



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Mary Hare Grammar School For The Deaf

**Arlington Manor
Snelsmore Common
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 3BQ**

Lead Inspector
Lucy Martin

Announced Inspection
4th – 5th October 2006 9:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

Those outcomes are:

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

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

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

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school Mary Hare Grammar School For The Deaf

Address Arlington Manor
Snelsmore Common
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 3BQ

Telephone number 01635 244200

Fax number

Email address

Provider Web address

Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school Mr Hugh Ogus, Chairman of Governors

Name of Head Mr D A J Shaw

Name of Head of Care Mr Peter Gale

Age range of residential pupils 5 - 19

Date of last welfare inspection 25th April 2005

Brief Description of the School:

Mary Hare School is a non-maintained mixed special school near Newbury for pupils aged 5-19 with severe and profound hearing loss. The mixed ability primary centre is on a separate site not far from the larger selective secondary division. Pupils do not move automatically between the two parts of the school, although around a third of Year 6 pupils transfer to the secondary each year. Pupils are admitted from all parts of the United Kingdom and overseas. All of the 240 pupils have a statement of special educational needs and nearly all take advantage of the school's age-appropriate boarding provision. The school has a small number of ethnic minority pupils and students. Their language needs do not differ from those of other pupils.

The Primary school currently has 10 weekly boarders. The secondary school on the main school site has four separate boarding houses. One house is specifically for Year 7 boarders and there are two main boarding houses for Year 8 – 10 boarders. There is also a separate boarding house for the sixth form.

The current cost of a boarding placement at the school is £27,840 per year.

SUMMARY

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

The inspector told the staff at the school that she was coming to visit them and she spent one long day at the main school site and half a day at the Primary school. Meals were eaten with the staff and pupils.

The inspector met with:

- Mr Shaw, the Principal
- Paula, the school Nurse
- Mr Gale, the Deputy Principal
- Mrs Wylie, Head of Pupil Support
- All the Heads of Houses, including the Team Leaders of Mansell House
- Mrs Smith at the Primary School
- The Head Boy and Head Girl
- Mr Cowley, the Bursar

She also:

- Looked at some records and some care plans for boarders.
- Gave boarders who said that they wanted to speak to an inspector an opportunity to meet.

Before the inspection the inspector wrote to the Principal and to other people who know the school to ask them what they thought about it. The boarders', their parents, care staff and the local authorities who are responsible for placing pupils at the school also filled in questionnaires asking them their views about the school. The inspector used these answers to help write the report.

What the school does well:

The inspector thought that Mary Hare looks after its pupils well. The school does this by:

- Having staff who spend time with pupils when they have concerns or worries.
- Having a number of adults who pupils feel happy talking to.
- Employing care staff who are fair.
- Talking to parents especially when boarders are new to the school.

- Listening to what pupils say and doing something about it.

The boarders said:

- 'The school is a really good place to be.'
- 'The care staff are very understanding and they are willing to do anything to help by talking to teachers, parents or even just giving me advice.'
- 'If I had a problem I would go to (names of staff). They are really nice people and would sort the problem right away'.

The Parents said:

- 'I couldn't have asked for a better school for my child. The care has been excellent, the staff friendly.'
- 'The staff are very friendly. They know the parents well. Given feeling of being involved – a community.'

What has improved since the last inspection?

A few suggestions were made at the last inspection on how to make things better at the school and these changes have been made.

- There are more staff helping in the classrooms in Year 7 who also work into the evening in Howard house.
- There are more care staff in the boarding houses.
- The school has done work to ensure the safety of boarders – the rewiring of Mansell House and the safety testing of boarders' electrical equipment.
- There is now a networking system which means that all staff and pupils have an e-mail address.
- Help and information has been given to pupils who have problems managing their anger and to the 6th formers on health matters.

What they could do better:

- A lot of pupils felt that the food provided at supper could be improved and pupils and parents are not always sure about the special food provided for religious reasons.
- The person responsible for ensuring that pupils are protected and kept safe needs to go on special training regarding this area.
- There need to be some changes made to the checks that the school carries out when a new member of staff starts work at the school.
- The care plans that care staff complete with boarders should include details regarding the cultural, religious and racial needs of the boarders.

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

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

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

CONTENTS

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

14, 15

Quality in this outcome area is good.

The health needs of the boarders' are closely monitored and are well met and there are good relationships between the care staff and the nursing staff. The quality and choice of the food available at breakfast and lunch is good but pupils feel that the evening meal is in need of improvement.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

The school has a full-time and a part-time nurse who works two days a week. They cover the school site during the day from approximately 7.45am until 3.45pm. During the evenings one of the nurses is on call. At weekends there is no school cover and there is reliance on the emergency doctor and the local hospital.

The care staff spoke positively about good relationships with the school nurses and the boarders felt that their health needs were well met. One boarder said that she always feels well cared for 'especially as I am diabetic'. 'The care staff are great and help me when my blood sugars are low by giving me food and they stay with me until I am better'.

The school doctor continues to visit once a week and appointments can be made at the surgery at other times if needed. Pupils are able to see doctors of either gender if they wish and alone if wanted. The medical room at the school is adequate but a little small. There are two additional rooms with two beds each and en-suite facilities for sick pupils.

The nurses are involved in aspects of the PSHE programme and one of the school nurses is involved with care staff from the 6th form centre in running an

open group discussing health topics. The nurses were frequently identified as someone the pupils could talk to regarding concerns or worries.

Records are maintained of pupils who attend surgery and the nurse periodically monitors the administration of the small stock of non-prescribed medication in the boarding houses and stock checks.

It was a recommendation at the last inspection that the first aid training for staff should be planned and implemented in a more systematic manner. This has been done and there is a rolling programme of staff training. A number of care staff attended first aid training in November 2005.

The catering staff are employed by the school and provide three meals a day. A cooked breakfast is provided and there is a wide choice of food available at lunchtime including a hot vegetarian option, a salad bar and a pasta bar two days a week. Pupils were complimentary regarding the quality and variety of food served at breakfast and lunch but not supper. A number of pupils said that the food at supper was not as good as the other two meals 'less variety and fatty/unhealthy'. One parent and one pupil (not related) also said that they were not given Halal meat which they had been told that the school would provide. This was reported to the school management who responded that they believed that Halal meat was being provided. It is a recommendation that the pupils are consulted regarding how to improve the food at supper and that parents and pupils are made aware of the availability of special meals required for religious reasons and that this food is provided.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 26, 27

Quality in this outcome area is good.

Arrangements for the safety of the pupils are handled well with robust arrangements in place for complaints, behaviour management, dealing with bullying and health and safety. These ensure that pupils are kept safe.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

The care staff showed awareness of the need for privacy and confidentiality and are mindful of the specific issues surrounding deafness. In the sixth form centre all the bedrooms have doorbells which are used and the bedroom doors have locks. Records are securely stored and kept confidential.

The pupils and parents are aware of how to complain and one parent commented that the school 'attempts to deal with everything at the lowest level which is admirable'. Most concerns are dealt with informally whenever possible. The Principal maintains a written log of more serious complaints and there have been only two since the last inspection.

Child protection has a high profile within the school. All care staff receive training every two years and staff are reminded annually of the designated person in terms of child protection issues, which is the Principal, and his Deputy. Safeguarding training and good safe practice for staff and young people was cascaded through all sectors of staff in 2006. At the last inspection it was a recommendation that the senior management should ensure that they receive appropriate external training in child protection procedures. Two senior managers did attend the safeguarding training offered by West Berkshire but the school acknowledges that there is still a need to find specific training designed for the designated person.

There have been three child protection concerns since the last inspection that have been referred to the local authority. All relate to incidents between pupils and the school has acted appropriately in liaison with West Berkshire Council. It is recommended that a written record is maintained for child protection incidents in line with Standard 7.4 which includes details of the action taken and the outcome of any investigation. This would ensure that information is recorded in one place and give a better overview of the actions taken. The CSCI need to always be notified of child protection concerns and there was one incident in the last year which was not notified to them.

There are low levels of bullying within the school and pupils were clear that action is taken if they report an incident. Some pupils reported being bullied lower down the school and that the care staff had intervened when they had complained. The school has a 'peer mediation' programme as well as a mentoring/buddying system which supports pupils. The school benefits from a staff team that is aware of bullying in all forms and a commitment to take action to ensure that potential problems are identified.

There is a clear understanding of boundaries, rules and sanctions shown by both staff and boarders. The care staff were generally seen to be fair and there were few instances of formal sanctions being recorded as given. Each boarding house maintains its own sanctions book and there was uniformity across the

school. 'House Report' is widely used as a sanction and advice is given that what this constitutes is written in the sanctions book to make this sanction more transparent to all. The Principal maintains a record of major incidents which was clear and well recorded. Improvements were seen since the last inspection in the recording of events within the incident logs.

All care staff receive training in physical intervention with regular updates, but the use of physical intervention is extremely rare and there have been no incidents since the last inspection. A separate record is used to record any incidents that take place.

The school works well to assist boarders to develop appropriate behaviour and has an anger management group in operation at present. Care staff also received training in behaviour management at the start of the autumn term.

There was good evidence to show that the school takes health and safety issues seriously and there were improvements noted since the last inspection. There were five recommendations made at the last inspection relating to health and safety issues and they have all been met. The fire records seen in the main school and the Primary school showed that fire drills, tests and servicing are all routinely undertaken. The fire alarm which was linked to two boarding houses has now been separated which has long been an issue and is a positive development. The boys boarding house, Mansell, has been completely rewired and all the electrical equipment owned by the boarders has been tested to ensure safety.

Three recruitment files were seen during the inspection. The school uses a checklist which is valuable in ensuring that all the required information is recorded. For the permanent staff all the information was found on file including phone verification of references. The 'gap' student only had one reference on file and their recruitment should include every element of the recruitment procedure used for permanent staff. One member of staff started work before her CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check was returned. This should be exceptional and there should be details in the file regarding how the member of staff is to be supervised and therefore not allowed unsupervised access to pupils before the check has been returned. It is a recommendation that these matters are actioned.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

12, 22

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

The boarders receive high levels of individual support and there is improved communication between the school and boarding houses to ensure that the boarders achieve high educational standards.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

There are clear links between the care and educational sides of the school. Care staff give very active practical support to the boarders during prep and attend academic staff meetings as appropriate. There are some Learning Support Assistants in Year 7 whose work hours extend to 6pm and include time with the boarders during prep. This illustrates the real links between the school and care elements. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a new IT networking system which means that everyone at the school, including, pupils, have their own e-mail addresses. Care staff felt that this will improve communications between school and themselves.

The boarders receive high levels of individual support. The questionnaires received from boarders showed that there are a wide range of individuals within the school, as well as an independent listener, whom they feel that they can talk to if they have concerns or worries. Most boarders feel that they can talk to the care staff. 'If I have problems I would usually go to the care staff for help because they are usually available for people's problems'.

To the question 'do you feel well cared for where you are living now?' 33% of the boarders responded in the questionnaire that they always feel well cared for which is the top answer and there were lots of positive comments such as 'the care staff are very understanding and willing to do anything to help by talking to teachers, parents or even just giving me advice'.

External to the school there is a local counselling service which the boarders can quickly access as well as a referral for therapeutic input from the visiting GP if this is felt more appropriate. There is a designated member of the senior management team in charge of pupil support.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

2, 17, 20

Quality in this outcome area is good.

The boarders feel that they have a say in the way the school is run and there is regular contact with parents. There has been training in care planning and the forms have been redesigned since the last inspection.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

Pupils feel that their views are sought and there are various committees as well the School Council where their views are sought. The School Council is an active group and is seen as a real forum to make changes. Each year group elects one boy and one girl. Year groups have House Meetings where pupils can discuss concerns and individual care planning gives each child a voice. Annual reviews are structured in such a way that the child and parents get the chance to raise any concerns.

Examples where action has been taken as a result of listening to pupil's opinions are the provision of new games equipment and a weekly leisure

timetable. Year 7's offered to help as guides at Open Day and this was adopted and there is now Freeview TV in all the boarding houses.

The parents who responded in the questionnaire were generally extremely positive about communication and contact with the school. They felt that there were good relationships and that staff contacted them quickly and efficiently if there were problems. Equally, any queries made by parents were quickly answered and particularly the parents of new boarders felt that there was good contact made with them.

The boarders use their own mobile phones to contact home in the main school, although conventional phones and minicoms are available in the main school as well as the Primary School. There is also use of an e-mail facility. Parents who visit are welcomed and are able to meet their children in private if they wish. On the evening of this inspection a parent visited and was made welcome at supper.

The care staff have attended training on care planning since the last inspection and the care plan form has been redesigned. It is planned that keyworkers will meet individually with boarders once each term. It is an opportunity to make targets and to review how things are going. There were improvements noted to the design of the form but it was noted that cultural, religious and racial needs and how they will be met, was not an area that was addressed in the current form. It is recommended that these matters are included and detail any issues relating to their care such as the provision of special meals.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

None

EVIDENCE:

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

1, 28, 31, 32

Quality in this outcome area is good.

The school is well managed and well staffed. There is a consistent team of care staff who are experienced and who know the boarders' well.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

There is a school prospectus specifically for the Primary School as well as the Secondary school. The prospectus for the Secondary school has recently been updated and the inspector was informed that the prospectus for the Primary

school is in the process of being updated. Both prospectuses contain all the required information.

The inspector was informed that the school has attracted a good response to advertisements for staff and that currently there are no full-time vacancies amongst the care staff teams. In all the boarding houses, including the Primary school, there are sufficient staff in post and there is a good mix of experienced and new staff. There has been a slight increase in staffing levels in the two main boarding houses with both now having 8 full time staff, four on a shift. There has also been the appointment of more male staff which is a positive move and has created more equal teams in terms of gender in both Howard House and the Sixth Form Centre.

Staff spoken with and who responded in the questionnaire said that they felt well supported in their role and the inspector was informed that the care staff were receiving regular formal staff supervision. All the Heads of Houses have NVQ 4 and the school has a rolling programme of training for care staff in NVQ 3. The Deputy Principal oversees the work undertaken by the care staff at present. This has been professionally undertaken but the school has recognised that a Head of Care with a total emphasis on boarding and the care side would be an advantage. The proposal to appoint a Head of Care has to be agreed by the Governor's but is a positive move. This post should ensure that the care practice at the school will be further developed and improve current standards.

There is an experienced and strong senior management team at the school and there is appropriate monitoring of the prescribed records. The Principal writes an annual care report.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

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

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	3
15	2

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

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3
13	X
22	4

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

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

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? No

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS15	The school consults with pupils regarding how to improve the food provided at supper.	
2	RS15	Parents and boarders are made fully aware of the availability of special diets due to religious needs and this food is provided.	
3	RS5	The named person with regard to child protection attends specific training in this area.	
4	RS7	A written log is maintained which includes details of notifiable events that have occurred since the last inspection.	
5	RS27	Recruitments records show: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gap students have the same recruitments checks undertaken as permanent staff. CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks are returned before a new member of staff starts work or in exceptional circumstances the file details how the new member of staff will be supervised) 	
6	RS17	The care plans include care needs relating to the cultural, religious and racial backgrounds of the boarders.	

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