



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

St Francis

**Wickenby Crescent
Ermine Estate
Lincoln
Lincs
LN1 3TJ**

Lead Inspector
Alison Marshall

Announced Inspection
13th November 2006 09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

Those outcomes are:

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

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

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

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school	St Francis
Address	Wickenby Crescent Ermine Estate Lincoln Lincs LN1 3TJ
Telephone number	01522 526498
Fax number	
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Lincolnshire County Council
Name of Head	Mrs Ann Hoffman
Name of Head of Care	Mrs Linda Booth
Age range of residential pupils	11 –19
Date of last welfare inspection	15 November 2005

Brief Description of the School:

St Francis Residential Special School provides planned residential care within a 24-hour curriculum for boys and girls up to the age of 19 years old with medical and/or physical disabilities. The school provides a full curriculum from Nursery to Primary and Secondary through to the age of nineteen.

Boarding is available from Monday to Friday during school term time. Thirteen of the pupils accessing boarding had residential education as a requirement within their statement of educational need. The school had opened up remaining boarding spaces to key stage three and upwards pupils on a rotational basis to enable pupils to experience boarding. There were up to 20 pupils boarding each night.

All accommodation is on one level and there are three separate living areas. Each of these areas has a lounge with adjoining bedrooms and bathrooms. Boarders eat in the school dining room and there is a small kitchenette in the residential area. In addition the boarders can access school facilities throughout the evening. This includes the large post 16 area with IT and food preparation facilities, the school hall, outside areas and design and technology classrooms. The school swimming pool is available to 5 pm.

The school is situated on a residential estate in Lincoln. It has its own transport available for boarders in the evenings to enable access to the community.

The staffing of the residential area of the school consists of the Principal Residential Care Officer, Senior Residential Care Officer, three Lead Residential Care Officers and a team of Residential Care Officers. The staffing ratio is determined by the number of boarders in each evening and the level of their care needs. 24-hour nursing care is provided by qualified and registered nurses - 2 during school hours and 1 during the evenings and night.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place over 3 days: from 13 - 15 November and was carried out by one inspector.

Inspection planning was carried out beforehand and reviewed information provided by the school, information provided by other professionals, questionnaires returned from parents, staff and pupils.

During the time at the school the inspector spent time talking with the young people, the staff, the Principal Residential Care Officer, and key people within the school. The inspector joined the young people for an evening meal, breakfast and lunch. A number of records were looked at.

What the school does well:

The residential service provided was excellent.

All young people spoken to said that they really enjoyed boarding. The overriding comment from them 'can we have more please'. Young people enjoyed all of the activities and opportunities to socialise with their peers. They made particular mention of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and events at Youth Club, such as 'Deal or No Deal'.

Parents said that the level of care and support was excellent. In response to the question what could be done better, they could think of no improvements besides, as their children had said, 'more please'. They thought that their children made good progress on independent living skills which were often transferred back into the home environment.

The provision for health care was excellent. The food provided was of good quality and encouraged young people to have a healthy diet.

The relationships between young people and young people and staff were excellent. Young people were continually seen to be respectful and considerate towards their peers. They said that they never argued and that they always got on. Staff confirmed that the young people treated each other with mutual respect and that they were very aware of their own behaviour.

What has improved since the last inspection?

No recommendations were made following the last inspection. Significant improvements had been made to the environment and furnishings: a new hot water and heating system and much of the building had been redecorated and re-carpeted.

The role of the Senior Residential Care Officer was in the process of being developed.

The system of the rotation of boarders had been firmly established and expanded to include boarders from key stage three onwards. This allowed young people to spend up to two nights a week over a half term as a boarder. The aim being to work towards specific independence targets and to give young people experience of residential boarding as part of their preparation for a potential move to a further education residential college.

What they could do better:

The service provided was excellent and no recommendations were made. Discussion took place with the Principal Residential Care Officer (PRCO) and the Head Teacher about ways of further developing the residential provision and the role of the PRCO within the wider school setting.

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

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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)

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

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Young peoples' health needs were well documented and staff received suitable training to support young people with their health care.

EVIDENCE:

The young person's parent/guardian retained the overall responsibility for their child's own health care and this was clearly stated in the Residential Statement of Purpose.

The school provided 24-hour nursing cover to ensure that the medical and health needs of the young people were met at all times. Each young person had a health care plan which was reviewed annually. Nursing notes were kept for boarding pupils across the 24 hours: a staff handover between each shift ensured that all information was communicated to all staff. The nursing staff said there was good communication between themselves, parents, residential staff and other health professionals. The nursing staff provided training to the residential staff using a competency based training pack drawn up by the School Health Advisors for Disability within Lincolnshire. Residential staff said that they received all the training they needed in order to support young people with their health needs.

Nursing staff were responsible for the administration of all medication and parents liaised directly with them regarding any changes in medication or health. Residential staff had completed the Certificate in the Safe Handling of Medication.

There were detailed guidelines for staff on the delivery of intimate and personal care. Young people said that staff were respectful when supporting them in this area. They said that they were never rushed and that staff always encouraged them to do as much as possible for themselves. Where they did need direct help the staff always checked with them how they liked to be helped. Through discussion staff showed that they were very sensitive to young peoples' choices and wishes when supporting them with personal care.

The chef and kitchen staff provided a varied menu based on healthy eating: fresh ingredients were always used and meals were freshly prepared. The menu was prepared in advance so that young people/staff could inform the kitchen if something different were required. Some young people required that their food was pureed. The chef ensured that each food i.e. meat, potato, vegetable, was pureed separately rather than being combined together. There was a good range of specialist equipment available that ensured that young people could be as independent as possible. The inspector joined the young people for two lunches, and one evening meal. The food was of good quality and well presented. Mealtimes were calm and unrushed. The young people in one area of the residential wing were working towards independence skills. They prepared their own breakfast every morning and also took it in turns to plan, shop, prepare and clear up one meal a week. The responses from the pupil questionnaire showed that young people thought that the food was very good or usually good.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. There were good systems in place to ensure that the safety of young people was maintained at all times.

EVIDENCE:

The residential wing had written procedural guidelines for staff on privacy and confidentiality. These included information on case records, handling information, entering pupils' bedrooms, showering and the delivery of intimate care. In discussion, young people said that staff did respect their privacy.

The responses in the parent questionnaires showed that they were aware of how to complain but had never had to. The pupil questionnaires had the same response. Discussions with young people confirmed that they had never had to complain. Staff showed that they encouraged and supported young people to say if they were unhappy about anything.

The Head teacher was the designated responsible person for child protection and had attended the 4 day training course provided by Lincolnshire County Council. All staff associated with the residential wing, including ancillary staff, had completed the NSPCC Child Protection in Education Pack as well as receiving one day training from the head teacher. There had been no child protection referrals or concerns raised since the last inspection. Staff spoken to were aware of the policy and procedure to follow.

All young people completing the questionnaire responded to the question 'are you being bullied at school at the moment' with 'not at all'. Bullying was not seen to be any issue by either young people or staff. The Principal Residential Care Officer was due to attend a training course in January 2007 on pastoral care focusing on bullying and the right approach to openness. This was not in response to any concerns raised within the school but as a means of updating practice and keeping staff aware of the possibilities.

The Head teacher was aware of her responsibility to notify significant events to the appropriate authorities. Given the needs of the young people and the high staffing ratio no young people had been reported as absent without permission. The school did have a procedure for staff to follow should somebody be reported as missing.

The approach to behaviour management was outlined in the Statement of Purpose. It was based on positive reinforcement and praise with young people being encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and develop their own self-control. From discussion with young people and the staff it was clear that these principles were put into practice. Young people said that they were never punished and if they did 'do anything wrong' then staff just talked to them. They said that they were never 'told off' or restrained. Staff said that the young people managed their own behaviour very well. Staff had received training appropriate to meeting the needs of the young people. The residential wing had a sanctions book and a restraints book: neither of which contained any entries. The school were advised that they did not need to keep these records if the behaviour management policy clearly detailed how behaviour was managed.

The security of the site was good. There was fencing around the whole of the site and electronic gates on the main entrance that closed at 5 pm and opened at 6 am. This ensured that all visitors to the residential wing were monitored by staff. A fire risk assessment had been completed and was reviewed annually. Records showed that all fire equipment and systems were checked regularly, staff received training and that regular fire drills took place.

The Principal Residential Care Officer had set up staff recruitment files. These contained all of the information required by law for each staff member to ensure that they were suitable to work with young people. This included all volunteers and regular visitors to the school. No new residential staff had been employed since 2003.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The range and variety of activities on offer was excellent. All young people received support in line with their individual needs.

EVIDENCE:

The 24-hour curriculum was promoted through the stated purpose of the residential wing. Staff, young people and parents were clear that working towards developing independence skills was an essential part of boarding.

Residential staff were aware of the educational needs and targets of the young people and there was close contact and good communication between residential and teaching staff.

Young people said that they were 'never bored' and that there was 'always plenty to do'. They said that the choice and range of activities was very good. A different club ran every evening after tea. Youth club was very popular with young people: they enjoyed all the different people coming in such as the Lincoln Hospital Band. They also said they really enjoyed 'Deal or No Deal' evening and were looking forward to the next one. The Duke of Edinburgh Award was very popular. A number of young people had completed the Bronze Award and more were working towards this and the Silver Award. They said the expedition which had involved camping out in the school grounds and the climbing wall were 'the best thing ever'.

Each young person received individualised support in terms of their communication needs, health and medical needs and personal care needs. These were detailed in their care plans. It was clear from discussion and observation that there was a full range of specialist equipment that was being used by the young people and that staff were very knowledgeable about these. Discussion with staff showed that they worked hard to support the young people. For example, one staff member described how she had altered the positioning of the play station to enable a young person to access it independently and not have to wait for help.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. All young people were able to make a positive contribution to the school and their own development.

EVIDENCE:

Young people stated that they were consulted with about a whole range of issues and that the consultation took many forms. They were able to give a number of examples of changes that had been made in response to their comments. For example, older pupils had agreed a later bedtime. They felt that they were listened to and that their views were respected. Where their views or suggestions were not implemented they were always given a reason. Discussion with staff showed that they felt very strongly about encouraging young people to make positive choices rather than just agreeing with what was proposed or what they thought they should be doing.

It was very clear from observation and discussion that one of the strengths of the school was the nature of the relationships between young people and between staff and young people. The relationships were very positive and based on mutual respect. There were clear understandable boundaries in place that encouraged young people to manage their own behaviour. There were numerous examples of young people helping other young people and showing real awareness of their needs. Young people were friendly and courteous to each other, staff and visitors. The atmosphere throughout the school was one of calm, open, accepting, friendliness.

The school had a clear admissions process which involved the young person and all other involved professionals carrying out an assessment meeting. From this a health plan was drawn up. The young person and family were encouraged to visit the residential wing before boarding. Any young person boarding completed an 'All About Me' book which provided essential information to the residential staff. This was used as the basis for the residential care plan. In addition to evening and morning routines and care needs it contained termly targets that the young person had agreed to work towards. Care plans provided sufficient detail for staff to provide the support needed and they were updated regularly. Discussion took place with the Principal Residential Care Officer about possible ways of developing the care plans: targets be improved by being written in SMART format (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time bound). Information was also included about the young person's communication needs: this could be expanded by including specific information about how the young person made choices. It was also suggested that the care plan could be drawn up under the 5 Outcomes from Every Child Matters.

Parents' questionnaires reported that contact with the residential wing was very good: they felt involved and able to call or visit at any time. They said they were always made to feel welcome. Most young people had their own mobile phones and were supported to use these, the pay phone or the hands free phone in the staff office.

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):

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The accommodation provided was suitable for purpose and continually developing. The support provided for leavers was excellent.

EVIDENCE:

An assistant head took the lead on transitions and leaving the school. He worked closely with other agencies involved such as Connexions and the Learning Skills Council. Transition reviews started early to ensure that young people, families and other professionals had plenty of time to consider the options. The school took young people to visit prospective colleges in the area either in a group or individually. Staff would also support families with application forms and visits to individual colleges further away.

The residential premises had greatly improved since the last inspection. A new heating and hot water system was just being completed. Redecoration had taken place across most areas as well as new carpets and lighting. Staff and young people spoke positively about the improvements. Young people said they had been involved in choosing colours and other items such as clocks and pictures. They all said they were happy with their bedrooms. The Principal Residential Care Officer had plans for ongoing redecoration and refurbishment.

Bathrooms were spacious and contained a range of equipment suitable for meeting the needs of the young people.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The residential wing was well managed and ensured that young people consistently received an excellent service.

EVIDENCE:

The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed since the last annual inspection. This document covered all aspects of the boarding provision of the school as recommended. It was also available on an audio CD and in a power point format.

General school records were in order. Following the last inspection new accident records had been introduced, however, there was some confusion over which records were to be used and when. At the time of the inspection the senior management team agreed on a consistent approach. It was advised that an accident/incident reporting procedure be drawn up.

Rotas showed that there were always sufficient staff on duty at all times. There was a very consistent staff group, some of whom had worked at the school for a number of years: the longest being over 33 years. There was a very low turnover of staff which ensured consistency of care for the young people. Staff received appropriate training to help them to provide the support to meet the needs of the young people. Three residential staff had achieved the NVQ Health and Social Care level 3, other staff worked across school and the residential wing and most had achieved NVQ level 3 in Childcare and Education. All residential staff received regular supervision and an annual review.

The residential wing was very well managed by the Principal Residential Care Officer (PRCO) who had completed her NVQ level 4. Since the last inspection the Senior Residential Care Officer role had been expanded to take on a greater management role to allow the PRCO to develop a more strategic overview of the residential provision.

The residential governor visited regularly and produced a report covering all of the areas as stated in the national minimum standards. An independent visitor also visited regularly and produced a report. The senior management team of the school had established a clear system for monitoring records on a regular basis. The system identified if there were any patterns or outstanding issues that needed to be addressed.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion
 “N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

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

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

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

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

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

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

NO

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

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)

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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