

inspection report

Boarding School

Cobham Hall

Cobham

Gravesend

Kent

DA12 3BL

4th October 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

Cobham Hall

Address

Cobham Hall, Cobham, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 3BL

Tel No:

01474 823371

Fax No:

Email Address

enquiries@cobhamhall.com

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

Cobham Hall

Name of Head

Cobham Hall

CSCI Classification

Boarding School

Type of school

Date of last boarding welfare inspection

Date of Inspection Visit		4th October 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	John Walker	126635
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Sophie Wood	
Name of CSCI Inspector	3	Justine Williams	
Name of CSCI Inspector	4	Christine Hastie	
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):		Alison Scott	
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Was this inspection conducted alongside an ISI or OfSTED inspection as part of a Joint Whole School Inspection?			NO
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection			

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Boarding schools are subject to inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to determine whether the welfare of children (ie 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 Boarding 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.

Inspections are carried out by the CSCI, and in most cases the inspection team includes a specialist in boarding provision working, or with experience of working, in the boarding sector. Boarding welfare inspections by CSCI may also be carried out in conjunction with a full inspection of the school by the Independent Schools Inspectorate or OfSTED, so that the two inspections together constitute a Joint Whole School Inspection of the school. In such cases, a joint summary of main findings and recommendations from both inspections will also be available.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Cobham Hall.

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

The report will show the following:

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

INSPECTION VISITS

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

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

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED.

Cobham Hall, a non-maintained school for girls, was founded in September 1962. The school is based in a former large Tudor mansion set within its own extensive grounds. The building is of significant historic and cultural interest.

The school is a member of the Round Square worldwide affiliation of schools whose aims are based on the ideals of the educationalist Kurt Hahn. Consequently the school teaches individuals to be aware of the past and its importance, alert to the present and their role in the modern community, and to look to the future, aware of the responsibilities that brings. Over half of the school's students are British and the rest represent over 30 different nationalities. Cobham accepts students with a broad range of ability. In addition, there is specialist unit – the Susan Hampshire Centre – to support those with dyslexia and dyspraxia. Help is also provided for those who need to improve their English Language skills.

Boarding accommodation is arranged in three Halls of Residence, supervised by a team of Housemistresses and ancillary boarding staff. Girls in Groups 1 to 5 live in Main Hall and the Sixth Form girls live in two custom built boarding houses. Girls in Group 6 live in Bligh House and girls in Group 7 live in Brooke House.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

Throughout the course of the inspection the school presented as warm and friendly. The children were at ease with themselves and enjoyed positive relationships with the staff. Throughout the course of the inspection the girls were very open in making their views known to the inspectors. They clearly appreciated what the school was trying to achieve for them.

The headteacher had only been in post for a relatively short time and was to be commended for all that she had achieved in taking the work of the school forwards. The headteacher was promoting the principles of democracy throughout the school and the recent development of pupil tutor groups, promoting the work of the school council and giving high status to the school guardians and house captains evidenced her commitment to promoting the concept of democracy to the children. The guardian/house captain system was regarded as being commendable practice by the inspectors.

Given that the school accepts pupils from all parts of the world the school's practice in promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity was regarded as commendable by the inspectors. The inspection evidenced there was no inappropriate discrimination on grounds of race, religion, cultural or linguistic backgrounds and boarding staff were sensitive to different needs.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

This was the first inspection of the school under the terms of the Care Standards Act 2000. The inspection evidenced the school had a number of issues to address in order to meet the national minimum standards all of which are noted within the body of the report. The most important areas for development identified through the inspection process are as follows:

Some middle management issues were identified during the inspection which were being addressed by the headteacher and chair of governors.

Shortfalls in some of the school's documentation provided to parents, governors and staff were noted which did not include references to the school's policies on child protection, the use of physical restraint, and detailed descriptions of the school's complaints procedures and welfare arrangements offered to boarders.

With regard to the school's child protection policy and procedures in particular, the inspection evidenced the school needed to revise and update its policy and procedures to ensure they met the national minimum standards. That is not to say that the shortfalls identified compromised the safety and welfare of the children - they did not - but the school clearly needs to address the issues raised.

The school had limited systems in place for the reporting and recording of a range of important areas with the consequence it was not possible for the senior staff and governors to monitor effectively important areas of the school's boarding practice such as children's complaints, the use of sanctions and punishments by staff and levels and incidents of bullying. That is not to say that the school did not address such issues effectively when they arose but the inspection indicated that the school needed to evidence that it had done so by introducing appropriate recording/monitoring systems.

Whilst the school had been successful in recruiting boarding staff from overseas, and this reflected positively the wide range of children the school admitted from other parts of the world, it was evidenced that such staff needed to receive a better induction programme which included training in child protection, first aid and basic food hygiene. It was also evidenced that other members of house staff were not receiving regular supervision and ongoing training with regard to boarding practice and it is recommended that the school ensures opportunities are provided for all boarding staff to receive regular on-going training and updating in the school's boarding practice.

Whilst the children clearly valued much of what the school had to offer them it was evident to the inspectors the children felt their complaints were not always properly addressed. The headteacher had recently reviewed the tutor group system and the work of the school council as a means of ensuring all children were able to contribute to the efficient running of the school and could openly articulate their concerns about any aspect of school life. However, it is recommended that the school reviews its complaints procedure so as to be able to evidence to every child that their individual complaints are taken seriously and the outcomes of them are communicated to the child.

A pharmaceutical inspection of the school's medical practice indicated serious shortfalls, which the school has been asked to address.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

<p>The inspection evidenced that the school needed to address a number of important areas in order to meet that national minimum standards. Given the dedication and commitment of the headteacher and the school's governing body to take the work of the school forwards the inspectors are confident that the issues raised in this report will be addressed and the school's boarding practice will continue to improve.</p>
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NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

NO

NO
NO

The grounds for any Notification to be made are:

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION					

NA

No	Standard*	Recommended Actions	

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how Recommended Action 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 Boarding 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	BS3	That the school reviews its child protection policy to ensure it is consistent with the requirements of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> (Department of Health, Home Office, DfES 1999) and any local Area Protection Committee procedures and that the revised policy clarifies the role of the headteacher with regard to her being informed of possible child protection matters.	
2	BS8	That the headteacher and chair of governors resolve the middle management issues identified in the inspection.	
3	BS15	That the school implements the recommendations made in the pharmaceutical inspector's report the details of which are listed in the report.	
4	BS20	That the school provides all boarding pupils with lockable spaces based within or very near to their rooms.	
5	BS23	That all the shortfalls in recording systems identified in the report are rectified and that regular monitoring of such systems is undertaken by senior staff and governors.	

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	BS1	That the school documentation given to parents, boarders and staff includes information with regard to the school's child protection and anti-bullying policies and procedures, and to the welfare support services provided to boarders.
2	BS2	That the school reviews its anti-bullying procedures to ensure that there is an appropriate system in place to report and record incidents of bullying which can be monitored by senior staff and governors.
3	BS3	That the school reviews its child protection procedures to ensure that there is an appropriate system in place to report and record incidents of child protection which can be monitored by the school's child protection officer and other senior staff and governors as appropriate.
4		That the school has an appropriate policy and procedures in place with regard to the use of restraint by staff and that the reporting/recording of such incidents are able to be monitored by senior staff and governors. It is also recommended that appropriate training and advice about this area should be provided to staff by the school.
5		That the school should revise its formal complaints procedure so as to enable parents and children to make written formal complaints and that the outcomes of their complaints are made known to them in writing. Such a system should be able to be monitored by senior staff and governors
6		That when the school prepares individual health records for boarders information is requested regarding a child's psychological or emotional problems and that specific information be requested with regard to allergies, such as food allergies, insect stings, antibiotic allergies etc
7		That the school reviews its practice to ensure there is a better sharing of medical information about children, as appropriate, between the house and nursing staff.
8		That the school's policy for managing crises should include strategies to be adopted when serious medical/health matters arise.
9		That the school produces a guide/handbook, which describes in more detail the boarding practice of the school.
10		That the school introduces systems to ensure all boarding house meetings are properly minuted and that the outcomes of concerns raised are properly minuted at subsequent house meetings. Such systems should be able to be monitored by senior staff.

11		That the school makes boarding pupils aware that they are able to complain to CSCI and that the relevant CSCI telephone numbers are publicised within the school.
12		That health care plans and welfare care plans of boarders be agreed with the parents and other relevant members of school and house staff.
13		That links be developed with psychologists and other relevant professionals so that nursing staff might receive appropriate advice when dealing with those children who may be experiencing potentially complex difficulties.
14		That the head of the Susan Hampshire centre offers boarding staff training in strategies that might be used by parents to help boarders experiencing dyslexia and dyspraxia complete their homework.
15		That the older children adopting the 'big sister' role might be better briefed so as to ensure they are aware and have knowledge of all the information they are expected to share with new boarders.
16		That the school should review its existing procedures to enable the children, the chef manager and his staff to engage in regular discussion about school catering.
17		That the school reviews its catering practice so as to meet the dietary needs of some pupils with regard to their religious observances
18		That where required the issue of the boarders having access to drinking water is addressed as soon as possible.
19		That the temperatures of all fridges in the boarding houses be logged on a regular basis.
20		That the quality of the snacks and foodstuffs issued to the boarding houses be properly monitored by the catering department to ensure that, in particular, food issued to the boarding houses is within its sell by date.
21		That the shortfall in the marking of fire doors indicated within the report be addressed.
22		That the school should define the different categories of risks and amended its risk assessment practice accordingly and also ensures that staff not employed directly by the school have the appropriate qualifications and experience to offer children activities involving significant risks.
23		That the school reviews its practice and procedures with regard to ensuring staff are always aware of the whereabouts of all children.

24		That all boarding staff newly appointed to the school receive appropriate induction, initial and on-going training in boarding issues and are subject to regular supervision from their line managers.
25		That the school ensures opportunities are provided for all boarding staff to receive regular on-going training and updating in the school's boarding practice.
26		That the school implements systems to evidence that staff have read and understood all relevant policies and procedures.
27		That the school should build on its existing good practice and follows the guidance and recommendations made by CRB regarding the storage and destruction of CRB certificates.
28		That the school reviews its health and safety practice and procedures with regard to its boarding premises.
29		That the number of beds contained within the sick bay be reviewed given the high level of demand made by the children on the sickbay.

*Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. BS10 refers to Standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS & FINDINGS**

The following Inspection Methods have been used in the production of this report.

Direct Observation	YES
Pupil guided tour of accommodation	YES
Pupil guided tour of Recreational Areas	YES

Checks with other Organisations and Individuals

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	YES
• School Doctor	YES
• Independent Person or Counsellor	YES
• Chair of Governors	YES
'Tracking' individual welfare arrangements	YES
Group discussion with boarders	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	YES
Group discussion with ancillary staff	YES
Group discussion with Gap students	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Boarders' survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Invitation to parents to comment	YES
Inspection of policy / practice documents	YES
Inspection of Records	YES
Visit to Sanatorium	YES
Visits to lodgings	NA
Individual interviews with pupil(s)	YES

Date of Inspection	4/10/04
Time of Inspection	9.00
Duration of Inspection (hrs.)	32
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	12

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

SCHOOL INFORMATION:**AGE RANGE OF BOARDING
PUPILS****FRO
M**

11

TO

19

NUMBER OF BOARDERS (FULL TIME + WEEKLY) AT TIME OF INSPECTION:**Boys**

0

Girls

93

Total

93

Number of separate Boarding Houses

3

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 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) |

"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.

WELFARE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff.
- Boarders are protected from bullying.
- Boarders are protected from abuse.
- Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate.
- Boarders' complaints are appropriately responded to.
- Boarders' health is promoted.
- Safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records.

Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.4)

A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	
The school had produced a good quality prospectus and a variety of handbooks for the benefit of parents and pupils. It was noted that there was no specific references to the school's child protection and anti-bullying policies and procedures and that the welfare support services for boarders were not made sufficiently explicit. It is a good practice recommendation that these areas should be included in the relevant school documentation.	3	

Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.6) The school should have an effective policy on countering bullying, which is known to parents, boarders and staff and which is implemented successfully in practice.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>The responses made in the boarders' questionnaire and conversation with children indicated that minor acts of bullying occasionally took place though the levels of it were not seen to be of major significance. The reported acts of bullying were those of verbal aggression and teasing and no acts of physical bullying were reported by the children in the questionnaires. The children confirmed that bullying was not tolerated within the school and staff dealt promptly with any reported incidents.</p> <p>Whilst the school had a clear Anti-Bullying policy in place, the inspectors could find very little recorded evidence of incidents of bullying and indeed there did not appear to be any system in place for the proper reporting and recording of such incidents.</p> <p>Given this it is a recommendation that the school reviews its anti-bullying procedures to ensure that there is an appropriate system in place to report and record incidents of bullying, which senior staff and governors can monitor.</p>		
PERCENTAGE OF PUPILS REPORTING NEVER OR HARDLY EVER BEING BULLIED	86	%

Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.9)

The school should have, and follow, an appropriate policy on child protection and response to allegations or suspicions of abuse, which is consistent with local Area Child Protection Committee procedures, and is known to staff and, as appropriate, to older boarders in positions of responsibility.

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

Whilst the school had a child protection policy and all staff had recently received some rudimentary training from a local senior social services officer it was clearly evident the school needed to continue to develop its practice in this area. The child protection policy was not consistent with the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures and did not include a requirement for a referral to be made within 24 hours of allegations or suspicions of abuse to the local social services. Discussion with the headteacher indicated that her role in dealing with child protection matters within the school needed to be better defined within the school's child protection policy.

Given the school recruited many members of staff from other parts of the world it is recommended that such staff needed quite intensive on-going training in the area of child protection given, through discussion with several members of overseas staff, their apparent lack of knowledge of the English legal system and the importance of child protection legislation within it.

At the time of the inspection the head of boarding was the school's child protection officer and she had begun to introduce procedures aimed at improving the school's methodology in managing and reporting possible child protection matters. It was evident that further developmental work in this area was necessary to ensure the school had accurate ways of reporting and managing such matters in a way that could be monitored by senior staff and governors.

Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.7)

The school should have, and follow, a fair and appropriate policy on behaviour, discipline and use of punishments, known to boarders, staff and parents.

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

Throughout the inspection the standards of pupil behaviour was excellent and discussions with the children and the comments they made in the returned boarders' questionnaires indicated the school's use of punishments was regarded as fair. Nonetheless shortfalls were noted in this area.

The school had not defined what constituted serious breaches of the rules and the punishments which were appropriate for such breaches. None of the boarding houses had the school/house rules on display for the benefit staff and children. Some children complained that there were sometimes inconsistencies in the application of the rules, particularly by recently recruited house staff.

The school did not have a statement policy on the use of restraint and had not developed any system for the reporting of such incidents. It was accepted by the inspectors that such incidents were exceedingly rare but nonetheless it is recommended that the school should have an appropriate policy and procedures in place with regard to the use of restraint by staff and that the reporting/recording of such incidents can be monitored by senior staff and governors. It is also recommended that appropriate training and advice about this area should be provided to staff by the school.

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.7) The school should have, and follow, an appropriate policy on responding to complaints from boarders and parents.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>Whilst the school made it clear in its handbooks to parents and pupils that it would be responsive to any complaints made by parents or pupils and outlined in general terms how it would respond to such complaints it was evident the procedures outlined did not constitute a formal complaints procedure as indicated within this Standard.</p> <p>Throughout the course of the inspection the inspectors were concerned at the levels of complaints they received from the children on a wide variety of matters, some trivial - others of more concern, and when asked about the school's complaints procedures the children clearly indicated they felt there were no formal procedures in place to enable them to make complaints and/or to receive a replies as to their outcomes. Many children appeared to be very frustrated by this situation.</p> <p>The headteacher did maintain a complaints book, which was monitored by the chair of governors, in which was recorded the most serious complaints from parents. However, the very few complaints that were recorded in the book did not always list the nature of the complaint and their outcomes.</p> <p>It is a recommendation that the school should revise its formal complaints procedure so as to enable parents and children to make written formal complaints and that the outcome of their complaints are made known to them in writing. Such a system should be able to be monitored by senior staff and governors.</p>		
Number of complaints, if any, received by CSCI about the school during last 12 months:		0

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.3) The school should have, and follow, an appropriate policy on countering major risks to health, including substance abuse.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The school offered all pupils Personal, Health & Social Education to all pupils through its tutor programme, citizenship classes and as part of the school's Saturday morning lecture programme. Discussion with staff indicated they were aware of the school's policy on appropriate responses to alcohol, smoking and illegal substance abuse by boarders, and followed that policy in practice.</p>		

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.5)

Adequate records should be kept in relation to individual boarders' health and welfare needs and issues.

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

Individual records for boarders were kept, both on paper and computer. Relevant health information was kept though the forms used did not request information regarding psychological or emotional problems. It is recommended that specific information be requested with regard to this and also with regard to allergies, such as food allergies, insect stings, antibiotic allergies etc. House staff stated that communication between themselves and the health centre regarding students' health needs was not always forthcoming.

Records contained information on who had parental responsibility for boarders.

Nursing staff stated that they had difficulties with forms not being returned particularly from parents of Chinese girls, possibly due to language problems, and thus were accepting the care of these girls with no information regarding their health needs. Nursing staff stated that efforts were made to interview such boarders as soon as possible to seek relevant medical information.

Nursing staff were found to be maintaining confidentiality but it is recommended that advice and/or training be sought regarding what information should be shared with other staff. It is also recommended that the wording of the school's health form be reviewed with regard to the appropriateness of the sharing of health information with the headteacher.

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- There is clear leadership of boarding in the school.
- Crises affecting boarders' welfare are effectively managed.
- The school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare.
- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities.
- Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school.
- The operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare.
- Boarders receive personal support from staff.

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.3)

There should be clear management and leadership of the practice and development of boarding in the school.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>Discussion with the chair of governors indicated the school's governing body took a very active interest in all aspects of the management and organisation of the school. However, it was recommended that the governing body might wish to adopt a more rigorous approach to monitoring the school's boarding practice so that it might be better informed of the school's practice in this area.</p> <p>The inspection evidenced that the headteacher had done much since taking up her appointment to take the work of the school forwards. At the time of the inspection the evidence indicated the headteacher and chair of governors were actively involved in addressing some middle management issues though the inspectors were confident that this would be properly resolved for the benefit of the school.</p>		

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.3)

The school should be capable of satisfactorily managing crises affecting boarders' welfare

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>At the time of the inspection the school had just managed a particularly difficult crisis regarding a pupil of the school who had experienced serious medical problems. It was evident the situation had been very well managed by the staff of the school. Whilst the school did have a policy with regard to the management of crises it was a good practice recommendation that in the light of its most recent experience the policy should include strategies to be adopted when managing serious medical/health matters.</p>		

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.5)

The organisation of boarding houses or units should operate satisfactorily and provide appropriate protection and separation of boarders by age and gender.

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

It was recognised by the inspectors that the school had embarked on a rolling programme of refurbishing and upgrading its boarding accommodation. Consequently, there were variations in the quality of the physical provisions, facilities and standards between houses and this is reflected in the scoring of this Standard. However, it was acknowledged by the inspectors that these issues were being addressed through the school's development plan and it was evident that where refurbishment of boarding accommodation had occurred it had been done so to a very high standard.

The inspectors saw no documentation that explained the principles of the school's boarding practice and it is a recommendation that the school produces a guide/handbook that describes in more detail the boarding practice of the school.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

There should be an appropriate range and choice of activities for boarders outside teaching time.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****3**

A range of activities and clubs were available to the children in the evenings and at weekends. The children had regular access to a good range of sporting and physical activities as well as opportunities to participate in cultural and creative activities. The children informed the inspectors that a good range of off-site activities was offered at weekends.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.2)

Boarders have opportunity to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****3**

Discussion with staff and children confirmed the boarding houses did hold regular house meetings though minutes of such meetings were not taken and there appeared to be few opportunities for the recommendations made at such meetings to be fed back formally to the boarders. It is a good practice recommendation that the school introduces systems to ensure all boarding house meetings are properly minuted and that the outcomes of concerns raised are properly minuted at subsequent house meetings. Such systems should be able to be monitored by senior staff.

The headteacher had recently reviewed the work of the school council and it was her hope that as the work of the school council progressed it would become a valuable conduit for the boarders to contribute to the operation of boarding provision. During the course of the inspection one inspector sat in on a school council meeting and it was self evident the children were encouraged and felt able to raise a range of issues, many of which related to boarding practice.

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.7)

Any prefect system (or equivalent) should give prefects (or equivalent) appropriate specific duties and responsibilities, with adequate staff supervision and measures to counter possible abuses of the role.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****4**

The school had a well-established system for the election of the guardian – a position which equated to that of head girl in other schools. The guardian had two deputies and a number of house captains that formed the school's student management team. Discussion with the children confirmed the election of the guardian and her deputies was regarded as an important event within the school and was seen by the inspectors as an example of the school promoting democracy. The guardian had regular meetings with the headteacher and the student management team acted as an interface between the school council and the senior staff team.

Discussion with the other children indicated they supported the guardian/student management system and felt that the prefects fulfilled their roles appropriately and did not abuse their powers.

It was the view of the inspectors that the school's practice in this area was commendable.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.6)

Each boarder should have one or more members of staff to whom he or she can turn for personal guidance or with a personal problem.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****3**

The school had recently reviewed and developed its personal tutor system to ensure that all children received on-going support from staff with regard to their general pastoral care and support. Discussion with the children confirmed that they valued the tutor system and saw it as an important avenue in seeking support and advice from staff. Discussion with house staff confirmed there was much informal contact with the children regarding any personal/private matters the children wished to raise and it was evident the school did much to ensure all children received much personal support and guidance.

The school did have an independent listener who visited the school on a regular basis. The role of the listener was described in school handbooks and the frequency and times of her visits to the school were displayed on school notice boards and raised at house meetings.

During the course of the inspection the inspectors noticed that whilst the Childline telephone number was on display, the CSCI telephone number was not and discussion with the children indicated that they were unaware that they could complain to CSCI as an organisation external to the school.

WELFARE SUPPORT TO BOARDERS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Boarders receive first aid and health care as necessary.
- Boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill.
- Boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal problems.
- Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination.
- Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families.
- Boarders' possessions and money are protected.
- New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in.
- Boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school.
- Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders' welfare.
- Boarders receive good quality catering provision.
- Boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals.
- Boarders are protected from the risk of fire.
- Boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands.
- The welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school.
- Boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high-risk activities.
- Boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school.

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.14)

Appropriate first aid and minor illness treatment are available to boarders at all times, with access to medical, dental and optical services as required.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

1

Report of Pharmaceutical Inspection at Cobham Hall School by Christine Hastie on 6 October 2004

Summary

The pharmaceutical inspection found that the handling and administration of medicines had not been updated to meet best practice. The main issue arising is the lack of administration of prescribed and minor illness treatment in the houses.

There is a need for policies and procedures to ensure that adequate records are kept, self-administration is assessed and staff are competent in medicine handling. The inspector gave details for obtaining the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's guidelines "The Administration and Control of Medicines in Care Homes and Children's Services" to the nurses at the Health Centre.

Comments

First aid is available to boarders at all times but minor illness treatment in the houses is severely restricted and as a result pupils must attend the Health Centre which is not always practical. Boarders may see the school doctor who makes twice-weekly visits to the Health Centre. However, another doctor does not attend when the school doctor is unable to make visits. The school has arrangements for dental and optical attention. The school employs four nurses who provide 24-hour cover. One nurse on duty had her registration checked some years previously but the other nurse reported that her PIN had never been checked. There is no senior nurse and this appears to hamper the setting up of medicine management policies to ensure consistency. Boarders under 16yrs must be chaperoned when seeing the school doctor. If a girl wishes to see a female doctor, she must pay for a taxi to take her to the surgery some distance away. Housemistresses are only permitted to administer paracetamol tablets for minor illness and do not administer any prescribed medicine. Pupils must therefore visit the Health Centre, in some cases several times a day, to obtain medicine prescribed for them or for any other minor illness treatment. This arrangement not only takes up both valuable nurse time and pupil time but can lead to missed doses and boarders having to attend the Health Centre when they could be adequately treated in their house especially at night. It can also prohibit housemistresses having knowledge of the treatment of pupils in their care. The school keeps a wide range of stock of prescription only medicines (POMs) for the doctor to prescribe. The stock was inadequately labelled and was reported to be decanted in to other containers on occasions. Some POMs in the fridge were held for the doctor to prescribe over the phone. Medicine brought in to the school by boarders is checked to ensure it is fit for use and that there are detailed instructions for its administration. Nurses have a list of medicines they can administer but some of the medicines listed are prescription only. There is no guidance on dose or contra-indications. All medicine was found to be stored securely and keys handed over at shifts. The Health Centre has a dedicated lockable drug fridge. There were no spare keys. Some boarders keep and administer their own medicine but there was no evidence of assessment or how the school ensures they keep their medicine safely and appropriately. Records are maintained for all medicine administered. There was evidence of written parental consent to treatment. There has been no training in medicine management within the school. The BNF in use is ten years old.

Recommendations

1. Standard 15.1 Paracetamol used in the houses is supplied in manufacturer's packs with full details for administration, batch no and expiry date 30/11/2004
2. Standard 15.3 The school ensures that all nursing registrations are current 30/11/2004
3. Standard 15.7 All staff administering medicine are competent 31/12/2004
4. Standard 15.8 All stock medicine is fully labelled with batch no, expiry date and directions for administration 30/11/2004
5. Standard 15.8 There is written authority for the all medicine administered unless it is contained in the "household" medicine protocol 30/11/2004
6. Standard 15.8 The present system of administering all medicine in the Health Centre is reviewed. 15/12/2004
7. Standard 15.11 All boarders keeping and administering their own medication are

<p>assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so</p> <p>Standard 15.11 All boarders are able to store their medicines appropriately and safely</p> <p>30/11/2004</p>	<p>30/11/2004</p>
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Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.3)

Boarders who are ill should be regularly checked and adequately looked after by a member of staff, and be able to summon staff assistance readily and rapidly when necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Boarders who were ill were cared for at the health centre. Discussion with nursing staff indicated that boarders who were ill and admitted to the centre were regularly checked and looked after by nursing staff. Boarders were able to summon staff assistance readily when ill, by day and night.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

Significant health and personal problems of individual boarders should be identified and managed appropriately.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Nursing staff had produced care plans that were supplied to the house staff. Following an examination of some of the care plans it is recommended that the care plans should be developed further to include specific information about actions required to meet particular children's needs.

Welfare plans relating to those boarders with special welfare needs, significant emotional or behavioural difficulties, also needed be developed and it was recommended that health care plans, including welfare plans care, of boarders be agreed with the parents and other relevant members of school and house staff.

Discussion with staff evidenced that when the school admitted boarders with enuresis they were appropriately and sensitively supported and the needs of boarders with specific needs were also similarly supported. However documentation with regard to this requires further development so that such support might be evidenced.

Whilst boarders who were undergoing periods of stress were supported by nursing staff appropriately it is recommended that links be developed with psychologists and other relevant professionals so that nursing staff might receive appropriate advice when dealing with potentially complex issues.

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.6)

Within the school, there is no inappropriate discrimination on grounds of gender, disability, race, religion, cultural background, linguistic background, sexual orientation, or academic or sporting ability. These factors are taken into account in the care of boarders, so that care is sensitive to different needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

The school had a clear policy and guidance with regard to this area. The school admitted pupils from all parts of the world and it was self evident throughout the inspection that all children appeared to mix very well. None of the many children spoken to by the inspectors inferred or suggested that there were any examples of racism to be found within the school.

An inspector was informed by the head of the Susan Hampshire Centre of the work of the centre in working with those children within the school experiencing dyslexia and dyspraxia. It was evident the head of the centre was an excellent practitioner who worked well to ensure the needs of the children for whom she was responsible were known to staff and supported within their classes accordingly. The head of the centre was also on duty for one evening per week in Main Hall and spent some of her time supporting children with special needs during prep. It is a recommendation that the head of the centre might wish to offer boarding staff training in strategies that might be used by parents to help children with dyslexia and dyspraxia complete their homework. In that way the expertise of the head of centre could be used to skill up boarding staff to ensure that children with special needs received appropriate educational support within the boarding houses.

The school's EFL co-ordinator had also developed a role whereby she was able to offer culturally sensitive and appropriate support to the parents and children for whom English was not their first language. At the time of the inspection the EFL co-ordinator was interested in developing her knowledge of the Thai culture given that the school was beginning to admit children from Thailand. The work of the EFL co-ordinator was regarded as commendable by the inspectors and this is reflected in the scoring of this Standard.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.6)

Boarders are enabled to contact their parents and families in private.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Discussion with staff and children confirmed that the school facilitated contact between the children and their parents at all reasonable times. There were a number of telephone booths within the school that were available to the children though many had their own mobile telephones. Boarders were able to write letters home and receive and send e-mail messages to and from home though the use of the internet by the children was filtered to ensure inappropriate use of the internet did not occur.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.3)

Reasonable protection is provided for boarders' personal possessions and for any boarders' money or valuables looked after by the school.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****1**

Responses made in the boarders' questionnaire and discussion with children indicated that many incidents of petty theft had been occurring in the school for some time. During one visit to a boarding unit one inspector was present at a unit meeting when children reported to staff that a number of items had been stolen from them. Some of the items included a large sum of money and a wristwatch. Staff undertook an investigation into the thefts though the outcome was not known by the end of the inspection. Discussion with the children indicated they would preferred to have had their own lockable lockers within their boarding accommodation.

Whilst all children had been provided with their own lockable locker for use in school, it was the case that apart from Brook House none of the children had neither their own lockable lockers within their own boarding areas nor the facility to lock their rooms. The inspectors accepted that whilst there may have been acceptable reasons as to why children – particularly young children – should not be able to lock themselves within their own rooms for reasons of health and safety, it was considered to be poor practice that the boarders were not able to have lockable areas within the boarding houses in which to store some of their valued possessions.

At the school council meeting attended by one of the inspectors this issue was raised and the council members were advised that they did have access to their own lockable school lockers. The council members were quick to point out that their lockers were usually full of files, books and other school related items and therefore there was little space for other items and that these lockers were usually some distance from their boarding houses.

It is a recommendation that the school provides all boarding pupils with lockable spaces based within or very near to their rooms.

The pocket money records used in the boarding houses seen by inspectors did not provide sufficient detailed information and it is a recommendation that the school reviews and updates its procedures with regard to the management and recording of children's pocket money.

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.3) There is an appropriate process of induction and guidance for new boarders.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The school had an induction system for new boarders which included the appointment of 'big sisters' who were older pupils who supported children new to the school in settling in. Discussion with some of the children who had undertaken the 'big sister' role indicated they themselves were not always fully appraised as to what their brief was in supporting children newly admitted to the school.</p> <p>It was the view of the inspectors that the concept of the 'big sister' role was very good but it is a good practice recommendation that the older children adopting this role might be better briefed so as to ensure they are aware and have knowledge of all the information they are expected to share with new boarders.</p>		

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.4) Any guardians appointed by the school should be subject to the same recruitment checks as staff, and their care of pupils should be monitored.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
Not applicable.		

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.4) The Head, or a senior member of the school's staff, regularly monitors the school's records of risk assessments, punishments, complaints and accidents, to identify any issues requiring action.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>Given the lack of recording systems in many areas such as major punishments, sanctions and complaints identified within the report then it was evident the senior staff were unable to monitor formally such areas. It is a recommendation that the shortfalls in recording systems identified in the report are rectified and that the monitoring of such systems by senior staff is then implemented.</p>		

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.8)

Meals should be provided to boarders, which are adequate in quantity, quality and choice, and provision is made for special dietary, medical or religious needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****3**

The responses made in the boarders' questionnaires and discussion with the children suggested that the quality of catering within the school was of a poor standard. Many of the concerns expressed by the children suggested that too much fatty food was served, there was insufficient choice and the school did not promote healthy eating. However, discussion with the chef manager indicated that the school had, over the years, tried a range of strategies to address the issues raised by the children but whatever had been implemented was still not considered satisfactory by them. The school had established a Food Committee to discuss such concerns but discussion with the children indicated they were not always aware of the work of the committee and those that were saw it as being of little value to them. Discussion with the children also indicated that when they did complain about the food they felt their complaints had not been properly heard or addressed.

However, it was the case the school had been awarded the Kent 'Heartbeat' Award for promoting healthy eating and the chef manager was of the view that the school had had to demonstrate good practice to the assessors in order to achieve the award. Further, all of the inspectors took meals in the school during the course of the inspection and the food served to them was considered to be wholesome, nutritious and healthy and at variance with what many of the children had stated about it.

It was evidenced that the boarders did receive good quality catering provision though this was not necessarily perceived as such by the children. It is a recommendation that the school should review its existing procedures to enable the children, the chef manager and his staff to engage in regular discussion about school catering.

The inspection evidenced that insufficient attention was given by to the dietary needs of some pupils with regard to their religious observances. It is a good practice recommendation that the school reviews its practice in this area.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.5)

Boarders have access to drinking water in both boarding and teaching areas, and to food or the means of preparing food at reasonable times in addition to main meals.

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

Shortfalls were noted in this area. The Main Hall boarding house in that access to drinking water was restricted particularly when the kitchen areas were locked and children requiring a drink of water had to go some distance to get it. At the school council meeting the children requested that water coolers might be provided to overcome this difficulty. Discussion later with the bursar suggested that it would be a relatively easy matter to provide the boarders in the Main Hall with better access to drinking water and that he would take steps to address this issue. It is recommended that where required the issue of the boarders having access to drinking water is addressed as soon as possible.

No fridges in any of the boarding houses had thermometers and consequently the temperature of the fridges was not being recorded at all. It is recommended that the temperatures of all fridges in the boarding houses be logged on a regular basis.

Whilst snacks and foodstuffs were made available on the boarding houses the children complained that items such as bread and milk had sometimes passed their sell by dates and were not in a fit state to be used. In one boarding house an inspector noticed that milk had been issued which was indeed past its sell by date which suggested that the children's complaints were legitimate.

It is recommended that the quality of the snacks and foodstuffs issued to the boarding houses be properly monitored by the catering department to ensure that, in particular, food issued to the boarding houses is within its sell by date.

It was noted that in Brooke and Bligh Houses the young people were encouraged to prepare their own meals as part of the school's independence training cycle aimed at preparing students for university life.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.5)

Boarders and boarding staff should be aware of emergency evacuation procedures from boarding accommodation. The school should comply with recommendations of the Fire Service, and should regularly carry out and record risk assessments in relation to fire, together with fire drills and any routine tests recommended by the Fire Service.

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

At the time of the inspection an officer of the Fire Service undertook a visit to the school and in due course his report will be made available to the school. An examination of the school's fire safety logbook indicated that fire drills were undertaken regularly at different times.

During the course of an inspection of the premises it was noted that some fire exits were locked and that at least one door that was no longer a designated fire door was still marked as such. It was recommended that these shortfalls be addressed.

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.3)

Schools where there are unusual or especially onerous demands on boarders ensure that these are appropriate to the boarders concerned and do not unacceptably affect boarders' welfare.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Discussion with the children and general observation confirmed that very largely there were no onerous demands made on boarders. However, discussion with a group of younger children indicated they were very distressed at some of the demands being made upon them with regard to some of their homework. It was accepted by the inspectors that the group of children spoken to were still very new to the school and that some of them were finding it difficult to adjust to their new school life. The headteacher was aware of the difficulties these particular children were experiencing and the inspectors were confident that the headteacher would ensure the children continued to receive appropriate support whilst they adjusted to school life.

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.2)

The welfare of any children accommodated at the school, other than pupils, is protected.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

9

Not applicable.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)

Identifiably high-risk activities provided for boarders should be competently supervised and accompanied by adequate and appropriate safety measures.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Whilst the inspectors saw a range of risk assessments that had been properly completed with regard to various activities it was the case that the school had not defined what it considered low, medium and high-risk activities and it is a good practice recommendation that the school should define the different categories of risks and amended its risk assessment practice accordingly.

A minor shortfall was noted in that with regard to a horse-riding activity held outside the school, in that the school had not asked to see the qualifications of the staff offering the activity. It is a recommendation that the school ensures that staff not employed directly by the school have the appropriate qualifications and experience to offer children activities involving significant risks.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.5) Boarders have access to information about events in the world outside the school, and access to local facilities, which is appropriate to their age.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Discussion with children and staff indicated this Standard was met.		

STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Boarders are adequately supervised by staff.
- Staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site.
- Boarders are adequately supervised at night.
- Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training.
- Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice.
- There are sound relationships between staff and boarders.
- Boarders' personal privacy is respected.
- There is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders.
- Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises.

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.7)

The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time should be sufficient in number and deployment for the age, number and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

An examination of duty rotas and discussion with staff indicated this Standard was met. All boarding houses have their own staff attached to them and none were required to undertake any teaching duties, with the exception of the head of boarding who had some teaching commitments. All housemistresses had 1.5 days a week off duty and assistant housemistresses had 3 hours per day off duty as well as 1.5 days per week. The inspectors noted that the school did not have any formal cover arrangements for boarding staff sickness and absence but discussion with staff indicated that cover arrangements were made informally within the existing staff group and there no indications that this made excessive demands of the boarding staff.

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

Boarders temporarily away from the school site remain under the overall responsibility of a duty member of staff, and are able to contact a member of staff in an emergency.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Examination of relevant documentation and discussion with staff indicated that the school made all the necessary arrangements with regard to the organisation of trips away from the school site as indicated in Standard 32.2.

However with regard to outside trips made from the school during evening activities, it was noted by the inspectors that not all staff were punctilious in ensuring that all the children properly signed out when leaving the school site and consequently on occasion some staff were not totally sure as to the whereabouts of some children. It is recommended that the school reviews its practice and procedures with regard to this area.

It was evidenced that a caretaker was frequently taking out small groups of children unaccompanied in the school's minibus. It is recommended that this situation needs to be properly risk assessed to ensure the health and safety of both the member of staff and the children for whom he is responsible.

Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.5)

Staff should be present, and accessible to boarders as necessary, in each boarding house at night.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Discussion with staff and an examination of staff rotas indicated this Standard was met.

Standard 34 (34.1 - 34.7)

All staff with boarding duties have job descriptions reflecting those duties, receive induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receive regular review of their boarding practice, with opportunities for continuing training in boarding.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Discussion with staff and an examination of a number of staff files indicated that staff had current job descriptions. However, discussions with staff and an examination of relevant documentation indicated there were shortfalls in this area. Induction for newly appointed house staff was limited and house staff, did not receive any formal supervision. Whilst house staff had recently received some basic training in child protection no ongoing training programme for house staff in boarding practice had been developed. Discussion with house staff indicated they would appreciate training with regard to basic food hygiene, first aid, working in a multi-cultural environment and further training in child protection. It is a recommendation that the school ensures opportunities are provided for boarding staff to receive regular on-going training and updating in the school's boarding practice.

Standard 35 (35.1 - 35.4)

All staff with boarding duties are provided with up to date written guidance on the school's boarding policies and practice.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school had produced an up-to-date staff handbook which was available to all staff. The guidance adequately covered the school's current approach to a range of issues relating to boarding and the safeguarding and promotion of boarders' welfare. However, given the lack of a formal induction procedure it was not possible for the school to evidence whether newly appointed members of staff had read and understood the policies. It is a good practice recommendation that the school implements systems to evidence that staff have read and understood all relevant policies and procedures.

Standard 36 (36.1 - 36.4)

There are sound staff/boarder relationships.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Throughout the course of the inspection it was evident the relationships between staff and pupils were very positive. It was accepted by the inspectors that some of the children recently admitted to the school were experiencing some distress as a result of homesickness and the demands of adjusting to a boarding school environment. The staff were aware of those particular issues and were addressing them. That apart, the girls spoke very highly of the staff group and were appreciative of the support given to them by staff. The staff themselves were clearly committed to the welfare of the girls in their care.

Standard 37 (37.1 - 37.2)

Staff supervision of boarders should avoid intruding unnecessarily on boarders' privacy.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Responses made in the boarders' questionnaires and discussion with the children indicated this Standard was met.

Standard 38 (38.1 - 38.10)

Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those on a contractual/sessional basis) and volunteers who work with boarders (as defined in the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000) includes checks through the Criminal Records Bureau checking system (enhanced as appropriate), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****3**

Discussion with the bursar's secretary, who was responsible for the vetting of staff, and an examination of relevant files indicated this Standard was met. The bursar's secretary ensured that proper recruitment records were obtained and that CRB checks at the appropriate levels were undertaken for all staff employed within the school. Gap students appointed to work at the school were properly vetted.

The bursar's secretary maintained a detailed progress file with regard to the progress of CRB checks applied for by the school. The inspector noted that the bursar's secretary had kept CRB checks beyond the six months following their receipt into the school. The school had been advised to keep copies of CRB checks by the Boarding Schools' Association for the purpose of the CSCI inspection. The inspectors were appreciative of this, however, it is recommended that the school should follow the guidance and recommendations made by CRB regarding the storage and destruction of CRB certificates.

Standard 39 (39.1 - 39.4)

The school does not allow any member of staff (including ancillary staff, sessional/contract staff and volunteers) to work unsupervised with boarders unless that member of staff has been satisfactorily checked with the Criminal Records Bureau.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****3**

Discussion with the bursar's secretary and an examination of relevant documentation indicated this Standard was met.

PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation.
- Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion.
- Boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation.
- Boarders have satisfactory provision to study.
- Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities.
- Boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day.
- Boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas.
- Boarders are protected from safety hazards.
- Boarders are suitably accommodated when ill.
- Boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered.
- Boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school.
- The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted.
- The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits.

Standard 40 (40.1 - 40.8)

Boarding Houses (including dormitories and living areas) and other accommodation provided for boarders should be appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, suitably furnished, accessible to any boarders with disabilities, and adequately maintained.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The inspectors were well aware that whilst the main school buildings were listed and of great historic interest this had created significant attendant problems with regard to maintaining and developing the fabric of the building. All significant work had to be approved by English Heritage and, for example, even fairly minor items such as the refurbishment of lead windows, when restored, had to be exact replicas of the original Tudor lead work. This requirement for detail created significant additional costs to the school.

As was indicated previously within the report the school had been undertaking a rolling programme of refurbishment which meant there was a variation in the quality of boarding accommodation offered by the school. In some areas the boarding accommodation was of a high standard whilst in others work clearly needed to be undertaken to bring it up to the same standard. This is reflected in the scoring of this Standard.

The comments above notwithstanding, it should be stressed that all of the boarding accommodation was fit for purpose and that when the school's programme of refurbishment is complete then all of the boarding pupils will benefit from living in high quality accommodation.

Standard 41 (41.1 - 41.8) Boarding accommodation is reserved for the use of those boarders designated to use it, and protected by access by the public.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>General observation and discussion with the children and staff confirmed this Standard was met. The school maintained high levels of security and endeavoured to protect the children from access by the public. Keypads were fitted to all outside doors and during the night hours from 10.00pm until 8.00am the school employed security guards to protect the safety and welfare of the children. The school had installed CCTV cameras in parts of the school.</p>		

Standard 42 (42.1 - 42.14) Sleeping accommodation is suitably furnished and of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of boarders accommodated, with appropriate separation between genders, age groups and from accommodation for adults.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>The findings relating to this Standard reflect the comments made with regard to Standard 40 in that the quality and standard of the sleeping accommodation varied from being very good to poor depending upon whether such accommodation had been refurbished or not and this is reflected in the scoring of this Standard</p> <p>Those rooms that had been refurbished had been done so to a good standard and in those rooms which were due for refurbishment the children had been encouraged to personalise them to make them more homely and attractive.</p>		

Standard 43 (43.1 - 43.2) Suitable facilities for both organised and private study are available to boarders.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The children in Bligh and Brooke boarding houses had their own study areas within their own rooms. The children in Main Hall undertook prep elsewhere. Discussion with children and staff and general observation indicated this Standard was met.</p>		

Standard 44 (44.1 - 44.10)

Adequate toilet and washing facilities are readily accessible to boarders, with appropriate privacy.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Inspection of the premises indicated the school had sufficient toilet and washing facilities as indicated within this Standard. As was stated previously, the school was undertaking a rolling programme of refurbishment, including bathroom and toilet areas, and the quality and standard of such areas varied from being very good to poor depending upon whether such accommodation had been refurbished or not and this is reflected in the scoring of the Standard.

The inspectors were surprised to note that in some of the newly refurbished boarding areas not all of the bathroom/toilet areas had been refurbished and had been left in a poor condition. Comments made by the children in both discussion and in the responses made in the boarders' questionnaires indicated they disliked having to use the older bathroom/toilet areas. The inspectors received many complaints from the children that there was often insufficient hot water available for the showers at busy times such as morning rise and bedtimes. In some of the boarding houses – particularly Bligh and Brooke – the temperature of the hot water from the hand basin taps was very hot. The inspectors were informed that Bligh and Brooke Houses were due to be refurbished and the hot water system was to be reviewed when the refurbishment of both houses took place.

Standard 45 (45.1 - 45.3)

Suitable changing provision is provided for use by day.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

An inspection of the changing facilities indicated this Standard was met.

Standard 46 (46.1 - 46.6)

Boarders have access to a range and choice of safe recreational areas, both indoors and outdoors.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

An inspection of the school's recreational areas indicated this Standard was met.

Standard 47 (47.1 - 47.9) Indoor and outdoor areas used by, or accessible to, boarders should be free from reasonably avoidable safety hazards.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>Discussion with senior members of staff regarding health and safety and maintenance issues evidenced poor communication regarding their roles and responsibilities in this area. This lack of clarity was further evidenced when the inspectors inspected the boarding premises and found examples of health and safety risks. These included trailing electrical leads, windows containing shards of broken glass and others that were cracked, safety chains needing repair or replacing, window restrainers needing replacement.</p> <p>Whilst the school did have a clear health and safety policy the evidence obtained indicated the policy was not being carried out fully in practice. It is a recommendation that the school reviews its health and safety practice and procedures with regard to its boarding premises.</p>		

Standard 48 (48.1 - 48.4) Suitable accommodation should be available for the separate care of boarders who are ill.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>Boarders who were ill at school were cared for within the 3-bed sickbay at the health centre. There was no provision for the care of a boarder separately from other boarders. The school did not have a designated room for the isolation of a boarder.</p> <p>The sick bay was of adequate size for the current number of beds, however it is recommended that the number of beds contained within the sick bay be reviewed given the high level of demand made by the children on the sickbay.</p>		

Standard 49 (49.1 - 49.3) Adequate laundry provision is made for boarders' clothing and bedding.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>An inspection of the laundry and discussion with laundry and boarding staff indicated this Standard was met.</p>		

Standard 50 (50.1 - 50.2) Boarders are able to obtain minor necessary personal and stationery items while accommodated at school.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Discussion with the children indicated this Standard was met.</p>		

Standard 51 (51.1 - 51.11) Any lodgings arranged by the school to accommodate pupils provide satisfactory accommodation and supervision, are checked by the school before use, and are monitored by the school during use.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
Not applicable.		

Standard 52 (52.1 - 52.8) Any off-site short-stay accommodation arranged by the school for any of its boarders provides satisfactory accommodation and supervision, is checked by the school before use (although this may not be feasible when accommodation is in private households), and is monitored by the school during use.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Discussion with staff and an examination of relevant documentation indicated this Standard was met.		

PART C**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY****(where applicable)****Lay Assessor** _____ **Signature** _____**Date** _____**Lead Inspector** **John Walker** **Signature****Second Inspector** _____ **Signature** _____**Regulation Manager** _____ **Signature** _____**Date** **17/11/04** _____

PART D

HEAD'S RESPONSE

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 4th October 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

The inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection, although welcomed, came at the beginning of a new school year when a large proportion of boarding staff were new. This, plus a substantial intake of new boarders from across the globe, may have created a climate, which influenced the initial response of the inspectors. There also appeared to be a lack of experience on the part of the inspectors of the workings of a small independent school.

The emphasis on paper trails and administrative structures in some areas undermined recognition of the positive daily work of the school. However, this issue was addressed over the course of the inspection.

The Headmistress and Governors welcome the advice of the Inspection on compliance with Section 87 of the Children's Act 1989.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the Head

YES

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

YES

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

Note:

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

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 6-12-04 which indicates how recommended actions and advisory recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the recommended actions in a timely fashion

YES

Action plan did not cover all the recommended actions and required further discussion

Head has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

D.3 HEAD’S AGREEMENT

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

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

Print Name _____

Signature

Designation

Date _____

Or

D.3.2 I Helen Davy, Headteacher of Cobham Hall 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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