



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

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

Horton Lodge

Rudyard

Leek

Staffs

ST13 8RB

29 September 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

Horton Lodge

Address

Rudyard, Leek, Staffs, ST13 8RB

Tel No:

01538 306214

Fax No:

Email Address:

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

Staffordshire County Council

Name of Head

Ms C Coles

CSCI Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Children with physical disabilities

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

03/03/04

04/03/04

Date of Inspection Visit		29 September 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	Elizabeth Taylor	075779
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Chris Garrett	105812
Name of CSCI Inspector	3		
Name of CSCI Inspector	4		
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection			

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Lead Inspector	<u>Liz Taylor</u>	Signature	<u><i>Liz Taylor</i></u>
Second Inspector	<u>Chris Garrett</u>	Signature	<u><i>Chris Garrett</i></u>
Locality Manager	<u>George Plant</u>	Signature	<u><i>George Plant</i></u>
Date	<u>7 December 2004</u>		

INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

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

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Horton Lodge. 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

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

Horton Lodge School is part of the Education provision maintained by Staffordshire County Council Education Service. The School is situated in Staffordshire Moorlands, approximately three miles outside the market town of Leek and ten miles from Stoke on Trent. The buildings are a mix of old and new, dating from 1890 to the present day and are set within ten acres of ground. The school's education system is called 'Conductive Education' which addresses all areas of a child's development. The school has qualified Conductor/Teachers and works closely with the International Peto Institute in Budapest. The school also provide a 'learning centre' for parents, on site, and support children in a range of different educational settings.

The School offers education for boys and girls, aged between 2 – 11 years with physical disabilities. The majority of the children are day pupils though there is provision for fifteen residential places each weekday. Flexible boarding arrangements are promoted and many of the boarding pupils are resident only one or two nights per week. Many of the children have additional learning difficulties and some have additional visual, hearing and/or speech and language difficulties.

The residential provision is sited on the ground floor, in a separate wing with an interconnecting corridor to a number of classrooms. The residential area is comprised of a dining/lounge room, staff office, bedrooms, bathrooms and toilets. The bedrooms vary in size between single occupancy to a maximum of four.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

The Headteacher provided clear leadership. Both the Headteacher and the Head of Care were observed to be easily accessible to staff, pupils and parents and communicated effectively at all levels.

It was evident that boarding pupils were being offered a caring, supportive and well-structured environment which promoted individual self-esteem and made them feel safe. Comments by some of the boarding pupils showed they viewed their boarding time as a positive experience; a time to spend with friends and join in activities together.

The Inspectors spent time observing a small number of boarding pupils in the classroom as well as the boarding provision. This was to enable an evaluation to be made of the schools' philosophy of a holistic approach to each pupil. There was a high degree of consistency and continuity in staffs approach to the conductive education of pupils between the education and boarding settings. Recognition continued to be given to meeting the whole needs of each child and to making them feel safe and cherished, to support their educational development.

A particular strength of the school was its framework of procedures to safeguard young people both within and outside the school.

An area for development identified in the last report related to the process of meal times. Action had been taken by the school to resolve the tensions and these were seen to have resulted in mealtimes being a more relaxed and sociable event for both pupils and staff. The new system was sensitive to individual pupils needs and supported their conductive programmes.

The findings of the report are based on the pre-inspection information provided by the school, observations and information gained during the two day inspection which included an early morning and late evening period and information gained from discussions with boarding pupils, parents questionnaires and information provided by other professionals and interested persons.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

This report contains only one recommendation, which is reflective of the good standard of care offered within the school. A number of advisory recommendations are made to assist the school in its developmental planning process.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

This was a positive inspection visit with evidence of good practice in all areas. There was clear evidence the school had embraced the principles of good child-care practices and the guidance outlined in the National Minimum Standards. No concerns were identified regarding the safety or well-being of boarding pupils.

The management team continued to demonstrate a willingness to critically evaluate the standards of care provided and welcomed suggestions for improvements. The service was seen to be inclusive and evolving.

The Inspectors were impressed by the whole staff group who displayed both a commitment to their own professional development and to developing the quality of service offered to all pupils.

The Inspectors spent some time observing a small number of boarding pupils both as they attended classes as well as the residential provision. It was observed that the concept of 'an active learning environment' was successfully transferred from the classroom to the residential unit and visa versa. The crossover of staff working both within the teaching and residential areas of the school was considered to be crucial in ensuring consistency in approach and practice with pupils which, in turn, underpinned the learning process.

The Inspectors observations were that the boarding pupils were happy and felt safe in the school environment. Pupils were seen to be relaxed in the company of staff and there was good use of humour between both parties. Staff were observed to promote the privacy and dignity of the pupils at all times.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare.

No	Standard*	Recommended Action	
1	RS26	Routine checks are undertaken on all lockable doors to the residential provision.	With immediate effect

ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

Identified below are advisory recommendations on welfare matters addressed in the main body of the report and based on the National Minimum Standards, made for consideration by the school.

No	Refer to Standard*	Recommendation
1	RS1	The telephone number for the Commission for Social Care Inspection is corrected and information is provided about the Commissions role in the school's Statement of Purpose and other relevant documentation.
2	RS2	Staff ensure pupil's are given adequate time to indicate their preference.
3	RS3	Parents are made aware of the special device connected to the phone used by boarding pupils.
4	RS5	All staff and governors who may have individual contact with staff or unsupervised contact with the children are provided with child protection training.
5	RS10	Staff continue to develop record keeping in respect of the measures of control they adopt to promote acceptable behaviour by pupils.
6	RS13	The latest risk assessment model includes a review date.
7	RS17	Each care and placement plan target is expressed as a small, measurable step which staff can more easily and accurately evaluate as to whether it has been attained or not.
8	RS17	Staff are encouraged to record actual observations of pupils actions as evidence to support attainment or otherwise.
9	RS25	The temperature in toilets in the boarding provision be monitored.
10	RS26	Given the number of drivers using the vehicle and because of the schools remote location, the schools minibus receives an extensive weekly check.
11	RS27	The Headteacher discuss the matter of completed CRB staff checks with the Human Resources section in the education department.

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	NO
Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas	NO

Checks with other Organisations

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	YES
• School Doctor	YES
• Independent Person	YES
• Chair of Governors	YES

Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	NO
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	NO
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	YES
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	NO
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	29/09/04
Time of Inspection	9.20
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	39
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	2

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

SCHOOL INFORMATION

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

NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

BOYS

GIRLS

TOTAL

Number of separate Boarding Houses

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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There was a school Prospectus which provided clear details about the service offered by the school. There was a separate Parent's Guide to complement the Statement. Both documents had been reviewed and revised since the last inspection visit. Other documentation was also available to parents and other interested parties, to further inform them about the operation of the school.

It was noted the telephone number for the CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection) was incorrect in the Prospectus and other documentation. Responses to questionnaires sent to parents elicited that most were unaware of the role played by the Commission in respect to boarding provision in the school.

It is advised the telephone number for the Commission is corrected and information is provided about the Commissions role in the school's Statement of Purpose and other relevant documentation.

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?

4

The whole staff team were observed to promote communication for all boarding pupils, regardless of their disability. Various approaches and types of equipment were being used to enable individual children to express their views and opinions, both in respect of their daily lives and their future. Information in a pupil's file showed staff had responded to concerns expressed by her parents about her communication aid being inadequate to meet her changing needs. Action had been taken to re-assess her needs and alternative equipment was being sought to aid her communication.

There was written evidence that each child's likes and dislikes and preferred daily routine had been gained prior to their becoming a boarding pupil. Information in pupil 'profiles' had been updated to demonstrate developmental progress or changes in need.

Residential pupil's meetings had been implemented since the last inspection visit. These had been held monthly during school terms. Records of the meetings showed pupil's views had been gained about a range of issues to do with boarding, such as decoration of the dining room, activities and meals. A children's Advocate continued to visit the boarding pupils on a regular basis to gain their views about a range of matters relating to the running of the school.

Boarding pupils were noted to have attended their annual Review meeting, either for all or part of the meeting.

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Staff were observed to seek the views of boarding pupils in all aspects of their daily lives, or to act in accordance with the known/supposed preferences of each child as detailed in their Admission notes. On a small number of occasions staff more readily assumed a pupil's choice, from their known preferences, rather than give pupil's time to indicate their preference.

It is advised that staff review their practice in this area.

The School operated an 'open door' policy for parents. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher, (the latter held a dual role as Head of Care), were seen to be readily accessible to both pupils and parents, throughout the day and evening

Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.11)

The school and staff respect a child's wish for privacy and confidentiality so far as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Staff were observed to respond sensitively and quickly to the personal care needs of the boarding pupils and to uphold confidentiality at all times.

Pupils were able to spend time in their bedroom without staff supervision. The Headteacher said cardboard screens were being purchased to promote privacy for individual children in multi-occupancy bedrooms. A few screens had initially been bought to check they were suitable for the job. The intention was for each child to decorate their own screen and be able to use it when boarding. The screens were easily portable and provided a degree of privacy, if desired.

Baby monitors were being used to help supervise pupils suffering from nocturnal epileptic seizures. The management team were looking to purchase more appropriate monitoring aids. Written consent had been gained from pupil's parents for the use of monitoring equipment in this respect.

A telephone for use by boarding pupils was available in a large lobby just off the residential area. The location provided a degree of privacy however, the phone was connected to an amplifier to make it easier for staff to hear and assist pupils with their conversations. It was unclear whether all parents of boarding pupils had been made aware of the additional listening device.

It is advised parents are made aware of the arrangements for use of the phone by boarding pupils.

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

Information about the complaints procedure was available to pupils, parents, staff and other significant people in the pupils lives. There were various systems operating in the school for gaining the views of boarding pupils including boarders' meetings, which had been implemented since the last inspection.

There was written evidence to show both parents and pupils views were listened to and acted upon. Records showed one complaint had been made by a pupils' parents since the last inspection. There was written evidence to show action was being taken to resolve the matter.

An Independent Visitor for boarding pupils continued to visit regularly to meet with the pupils and ascertain their views and any concerns. Her visits were unannounced and she was noted to visit at various times throughout weekday evenings. Information forwarded by the Independent Visitor to the Commission showed there had not been any concerns expressed by boarding pupils.

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

1

Number of above complaints substantiated:

1

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The school had been proactive in responding to the recommended actions and advisory recommendations made in the last report.

The Inspectors were provided with a copy of the recently revised schools' child protection policy. An examination of this document titled 'Horton Lodge Community Special School, Child Protection Policy and Practice' showed it provided all information and guidance required by Minimum Standards and associated legislation.

The school had provided whole school training on Child Protection; this was presented by an Education Officer from the local education authority and delivered to the whole school team including ancillary staff. The Inspectors spoke to a number of ancillary staff who had attended the training. They stated they had found it interesting and that it had increased their awareness of the subject. A cross-section of the staff group were able to demonstrate that they had a good understanding of the procedure for reporting either a disclosure or suspected abuse. It is the Inspectors understanding that refresher training on child protection is going to be undertaken by all of the staff, on an annual basis.

The Inspectors were advised that the Board of Governors had identified one of its members to take a specific interest in child protection issues. The member would provide another avenue for staff or parents to raise any concerns about suspected or known abuse. The Inspectors were told that the Governor taking on this responsibility and the Schools Independent Visitor had not been able to attend the recent child protection training session. However, arrangements were being made for them to attend a course later this year. The Chair of Governors and the Headteacher said they were also looking for suitable child protection training for the Board of Governors.

It is advised that all staff and governors who may have individual contact with staff or unsupervised contact with the children are provided with child protection training.

The Inspectors felt the schools commitment to child protection training was an example of

good practice.

Information in the Parents Guide had been revised to include information on child protection, including contact numbers for various agencies.

The Deputy Headteacher had recently been appointed dual responsibility as Head of Care. In this role she was the Designated Person for child protection in the school. The Head of Care was able to demonstrate a sound understanding of the designated persons role and the schools child protection procedures.

Following previous discussion with the Inspectors, the Head of Care /Designated Person had designed a referral form to be used when contacting social services and had provided new guidance to staff on the use of body charts.

The purpose of body charts was to record the location of any bruise or injuries caused by known or unknown means. The Inspectors examined the advice and guidance and noted that staff were required to record any marks or bruise they may observe on the charts. They were advised that they must not ask a child to show them 'marks that are covered up unless (the child) has volunteered to show them'. The Designated Person was monitoring the charts for signs of any trends, patterns or reoccurrences that may indicate a cause for concern. The Inspectors considered this practice was appropriate in this particular residential setting as staff provided a high level of personal and intimate care to boarding pupils.

The Designated Person kept separate, secure files on child protection matters. A system had been introduced that alerted staff reading a child's main file that a secondary file existed with the Designated Person. The Inspectors were advised that there were no current child protection concerns for any of the boarding pupils.

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

0

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
<p>There was an anti-bullying policy. The policy was referred to in the Parent's and Children's Guides.</p> <p>The Inspectors spoke with a number of the boarding pupils and observed interaction between pupils and between staff and pupils throughout the two day inspection period; no concerns were raised or identified about bullying. The pupils were aware of what constituted bullying as this continued to be a topic discussed in boarder's meetings.</p>		
Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied		100 %

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
<p>There was an established system for notifying appropriate persons and authorities of significant events affecting the safety and well-being of the pupils. There was clear evidence on pupil's files to show the system had been implemented promptly and appropriately.</p> <p>The Headteacher has demonstrated a willingness to liaise with the Commission readily for advice about matters over and above the formal notification system.</p>		
NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO CSCI DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:		
• conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children		0
• serious harm to a child		0
• serious illness or accident of a child		0
• serious incident requiring police to be called		0

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)		
The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The Inspectors have previously acknowledged that, as a large number of the children at the school have limited mobility, the likelihood of a child absconding from the school was minimal.</p> <p>Nevertheless, in accordance with good practice, the school had produced a document titled 'Pupil Absconding Action Plan' which provided clear information to staff on what action should be taken were a child to abscond or to go missing from the school. The guidance advised prompt and early referral to the Police and advice on when to notify parents. It also included advise about the need to notify the Commission of such an event.</p> <p>Two further documents titled 'Coping with a Crisis at School' (produced by Staffordshire Local Education Authority) and a school document 'Coping with a Crisis at School Policy' (dated November 2002) also provided guidance on what steps should be taken if a child was missing under suspicious circumstances.</p> <p>To date, no pupils have absconded. Consequently, there has not been the need for a recording system to be implemented. Following discussion with the Headteacher and Head of Care it was agreed a recording system would be implemented, as part of the schools' existing policy and procedural guidance.</p>		
Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:		0

CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
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Interaction between staff and boarding pupils was seen to be positive and based on mutual respect. Staff were observed to be sensitive to the needs and feelings of the pupils at all times.

The boarding provision offered a nurturing environment which supported pupils in their endeavours to gain or develop independence skills. Pupils were observed to be treated with respect and this was reciprocated. The atmosphere in the boarding provision was relaxed with good use of humour initiated both by staff and the pupils.

Pupils were seen to be relaxed when staff were ministering to their personal care needs. Staff were observed to respond quickly and sensitively to the individual needs of pupils and to uphold privacy and dignity when carrying out personal care tasks.

The staff group caring for boarding pupils had been comprised of females only however, it was pleasing to note a male member of staff had just been appointed to join the team to provide a gender balance.

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.26)

Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour, and where the behaviour of children is regarded as unacceptable by staff, it is responded to by constructive disciplinary measures which are approved by the Head of Care.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There was a behaviour management policy which promoted the use of positive measures to manage unacceptable behaviours displayed by some pupils. The positive measures included verbal praise, star charts and certificates.

Discussion with various staff involved in the care of boarding pupils elicited that very few negative measures were used as the pupils generally did not display unacceptable behaviours. In most instances when a pupil was observed to display agitation or wish not to cooperate with a task, staff used a diversionary tactic or offered the pupil some 'quiet time' in their bedroom. These tactics were seen to have the desired effect of calming a situation and enabling the child to start a task afresh.

There was evidence staff were recording some instances of positive and negative measures administered to boarding pupils. However, this remained an area for development as the records did not always exemplify the effective way in which staff managed pupils' behaviours and moods.

It is advised staff continue to develop record keeping in respect of the measures of control they adopt to promote acceptable behaviour by pupils.

QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

A policy and procedure was in place regarding admissions to, and discharge from, the school.

The procedure for admission as a boarding pupil differed slightly for each pupil based on discussions with them and their parents. All admissions were planned and were preceded by several visits for tea and/or evening activities by the pupil prior to having an overnight stay. This gradual introduction was seen to promote boarding as a positive measure for pupils. This was further enhanced by the flexible arrangements for boarding, from one to four nights per week, which gave pupils a clear timeframe for them to understand what day/s they were boarding and when they were due to go home.

Some boarding pupils were able to express they were happy with their boarding arrangements and were sorry to be leaving to move to senior school provision.

Clear transition arrangements for pupils moving on were identified, whenever possible, well in advance of their final school year. Records showed staff were active in enabling pupils to visit their next placement and preparing them for change prior to their discharge from school. Staff were also said to provide continuing support for a number of ex-pupils in local senior schools.

Practice in this area was commendable.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

The care staff group were comprised of Personal Support Workers and Residential Social Workers. The former worked both in the classroom situation and residential provision.

The school's philosophy of addressing all aspects of a child's development, throughout their waking day, was demonstrated by a joint education and care plan which was in place for each boarding pupil. The Inspectors spent some time observing a small number of boarding pupils both as they attended classes as well as the residential provision. It was observed that the concept of 'an active learning environment' was transferred from the classroom to the residential unit and visa versa, though in a less structured environment in the residential unit. Staff in both areas were seen to be working towards the same goals with individual pupils and to be consistent in their practice and approach.

Boarding pupils were being offered a range of recreational and leisure activities each evening, both on and off site, which promote learning and contributed to each pupil's educational progress.

The crossover of staff working both within the teaching and residential areas of the school was considered to be essential to ensure consistency in approach and practice with pupils which, in turn, underpinned the learning process.

The Inspectors concluded that practice in this area was commendable.

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 Inspectors found evidence in a variety of records including pupil's files, the Children's Guide and activity records that boarding pupils were being offered an opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.

On site activities included Gym Club and Cooking Club whilst off site activities included Brownies. (The school were still pursuing the possibility of finding a local Beavers Club for the boys).

The residential provision had been reorganised to accommodate dining facilities within the unit. Whilst this had resulted in the playroom being moved to a smaller room, additional space for playing had been created in the large bedrooms. A wide range of age appropriate toys, games, books and comics were available to pupils both in the play room and in their bedrooms.

Pupils were observed to be enjoying the choice of play areas. On the night of the inspection the bedroom spaces were being used for playing with toys, playing magnetic darts, listening

to music, reading comics, for the use of sensory equipment and to have stories read to them. In addition, a small number of pupils used the play room to do some art and craft work.

Records of a recent boarders meeting showed they had been consulted about the activities they would like to do during the Autumn term and also what toys and comics they would like to have in their rooms.

The school had arranged for a number of the children to go for horse riding lessons and it was noted that appropriate generic and individual risk assessments were in place.

The school had completed an extensive programme of generic and individual risk assessment for activities held on and off site and were continuing to develop its systems for recording assessments. The latest model of recording individual children's assessment was comprehensive and covered environmental hazards, personal care and any issues that might arise from attending or participating in particular activities.

The Inspectors noted from reading the previous recording systems that all risk assessments had been reviewed last term. However, the latest model did not indicate when the next review was due. It is advised this omission is rectified.

The Inspectors were advised that all off-site trips or activities have to comply with the Local Education Authorities own procedures and be planned some 6 weeks in advance. Approval has to be sought from the Authority before any off-site trip or activity can take place. The Inspectors were advised of a trip that the school had undertaken to an outdoor activity centre last term. Staff had conducted a preliminary visit to the centre last term so that detailed risk assessments could be completed and submitted for approval. This exemplified good practice.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)

The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets any intimate care needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Individual pupil's health care needs were identified in their education and care plan. Parents had responsibility for their child's general health care needs although the school were able to offer pupils annual sight and dental checks. Written consent had been gained for boarding pupils to have emergency treatment, if necessary.

There was individual guidance in each child's Plan in respect of their intimate care needs. Various health professionals contributed to the care of the pupils including physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists.

An Inspector had a discussion with the Nurse who, although appointed earlier in the year, had been absent due to ill health for some time. Consequently, she was just beginning to review her role within the multi-disciplinary staff team.

It was pleasing to note that satisfactory arrangements were in place for the administration and recording of medication and medical treatment in the boarding provision. All Professional Support Workers held a qualification in First Aid and Residential Social Workers held a 'First Aid in the Workplace' certificate. Senior staff responsible for leading each shift had received training in the administration of medication.

Medication held within the residential provision was kept in a lockable cabinet in the staff office. The cabinet was kept in good order. A First Aid box was kept in the staff office in the boarding provision and the contents were in good order.

An accident log was being maintained for both staff and pupils. Recording in this respect was satisfactory.

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 Inspectors noted that pupils continued to be offered a wide choice of foods and drinks at meals and snack times. This practice was highly commendable.

The Inspectors were provided with copies of the current menu, which operated on a six week rolling rota. On the first day of the inspection, boarding pupils were offered a choice of two hot dishes with a selection of vegetables and potatoes. A salad was offered as an alternative. The main course was followed with a choice of two sweets, fruit or yoghurt. The evening meal consisted of a choice of a hot or cold dish followed by a sweet and/or fruit. The hot dish was cheesy oatcakes which had recently been added to the menus following consultation with the pupils. The choice of dessert included homemade carrot cake. Supper consisted of the cakes made by some of the pupils during their activity club and toast or

crumpets. A hot or cold drink was also available.

The Inspectors were provided with the same meals as the boarding pupils. The meals were well cooked and appetising. An Inspector spoke to the Catering Manager who advised that she visited the dining areas during each meal to see if the pupils had enjoyed them or whether any changes needed to be made.

Meals continued to be prepared in a spacious and well-equipped school kitchen, located in the main building. An Inspector was invited to visit the kitchen and, once again, found it to be clean, tidy and hygienic. The Inspector noted that all the recommendations made in the last Environmental Health report, dated October 2003, had been acted upon.

The Inspectors were told that Food Handling Training had been arranged for January, 2005. All staff involved in the preparation or serving of food were expected to undertake the training.

Significant changes had been made to the dining arrangements for boarding pupils. Breakfast and evening meals were being taken in a dining room that had been made available within the residential unit. The room had been furnished and equipped for the purpose. The floor was covered with an impervious material that made it hygienic and easy to clean. The overall effect and feeling was of a more domestic setting which was relaxing and comfortable.

The Inspectors observed two meals in the new dining room. These were both orderly and sociable events. Staff had reorganised the way in which meals were offered and served. For example, good use was being made of pictures to aid pupils in indicating the dish of their choice. The serving of meals was better organised so that individual pupils received their meals quicker; this ensured hot food remained hot when given to pupils. Previous good practice underpinned the new system such as pupils still being given the opportunity to make choices. Also, adapted cutlery and crockery were readily available to assist pupils. The Inspectors noted that new 'fitted serviettes' had been made and pupils were encouraged to wear them whilst eating.

Mealtimes were noted to be a time in the daily routine of the school when there was particular pressure on staff to ensure the individual needs of pupils were satisfactorily met; many of the pupils were noted to require assistance with feeding. The school is to be commended for responding in a timely manner to previous observations and recommendations made by the Inspectors. The action taken by the school to try and improve mealtimes was seen to have made them a more relaxed and sociable event for both staff and pupils. The new system was sensitive to individual pupils needs and supported their conductive programmes.

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.7)

Children are provided for adequately on an individual basis and encouraged to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing and personal requisites. Children who require assistance to choose what they wear and/or how they spend their money are provided with the assistance they need, in a way which maximises their choice.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

All pupils were expected to wear school uniform during the school day. However, boarding pupils were able to change into their own leisure clothes, which were brought from home, in out-of-school hours. Laundry arrangements reflected individual choice with some pupils taking their clothes home to be washed whilst others had theirs laundered at school. All boarding pupils were seen to be clean and well dressed.

Boarding pupils were expected to bring their own toiletries for their overnight stays although a small supply of provisions were kept by staff for boarders use, if necessary.

CARE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT PLAN

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.
- In accordance with their wishes, children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.
- Children receive individual support when they need it.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Each pupil had an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which addressed their educational, care and social needs. Whilst targets in the Plans were set by the Conductor Teacher, they were devised following consultation with the pupil's parents, Keyworker and Personal Support Worker. Individual pupils were also involved in setting targets, whenever possible.

The Plans were based on a detailed assessment of each child's current needs and skills level. Targets were devised to address most areas of development and were generally measurable. However, there remained a need to break down some of the targets into more specific steps. For example, a target of 'tolerating a hairwash' was specified in a pupil's plan. It was not clear what elements of the process were troublesome for the pupil; the water over the face, shampoo in the eyes or so on.

It is advised that each target is identified as a small, measurable step which staff can more easily and accurately evaluate as to whether it has been attained or not.

Varying timescales were indicated for reviewing individual targets, indicating they had been prioritised. However, the evaluation of whether a pupil had met a target appeared to be intuitive rather than based on hard facts or consistent observations. There was a need for a more reliable method of evaluation.

It is advised that staff are encouraged to record actual observations of pupils actions as evidence to support attainment or otherwise.

A key-working system had been established. Staff undertaking this role saw themselves as acting on behalf of the pupils to ensure their needs and wishes were identified and addressed as well as providing an effective link between the school and the child's home.

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.5)

Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress which can, in compliance with legal requirements for safeguards, be seen by the child.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Each boarding pupil had an individual file which was seen to be maintained in good order. The files were kept securely in the main staff office. They were in modular form which enabled important information to be gained quickly and easily. There was evidence to show information was updated to reflect changes or significant events in the pupil's lives.

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

Clear records were being maintained in respect of staff working in the school, day pupils attending school and pupils boarding each weekday evening. All required record keeping was being maintained to a good standard.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.6)

Subject to their wishes, children are positively encouraged and enabled by the school to maintain contact with their parents and other family members (unless there are welfare concerns) while living at school.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Boarding pupils had easy access to a phone during out of school hours. The phone was sited in a corner in the interconnecting hallway between classrooms and the residential unit. A computer station was also sited in this area and at times this meant it was difficult to promote privacy for pupils using the phone. The Inspectors were advised that an alternative site was being sought for the computer.

Boarding pupils indicated they could use the phone when they wished and could make and receive calls during the evening up to bedtime. Due to some of the pupils not using verbal communication, a device was fitted to the phone which enabled staff to hear the callers comments and respond on behalf of the pupil, if necessary. Staff were unsure whether all parents had been informed of the use of this device.

An advisory recommendation is made earlier in the report in respect of this matter.

No concerns were raised either by pupils or their parents about access to a telephone. Stationery was available for pupils to use if they wished.

The school operated an open-door policy for parents. The Headteacher and Head of Care were seen to be easily accessible to parents throughout weekdays and evenings. There was facility for parents to be private with their child during their visits.

Parents commented positively about communication systems within the school and felt they were kept informed of all important matters affecting their child's education and welfare.

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?**

0

This standard was not assessed as it was not applicable to any boarding pupil at the time of the inspection.

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?

3

A range of professionals were employed within the school including physiotherapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists as well as teaching and care staff. There was written evidence to show the multi-disciplinary team were working effectively to address all aspects of each pupil's development.

Comprehensive assessments had been carried out to identify specialist equipment which would enable pupils to communicate and facilitate greater independence. Records showed concern about a delay in updating a piece of equipment for a pupil had been actioned and a reassessment was being carried out at the time of the inspection.

In addition to Keyworkers for individual pupils, the school had arranged for an Independent Visitor to meet with boarding pupils regularly each half-term. Unfortunately, the Inspectors were unable to meet with the Independent Visitor on this occasion. However, she did write to the Inspectors to comment on her observations. She reported that none of the boarding pupils had raised any concerns and she had not identified any issues during her visits.

The Visitors book showed the Independent Visitor continued to visit regularly and that the visits took place on different nights so that she could meet with all the boarding pupils; taking account of the flexible boarding arrangements. The visits lasted approximately two hours on each occasion.

PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children live in well designed, pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.
- Children live in accommodation that is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.
- Children are able to carry out their ablutions in privacy and with dignity.
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. It serves the needs of the children and provides the sort of environment most helpful to each child's development, and is sufficient for the number of children.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The school is situated in a rural location near to Leek in Staffordshire. The main building was a large private residence set in its own large grounds and built at the turn of last century. An extensive range of buildings have been added to provide additional teaching wings, indoor sport facilities, a swimming pool and the residential unit.

All the facilities used by boarding and day pupils are on ground level and have been designed to allow access for wheelchairs users. Outside ramps were provided where required.

The facilities include a quadrangle to provide an internal play area, the provision of a training and lecture area for parents with pre-school children and a staff gymnasium.

The School has extensive grounds with a large car park and a suitably adapted play area for pupils. Recent additions within the grounds include a sensory garden which can be accessed by all pupils and a tyre trail, which can be used by pupils who have a greater degree of mobility.

The school have a range of specialist equipment, furniture, aids and adaptations for children with disabilities and sensory impairments.

An inspection of the accommodation showed there was adequate storage space for wheelchairs and other apparatus near and within the boarding provision. The Headteacher said she had recently invited a Fire Officer to review the premises. Following the visit, the Fire Officer made a number of verbal recommendations which had been included in an action plan and prioritised.

Work was already in progress to extend the external lighting in the car park located some way from the main school building.

Areas adjacent to the school were monitored by close circuit television and tapes were kept

in the school office. The Headteacher said surveillance equipment was being increased to cover all access points to the school. The main access road into the school was shared with private accommodation situated near the main gate and part of the drive way was also shared with a nursery sited in a building behind the school. The Inspectors were advised that a new movable barrier was to be installed to control vehicular access at key points of the day.

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 residential unit at the school was called Kipling's and rooms within it had been named after characters from Jungle Book (in recognition of Rudyard Kipling's association with the area).

Kiplings provided a good standard of accommodation for a total of twelve children. The boarding accommodation was accessed via a large entrance lobby. The lobby was a large space and was being used to provide wheelchair storage, a private space for the children's telephone and a computer station. The latter was used both during the school day and evening. The Head of Care said consideration was being given to relocating the computer, thereby offering a greater degree of privacy to pupils when using the phone.

A wide central corridor provided access to the rest of the accommodation, with rooms off both sides of the corridor. The residential accommodation was comprised of a dining/lounge room, three bedrooms and a small but well equipped play room, sleeping accommodation for staff, a sick bay, toilets and bathrooms and a duty office. The accommodation throughout was seen to be maintained in good order with domestic style furnishings and decoration. Both the dining room and corridor had been redecorated since the last inspection earlier in the year.

All communal rooms and bedrooms were well lit and sufficiently heated. There was direct emergency access to the outside of the building from each bedroom. Windows were constructed of double glazed units with openings to provide adequate ventilation. Each bedroom could accommodate a total of four children. These rooms were open plan, fully carpeted and well furnished with individual wardrobe and storage facilities.

Overhead lighting was fitted over all beds. The rooms were of sufficient size to accommodate wheelchair access and other equipment required to assist boarding pupils. Pupils were being encouraged to personalize their bed space and many had brought pictures, posters and their own duvet covers. Staff were encouraging greater use of the bedrooms as space in which to play and relax. The Inspectors observations were that this practice was proving successful in offering pupils a wider choice of recreational areas.

As mentioned previously in the report, the school had responded to a previous recommendation concerning the level of privacy in bedrooms. Action had been taken to provide free-standing screens for each pupil. The Inspectors felt this was an innovative solution. Pupils had the choice to create a small private space around their bed if they wished.

There was adequate storage space in each bedroom for pupils to store their clothes and belongings but there was no lockable facility. The Head of Care said they were still in the

process of trying to identify a suitable lockable facility which could easily be used by pupils if they wished.

The Inspectors noted work was continuing in respect of covering all full-length mirrors with safety film.

Night time cover in the residential provision consisted of one waking person, with two further members of staff undertaking sleep in duties. One of the latter slept in a room located in the residential unit whilst the other slept in the main building. As previously advised, the school had conducted a risk assessment regarding emergency call systems being available in the bedrooms and concluded that the current combination of waking night staff, audio monitors and back up staff sleeping on site was sufficient to meet pupils' night time needs.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.7)

The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets, all of good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children. The school has appropriate changing and washing facilities for incontinent children where necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Suitably equipped bathrooms and showers facilities and separate male and female toilet facilities were situated off the main corridor in Kiplings. Bathroom and toilet facilities were of sufficient number for the pupils resident at any one time.

All toilets and bathrooms were clean and free from offensive odours. Bathrooms were painted in bright colours with a border and other forms of decoration to make them more homely in appearance.

One of the bathrooms was equipped with a 'rising' bath and another with a Jacuzzi. They were also equipped with suitable hoists. The Inspectors were provided with information that showed that bathroom hoists in the residential provision had been routinely serviced.

As previously advised, the school had arranged for two exposed radiators - which were located in two of the toilets - to be covered. Work was also planned to box in exposed pipe work in these rooms. The Inspectors had previously noted that three of the toilets used by boarding pupils did not have any source of heating in them. The Head Teacher was of the opinion that the heat from the main corridor was sufficient to heat these areas.

It is advised that the temperature in these toilets be monitored.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The Inspectors noted the Head and members of the management team had taken a number of positive steps to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors. The school had been proactive in responding to recommendations and advisory recommendations made in the last report.

The school had developed written strategies for dealing with unforeseen crisis issues, as recommended in the Local Education Authority guide titled 'Coping with a Crisis in School'. The school had details of a snowline and carried enough stocks of food for two weeks in case of bad weather.

The Head had invited a local Fire Officer to visit the school during the summer term. As a result of his observations, the Fire Officer made a number of verbal recommendations. The school had prioritised these and produced an action plan, which had already been partially completed.

The Bursar advised an Inspector that the school was in the process of reorganizing its fire safety checks. These were to be recorded in a single book and the frequency of checks had been agreed with the Fire Officer.

The Bursar explained that, following a number of malfunctions to the fire alarm system some months previously, the system had been updated and a number of sensors replaced. The school site had been divided into a number of zones to make identification of the site of a fire easier and to provide safe areas to retreat to. The fire alarms in these zones were said to be checked once every fortnight though no written record was kept of the checks. Following discussion between an Inspector and the Bursar it was agreed that the fire alarm checks would be recorded. The Bursar had implemented a system of visually checking fire fighting equipment weekly and was about to introduce monthly checks on the emergency lighting system.

The previous practice had been to undertake a fire drill twice a year but the intention was to increase them to once a term. There was evidence to show the fire alarms, emergency lighting and fire fighting equipment had been serviced in the last twelve months. Copies of the schools' fire procedure were clearly displayed around the residential unit.

Examination of the Fire Log Book and staff training records showed a number of care staff had recently undertaken fire safety training.

The Inspectors found evidence that the boilers had been routinely serviced and that electrical testing had taken place in March, 2004.

Arrangements were in place for the water in the swimming pool to be checked daily and for a Pool Maintenance person to visit once a week. The Bursar provided certificates to show showerheads and the mains water supply were regularly checked.

As part of its commitment to provide a community service, the school allowed some of its facilities to be used by outside agencies. The Inspectors were advised of systems which

were in place to ensure that visitors to the school did not have unauthorized access to any of the education or residential areas. These included signing in at the main office and the use of keypads on all doors giving access to the classrooms and residential unit. The Inspectors were advised the codes to the keypads were changed routinely.

Unfortunately, during a tour of the premises one of the Inspectors was able to enter the unit via an external fire door in a bedroom; each bedroom had the same door system. Staff said these doors were normally locked but the locking mechanism was disabled if the fire alarm was activated. The Inspector was concerned that staff were unable to say how the door came to be open or how long it had been unlocked. The Inspector was advised that there had been a previous problem with a lock on another bedroom door and arrangements had been made for it to be replaced.

It is recommended that routine checks are undertaken on all lockable doors to the residential provision.

The school has its own mini bus and staff undertake a special test before they are approved to drive it. Drivers are required to undertake a daily check on the vehicles condition before using it. The Inspector advised that, given the number of drivers using the vehicle and because of the schools remote location, the vehicle receives an extensive weekly check. The Bursar agreed to implement this.

The Inspector was advised that the school had a system of checking the driving licences of staff involved in driving the mini bus once a year.

The Inspector were advised the school no longer had a site supervisor; responsibility for site management had been transferred to the Bursar. A part-time Handyman was undertaking routine maintenance and larger items of works were being contracted out.

STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There was an established recruitment and selection process for all staff. The process was thorough and in accordance with good practice. However, there was the possibility of a loop-hole in that proof of completed Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks were dependent on staff bringing in their own copy of the completed check. Whilst the Education Department sought the check they did not provide evidence back to the school about the result of a check. Whilst no member of staff has failed to provide proof of their completed CRB check to date, there was the possibility of this occurring.

It is advised the Headteacher discuss this matter further with the Departments' Human Resources section.

A cross section of staff files were chosen randomly, representative of the whole staff group. All required information was seen to have been gained and appropriate checks completed prior to staff starting work in the school.

Total number of care staff:

14

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

2

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Staffing arrangements in the residential provision were somewhat fluid due to the flexible nature of boarding numbers throughout weekdays. However, general staffing levels throughout waking hours were seen to be a minimum of 1:2 and, more often, 1:1. Night staffing levels were one waking person plus two sleeping-in staff each weekday night. Staffing levels on the morning shift were supplemented by the waking night staff person who stayed on duty till 8am.

There were designated experienced staff responsible for 'leading' each shift and providing a hand-over briefing each afternoon. The staff team responsible for caring for boarders was a mix of Professional Support Workers and Residential Social Workers. The former worked in both classroom settings and in the residential provision whilst the latter worked solely in the residential provision. This mix of staff was seen to be crucial to ensuring consistency and continuity for pupils in respect of the delivery of their conductive education.

Observations of the staffing arrangements throughout the two day inspection period and previous rotas showed there were sufficient staff on duty to meet the individual needs of the young people. There was also some time allotted for staff to complete record keeping and plan the shift.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)

Staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the school.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Staff training continued to be given good attention. It was pleasing to note the recommendation for child protection training to the whole staff team had been acted upon. Discussion with various ancillary staff elicited that they had found the training useful.

Thirteen staff responsible for caring for boarders were in the process of doing a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level III in child care. Training specific to the needs of the pupils in areas such as Client Handling Techniques, Epilepsy, Administration of Diazepam and Gastronomy Tube Feeding had also been provided.

There had been a small number of changes within the staff team as a result of promotion. Discussions with various staff elicited there was a keenness for personal professional development.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There was a clear management structure and staff at all levels were aware of lines of accountability. Communication systems continued to be effective between the whole staff group. Records showed weekly teaching/care staff meetings were taking place though night staff found it difficult to attend the meetings because of their work pattern. Ancillary staff also had regular meetings. Minutes of the various staff meetings were placed in staff's 'pigeon holes' to keep them up to date with matters discussed across the whole staff team'.

It is advised that the management team ensure all relevant information or specific issues are shared between the various staff teams. All staff were subject to an annual performance management review.

Arrangements were in place for staff responsible for boarding pupils to receive formal supervision. A previous recommendation that ancillary staff receive formal supervision had been acted upon and was due to commence in October, 2004.

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.
- Children enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

The school is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible childcare.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The school was well organised and managed. The whole staff group continued to display their commitment to offering a quality service to the pupils. The management team had taken action to address all the recommendations identified in the previous inspection report and various initiatives were being considered to further develop the service.

The Headteacher provided clear leadership. Both the Headteacher and the Head of Care were observed to be easily accessible to staff and pupils and communicated effectively at all levels.

The school promoted a holistic approach to the care and education of pupils. There was clear evidence the philosophy of the school was effectively transferred into practice. This was demonstrated by the degree of consistency and continuity in staffs practice and approach to the pupils between the formal education and more informal care settings. The consistency in approach was observed to be crucial in promoting the development and transfer of skills for individual pupils.

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

X %

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

There was no evidence of monetary constraint affecting the day to day running of the school. There was evidence the Board of Governors and Headteacher continued to be proactive in seeking additional funding from various sources to support developments in the school.

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

Staffordshire Education Department had supported a system for reciprocal visits to be made by the Heads of Care to report on the conduct of its residential special schools. The reports cover all areas identified in this standard (33) and were being carried out on a termly basis. Copies of the reports were being provided to the school, the Education Authority and to the Commission.

The Headteacher advised the Inspectors that, following a previous recommendation, a system was being implemented whereby the Head would provide half-termly reports to the Board of Governors which would include a copy of the relevant Standard 33 report.

PART C

HEAD'S RESPONSE

C.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 29 and 30 September 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

We are working on the best way to include provider responses in the published report. In the meantime responses received are available on request.

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

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

Note:

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

C.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 4 January 2005, which indicates how recommended actions and advisory recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan was received at the point of publication	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/> YES
Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider has declined to provide an action plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: <enter details here>	<input type="checkbox"/>

C.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

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

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

Or

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

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

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

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