



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

BOARDING SCHOOL

St Michael's School

**Harts Lane
Burghclere
Hampshire
RG20 9JW**

Lead Inspector
Maureen
Webb

Announced
09/05/05 9.00am

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
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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 *Boarding 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	St Michael's
Address	Hart's Lane, Bughclere, Hampshire, RG20 9JW
Telephone number	01635 278137
Fax number	01635 278601
Email address	smsssp@aol.com
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the	Fr Paul Morgan
Name of Head	Fr Frank Kurtz
Name of Head of Care	
Age range of boarding pupils	9-19 years
Date of last welfare inspection	6-7 October 2003

Brief Description of the School:

St Michael's is a boarding and day school for boys and girls, aged 7 to 18 years. The school is run under the auspices of the Society of Pius X and provides a Traditional Catholic education. At the time of the inspection the school had 21 boarders, 7 girls and 14 boys. These numbers represented a fall of almost 60% in the number of boarders since the previous inspection and the school confirmed that the girl's boarding house would close at the end of the current academic year. The school also had 34 day pupils. The school's facilities are located on three sites, a few miles south of the town of Newbury. The senior school and the senior boys' boarding house are based on the main site in the village of Burghclere. The girls' boarding house and the junior school are located close to one another in the village of Highclere. The school was offering weekly or full boarding facilities and boarders are cared for by lay members and religious of the Society of Pius X.

SUMMARY

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

This inspection included a period of 19 hours spent at the school by two inspectors over two days. Part of day I of the inspection was carried out alongside an OFSTED inspector. While in school the inspectors spent time speaking with boarders, the Headteacher, staff, including boarding, teaching and ancillary staff and parents. They visited the boarding houses, saw the classrooms and shared meals with pupils. In addition to the time spent in school, CSCI wrote to the parents of all boarding pupils and conducted a written survey of boarders. They also contacted the school's doctor and two independent visitors.

What the school does well:

St. Michael's is a small school located in the attractive North Hampshire countryside. The school expects very high standards of behaviour from its pupils and this is reflected in the way young people conduct themselves. They reported very little bullying. The school has two independent visitors who have taken an active interest in the welfare of boarders. The operation of the boys boarding house was running smoothly at the time of inspection, with sound relationships between the boys and staff.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has completed an extensive building programme since the last welfare inspection. This has provided new boarding accommodation for the boys, which is of a good standard. It has included a new kitchen and dining rooms, a new library and some new classrooms. The school is in the process of setting up sound administrative systems which can be monitored. Awareness of health and safety has improved in all areas.

What they could do better:

There are a number of areas in which the school needs to improve and this report contains a high number of recommendations. The lack of continuity in the management of the school and the management of the boarding houses has made it difficult for the school to make progress. The number of boarders has fallen to such an extent that the girl's boarding house is to close. This has

caused considerable anxiety to the remaining girls and their parents. The evidence of this inspection is that the care of girl boarders has not been of a good standard and must be improved. The way in which the girls' behaviour is perceived and managed needs to become much more positive and this should be actively monitored by the school's senior management.

The school's child protection procedures must be revised. All staff need to be briefed in the policies and procedures and those with specific child protection responsibilities must receive appropriate training.

The recruitment and vetting of staff must be carried out in accordance with National minimum Standards in order to protect children.

The school needs to recruit staff with appropriate experience to manage the boarding houses. The school's inability to do this has been a significant factor in the problems that have occurred in the girls' house. Staff should receive an appropriate induction programme and ongoing support and they should have opportunities to receive additional training to improve their professional practice.

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 Standards

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders' health is promoted. (NMS 6)
- Safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records. (NMS 7)
- Boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary.(NMS 15)
- Boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill.(NMS 16)
- Boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal Problems.(NMS 17)
- Boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- Boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals.(NMS 25)
- Boarders are suitably accommodated when ill. (NMS 48)
- Boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered.(NMS 49)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 7, 15, 16, 24, 48, 49

The school was keeping appropriate records on boarders' health. Boarders were receiving first aid and treatment for minor illnesses as necessary and had access to medical services when needed. Supervision of sick boarders appeared to be adequate. The new kitchen and refectory had improved the quality of meals to a satisfactory standard.

EVIDENCE:

Boarders records included information from parents on any specific health problems. Parental permission has been obtained for emergency medical treatment and for the administration of named non-prescribed medicines. This information had been made available to boarding house staff.

Staff were available to provide supervision to boarders if they were sick. The newly built boys' boarding house included a designated sick bay with en-suite facilities.

All boarders were registered with a local GP practice. The school doctor reported positively on the care provided by the school for boarding pupils.

A number of staff had received training in first aid.

A new refectory and well-equipped kitchen had been built since the previous inspection. The facilities were spacious and comfortable. Kitchen staff had had up to date food handling training.

Menus were planned on a six-weekly cycle and were seen to provide a balanced diet that included fresh vegetables and fruit. There is no alternative offered for the main meal. The National Minimum Standards suggest that boarders should have a choice of main dish. Staff in the girl's house said they were able to provide an alternative to the evening meal if this was necessary. There were no boarders requiring a special diet. Drinking water was readily available.

Boarders clothing and bedding were being regularly laundered. Boarders either managed this themselves or received help from staff. Girl boarders reported that staff in their boarding house were very helpful in this regard.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are protected from bullying.(NMS 2)
- Boarders are protected from abuse.(NMS 3)
- Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate.(NMS 4)
- Boarders' complaints are appropriately responded to.(NMS 5)
- The operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- Boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school.(NMS 22)
- Boarders are protected from the risk of fire. (NMS 26)
- The welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school.(NMS 28)
- Boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities.(NMS 29)
- Boarders' personal privacy is respected.(NMS 37)
- There is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders.(NMS 38)
- 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.(NMS 39)
- Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. (NMS 41)
- Boarders are protected from safety hazards.(NMS 47)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 2, 3, 4, 26, 29, 37, 38, 47

There appeared to be very few incidents of bullying between pupils in the school. However reports received from pupils, staff and parents about the treatment of girl boarders by some staff, suggests that these staff had been guilty of bullying behaviour.

The school's child protection policies and procedures were not sufficiently robust and needed updating. Some staff were not sufficiently aware of them. The school's discipline procedures appeared to be interpreted in an unduly harsh way for the girls and the girls did not feel able to defend themselves. A high number of exclusions had taken place in the summer of 2004 which could not be justified on the available evidence.

Fire safety procedures were being carried out satisfactorily.

There were very serious gaps in the vetting procedures for new staff and boarders were not being protected in this regard. Young people were generally being protected from other safety hazards but clear written safety guidelines need to be implemented for using the swimming pool.

EVIDENCE:

The school has an anti-bullying policy which was included in both the school handbook for parents and pupils and the staff handbook. Feedback from boarders via a written survey and face to face discussions suggested that bullying between pupils was a rare occurrence. Some staff behaviour towards girl boarders sounded as if it amounted to bullying.

The school's child protection policy is not fully in line with the most recent Department for Education guidance or with National Minimum Standards. In particular it needs to include:

- guidance for staff on how to respond to a disclosure of abuse from a young person
- a requirement of staff to report any concerns about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues, likely to put pupils at risk of harm.

Boarding staff reported having had a briefing on child protection when they took up their posts. Ancillary staff spoken to had not received such a briefing. There was a need for further child protection training for all staff.

The school had been subject to a child protection investigation during this school year. No action by the Police or Social Services had been considered necessary following the investigation.

There was conflicting evidence about the school's use of discipline. There had been a high number of permanent exclusions at the end of the last academic year, July 2004, for which there was no supporting documentation to justify this most serious sanction. A survey of girl boarders, information from parents and discussions with the girl boarders during the inspection, suggested that they often felt wrongly accused of misdemeanours by boarding house staff and they were disciplined disproportionately for very minor offences. In either case they felt they were not allowed to refute allegations or to explain their actions. In contrast the boy boarders reported being treated fairly.

Fire safety checks were being carried out and recorded appropriately.

Staff recruitment files were seen and a number of staff had been appointed without the required Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks having been made and some without any written references. This meant that children were being

supervised by staff who had not been rigorously checked. The school had requested all the outstanding CRB checks at the time of the inspection.

Written guidelines were seen for any journeys off site and use of the school's minibus. The school has introduced risk assessments for a wide area of school activities. The school has an outdoor swimming pool which is used in the summer months. Boarders were aware of the rules about pool use but no written guidelines or risk assessment were seen. No other high risk activities were identified and no other safety hazards noted during the inspection.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities.(NMS 11)
- Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination.(NMS 18)
- Boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands.(NMS 27)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision to study.(NMS 43)
- Boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas.(NMS 46)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 11, 18, 43, 46

The boys had access to a range and choice of activities outside of teaching time but this was not the case for the girls, whose opportunities were limited. The different experience of the girls compared to the boys cannot be justified and was discriminatory. The boys had easier access to safe recreational areas than the girls. All boarders had satisfactory provision for study.

EVIDENCE:

The boys confirmed that they had good opportunities for leisure activities. Their boarding house was located on the main school site which gave them easier access than the girls to the playing field and the sports hall. A number of the boys stayed at weekends and they reported favourably on the weekend activities organised by their house staff in consultation with them.

The girls had fewer activities organised for them. None of the girl boarders stayed at the weekends and some of them said this was because there was nothing for them to do. The girls boarding house had an extensive garden which the girls were only allowed into with supervision. When staff were not available to supervise, the gardens could not be used. A separate recreation room had been created in the girls' boarding house for the junior girls and this was well used by them. There was clear evidence of discrepancy in the provision of leisure activities for the girls in comparison with the boys.

The boarders had facilities for private study which met their needs.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school.(NMS 12)
- Boarders receive personal support from staff.(NMS 14)
- Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families.(NMS 19)
- New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in.(NMS 21)
- Boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school.(NMS 30)
- There are sound relationships between staff and boarders.(NMS 36)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 12, 14, 19, 21, 36

The contrast between the experience of the boys and girls was marked. The boys were able to contribute their views to aspects of the operation of the boarding house. This was not the case for the girls.

The boys had good provision for maintaining telephone contact with their families while the girls' ability to remain in contact with their families had been compromised by the lack of a private telephone for their use.

Insufficient support had been given to new boarders, particularly those coming from overseas for whom English was not their first language

There appeared to be good relationships between the boys and their house staff, whereas relationships between the girls and their boarding house staff were poor.

EVIDENCE:

The boys reported that they were able to make suggestions and were asked for their views on planned activities but the girl boarders did not appear to have opportunities to contribute their views on the operation of the boarding house. The girls felt they were not consulted or listened to and this appears to have been the case.

In the survey of pupils carried out as part of this inspection, almost all the boarders said they had at least one member of the school's staff with whom they could discuss a problem. The school has two independent visitors, one for the boys and one for the girls, who visit the school and who were known to boarders. Their contact details were readily available. The recently appointed

independent person for the boys had not been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau.

Boarders were able to contact their parents and families but it had been difficult for the girl boarders to do this in private, when the telephone for their use had been out of action for a number of months prior to the inspection. The boys' boarding house had a private telephone booth. Some parents reported that the school was not good at informing them of events which affected the welfare of their children.

The school does not have a structured approach to the induction of new boarders and it was evident that this had left at least one pupil without sufficient support. This could be particularly important for students coming from overseas for whom English was not their first language.

Feedback from the boys was that relationships between them and their boarding staff were good. They felt they were looked after well and treated fairly. This was not the case for the girls where relationships between the boarding house staff and the girls appeared to be poor with a lack of trust on both sides. The girls and some parents reported that there had been instances when girl boarders had not been looked after carefully or treated fairly.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders' possessions and money are protected.(NMS 20)
- Boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation.(NMS 40)
- Boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation.(NMS 42)
- Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities.(NMS 44)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day.(NMS 45)
- Boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school.(NMS 50)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 40, 42, 44, 45

The new accommodation for the boys was of a good standard. The provision for the girls' was less satisfactory. The boarding house was just adequate but in need of some refurbishment. The changing facilities for the girls were poor.

EVIDENCE:

The school had recently undergone an extensive building programme on the main school site which had included a new modern boarding house for the boys as well as new classrooms and a new library. The new boarding house provided spacious and comfortable accommodation with new furnishings and fittings. The girl's boarding house is located in a village some miles from the school. It is a big old house in need of some redecoration and refurbishment. It had plenty of space for the girls accommodated but the beds and furniture had been much used and looked shabby. The girls needed to provide their own secure storage. Both boarding houses had sufficient numbers of toilets and showers for the numbers of boarders.

The boys used their boarding house for changing before and after sport and this worked well. The girls changing facilities had been extended into the provision previously used by the boys. The boys' urinals were still in place and the showers were not in use.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- A suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- There is clear leadership of boarding in the school.(NMS 8)
- Crises affecting boarders' welfare are effectively managed.(NMS 9)
- The school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare.(NMS 10)
- Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders' welfare.(NMS 23)
- Boarders are adequately supervised by staff.(NMS 31)
- Staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site.(NMS 32)
- Boarders are adequately supervised at night.(NMS 33)
- Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training.(NMS 34)
- Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice.(NMS 35)
- The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted.(NMS 51)
- The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 8, 10, 23, 31, 33, 34, 35

At the time of the inspection there was no clear leadership of boarding in the school and no evidence of any system for monitoring of welfare provision by the school's Governor.

There were serious discrepancies in the quality of the boarding experience between boys and girls, with girls receiving a poorer service.

Risk assessments and record keeping had been very poor in the past but are now improving.

Boarding houses had sufficient numbers of staff for the appropriate supervision of boarders, during the day and at night, but the levels of experience and training of boarding staff was inadequate and was a particular concern in the girls' house.

The staff handbook, which was the main source of guidance for boarding staff, was very brief.

EVIDENCE:

There has been a sharp decline in the number of boarders since the last welfare inspection in October 2003. At that time there were 52 boarders, 24 boys and 28 girls. At the time of this inspection numbers had fallen to 14 boys and 7 girls and a decision has been taken to close the boarding provision for girls at the end of this academic year. The Headteacher, who has been in post since September 2004, told the inspectors that a development plan for the school was under discussion. The school has a school governor, who is the Religious Superior for the Society of Pius X in Great Britain. It does not have a governing body. It was not clear what role the governor takes in the governance of the school and there was no evidence of his system for monitoring welfare provision.

There have been numerous changes of personnel since the last inspection. This has included the Head and Deputy Head and all of the senior boarding staff. The school has had no structured induction programme for new staff and a number of the boarding staff have had no previous experience or training in caring for children living away from home. They have not had access to the support and guidance of experienced staff and their training opportunities have been limited to first aid training. The Headteacher told the inspectors that he is developing a system of appraisal for all staff, but no such system is currently in place. Job descriptions for boarding staff put little emphasis on providing a caring and nurturing environment.

The school has a strict policy of separation between boys and girls and this inspection highlighted a major discrepancy in the quality of their boarding experiences. The feedback from the boys was that the provision for them was operating well and was meeting their needs. The girls did not feel this way. They had less access to constructive activities, their relationships with boarding staff appeared to be very negative and their boarding accommodation was of a lesser standard. They had also experienced the sharpest decline in their numbers so that the group was now very small.

The school's Deputy Head was in the process of putting an administrative system in place for managing and monitoring of health and safety and a number of other administrative tasks and records. This included the wider introduction of risk assessments. Important records for individuals who had been permanently excluded in the previous academic year were absent.

In both boarding houses although there were sufficient numbers of staff to supervise the numbers of boarders, including at night, their training, experience and skills could not be evidenced. This was particularly true of the girls' boarding house.

The school has a brief staff handbook which included policies on child protection, bullying and complaints. It did not include guidance on many important areas listed in Appendix 1 of the National Minimum Standards.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 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>
6	X
7	3
15	3
16	3
17	X
24	3
25	X
48	3
49	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	2
3	1
4	1
5	X
13	X
22	X
26	3
28	X
29	1
37	3
38	1
39	X
41	X
47	2

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
11	1
18	1
27	X
43	3
46	1

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	1
14	1
19	1
21	1
30	X
36	X

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
20	3
40	3
42	3
44	3
45	1
50	X

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

Continued

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	X
8	1
9	X
10	1
23	3
31	1
32	X
33	3
34	1
35	1
51	X
52	X

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? Yes

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s 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.	3	The child protection policy is revised and implemented in line with DfES guidelines and National Minimum Standards.	15/07/05
2.	4	The School's discipline policy is interpreted reasonably and fairly for all pupils.	15/06/05
3.	3	All staff receive an updated briefing on child protection.	15/07/05
4.	3	Staff with specific child protection responsibilities receive appropriate training.	16/12/05
5.	29	A risk assessment and safety guidelines are drawn up for use of the swimming pool.	30/06/05

6.	38	The school carries out rigorous selection and vetting procedures for all staff.	30/06/05
7.	11	All boarders, girls and boys, have access to a range and choice of activities.	30/06/05
8.	18	Girls do not experience inappropriate discrimination in any aspect of school life.	30/06/05
9.	12	All boarders, girls and boys, are able to contribute to the operation of the boarding house.	30/06/05
10.	19	Provision is made to ensure that all boarders have access to a telephone to contact their parents in private at reasonable times, without having to seek permission from or inform staff.	15/06/05
11.	21	New boarders are provided with the support they need to settle into the school.	30/06/05
12.	36	Action is taken by senior management to promote more positive relationships between girl boarders and their house staff.	30/06/05
13.	45	The changing facilities for girls are refurbished with the urinals removed and the showers made operable.	01/09/05
14.	34	All staff with boarding responsibilities receive adequate induction training, regular review of their boarding practice and opportunities for continued training.	01/09/05

**Commission for Social Care Inspection
4th Floor, Overline House
Blechynnden Terrace
Southampton, Hants
SO15 1GW**

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

Email: enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.csci.org.uk

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