



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Potterspury Lodge School

**Potterspury Lodge
Towcester
Northants
NN12 7LL**

Lead Inspector
Joanne Vyas

Announced Inspection
13th June 2006 09:15

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	Potterspury Lodge School
Address	Potterspury Lodge Towcester Northants NN12 7LL
Telephone number	01908 542912
Fax number	01908 543399
Email address	mail@potterspurylodge.co.uk
Provider Web address	www.potterspurylodge.co.uk
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	The Trustees of Potterspury Lodge School
Name of Head	Mr J W D Brown
Name of Head of Care	Mr C Laidler
Age range of residential pupils	8 - 16
Date of last welfare inspection	11/10/05

Brief Description of the School:

Potterspury Lodge offers education with boarding for up to 36 boys of the age range 8 years to 16 years. The school also provides places for day pupils, some of whom take part in evening activities. Founded originally as a Steiner school, the school retains few of the Steiner principles, but the community ethos remains strong.

Many of the staff live on site, including most care staff and the Head of Care Mr Laidler.

The main house is a large grade 2 listed building and accommodates some of the school classrooms, some boarding areas, the main office and medical room.

Further boarding accommodation and school facilities are provided in various buildings adjacent to the main house.

The school is set in several acres of land providing a very tranquil and spacious setting with some beautiful features and scenery. A stream running into a small lake filled with various fish, where boys can fish for pleasure, marks the school boundary to one side. Another boundary is marked by a large vegetable garden, orchard and oakery, though these areas are out of bounds to the children unless accompanied by an adult. A large field provides a football pitch, running track and large play area including climbing frames and swings. There is a skate park, tennis and basketball courts. Indoor facilities include a large sports hall, pottery and music room, a chapel and other educational facilities that can be used for extra-curricula activities.

The boarding accommodation consists of 6 self contained units providing accommodation for groups of up to 6 boys. This accommodation is homely and comfortable. Boarding is available from Sunday evening to Friday, during term time only.

Fees for boarding at this school are £11737 a term or £35211 a year.

SUMMARY

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

This inspection report has taken into account all events specific to this school since the last inspection in October, including an unannounced visit spanning over three days, any notifications of incidents or accidents to the young people who board at the school, the Head's self-assessment and pre-inspection questionnaire and questionnaires from students, parents and staff. A report from a visit from a pharmacist inspector and a recent OfSTED inspection was also viewed.

During the visit, the inspector was able to seek the views of students and staff, take meals with them and look at their records. Other records were also viewed that are relevant to health and safety in the school.

What the school does well:

Generally, there are excellent outcomes for students who board at this school. A caring, professional and well-trained care staff team support students. Students enjoy boarding and find it a valuable part of their education. There are excellent links between education and boarding.

Boarding offers an excellent opportunity to access a valuable resource as part of a well planned and evaluated extended curriculum, gaining essential life skills as part of their personal, social and health education but also enabling students to access learning during the school day by offering structure, routine and consistency. The school is commended for the encouragement and support it gives to students with regard to following a healthy lifestyle and gaining independence and the contact staff maintain with families. A parent said, they appraise me about my son's behaviour (good or bad) on a weekly basis." "Health and safety checks and risk assessments are comprehensive and robust. Recruitment procedures are rigorous.

When parents were asked, via questionnaire, what are the best things about the school, most agreed that it is the activities, the surroundings, small groups, a structured environment and caring staff. A parent said, "I have every confidence that the school treat pupils as individuals with high standards in both care and education. My son is happy there."

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school have now implemented a process to ensure all existing staff are checked with the Criminal Records Bureau and that this process is repeated every three years.

Some areas of medication administration have improved.

What they could do better:

The safe storage and administration of medication, particularly controlled drugs remain unsafe. The school intend to address these issues over the summer break. Hot water that is accessible to students is very hot. Although some safety measures are in place, a risk assessment should be completed to ensure everything possible is being done to reduce the risks to young people. Records for physical intervention and complaints should be reviewed to ensure the appropriate action has been taken and a satisfactory outcome has been reached. Ten questionnaires were received from parents and three from Placing Officers after the visit; some issues were raised and will be looked into.

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

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

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

CONTENTS

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

14, 15

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Staff promote the health of the young people at this school although practices with regard to the safe storage and administration of medicines remain unsafe.

EVIDENCE:

Meals are cooked from fresh ingredients and are varied. Most fruit and vegetables are grown on-site and are organic. The school only buy locally produced organic beef and other meats. Staff explained that they also avoid food additives. Students said they enjoyed the food and that they had plenty to eat. Points are awarded to students dependent upon how many portions of fruit and vegetables they eat each day to encourage them to eat healthily. Points are collected and turned into trips out to the cinema, theme parks etc.

Students are encouraged to follow outdoor pursuits and sports rather than watch the television in the evenings. These creative activities appeared very popular amongst students. A student said that the best thing about boarding were the evening activities.

After the last inspection, a pharmacist inspector visited the school to assess the safe handling of medication at the school. A number of weaknesses were highlighted. Some have been addressed and the school intend to address the other areas over the summer break. These areas include the safe storage and administration of medication, particularly with regards to controlled drugs.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

Quality in this outcome area is good. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Staff ensure students are kept safe while boarding at this school.

EVIDENCE:

Students said they feel safe at the school. All staff receive training on child protection and physical intervention. Staff rarely use any form of physical intervention, preferring to use distraction techniques and/ talking to the young person until they are calm. Any physical intervention is recorded in the incident book. Currently records do not include enough detail such as the type of hold used during physical intervention and length of time the young person was held for. Bullying is addressed immediately by staff and also recorded in the incident book.

Staff take confidentiality at the school very seriously and ensure this is upheld. Students know who they can complain to and are given frequent opportunities to do so. The inspector was present during a school council meeting where students voiced their opinions openly. Complaints made by students are recorded in the incident book. Action taken and the outcome of the complaint is not always recorded, however the inspector was satisfied that the senior management team thoroughly investigate complaints and ensure a satisfactory outcome for the complainant. There are no complaints from parents. A parent said, "Things were easily dealt with by phone – generally misunderstandings." The school has a current fire risk assessment and all health and safety checks and servicing are carried out appropriately. Risk assessments for the school are also in place. Currently the hot water accessible to young people is too hot (61 degrees centigrade from taps for a bath in a hostel for the younger boys). Signs denoting the water is very hot are above the taps and staff said that they run baths for the younger boys. There are no risk assessments in place with regard to the hot water and the school does not have temperature regulators fitted.

Recruitment procedures are robust. The school ensure all new staff have two valid references and checks are carried out with the Criminal Records Bureau. Existing staff also have a check completed every three years.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

12, 22

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Staff provide students with the appropriate level of support. Education is a valued and intrinsic part of the agenda in boarding.

EVIDENCE:

Parents/carers are invited to the Annual Review of the Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) at the school. Care staff contribute to this process and also write part of the school report for all boarders. Care staff handover to teaching staff each morning and evening to ensure consistency.

Care staff have access to the Individual Education and Care Plans for all students in boarding as well as the SEN. Care staff demonstrated a good awareness of educational plans of all students during this inspection and work closely with the teaching staff.

Activities in boarding are planned for in and around the local community as well as within the school and clubs in the evening are run by teaching staff. Students can also join local clubs such as Boys Brigade, the brass band and drama group. In year 11, students are given the opportunity to board in the Life Skills Flat, which has proved very popular. They are also given work experience opportunities where students are given any support they require to enable them to achieve success. Students are expected to help with domestic tasks around the hostels. A student said he particularly enjoys this aspect of boarding, as he doesn't get the opportunity at home to carry out such tasks.

Individual support is identified and given as appropriate to the needs of the student.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

2, 17, 20

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Staff provide an holistic service with the young person at its centre.

EVIDENCE:

Students are actively encouraged to make decisions through school council meetings, hostel meetings and daily choices. During a council meeting at the time of the visit, students were asking for more of a choice of fruit at breaks and more salads instead of vegetables.

House parents complete good, user friendly Placement Plans for each student in boarding, which are regularly reviewed. All students have risk assessments in place. Care notes are written daily and are in-depth and well written.

The care staff are also in regular contact with parents/carers via the phone, diary and/ letters. This can be as frequently as every evening dependent on individual needs.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

none

These standards were not assessed on this occasion.

EVIDENCE:

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

1, 28, 31, 32

Quality in this outcome area is good. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The care staff benefit from good management, leadership and direction, which ensures students receive consistent, quality care providing them with the skills they require for an independent life.

EVIDENCE:

The school's prospectus is a comprehensive document.

The Head of Care/ Deputy Principal has 19 years experience working with children, 5 of which are as Head of Care, and a Bachelor of Social Science Degree. A number of care staff have been trained to the National Vocational Qualification level three standard and have received training in relevant subjects including child protection, physical intervention and children with Asperger's Syndrome and Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Staff are knowledgeable, experienced and caring. There is a consistent approach to

care, which enables staff to address individual needs but maintain structure and routine.

Reviews of the Statement of Special Educational Need take place annually. The Principal conducts detailed formal inspections of each of the hostels and writes a report for the trustees and action plans for the House Parents. The management team ensure that they spend time in the hostels on a weekly basis. This ensures consistent, quality care.

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	1
15	4

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

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

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

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

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

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.	RS10RS4	The Principal is recommended to review the school's recording system for physical interventions and complaints.	30/09/06
2.	RS14	Medication storage in the hostels must be stored separately and securely from other non-medicinal items. (This recommendation has been carried forward from the pharmacist inspector's visit).	30/09/06
3.	RS14	Controlled drugs should be locked in a non-portable container (ideally meeting the Misuse of Drugs (safe storage) Act 1973), which is separate from other medicines and with named staff access. (This recommendation has been carried forward from the pharmacist inspector's visit).	30/09/06
4.	RS14	A separate controlled drug record should be kept for audit and safety purposes and two staff must always administer controlled drugs and a running balance must be kept and checked at least daily.	30/09/06
5.	RS14	The medicines policy should be reviewed and updated. (This recommendation has been carried forward from the pharmacist inspector's visit).	30/09/06
6.	RS26	Risk assessments should be completed to ensure the safety of students when using hot water.	30/09/06

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