



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

### **Wells Park School**

**School Lane  
Lambourne Road  
Chigwell  
Essex  
IG7 6NN**

*Lead Inspector*  
**David Downes**

*Key Announced Inspection*  
**23rd January 2007 10:00 am**

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://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](http://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

<b>Name of school</b>	Wells Park School
<b>Address</b>	School Lane Lambourne Road Chigwell Essex IG7 6NN
<b>Telephone number</b>	0208 502 6442
<b>Fax number</b>	0208 502 6729
<b>Email address</b>	davidwood@wellspark.freemove.co.uk
<b>Provider Web address</b>	www.essexcc.gov.uk
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	Essex County Council
<b>Name of Head</b>	David Wood (Director)
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Carol Mitchell
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	5 – 11
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	29/11/05

**Brief Description of the School:**

Wells Park School is owned and managed by Essex County Council. The school provides boarding accommodation, from Monday to Friday in term time, for boys and girls of primary school age. Pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs identifying social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The majority of the children come from Essex, but a small number are placed at the school by neighbouring local authorities.

At the time of this inspection, there were 28 children (25 boys and 3 girls) on the school roll and all were boarders.

The residential accommodation is located in the main school building. Children are accommodated in four groups on two floors. In addition to outdoor play areas, the school has a sports hall and an indoor swimming pool.

The overall aim of the school is to work towards reintegrating children into their home environment with appropriate schooling. The school works closely with pupils' parents and other carers.

# SUMMARY

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

This is the report of the statutory annual inspection of the school. All of the twenty key Standards identified by the Commission were considered as part of the inspection. The announced, one-day visit made to the school by two inspectors lasted ten hours. Additional time was taken to read survey responses and information requested from the school.

The Commission received ten survey responses from parents and carers and six from members of staff. Comments received from these surveys have been incorporated in the report.

The following sections of this summary have been written using language suitable for children and will be produced as a separate document for the children who board at the school.

Two inspectors, David Downes and Kay Mehrrens, visited the school on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. They arrived in the morning and left in the evening, after tea. While they were at the school, the inspectors:

- talked with some of the children about what it is like to stay at the school
- looked around the school, including the children's bedrooms and the lounges
- talked to the Director, the Heads of Care and Education and some other staff
- looked at some children's files and other records
- watched some of the evening activities
- joined children and staff for lunch and tea
- watched how the children and staff got along together

The inspectors would like to thank the Director, the staff and the children for making them feel welcome during the inspection.

## **What the school does well:**

These are some of the good things that the inspectors saw and that staff and children told them about.

- The children told the inspectors that they like being at Wells Park and feel safe there.
- The staff are very caring and know the children very well, so they can give them the right sort of help.

- The inspectors saw the staff talking to the children in a calm and friendly way.
- The care staff and teaching staff work very well together to make sure that the children's needs are met during the whole day.
- The bedrooms and lounges are clean, bright and very comfortable for the children to use.
- The staff work with other people, like the School Nurse, to help children to be healthy.
- The food is very good and nicely presented. The children enjoy their meals and they try new food.
- The staff give the children a lot of help with their behaviour and help them to meet their personal targets.
- There are plenty of really good activities for the children to do after their lessons.
- There is plenty of training and support for the staff. This helps them to look after the children in the best way possible.
- The staff are really good at keeping in touch with parents and make them feel welcome when they visit the school.
- These are some of the things that parents said:

*"Its all very relaxed and a nice environment"*

*"My son is happy with the way that he is cared for at the school"*

*"All members of staff are clearly dedicated to their job"*

*"Warm and friendly staff, always willing to help"*

*"The staff do an excellent job. I am very happy with the way they are looking after my child"*

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

- The school can now put children in touch with an advocate who can help children to ask for help or for something to be changed.
- The school is finding ways to give more help to the children who are getting ready to move to other schools.
- The rest of the children's bedrooms have been decorated and they have new furniture, carpets and curtains. This has made all of the bedrooms really comfortable.

- The fire safety officer has said that it is safe for the fire doors to be kept open when the children are on the landings.
- The school takes care to make sure that the water is not too hot for showers and baths.

### **What they could do better:**

- Some of the heaters in children's bedrooms get very hot and do not have covers. The school needs to make sure that these heaters are safe.
- The inspectors have asked the Director to let them know when checks have to be done to make sure that a child is safe.
- The school finds out a lot of important things about new staff to make sure that they are the right people for the job. The inspectors have asked the Director to do even more to make sure that the school has as much information as possible before new staff start work.
- When they have to use "safe holding", the staff write down important information in a file. The school needs to check that this is being done really well all the time.
- The 'Welcome to Wells Park' guide is written in a way that helps children to understand it. The school could write some other things in this way, like children's targets and information about how to complain.

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](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.



# DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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# Being Healthy

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

## The Commission considers Standard 14 the key standard to be inspected.

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

14 and 15.

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school.

The health care needs of children are identified and promoted through detailed written plans. Very good links are maintained with health care professionals. The school has robust systems for the storage, administration and recording of medication. Children are provided with good quantities of healthy, nutritious food.

## EVIDENCE:

Since the last inspection, the school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award. The particular strengths highlighted in the assessment report included: the school's work in promoting the emotional well-being of children; the quality of the Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) programme; the promotion of healthy eating; and the quality of the food provided for children.

Children's placement plans ('Individual Social Plans') and medical files contained detailed information about their health care. Records of children's physical, emotional and mental health needs, and the actions being taken to address these needs, were comprehensive and well organised. The school monitors arrangements to ensure that children receive regular medical, dental and optical checks. Discussions with staff and with the visiting School Nurse indicated that the school continues to be proactive in identifying children who would benefit from further assessment of their health and developmental needs. The school maintains very good links with health professionals, such as the local Health Centre, the School Nurse and the Child and Family Consultation Service. A local consultant paediatrician provides the school with

a monthly 'open' appointment for any child whose specialist health needs are not being met elsewhere. The School Nurse liaises with Looked After Children's (LAC) nurses, as necessary, and provides specialist training for the staff in relation to children with special health needs.

The school was holding a relatively small amount of medication and the storage arrangements were satisfactory. Senior care staff are responsible for administering and recording medication and have received appropriate training for these tasks. There is a good system for auditing medication entering and leaving the school. Staff are able to access the advice and support of a local pharmacist, when necessary.

Children take part in a variety of sports and other activities that encourage physical exercise.

The school has a written food policy and children receive plenty of encouragement to learn about, and practise, healthy eating. The inspectors joined children and staff for lunch and tea, both of which were pleasant, well managed social occasions. The children were served first and were encouraged to eat a well-balanced meal and to try new foods. Children had a choice of main courses and desert and a good selection of fresh vegetables and fruit was provided. The food was very well presented. Children were keeping 'five-a-day' diaries to record the portions of fruit and vegetables that they ate.

The Environmental Health Officer confirmed that the kitchen was inspected in April 2006 and stated that the school has been re-issued with the Heartbeat Award, in recognition of the good standards of hygiene and food safety, as well as the provision of fresh, nutritious food.

## Staying Safe

### The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

**The Commission considers Standards 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

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

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school.

The school has a range of systems and practices in place to keep children safe. Children are protected from bullying. Children respond very positively to the school's consistent and effective approach to behaviour management.

The recording of physical interventions and the arrangements for making notifications to the Commission of any significant events need to be improved.

Arrangements for the recruitment and vetting of new staff are in line with recent government guidance, but new staff sometimes start work without a completed CRB check.

Health and safety arrangements are satisfactory, except for the need to review one risk assessment.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Children's records are stored securely. Staff were seen to be sensitive to the need to protect pupils' confidentiality and did not talk to them about personal issues in front of other children. Children understood that they should not go into other children's rooms without their permission.

The inspectors were informed that the school had not received any complaints from children or parents since the last inspection. Children spoken with during the inspection said that they would tell the Head of Care or another member of staff if there was anything that they were unhappy about. Written information about the complaints procedure was available for children. This information could be produced in other formats that would help children with differing abilities and aptitudes to understand how to complain. Most of the parents and carers who completed the questionnaire said that they knew how to access the school's complaints procedure.

The Director is the school's designated Child Protection Officer. The school's written policy and procedure on dealing with child protection matters meets the relevant Standard, but part of this procedure had not been followed in relation to an incident (see below). Staff spoken with and those who completed questionnaires confirmed that they had received child protection training. A recently appointed member of staff confirmed that their induction had covered the school's child protection procedure.

After the site visit, the local authority's Child Protection Investigation (CPI) Team informed the Commission that a child protection enquiry had taken place within the preceding twelve months. An injury sustained by a child had been reported by another agency. The Commission had not been notified about this matter by the school. The school subsequently provided the Commission with details of the strategy meeting and related records. The enquiries followed an incident in which a child had been injured during a physical intervention by staff in residential time. Records indicated that, following this incident, the school had reviewed the child's risk assessment and had given full consideration to the use of physical intervention in this situation. The CPI Team Manager confirmed that the school had co-operated fully with their enquiries and that there were no outstanding concerns about this matter.

The school has a policy on countering bullying. Staff were seen to deal immediately with any unacceptable behaviour on a one-to-one basis with the child involved. No children or parents identified bullying as being a problem at the school.

Pre-inspection information provided by the school indicated that there had been no notifiable incidents of absconding in the last twelve months. Files contained good information about the children in case of any such unauthorised absence.

All of the children spoken with had a clear understanding of the school's structured day and evening routine. A token economy system is used to promote positive behaviour. Staff distribute tokens to children at regular intervals in order to reward good behaviour, such as being helpful or co-operative. Children knew how many tokens were needed to enable them to participate in the different activities on offer and understood why they may sometimes not earn a token. Staff demonstrated consistent expectations in relation to pupils' behaviour and were quick to notice and praise the children's achievements. Personal behaviour targets are set for each child and pupils are involved in the process of setting their targets. Care files contained evidence that children's targets are reviewed regularly. Training sessions and staff meetings provide opportunities for staff to discuss a consistent approach to behaviour management and the application of the token system.

Comments received from parents about the way that the school manages children's behaviour included the following:

"Firm, but fair. They are strict when they need to be and it seems to work."

"The token system is a brilliant incentive for children."

"Rules are fair, balanced and consistent."

"The token system has made dramatic changes for my child – it helps the children to understand the consequences of their actions."

One parent said that they did not consider the token system to be an effective way of helping the child with their behaviour.

The school has a written policy on the use of physical intervention ('safe holding') by staff. The school's records of physical interventions are kept in a loose-leaf format (instead of a bound book) and each record is given a reference number. It was, however, noted that the records made in the last ten days had not yet been numbered, indicating a potential for errors to occur. Records were regularly counter-signed by the Director to evidence that monitoring had taken place. There was also evidence to demonstrate that the physical intervention records had been monitored periodically by a member of the governing body.

Essex County Council completed a health and safety audit of the school in March 2006. A copy of the report was made available to the inspectors and the Director confirmed that all recommendations had been addressed. Current safety certificates were seen for the gas and electricity supply and for Legionella testing. The radiators in two bedrooms used by children were not covered and were very hot to the touch.

Records of regular fire drills and equipment checks were satisfactorily maintained. The Fire Safety Officer visited the school in November 2006 and the letter sent after this visit confirmed that a satisfactory standard of fire safety was being maintained. The school's practice of wedging open fire doors in the residential accommodation was reviewed and the Fire Safety Officer concluded that, although the arrangement "is not ideal and an electrical release system linked to the fire alarm would be more appropriate", the school had given this matter careful consideration and had developed a "robust fire prevention regime" which was reflected in the fire risk assessment.

The files of two recently appointed care staff were sampled. These records were clear and included proof of identity, two verified written references, an employment history, interview records and satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosures at the Enhanced level. The approach taken by the Director, of using discretion to permit a member of staff to start work in the school before the result of the CRB check is known, is in line with the latest guidance issued by DfES. However, the Commission encourages all residential schools to meet the slightly higher expectations of the National Minimum Standards, which state that schools must have completed the CRB check before a member of staff begins working in the school. This issue has been raised at previous inspections. The school has, however, been proactive in carrying out CRB checks for existing staff who were already in post on 1 April 2002. This aspect of vetting exceeds the current government guidance and the National Minimum Standard.

One member of staff had listed the start and end dates in their employment history in years only, instead of giving the exact dates of employment. In such situations, the school should evidence how this has been addressed with the applicant.

The Director and the Chair of Governors have completed on-line Safer Staff Recruitment training since the last inspection.

# Enjoying and Achieving

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

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

**The Commission considers Standards 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

12, 13 and 22.

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school.

The school's residential provision is integrated very effectively with the 'school day', providing children with a high level of continuity of care and support. Children are able to participate in a wide range of suitable activities, which broaden their experience and enhance their self-esteem. The school provides a commendable level of individual support for children.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The residential and teaching staff groups continue to work very effectively as a team to promote each child's personal, social and educational development. Throughout the inspection, there was evidence of particularly good communication between care and education staff in relation to children's needs. Two staff handover meetings are held every day. Details about individual children were shared in an informative and reflective manner during a handover meeting attended by one of inspectors. Teaching staff were involved with the care staff in facilitating the extra-curricular activities and care staff helped to support children in the classroom time and during breaks. Sampled child records (care files, incident records and home-school diaries) also provided evidence of clear and effective communication being used to ensure consistency of care for the children. Each child has personal behaviour targets, which form part of their Individual Social Plan (ISP) and Individual



Learning Plan (ILP), and these are well known to both care and teaching staff. The token system is used consistently by care and teaching staff.

Children are offered a wide variety of evening activities. The choice of activities available to each child depends on the number of tokens that they have earned during the day. Children spend their tokens in the 'Token Shop' at the start of residential time. Staff were seen to help children to understand their options and to make choices. The evening activities were well organised and children participated enthusiastically. Since the last inspection, the range of activities available for children has been extended. The school has joined a local school sports partnership to increase the options for sharing sports facilities and coaching skills. The school's 'youth club' room has been refurbished and now includes a large-screen projection TV, with surround sound. In addition to the regular evening activities, the school periodically arranges 'saver trips', such as whole day outings to theme parks, and children collect their tokens to enable them to participate in these events. All of the comments received from children about the activities were extremely positive. Many photographs of children taking part in activities were displayed around the school. These photographs were well presented and the children enjoyed telling the inspectors about them during the tour of the residential accommodation.

The inspectors were impressed with the quality of individual support that was being provided for children. Staff showed a high level of awareness of the effects that each child's family background, current difficulties and feelings have on their behaviour. This information is well documented in children's ISPs. Staff spend a great deal of time talking individually with children about their behaviour and supporting them in reflecting on their actions and the impact that they have on others. Careful attention is paid to the way in which spoken language is used to aid children's comprehension. Home-school diaries ('chat books') are used very effectively by care and teaching staff to communicate with parents and other carers. Key workers telephone the parents or carers of each pupil on a weekly basis to discuss the child's progress. Discussions with staff and feedback received from parents, together with observations and sampled records, demonstrated that the school builds excellent relationships with parents and carers. The reported high level of attendance by parents and carers at parents' evenings and other school events reflects the efforts made by staff to engage and form strong working relationships with them.

Parents commented very positively on the individual support provided for pupils. The comments received included:

"Staff are always pleasant and work well with parents on the children's difficulties."

"Personal attention is paid to the individual development of each child."

The school has developed links with a local independent advocacy service for children and young people. Children have been referred to this advocacy service in situations where the school has identified that their needs are not being met by all of the agencies involved. The inspectors were pleased to have the opportunity of meeting the independent advocate working with one of the children. Independent legal representation had also been arranged for this child with support from the school.

The school has also identified the need to improve the support available to children in the period leading up to their transition to other schools and in the early stage of the integration process. An experienced member of the care staff team has been designated to take the lead in this work. The aim of this initiative is to work with children at an earlier stage in the transition process, so that their individual support needs can be identified and planned for more effectively, which should, in turn, help to reduce their anxiety about future placements. As part of this work, the school is strengthening its links with local schools.

## **Making a Positive Contribution**

**The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

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

**The Commission considers Standards 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

2, 9, 17 and 20.

Quality in this outcome area is good. This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school.

There are planned opportunities for consultation with children and parents. Relationships between staff and children are very good. Placement plans are detailed and are reviewed on a regular basis. Children are supported in maintaining contact with their families.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Children have opportunities to communicate their views about the school during weekly 'house nights' and during individual time spent with their key workers. The school carries out an annual survey of pupils' views and children recalled completing this questionnaire. The results of the survey were not, however, inspected on this occasion. There is a School Council with pupil representatives elected by each class group. The inspectors were pleased to have the opportunity of meeting with members of the School Council. The children said that staff listened to their suggestions and took them seriously.

The inspectors were shown records of School Council meetings. The Director explained that the other children were informed about the outcome of these meetings through discussions with staff and pupil representatives. The inspectors suggested that the children could be involved in developing other ways of giving feedback to their peers on the areas covered and any action to be taken.

Records contained evidence of children's views being sought during their admission assessment and, subsequently, as part of the annual Statement review process.

Parents and carers said that they were asked for their views about the way that the school was running, both by means of a questionnaire and in discussions on open days.

The interaction observed between staff and children throughout the inspection visit was very positive. Staff approached children in a friendly and respectful manner. Staff were focussed in their interaction with children, offering them choices, giving explanation and checking their understanding of requests. They were consistent in the comments that they made to children regarding specific behaviours. Children actively sought appropriate attention from staff and enjoyed their company. Children showed awareness of the role of their key workers. Parents described the staff as "caring", "friendly" and "devoted to the children".

Since the last inspection, the school had completed the implementation of the new Individual Support Plans (ISPs) for all of the children. The sampled plans were detailed and covered all of the areas specified in the relevant Standard. There was particularly good information about children's communication needs, such as their ability to understand verbal instructions. Individualised targets included clear explanation of the child's behaviour and the responses to be made by staff. All of the children spoken with were able to recall their current targets and said that they talked about them with their key workers. The children also said that they had been involved in agreeing their targets. Targets had been reviewed on a regular basis and outcomes had been recorded, providing a very good record of the child's progress in these areas. However, as targets were recorded only in plain text and given the range of ability of the children, there was scope for the school to make use of other formats and methods of presentation, which would further promote the children's involvement and understanding. For example, some children might find pictures or photographs helpful to supplement the text. The format of the 'Welcome' booklet/CD (see Management section) provides a good example of material that the school has produced in a 'child friendly' format that helps to capture children's interest and aid their understanding. ISP files contained certificates of achievement awarded by the school and photographs of significant events.

Contact arrangements (including any restrictions) were recorded clearly in children's files. Staff support the children to stay in touch with parents and carers during the week. Telephones for children's use are located within the residential accommodation. The children explained that they were given money to use the telephones between 4 pm and 8 pm or their family members would phone them. Parents said that they were always made very welcome when visiting the school.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

23 and 24.

Quality in this outcome area is good. This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school.

The children's bedrooms and communal areas in the residential units are furnished and maintained to a high standard, creating a comfortable, homely atmosphere for children. Bathrooms, showers and toilets are satisfactory.

## EVIDENCE:

There were no outstanding requirements from the Fire Authority or Environmental Health in relation to the school premises. Good security arrangements were in place. Access to the school is via an 'unadopted' road, which leads to a farm. The inspectors were advised that this farmland is owned by Essex County Council and is leased to the current occupier. The Director expressed concern that the Local Authority's plans for the future use of this land could result in a significant increase in traffic and pedestrian access, with implications for security and safety. The inspectors were informed that the Director had raised this issue with the Local Authority.

All areas of the school were clean and well maintained. The lounge and kitchen areas of each residential unit were attractively furnished and well equipped. The lounges contained plenty of comfortable seating for the children

to relax. There was also sufficient space in each unit for children and staff to sit together around the table for meals. The equipment in each area included a television, DvD/video and a computer linked to a printer. Games consoles were also available for the children to use. Pot plants, lamps, pictures, photographs, soft toys and other homely touches contributed to a very pleasant environment for children. A variety of toys, books and games were seen in children's bedrooms and in the lounges.

Children are accommodated in shared and single bedrooms. Since the last inspection, the school has completed the refurbishment of all the children's bedrooms. The bedrooms have been redecorated using an attractive colour scheme. New furniture has been provided and carpets and curtains have been renewed. The children have chosen their own duvets covers and pillow cases. Children are also encouraged to personalise their bedrooms with their own posters, photographs, drawings, soft toys and other possessions. The children spoke very positively about their accommodation and obviously liked their bedrooms.

The bathrooms, showers and toilets in the residential accommodation were generally satisfactory. The inspectors were advised that the school had plans for upgrading these facilities. The first stage of this work will be to replace the existing windows with double glazing and this was due to start shortly after the inspection visit.

# Management

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

**The Commission considers Standards 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

1, 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32.

Quality in this outcome area is good. This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to the school.

The school's residential provision is well managed. The Head of Care is appropriately qualified and experienced. The number and deployment of staff are well matched to the children's needs. Staff have a sound understanding of the needs of individual children. The school provides a very supportive working environment, including regular supervision and training. Good progress has been made with the NVQ Level 3 award. Systems are in place to monitor records. Regular reports are made to the governing body.



## **EVIDENCE:**

The school has a Statement of Purpose, which incorporates other key policy documents, explaining how teaching and care are provided in an integrated manner. There is a separate guide for children ('Welcome to Wells Park'), which is available both as a computer presentation and as a booklet. This guide is written and illustrated in a format that promotes children's understanding.

The school has an experienced and effective senior management team, who provide strong leadership of the residential provision. Comments received from staff reflected a clear understanding of, and commitment to, the aims of the school and its methods of working with the children.

Observations made during the inspection, together with comments received from parents, indicate that the number and deployment of staff continue to meet the needs of the children well. Rotas allow time for staff to attend meetings and training sessions, receive supervision, undertake tasks as key workers and complete records. There is a low rate of turnover of staff and the school very rarely uses agency staff, both of which contribute to a high degree of continuity of care for children.

The school continues to provide particularly good training for care staff. There is an established programme of core training. Since the last inspection, the induction programme has been reviewed and strengthened. The revised programme, which is delivered by the Director and senior managers, provides more time for staff to reflect on their practice; this development and the introduction of a mentoring system were welcomed by staff. Training in Transactional Analysis has been extended to the whole staff group.

Although the school has not yet reached the level of 80% of care staff holding the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 award in Caring for Children and Young People, the majority of the care staff have completed the award and the remaining eligible staff are due to commence in April 2007. The Head of Care and Deputy Head of Care are qualified assessors for NVQ Level 3. Staff spoke very positively about the training opportunities and about the support and encouragement provided by the school.

The Head of Care is appropriately experienced and has recently completed the Registered Manager Award (Child care) at NVQ Level 4. The Deputy Head of Care is also registered and working towards this award.

Discussions with staff, together with responses to the staff survey, indicated that they were very satisfied with the level of supervision and support provided

by the school. Comments made by staff included: "very useful, practical and relevant training" and "support is available for both work and personal areas at all times". Staff were receiving one-to-one supervision on a regular basis and sampled records of these sessions were appropriately maintained. Whole school staff meetings and training take place on a weekly basis. Members of the senior management team were described by staff as being very approachable and having an 'open door' policy. Staff confirmed that they were kept up-to-date with any changes to the school's policies and guidance. The school has achieved 'Investors in People' status.

Systems are in place for the Head of Care, or another senior member of staff, to monitor the range of records specified in the National Minimum Standards. The Director, Head of Care and Head of Education all present termly progress reports to the school's governing body. These reports would, however, benefit from further development to include an internal assessment of compliance with the National Minimum Standards.

Letters were made available from visiting professionals who had commented very positively on the hospitality that they had experienced at the school and on the behaviour of the children. Two visiting professionals told the inspectors that the school was very supportive of their respective roles and worked openly with them in the children's best interests.

Eight of the ten parents and carers who completed questionnaires were fully satisfied with the way that their children were being looked after by the school and two said that their children were being looked after "quite well".

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

“N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	4
15	4

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

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

<b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	3
9	4
11	X
17	3
20	3

<b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	X
21	N/A
23	3
24	4
25	X

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
18	X
19	X
28	3
29	4
30	4
31	3
32	3
33	X

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? Yes

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1.	RS4 RS17	The school should consider how the format of information provided for children can be developed to promote the children's understanding of the content.	
2.	RS7	The school must ensure that the instigation and outcome of any child protection enquiries relating to the school are notified promptly to the Commission (to Ofsted from 01/04/07).	
3.	RS10	The school should review the system for recording physical interventions to ensure that a robust audit trail is maintained at all times.	
4.	RS26	The school should review the risk assessment and take any necessary action to minimise risks from uncovered radiators in children's bedrooms.	
5.	RS27	The school, in conjunction with the LEA, should ensure that staff members do not start work in the school until a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure check has been satisfactorily completed at the appropriate level.  <b>Previous timescale of 24/02/06 not met</b>	

