a weekly basis. This creates an impression of a school which is open to outside scrutiny.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

[Empty box for Lay Assessor's Summary]

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

Locality Manager Sally Anne Floyd **Signature** _____

Date _____

PART D

HEAD'S RESPONSE

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

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

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

NO

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

YES

Note:

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

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

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

NA

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I _____ of _____ 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 _____ 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.