



Champions for
Social Care
Improvement

inspection report

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

Bramfield House School

Walpole Road

Bramfield

Halesworth

Suffolk

IP19 9AB

25 – 27 February 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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

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

The role of CSCI is to:

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

Inspection Methods & Findings

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

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School

Bramfield House School

Tel No:

01986 784235

Address

Walpole Road, Bramfield, Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 9AB

Fax No:

01986 784645

Email Address:

BRAMFIELDH@aol.com

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

Mr and Mrs Anstes

Name of Head

Mrs D Jennings

NCSC Classification

Residential Special School

Type of schoolResidential Special
School**Date of last boarding welfare inspection:**

04/03/03

Date of Inspection Visit		25th February 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of NCSC Inspector	1	Bridget Forrest	075526
Name of NCSC Inspector	2	Joe Staines	
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):		N/A	
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		N/A	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		N/A	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		N/A	

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION
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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 Bramfield House 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

Bramfield House was established as a School in 1970. In 1986 it became approved as a school suitable for the admission of pupils for whom statements are maintained, and has kept this status and remains approved by the Secretary of State under Section 347(1) and (3) of the Education Act 1996.

The School is in the private ownership of Mr and Mrs Anstes, who have a flat on the first floor, and spend some of their time living on site. Neither of them are involved in the routine running of the School. This is managed by Headteacher Deirdre Jennings, supported by senior staff, teachers, and a small team of pastoral staff. Since the last inspection of the School in March 2003, there have been some changes in personnel including a new appointment to the post of Head of Care.

The School is situated in a rural setting, on the outskirts of Bramfield, a small village in the northern region of Suffolk. The actual location is between the villages of Bramfield and Walpole. The nearest towns are Halesworth, Beccles, and Southwold.

The School premises comprise the main Hall, which includes the boarding accommodation, and a range of separate school buildings used for teaching and recreation. The School is set in 10 acres of grounds used for sports and recreation, and there is also an indoor swimming pool.

At the time of this inspection, a total of 38 boys were being educated at the School. Of these 33 were boarders, and the remaining 5 boys were attending on a daytime basis. The School is open weekdays Monday to Friday during term times. All boarders return to their own homes at the weekends, and some boarders have an overnight stay at home, during the week.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

The inspection included seeking the views of parents, placing authorities, the school's general practitioner, staff and boarders at the School. Questionnaires were sent out to the parents / carers of boarders, and thirteen responded. Each of the five Placing Authorities also received a letter from the NCSC, seeking feedback. At the time of writing this report, only one response had been received. Every member of staff working at the school was given a Questionnaire, although only two members of staff completed and returned these to the NCSC. The Lead Inspector also carried out a Boarders Survey at the School, at the end of January 2004, before the inspection took place. In small groups, a total of twenty-seven boys completed Questionnaires given to them. Where appropriate, their responses have been included in the main body of the Report, and an analysis of the Questionnaires has also been provided separately to the Headteacher.

The School is commended for the energy invested in developing and maintaining relationships with the parents of boarders, including taking time to do home visits during the School holidays.

Despite some changes in key personnel resulting in staffing shortages, staff have continued to provide good levels of pastoral care and support to the boarders at the School.

Relationships between boarders and staff were noted to be positive, warm and caring.

Challenging behaviours were being dealt with appropriately, and boarders were rewarded and praised for their achievements.

The catering arrangements were commended, including the fact that feedback from boarders about their choices and preferences was sought and acted on. Some improvements were also being made to the physical environment and facilities.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

The Inspectors recommended that the Headteacher (and senior staff team) now need to focus attention on ensuring that the recommendations and advice given at last year's inspection are acted on and addressed. There are aspects of the School's recruitment process that need to be strengthened, and arrangements for formal individual supervision need to be introduced. The Inspectors also recommended that attention is focused on ensuring that every child at the School has a meaningful Care Plan, and that Keyworkers are given a more active role in this respect.

The Inspectors were somewhat concerned that although the former Head of Care who left in 2003 had been replaced, the person appointed who started in January 2004 was only in post a short time, and left the School before the start of the Easter holidays. In the context of a residential special school, the position of Head of Care is a crucial appointment. The position was discussed with the Headteacher at the feedback meeting, and an assurance was given that interim arrangements had been made for the following term, with an existing member of staff agreeing to take on the role on a temporary / acting basis.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

Overall, the findings from this inspection were positive. The Head, now in her second year of office, provides strong leadership and is well respected. Although there have been a number of staff changes, it is to the credit of the remaining staff team that this has not directly impacted on pastoral care and support to the boarders. The Inspectors gained the impression that staff have a strong sense of commitment to the School, in their preparedness to take on additional responsibilities and extra shifts.

The Inspectors were made very welcome at the School and were provided with all of the information requested, as well as access to the facilities, and opportunities to meet with staff.

The inspection was followed by a short feedback meeting with the Head and Lead Inspector, when feedback on the inspection findings were discussed, during which agreements were reached on how the recommendations and advice given would be taken forward.

NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

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

NO

Notification to be made to:

**Local Education Authority
Secretary of State**

NO

NO

The grounds for any Notification to be made are:

N/A

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION

Recommended Actions from the last Inspection visit fully implemented?

NO

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

No	Standard	Recommended actions	
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1	RS1	The School should develop specific information in the most suitable format for children / young persons to understand.	January 2004
2	RS2	<p>The School should introduce policy guidance for staff about their role and responsibilities for seeking the opinions and views of children / young persons boarding at the School.</p> <p>The School should introduce forums to seek and obtain boarders feedback on life at the School.</p>	<p>September 2003</p> <p>October 2003</p>
3	RS3	The School to produce procedural guidelines for staff on the issues of privacy and confidentiality.	September 2003
4	RS10	<p>The School's policy on prohibited corporal punishment should be expanded to include all of the elements in Criteria 10.6 of Standard 10.</p> <p>A bound and numbered Sanctions Log, cross-referenced to individual incident reports and sanctions records, should be introduced and maintained. Entries should be made within 24 hours.</p> <p>The control and restraint practices at the School should be reviewed and staff provided with training from an Accredited Provider.</p> <p>The Children's Guide should be updated to include information for boarders about the School's expectations of behaviour, school rules, and sanctions and physical interventions that might be used.</p>	<p>October 2003</p> <p>September 2003</p> <p>September 2003</p> <p>January 2004</p>
5	RS11	Children should be provided (in the Children's guide) with information about the process for introducing and admitting them to the School.	January 2004
6	RS16	The records for children's / young persons monies should include the child's signature for monies received, or handed over for safekeeping.	April 2003
7	RS17	The School should develop information gathered about children / young persons into formal written Placement Plans / Care Plans for each boarder.	September 2003
8	RS18	The Children's Guide should include an explanation about children's / young person's rights to read and have access to their file.	January 2004

9	RS22	The School should develop it's arrangements for independent advocacy for the boarders. For example, the introduction of a local independent person / counsellor / mentor.	September 2003
10	RS25	Locks on bathroom and toilet doors should be changed to a type that can be opened in the event of an emergency	September 2003
11	RS26	The School should expand the risk assessment process. The School should formalise the verbal process for reporting health and safety matters. The School should develop a Lone Working Policy for staff.	December 2003 December 2003 October 2003
12	RS27	The School's recruitment process should be reviewed and enhanced to meet all the criteria of Standard 27.	July 2003
13	RS28	The School should carry out a risk assessment in relation to waking night staff.	October 2003
14	RS29	The Schools induction programme should be provided to all new staff. The Schools induction programme should cover local child protection procedures and the School's own child protection procedures. The Schools induction programme should cover notification of incidents procedure. Each member of staff should have a personal development plan. Staff working in any capacity with children at the School should have received training appropriate to their role about the needs of children accommodated	September 2003
15	RS30	The School's supervision arrangements should be reviewed to meet the Criteria of Standard 30 (30.2) in that regard. All staff should be provided with written Job Descriptions in line with Criteria 30.9 of this Standard.	December 2003 December 2003

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	RS1	The School should develop specific information in the most suitable format for children / young persons to understand.	September 2004
2	RS1	The information for children / young persons should include information about their right to see their personal file.	September 2004
3	RS2	The School should introduce policy guidance for staff about their role and responsibilities for seeking the opinions and views of children / young persons boarding at the School.	September 2004
4	RS2	The School should introduce forums to seek and obtain boarders feedback on life at the School.	September 2004
5	RS25RS3	The School should produce procedural guidelines for staff on the issues of privacy and confidentiality.	September 2004
6	RS3RS25	The School should ensure that all door locks in bathroom/shower/toilet areas assure privacy (whilst being able to be opened from the outside in the event of an emergency situation arising).	September 2004
7	RS26RS5	The School should produce a written policy in respect of Lone Working for members of staff who work alone or are involved in 1:1 contact with a boarder.	September 2004
8	RS10	The School's policy on prohibited corporal punishment should be expanded to include all of the elements in Criteria 10.6 of Standard 10.	September 2004

9	RS10	A bound and numbered Sanctions Log, cross-referenced to individual incident reports and sanctions records, should be introduced and maintained. Entries should be made within 24 hours.	September 2004
10	RS10	The control and restraint practices at the School should be reviewed and staff should be provided with training from an Accredited Provider in that regard.	September 2004
11	RS10	The Children's Guide should include information for boarders about the School's expectations of behaviour, school rules, and sanctions and physical interventions that might be used.	September 2004
12	RS11	Children should be provided (in the Children's guide) with information about the process for introducing and admitting them to the School.	September 2004
13	RS14	The School should record episodes when the Epi Pen is used. The School should record any circumstances when a prescribed medication is not given, and the reasons for that decision.	May 2004 May 2004
14	RS16	The records for children's / young persons monies should include the child's signature for monies received, or handed over for safekeeping.	May 2004
15	RS17	The School should develop information gathered about children / young persons into formal written Placement Plans / Care Plans for each boarder. Keyworkers should be given a more significant role in the development of Plans of Care.	September 2004 September 2004
16	RS22	The School should develop it's arrangements for independent advocacy for the boarders. For example, the introduction of a local independent person / counsellor / mentor.	Ongoing
17	RS26	The School should expand the risk assessment process. The School should formalise the verbal process for reporting health and safety matters. The School should ensure that safe hot water temperatures are maintained. The School should ensure that evidence is recorded that fire alarm points are being tested on a weekly basis.	September 2004 May 2004 May 2004 May 2004

18	RS27	The School's recruitment process should be reviewed and enhanced to meet all the criteria of Standard 27.	September 2004
19	RS28	The School should carry out a risk assessment in relation to waking night staff.	May 2004
20	RS29	<p>The Schools induction programme should be provided to all new staff</p> <p>The Schools induction programme should cover local child protection procedures and the School's own child protection procedures</p> <p>The Schools induction programme should cover notification of incidents procedure</p> <p>Each member of staff should have a personal development plan</p> <p>Staff working in any capacity with children at the School should have received training appropriate to their role about the needs of children accommodated</p>	<p>September 2004</p> <p>September 2004</p> <p>September 2004</p> <p>September 2004</p>
21	RS30	<p>The School's supervision arrangements should be reviewed to meet the Criteria of Standard 30 (30.2) in that regard.</p> <p>All staff should be provided with written Job Descriptions in line with Criteria 30.9 of this Standard.</p>	<p>September 2004</p> <p>September 2004</p>
22	RS31	The School should ensure that the duties and responsibilities allocated to the post of Head of Care are being carried out by appropriately experienced person(s) either in an interim / acting capacity, and in the longer term, by a new appointment to this position within the School.	May 2004

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
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		None
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Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. RS10 refers to standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS AND FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods were used in the production of this report

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

Date of Inspection	25/02/04
Time of Inspection	14.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	22.0
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	3

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

SCHOOL INFORMATION

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

NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

BOYS

GIRLS

TOTAL

Number of separate Boarding Houses

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the 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?	2
<p>As part of the inspection, the NCSC was provided with an updated copy of the School Prospectus which describes the aims and objectives of the School, the details of the staff working there, and how pupils will be supported with school curriculum, and with boarding life. The School Prospectus also includes key policy documentation including child protection, control and restraint, bullying, complaints, and sanctions and rewards.</p> <p>A recommendation from last year's inspection of the School remains outstanding to be addressed, in so far as the School has yet to produce specific information for boarders, about what it is like to be a boarder at the School (i.e. a 'Boarders Guide'). This was discussed with the Head Mrs Jennings who confirmed that this piece of work has been started, and she is considering using a video, to show footage of the school's boarding practices and routines. The work is to be further developed by the Head of Care, and an extended timescale was agreed for this work to have been completed in readiness for the start of the new school year, by September 2004. (See also Standard 18 later in this report with regard to information to be provided to children about their right to see their personal file).</p>		

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****2**

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *"Views are generally sought verbally although on some occasions boys write suggestions down. Verbal opinions occur in a number of ways and in different settings i.e. trips out, in meetings, one to one sessions, during activities, or on the journey there and back, at mealtimes, or bedtimes. The keyworker systems should also encourage boys to make suggestions". "Boys are encouraged to offer opinions and ideas openly and to make suggestions for evening activities. Boys are also asked for their opinions in relation to their school reports and these are recorded as part of the report"*.

In answer to the question 'Are staff good at letting you know about things that happen with your child?', 11 of the 13 responses from parents confirmed a satisfactory Yes.

In answer to the boarders questionnaire which asked 'Do staff ask your opinions about the School? 17 boys said yes, 3 said sometimes, and 4 said no. Only a small proportion of boys who answered this question felt that their opinions had made any difference to how the School is run.

As reported last year, there is a daily meeting at 4pm, where boys and staff gather together, to review their day. The meeting is mainly geared for staff to report on how well the boys have fared, praising achievements and good behaviour, and also commenting about situations where boys have not fared so well. The staff attending comprise teaching staff, and those with pastoral roles, so everyone gets a briefing on how the day has gone. The Inspectors felt it was positive that this meeting had been reinstated following a request from boys for it to be re-established.

Having observed this meeting the Inspectors felt that this forum was mainly geared to staff feedback, and is not a forum where boys can fully express their views.

Therefore the recommendation made at last year's inspection (for the School to introduce policy guidance for staff about their role and responsibilities for seeking the opinions and views of boarders) remains to be addressed. Also the recommendation that the School introduces forums to seek and obtain boarders feedback on life at the School. These areas will need to be actioned by the Head of Care, and an extended timescale for this to be developed was agreed as September 2004.

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?****2**

The Boarding Principles, including the right to privacy, are outlined in the School Prospectus, which states that *“Privacy – space, opportunities and facilities for the child to withdraw and be alone”*. The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *“The School has a room available for children to meet with visitors. The vast majority of visitors are social workers or youth offending officers. Both groups of people would already be known to the young person. Staff will sit on the meeting, should the young person request this”*.

With regard to confidentiality of information, the Inspectors did feel assured that staff were aware of what matters could be kept in confidence, and those matters that would need to be referred on, such as a child protection matter, or any issue where the safety and welfare of a boarder may be at risk.

Boys are able to make phone calls in private, to family or friends. Some boys have their own personal mobile telephones.

With regard to privacy in boarding areas, boys showering areas are provided with appropriate privacy curtains, including arrangements for them to undress / dress, with a degree of privacy. Each boarder is provided with a full hanging metal locker (and key) and they are encouraged to keep any valuables safely locked away. They can also ask the Head to safe-keep personal items on their behalf.

During the tour of the accommodation, boarders confirmed that, in the event of bedwetting, the School has ample supplies of fresh bedding, and that this is dealt with appropriately without causing the boarder any embarrassment or difficulty. Dormitories are shared, and therefore privacy in these areas is more difficult to achieve. Nonetheless, the boarders did not raise this as an issue during the inspection of the School.

21 boarders who completed a Questionnaire confirmed that there was enough privacy when using toilets and showers. However, the Inspectors did note during a tour of the accommodation that, in some areas, door locks were insecure, and boarders reported that if the doors were shaken, the bolts could be undone, and their privacy was compromised.

This is an issue that the School will need to address, and in respect of which a recommendation was made. This is linked with Standard 25 (which appears later in this Report) and recommends the installation of more appropriate door locks in bathroom, toilet, and shower areas.

A recommendation made at last year's inspection of the School with regard to the production of procedural guidelines for staff on the issues of privacy and confidentiality within the context of boarding, remains outstanding to be addressed. It is recommended that the School introduces written guidelines to staff covering access to case records; passing on information with child protection implications; practical details about the way, and when, boarders rooms, bathrooms and toilets are entered; showering and bathing arrangements and use of toilets; washing clothes; and intimate personal care. An extended timescale to September 2004 was agreed for this to be completed.

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**

A recommendation made at last years inspection of the School has been actioned, and the School has Complaints Procedures in place for staff, and boarders at the School.

24 boarders who completed a Questionnaire confirmed that they knew how to make a complaint if they needed to, and that this had been explained to them by various members of staff. 15 boarders were also able to list the names of people who they felt they would approach if they had a complaint, worry or concern. This included senior staff, care staff, keyworkers, and friends.

Any formal complaints made are referred to the Head of the School for action and response. The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that there have been no serious complaints about the School or those working there, in the last twelve months.

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

Number of complaints received by NCSC 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 Child Protection Policy forms part of the School Prospectus. The School also holds a copy of the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Procedures for Suffolk, and these are available to staff, for reference or referral purposes.

The Pre Inspection Questionnaires states that *“Child protection training takes place periodically. It is essential for staff to be available for this training which takes place during the three weeks allocated”*.

A positive development in the last twelve months is that child protection training was arranged in July 2003, at the end of the School term. This took place at the School, and all but the most recently recruited staff were involved.

In the last year, the School has been the subject of one child protection investigation involving a member of staff. The National Care Standards Commission was kept fully advised, and attended a Joint Strategy Meeting with police and social care representatives, at the School.

With regard to the School's policy and practice regarding staff working alone / one-to-one with a boarder, the School recognises the benefit that this can have in forming and maintaining relationships. The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *“A written policy is in the process of being drafted”*, in that regard (see the recommendation made in Standard 26).

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

As reported previously, there is a detailed policy on Bullying, which forms part of the Prospectus. This states that *“At Bramfield House, it is considered to be a basic entitlement for pupils to receive education, which is free from humiliation, oppression, and abuse. Thereby it becomes the responsibility of all adults within the school community to create an atmosphere which is caring, protective, and non-threatening”*.

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire states that *“The good relationships that exist between staff and pupils mean that staff can tackle incidents between young people as they happen. This also means that children are able to confide in staff when incidents take place. There is also good supervision which decreases the time when bullying can take place”*.

In respect of those boarders who completed a Questionnaire and answered the question ‘Are you being bullied at the school at the moment?’ sixteen boarders said they were not bullied at all / were hardly ever bullied. Six boarders reported that they had been bullied sometimes, and a further 5 boarders reported that they were often bullied. As a result, bullying was explored in more detail during the discussion groups with boarders, which took place on the first evening of the inspection. From discussion with one particular year group, the Inspectors felt that bullying in this particular context may have been due to the fact that, for a short period of time, this dormitory area was not being consistently supervised by a named member of staff, due to staffing shortages. The situation was therefore discussed with staff and the Inspectors were assured that staff were aware of the particular issues, and were aware of the need to closely monitor the situation.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

60 %

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**

As reported last year, the Head is aware of her responsibilities for notifying significant events to the appropriate Authorities.

A child protection referral was notified to the NCSC during 2003 (see Standard 5 above).

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**

0

0

0

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**

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire states that *"In the initial instance, the School will make contact with the home to find out why the child is absent. If there is a continued absence without a reasonable explanation, the School will notify the education authority. In the case of an unauthorised absence of a child from the school premises, staff make every effort to locate the child and return them to School. If a child has been absent for a period of one hour, local police are informed. Once the child has returned to School, every effort is made to talk through the incident and the reasons for it, with them"*.

The School is well versed in dealing with children who abscond or go missing from School. One strategy for supporting boys who are very upset, is to allow them time out to walk down the school drive and back, and to have a period of time to 'cool off'. Incidents of boys going missing are most likely to be as a result of upsets in the house or classroom. Every incident of a boy going missing outside of the school grounds without permission, is recorded. These records were examined and there were 6 entries made so far this year.

In response to a recommendation made at last year's inspection, the Head has confirmed that the protocol for dealing with missing pupils was developed in January 2004. This was examined at the inspection and was found to meet this Standard. The Head confirmed that the protocol had been discussed with local police officers – both the Community Beat Officer, and the Police Education Officer, both of whom have attended the School in recent months in their public relations and safety roles.

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

X

CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>During the course of this inspection, the Inspectors saw evidence that the School engenders mutually respectful relationships between boarders, and between boarders and members of staff. The Inspectors felt that the 4pm review meeting (which requires all staff and pupils to be present, and to listen to what is said, in respect of positive and less positive outcomes) was one way of maintaining clear boundaries and respectful relationships between staff and boarders at the School.</p> <p>The Inspectors participated in mealtimes, breakfast, lunch, and tea, and this provided evidence that mealtimes were appropriately relaxed and informal. Most usually, a member of staff will sit with a group of five or six pupils. There was a good balance of social conversation, and banter. Discipline was only applied when absolutely necessary. The Inspectors observed one event where a boarder became very upset at a mealtime. The situation was well handled, and the boarder was supported to leave the room, take time out, and then encouraged to return and rejoin the group.</p> <p>Good behaviours and positive attitudes towards each other are noted and rewarded. The Inspectors experienced the majority of boys as being friendly, polite, interested and helpful.</p> <p>Each child has a named Keyworker, and boarders can exercise an element of choice. If a keyworking situation breaks down, then the arrangements can be changed.</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?****2**

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire comments that *“Staff at school form close relationships with pupils and this is of paramount importance when talking of methods of control. These good relationships are the first level when looking at control. The School operates a points system which the majority of boys work within. There are other rewards for good behaviour, both in the class setting and in the house. These are often individual arrangements between staff and pupils working towards particular targets. When control is challenged there are a variety of different strategies used. This will include engaging the child in dialogue, using diversionary tactics, change of environment, moving to another room, passing the child on to another member of staff. In some cases a child may be taken home, this is usually by prior arrangement with the parents as a means of de-escalating a situation. In more serious situations physical restraint will be used. This can range from taking a child’s arm to guide them away, to a prone restraint”* The Pre Inspection Questionnaire also confirms that *“Exclusion is now being used more as an alternative to restraint”,* and that *“Methods of control and restraint have evolved with the School, in consultation and discussion with staff, through staff meetings, and reinforced during in-service training days”.*

In response to last year’s inspection, it is positive that the School is arranging for 2 days restraint training for staff working in teaching and care working roles. It is planned for this to be provided either during the Summer holiday recess. The methods of restraint training that has been arranged is TEACH training, which the Head confirmed as being appropriate in a Residential Special School environment. The School may, in the light of any training delivered, need to revise its policy, practice and written reporting arrangements in respect of episodes of restraint.

Following last year’s inspection of the School, recommendations were made with regard to the school’s policy and practice in respect of sanctions and discipline. Discussion with the Head confirmed that these recommendations remained outstanding for action. As a result, they are repeated below, with an extended timescale by which actions should have been taken.

In order to comply with the Criteria in 10.6 of this Standard the School is recommended to expand the policy to include reference to:

Any form of hitting a child; Enforced eating or drinking; Prevention of contact by telephone or letter with parents or any appropriate independent listener or helpline; Intentional deprivation of sleep; Use of fines other than by way of reparation and not exceeding two-thirds of the child’s immediately available pocket money provision; Intimate physical examination of the child; Withholding any aids or equipment needed by a child.

With regard to Criteria 10.9 of this Standard, whilst the Inspectors accepted that it might not be appropriate for each and every separate sanction to be recorded in this formal way, the Head must ensure that all **significant** sanctions are recorded, as evidence of actions taken by staff. A bound and numbered Sanctions Log, cross-referenced to individual incident reports, and sanctions records, should be introduced and maintained in respect of sanctions imposed in so far as they relate to withdrawal of privileges, application of fines, or curtailment of activities. This is particularly important as a safeguard against any future possibility that a pupil takes any form of legal action against the School, in respect of which written evidence would be required to account for the School’s actions in that respect.

As reported at last year's inspection, discipline and control at Bramfield House supports and focuses on the positive aspects of each boy. A daily 'Points' system is used to reward children who do well. Each new day starts with ten points, and extra points can be earned for attitude, volunteering, self-control, and positive or encouraging behaviour. Points are deducted for misbehaviour and disruption of classroom activities. If a pupil leaves the school premises without permission, five points (and the pocket money allowance for that week) are deducted. The Points system is used to allocate pocket money, and to provide 'treats' to boys who earn 50 points or more. The top scoring pupil each term receives a trophy, which they hold for one term.

20 Boarders who completed a Questionnaire confirmed that they felt punishments were Very Fair / Fair, with the remaining 6 who responded confirming that punishments were 'Usually Okay'.

With regard to the use of Control and Restraint, the School has developed a written Policy. The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *"Staff should have good grounds to believe that immediate action is necessary. Staff should take steps in advance to avoid the need for physical restraint. Only the minimum of force necessary to prevent injury or damage should be applied. If possible, other staff should be present. As soon as possible, the restraint should be gradually relaxed. The situation should be de-briefed as soon as possible for both the young person and the member(s) of staff"*.

In response to last year's inspection of the School, a bound book is now kept by the Head, which logs all incidents involving the use of physical restraint. The Inspectors examined this book during the course of the inspection, and found there had been 32 entries in the last 12 months. The majority of events had included an episode of violent challenging behaviour by a young person, and bullying was also cited as being a reason for restraint being applied.

In order to meet the Criteria in 10.14 of this Standard, it is recommended that the School revises the paperwork used to record incidents of restraint, in order to ensure that each of the Criteria within this element of the Standard are included in the written restraint reports being completed by staff. The restraint record, which will need to be cross referenced to the bound restraint log, must include the following information:

Name of the child; date and location where the physical intervention took place; details of the behaviour requiring use of physical intervention; the nature of the physical intervention used; the duration of the physical intervention; the name of the staff member(s) using physical intervention, and name(s) of any other staff present; the effectiveness and any consequences of the physical intervention; any injuries caused to or reported by the child or any other person; the signature of the Head, Head of Care, or a person authorised by the Head; the Governors or Owners of the School.

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?

2

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *“All pupils go home at weekends and holidays. The longest period of time they are away from their home base is four nights. Teaching staff organise college or work experience placements for children to move onto when they leave full time education”*.

As reported last year, the boys attending Bramfield House have all been admitted to the School as part of a pre-planned process, involving parents, carers, and Placing Authorities.

Although there is no formal procedure for introducing children, the Inspectors asked boarders in the discussion groups what their first experience of coming to the School had been like. They said they had been helped to settle in, and that they were allocated a 'buddy' to help them over the first few days.

A recommendation that remains outstanding since last year's inspection of the School relates to the Criteria 11.2 of this Standard, regarding boarders being provided with information. This links to Standard 1, earlier in this Report, which recommends that the School introduces a Boarders Guide, to be given to boarders when they first join the School.

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

As reported last year, the Inspectors felt that this Standard continues to be well met. The small size of the School, and the way in which the staffing arrangements for teaching and pastoral care overlap, mean that children are provided with consistent care and support. Teaching and pastoral staff have opportunities to meet and communicate on a daily basis, and the Inspectors felt that the tighter controls imposed around the school day were appropriately relaxed during the evening, so that boarders could enjoy recreational opportunities and activities.

The files seen included evidence of regular reviews of boarders progress in school, and that parents are kept well informed in that respect.

Some of the older boarders spoke about the arrangements being made to support them towards leaving school and moving on, and others about the opportunities for Work Experience placements, which were being arranged with local businesses.

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *"The School is set in large grounds and the children can have some supervised 'freedom'. There is plenty of space for a range of imaginative activities. The children all appreciate being in the countryside and also living in a large house"*. Also that activities in the community include *"Youth Club in Halesworth, and Leiston and Lowestoft Sports Centres. Local swimming pools, 9 ball pool hall in Beccles"*.

The Inspectors concluded that this Standard was well met. Recreational and social activities are given high priority, and boarders are provided with choices in that respect, and are asked to make decisions about what activities they want to do. This includes the chance to do short activities before the start of school, activities in the school lunch time, and activities at the end of School, including activities away from the School, such as Karting, swimming, and bowling.

The School has a good range of activities equipment, including sporting equipment, a pool table, bikes, and a small gymnasium, and indoor swimming pool used in warmer weather. There are also grounds used for sport, including a football pitch on the field at the front of the School.

Boarders who completed a Questionnaire said that some of the best things about the school were the activities and trips, playing games, watching videos, and using the School's computers, and being able to go out. Computer activities are supervised and there are appropriate restrictions on access to unsuitable material.

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 inspection included an interview with the School Matron She is a qualified RGN who has been working full time at the School for three years.

In response to a recommendation made at least years inspection, hand-washing facilities have now been provided in the Matrons office.

With regard to the provision of a separate sickbay for boarders who are unwell, this has not been actioned. The existing arrangements were therefore discussed again during this inspection. As a result, the Inspectors felt satisfied with the arrangements in place, given that no child boards at the School for more than four days in a week, and no child is present at the weekend. Any boarder who becomes unwell would most likely go back home. Whilst they remained unwell at School the Nurse would stay with them. No child boards at the School for more than four days in a week, and no children are present at weekends.

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *"Medication is kept in a locked cabinet in an allocated room. Medication is administered by nominated senior staff in the absence of the School Matron. Records are kept of any medication administered. Regular medication is taken to the child while they are having their meal, either breakfast, lunch, or tea. There is also a regular routine procedure for the care of an insulin diabetic child"*.

It also confirms that *"Children have regular dental and optician appointments. If a child needs to see a Doctor, an appointment will be made at the local surgery by the Matron"*.

The Inspection included obtaining feedback from the School GP who confirmed that he had *"Visited the School a month ago, and it would appear that the children are well looked after and there are no reservations or worries"*.

Since the last inspection, the School has been developing it's policies in respect of healthcare matters. Written guidance has been produced for staff, in respect of the administration of medication, and the Matron confirmed that this is adhered to. Also in respect of the use of the Epi-Pen and the majority of staff have received training in that respect.

A recommendation has been made for written records to be made in respect of each episode when the Epi Pen is used.

Another recommendation has been made that the school medication policy includes requiring staff to record the reason for any medications not administered, and that records about actual medications administered also include this information.

Parental consents are being obtained, and these were seen to be signed and dated.

However an additional recommendation has been given that written permissions should include the fact that the School may give a child a non-prescribed medication (if this was assessed as being required, e.g. for pain relief).

There are individual Health Care Plans for children at the School. These include the name,

admission date, date of birth, parents name and address, details of the GP, and other health and medical information. Positively, the Matron confirmed that new Care Plans are being drawn up which include health care information. These are based on hospital Care Plans which are being adapted by the Matron to suit the needs of children at the School. The new format for Care Plans, once implemented, will bring together various sections, into one comprehensive document. The Inspectors recognised this as a positive development.

With regard to an earlier recommendation made for the Matron to be provided with child protection training, this was discussed. The Matron confirmed that it was intended she would participate in the Foundation in Child Protection Training course, which is planned for the summer recess.

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?****4**

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *"Mealtimes are an area when choice may be seen as being limited. The school cook provides very tasty and nutritious meals made with fresh local ingredients. Many of the pupils live on take-away meals at home, and what we try to do at School is introduce them to home-cooking, and get them to try a range of meals"*.

The Inspectors have commended the School for the catering arrangements. They were invited to join breakfast, lunch, and tea. Boarders sit in groups of 5 or 6, with a member of staff on the majority of tables. The atmosphere is generally relaxed and informal, and conversation is encouraged.

The Inspectors observed that the food was well prepared and presented, and that there was ample, including 'seconds'. The kitchen staff are involved in serving from the dining room, and this gives them the opportunity to observe what boarders like, in terms of preferences and choices. Breakfast was a choice of toast, cereals, eggs and a hot drink, and lunch was roast chicken and vegetables, followed by fruit salad. Teatime also included options of lasagne, chicken, and salads, followed by home-made cakes.

Eighteen boarders who filled in a Questionnaire said that the food was very good, and a further seven said that it was usually good / okay.

The main kitchen was being kept clean, organised and in a hygienic state. Certificates of training in food hygiene / food handling were on display. Food was covered and labelled, and food was stored in a well organised manner. Fresh produce was being used, and written menus are being kept. Temperatures were regularly taken and recorded in respect of food temperature, cooking times, and refrigerator temperatures. Fresh fruit and fresh vegetables are used every day, and the Inspectors were told there is a satisfactory budget in that respect.

The catering staff confirmed that if they had any concerns about a boarder who was not eating, they would refer this to the pastoral staff, for action. They also confirmed that the one diabetic boarder controls his own diet, although they keep a 'watching eye' in this respect.

In response to last year's inspection the various sources of drinking water at the School have been identified and labelled.

In response to last years inspection recommendations, older boys are now able to prepare snacks in the small lounge area allocated to them. They can make hot drinks, and snacks, and have been provided with a microwave, toaster, kettle and 'fridge.

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?****2**

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *“Children bring their own clothes from home. If they have insufficient clothing a member of staff will contact parents. The School has a supply of clothing that children can use for a short period of time while their own clothes are obtained. Children are encouraged to hand any valuables and money to staff for safe-keeping. All children have at least one locker they can use, although there are many problems with children losing their locker keys.”*

As this is not a full-time boarding school, the boarders bring their personal clothing with them at the start of the week, and take these clothes home again on Friday.

There is no school uniform, and boarders wear casual clothing and footwear, such as jeans, teeshirts, sweatshirts and trainers. Each boarder has a small metal locker in their dormitory area, where they can hang up any clothing they have brought to school for that week. The Headteacher recognises that lost locker keys is a continuing problem and that many of the boarders at the School do need to be reminded about the need to maintain personal hygiene, and to change their clothing.

The system for pocket monies was not inspected in detail during this years inspection of the School, although the Inspectors understand from a meeting with the Head that a recommendation made last year in respect of recordings of pocket monies had not been actioned.

A further recommendation was made that boarders are asked to sign the monies record, as confirmation of monies received or handed over for safekeeping.

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?

2

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire states that *"This is an area that the School is working on at present. Staff have worked on Care Plans but they had not yet been shared individually with the young people. This does not mean that staff are not working with young people – in fact the opposite is the case."*

Last year's inspection of the School generated a recommendation with regard to developing written Placement Plans for each boarder. During discussion with the Head, the Inspectors were advised that this piece of work has started, but it has to be developed further. The intention is that each boarder at the School will have a comprehensive Placement Plan in place, by the start of the next School year i.e. September 2004, and an extended timescale has been given in that respect.

In practice the Inspectors felt that the staff were working hard to support the needs of individual boarders at the School, in consultation and liaison with their families. It is particularly positive that, during school holidays, contact is maintained between school staff and families. In particular with situations where the School knows that the family situation is a cause for concern, and where there might be difficult / delicate issues.

One boarder's file provided evidence of how the School was supporting him in dealing with anger management issues, including discussion with the Local Authority with a view to securing anger management therapy.

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

As part of the inspection, three boarders files were inspected. These provided evidence that essential information is recorded, including a photograph. The files contained School Reports and Pastoral Summaries at the end of each term. These included boarders and Headteachers comments. One boarders file provided evidence of the process and decision-making concerning an exclusion from School, including information to parents. Incident Reports are also kept on files, including episodes of restraint.

In respect of information for boarders about their rights to access their files, a recommendation made last year remains outstanding to be addressed. This relates to providing boarders with some information about their rights to access / read their file, and it has previously been agreed that this will be incorporated in the Children's Guide (see recommendation made in respect of Standard 1 above).

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

As reported previously, the School maintains a Register of all children, which includes the information outlined in Criteria 19.2 of this Standard.

With regard to staffing information see Standard 27 below, which makes recommendations about the School's recruitment and record keeping in that respect.

The Inspectors were provided with evidence that the School maintains (and retains) staffing rosters, incidents reports, restraint records, and menus of meals prepared and taken. With the exception of menus, the School is aware of the requirement to retain these records for at least 5 years from the date of the last entry.

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

This is an area where the School can be commended. A number of parents and one Placing Authorities who responded to Questionnaires made some positive comments about the arrangements for contact. Their comments include the following:

Parents responses:

"In the summer holidays one of the staff comes to visit us at home".

"My son is encouraged to ring home whenever he likes, and if I ring him at the School they always find him for me, no matter where he is".

"Staff are good at letting me know about things that happen" x 9

"They have good contact on the 'phone"

"Staff are warm, friendly and available"

"The communication between myself and the School regarding my son is exceptional"

"Head keeps in touch during the holidays, sometimes visiting homes of boarders".

The Placing Authority commented that *"There are no concerns regarding welfare or provision of care for our pupils placed at Bramfield House. The County Council has a good relationship with the School and has placed pupils in the School on a regular basis. Officers have visited the School many times".*

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

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *"All pupils go home at weekends and holidays. The longest period of time they are away from their home base is four nights. Teaching staff organise college or work experience placements for children to move onto when they leave full time education".*

The Headteacher has previously confirmed that any arrangements for pupils leaving care would be discussed with that young person's Placing Authority. With regard to any pupils leaving the School, the School works with that pupil to help them move on. This can include support with basic independent living skills, and also opportunities for older pupils to take up work placements, as part of developing their knowledge and skills towards gaining employment once they leave school. Arrangements were being made during the course of this inspection, for work placements at a local supermarket, firm of Joiners, with a Tree Surgeon, and at a local café / restaurant.

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?****2**

The stated ethos and philosophy of Bramfield House; the experience and competency of the staff; the staffing arrangements for supporting boarders; and the involvement of the pastoral staff – all combine to provide boarders with individual and collective support. The Headteacher (and other staff) take particular interest in the pastoral care of boarders who have more challenging behaviours, as well as those with complex family situations. The fact that staff working at Bramfield House visit families during the School holidays provides continuity of support and ensures that boarders know that staff are still ‘there for them’ even when the School is closed.

With regard to developing arrangements for independent advocacy for boarders at the School the Headteacher has not yet found any persons local within the community either willing or suited to take this on.

The recommendation from last years inspection therefore remains outstanding to be addressed.

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 School is on the outskirts of Bramfield village, and is located adjacent to a working farm. There are extensive grounds, and the majority of the School is located in the main house – a large three storey period property. As such, the premises would not meet the Criteria 23.2 of this Standard and be suitable to accommodate children with physical disabilities.

Since last year's inspection, work has been carried out to the School's external fire escapes.

With regard to Criteria 23.6, the Proprietors of the School – Mr and Mrs Anstes – do occupy accommodation on the first floor, on a part-time basis. Their accommodation is accessed from within the School, via the first floor. This area is in close proximity to boarding areas, and the Inspectors noted that the safety and privacy of boarders could be compromised by these arrangements, although this was not raised as an issue during this (or the last) inspection of the School. In practice, the Proprietors are frequently away during term-time, and there are no boarders present at the School during the weekends or school holidays. Visitors to the School are monitored, in so far as the main entrance is kept locked, and visitors are only invited in once their identity and the purpose of their visit has been established.

With regard to maintaining good relationships within the local community the Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *"The School makes every effort to liaise closely with all of the above groups. Pupils regularly participate in work experience in the locality and also socialise to a small extent i.e. attending the local youth club"*. The same section of the Pre Inspection Questionnaire also confirms that the School *"does not have any problems with other professionals, with neighbours, or the local community"*.

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 Pre Inspection Questionnaires confirms that *“There are seven bedrooms ranging from three beds to six. The boys are allocated to bedrooms dependent on friendship groups, age, and their relationship with the member of staff in charge of the bedroom”*.

This inspection included a pupil guided tour of the boarding facilities. The accommodation and facilities are appropriate for the boarders. There is plenty of space, both indoors and outdoors. The grounds are well maintained and the boarding areas are homely and comfortable. Dormitories are maintained to a satisfactory standard. Older boarders are provided with additional facilities for making hot drinks and snacks. The tour of the accommodation confirmed there is little accidental or deliberate damage, and that repairs that are identified, are actioned promptly. Reasonable standards are being maintained.

The Headteacher's Self Assessment comments that *“The Proprietor has an extensive programme of maintenance underway. This includes electrics, sewage works, plumbing, and renewal of windows”*.

In response to last year's inspection, a programme for refurbishment and redecoration of the external paintwork and fascias has begun, and the buildings now looked better cared for.

This is not a full-time boarding School, and therefore the boys do not tend to personalise their individual bed space to any significant degree. Some boys have put up posters, but generally speaking, the dormitories are kept fairly simple. In addition to beds, comfortable settees and television sets have been provided in each dormitory. These have proved popular in the evenings, at the end of the planned activities, when boys go upstairs into their dormitory areas, to spend sometime together before bedtime.

In response to last year's inspection, the School has made some changes in dormitories to ensure that only even numbers of boarders are accommodated in dormitories. As part of ongoing replacements, bunk beds will be replaced with single beds. Older boarders are, in any event, provided with single (as opposed to) bunk beds. Lighting in dormitories is restricted to overhead lighting only, but the Inspectors were told that boys do not read in bed, and once they actually get into bed, 'lights out' quickly follows.

Each boarder is provided with a single metal hanging locker to hang their clothes. The majority of boarders laundry is taken home and done at the weekends. The Pre Inspection Questionnaire also confirms that *“A part-time domestic is responsible for washing children's clothes. There is no facility at the School for children to wash their own clothes. Some children prefer to take their clothes home to wash. Children are only resident for a maximum of four nights at any one time”*.

With regard to contact with their families, the boarders do have access to a telephone that they can use in private to make and receive calls to and from family and friends. There is a ground floor room set aside for meetings, and for family visits. Drinks can also be made. Boarders confirmed that there is somewhere comfortable and private to go, with visitors.

The arrangements for hobbies, sports and recreational activities were good. Boys were

offered a variety of choices for their evening's recreation. These included in-house activities, use of the school facilities and grounds, as well as recreational trips out i.e. to the local indoor swimming pool.

With regard to the arrangements for supervising boarders at night, the School employs a waking night person who comes on duty at 11pm and leaves at 7pm. During the course of the night there are regular dormitory patrols and the night staff stays on the landing area, to support any boarders who are unwell, or need help. This waking night shift is backed up by another member of the pastoral care staff, who sleeps-in, using a room that is nearby.

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?	2
<p>The School has addressed a recommendation made last year, and the ground floor urinal area has been improved to a better standard.</p> <p>There are adequate numbers of baths, showers, toilets and urinals for the numbers of boarders being looked after.</p> <p>The Inspectors were told during the tour of the accommodation that not all door locks worked effectively. In particular the large sliding bolt types can be tampered with, and doors can be undone from the outside, as a prank by other boys. The Inspectors also noted that where new doors (and door locks) had been fitted, the locks were not of a suitable type that could be opened from the outside in the event of an emergency. This is something that is recommended the School addresses.</p>		
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
<p>A recommendation from last year with regard to maintenance of the School's external fire escapes has been addressed. In other respects, the Inspectors found evidence that the following health and safety matters need to be addressed:</p> <p>One wash hand basin where there was a reading of a hot water temperature at 64° C. This is an excessively hot water temperature and one which the School should urgently address.</p> <p>Fire precautionary arrangements – the records inspected failed to provide evidence that fire points throughout the School are being tested on a regular basis (although according to the School Prospectus, these are checked on a weekly basis). This is a health and safety matter that the School should address.</p> <p>With regard to risk assessments, the Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that <i>"Boys are alerted to the hazard or risk or may be asked to refrain from using a certain area until the problem is dealt with. An example is during a recent cold spell, the boys were asked to stay away from frozen areas until they could be treated with salt and grit"</i>. In respect of 26.3 of this Standard, the following recommendations remain outstanding from last year's inspection of the School:</p> <p>The School expands the risk assessment process already in place to address issues associated with ensuring the health, safety and welfare of boarders and staff. This to encompass all aspects of the School's operation – including classroom activity; grounds; premises; equipment; vehicles; social and recreational activities; and health care issues.</p> <p>The School formalises the verbal process for reporting health and safety hazards and requires staff to report in writing any matter of risk or concern.</p> <p>With regard to the School developing a written policy and working practice for members of</p>		

staff who may be working alone, or be involved in one-to-one contact with a boarder (see also Standard 28.6 with regard to waking night staff), a recommendation has been made for this to be addressed. In respect of this point, the Inspectors were made aware of past situations where a boarder had been invited to the home of a member of pastoral staff. This was discussed in detail with the Headteacher, as the Inspectors were concerned for a number of reasons, and felt that all parties were very vulnerable in this situation. The Headteacher agreed that this would no longer be an acceptable practice, and that all staff would be advised accordingly.

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
<p>The Pre Inspection Questionnaire states that <i>“Permission for checks are acquired when people express interest in a post. This is followed up if staff are offered a post. Care, teaching and learning support staff are checked through the enhanced disclosure at CRB. All education and care staff have been subject to satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau checks. Domestic and maintenance staff have little access to children and have not been checked”</i>. In order to meet the requirements for children’s services, the School will need to address this, to ensure that all staff who could have unsupervised access to children at the School have been subject to Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures at enhanced level, (and to renewal of CRB Disclosures at three yearly intervals).</p> <p>With regard to the School’s process for recruiting new staff, recommendations made following last year’s inspection remain outstanding to be addressed:</p> <p>Written references to be verified in a direct discussion (i.e. over the telephone) with the referee (27.2iv)</p> <p>All interviews have a written record of the outcome (27.2v)</p> <p>Checks on proof of relevant qualifications (27.2vi)</p> <p>Any CV’s / Applications which are incomplete, sketchy in detail, and make it difficult to track possible gaps in employment to be returned for full completion</p> <p>Gaps in CV’s to be fully explored with satisfactory explanations during the interview process and details of those discussions recorded (27.2 vii and ix).</p> <p>Contracts of employment not to be issued until all other checks including references have been received and agreed as satisfactory (27.6 and 27.2)</p> <p>The School Prospectus confirms that the School employs a Deputy Headteacher, a Head of Care, and Senior Care Worker, all of whom have pastoral care responsibilities. In addition, there are five named Care Staff, and two relief staff providing care support. Other staff with pastoral roles include the Day Matron, Day Matron’s Assistant, and the Night Waking Watch.</p>			
Total number of care staff:	6	Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:	5

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?****2**

During the course of this inspection the Inspectors felt that historically shortages of Care Staff may have had a direct impact on supervision / provision of care. In particular the Inspectors were concerned that a reduction in staffing levels meant that one dormitory was not supervised on a day to day basis by the same member of staff. From discussion with boarders in that dormitory, the Inspectors felt that issues associated with bullying in that particular dormitory could have been linked to staffing shortages. The situation was discussed with staff on duty during the evening inspection, and the Inspectors were given reassurances in that respect. Nonetheless, the Inspectors felt that if staffing levels were further enhanced, this would provide stronger pastoral support during the evenings, (as well as providing cover in the event that staff are absent from their usual duty shift.

Recommendations remaining outstanding from last year's inspection of the School relate to:

Criteria 28.6 A Lone Working Policy being developed for staff working at the School (see also Standard 26 above)

The development of a waking night risk assessment which identifies any likely risks to children, to staff, and members of the public. This to demonstrate there are no unacceptable levels of risk from the night time arrangements.

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**

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *“There are three weeks in the year set aside for staff training. These are traditionally one week at Easter and two at the start of the summer holidays. However, this has recently been changed to one week at the start of the summer holidays and one week at the end of the summer holidays”*.

Due to the departure of the previous Head of Care, and the recent new appointment to this post, those recommendations made following last years inspection of the School with regard to induction, training, support and supervision remain outstanding to be addressed. These are outlined again, as follows:

The School’s induction programme is provided to all newly appointed staff (Criteria 29.2)
The School’s induction programme covers both the local Area Child Protection Committee Procedures for child protection, and the School’s own written policy guidance in that respect (29.2)

It covers the School’s notification of incidents procedure (29.2)

A training budget to be provided to enable the training programme for staff to cover each of the 21 areas outlined in Appendix 2 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools (29.4)

Each member of staff to have a personal development plan (29.5)

Staff working in any capacity with children at the School to have received training appropriate to their role about the needs of children accommodated (29.6)

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?****2**

The Pre Inspection Questionnaire states that *“There is a basic induction package for new care workers, overseen by the Head of Care. All new workers are teamed with an experienced staff member for the first few weeks to get a feel for the running of different activities and the discipline and boundaries involved... Time constraints have made undertaking regular supervision sessions very difficult”*.

As reported last year, the School has yet to fully develop the arrangements for the induction and supervision of all staff. The Head of Care has primary responsibility for supervision of pastoral staff, but as a newly appointed postholder was unable to confirm that this was yet formalised or taking place on a regular basis. Similarly, whilst he had received some supervision from the Headteacher, this had not been formalised or recorded, although the Headteacher confirmed in the Pre Inspection Questionnaire that *“time is spent with the new Head of Care most days, discussing his work”*. These are areas that remain outstanding to be addressed, and where last year’s recommendations have therefore been made again:

With regard to Criteria 30.2 the School to fully introduce a formal process for supervision of all staff which enables all staff to receive at least 1.5 hours of 1:1 supervision each half-term
The School to formalise the arrangements for new staff to receive 1:1 supervision at least fortnightly during their first two terms of employment.

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?****2**

Given that there have been some changes in personnel at the School, the Inspectors felt that the arrangements for overseeing and developing the pastoral care at the School have not yet been fully consolidated, and that more direction and input was required by the person in role as Head of Care in that respect. The Inspector's acknowledged that, at the time of the inspection, the Head of Care had only recently been appointed, and was, to an extent, finding his feet, rather than taking any lead role. Reference is also made earlier in this Report to the fact that the Head of Care only remained in post for three months, and that the position was vacant again by the time of the feedback meeting at the School on 7 April 2004.

There is an 'end of the week management meeting' between the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Head of Care and Senior Care Worker. This meeting is used to review pastoral care matters during that week.

An interview was held with the Deputy Headteacher, and Senior Care Worker, during which they expressed a certain degree of frustration about the current arrangements, including the division of their time between teaching and pastoral care responsibilities.

The role of Keyworkers at the School is also being developed, with a view to their taking a more active role in developing Plans of Care. The Headteacher has recognised the fact that the Keyworker role needs review. In her self assessment she comments that *"The Keyworker role needs whole staff discussion as to what the term means and what the expectation of a Keyworker should be. Care Plans are part of this, and are in the early stages of development"*. *Care Plans and the Keyworker role are being discussed at present. However, time is the problem, as the main focus of our work is working with the young people"*. Recommendations have been made in respect of Care Plans, and Keyworking roles in this respect.

With regard to staff training and development, the Pre Inspection Questionnaire confirms that *"Last September, 4 care staff began an Open University Course. Two subsequently left, but the other 2 staff are continuing their studies. Most of the work entailed in this is undertaken in their own time, but time off is allowed for the exams"*. The Headteacher is aware of the Criteria in 31.4 of this Standard, which sets a minimum ratio of 80% of care staff to have completed NVQ Level 3 (or equivalent) in caring for children / young people, by the year 2005.

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

X %

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 part of this inspection, one of the Inspectors met with the Proprietor, Mr Anstes. He confirmed his involvement in the School has been mainly confined to financial matters. There is an intention that his son may become more actively involved, including taking on responsibility for undertaking the requirements of Standard 33 (below) to visit the School half-termly, and produce a written report on the conduct of the School.

Mr Anstes confirmed that funding was available to continue with development of the School including the provision of a training budget.

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

See also above. During the feedback meeting, the Inspector asked the Headteacher about intentions for fulfilling the requirements of Standard 33 and whether these have been further developed. During the course of the inspection, the Inspectors were provided with a copy of the Report compiled following a visit carried out by the Assistant Headteacher late in 2003, and gave some feedback to the School that the format and content of this appeared to comprehensively cover the requirements of this Standard.

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

Not Applicable

Lay Assessor

N/A

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 25th – 27th February 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

Part D Headteacher's Response to Inspection. 25 – 27 February 2004-07-05

Page 7/8 What the school should do better in boarding welfare

The Head of Care in post at the time of the inspection left by mutual agreement with the school the week after the inspection. As noted the post of Head of Care is of crucial importance. The current Deputy Headteacher has taken over some of the duties and the post will be advertised again in Autumn Term.

Page 12 Re Standard RS3RS25

I have spoken with Care standards to ask advice on toilet locks suitable for an EBD residential school and am yet to receive suitable guidance.

Page 49 Re interview with Deputy Headteacher.

The Deputy Headteacher has taken over some of the Head of Care post responsibilities and no longer teaches.

A number of the previous standards have not been met due to the previous Head of Care leaving his post at the end of the Summer Term 2003. The post was vacant for a term and the next appointed person left the post after two months. Although the post is being covered internally this is not a long term solution.

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

YES

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

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 8th June 2004, 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

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 Bramfield House 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 Bramfield House 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.