

inspection report

Residential Special School (not registered as
a Children's Home)

Heathlands School

Heathlands Drive

St Albans

Hertfordshire

AL3 5AY

30th November 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

The role of CSCI is to:

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

Inspection Methods & Findings

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

'X' is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School

Heathlands School

Address

Heathlands Drive, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL3 5AY

Tel No:

01727 754060

Fax No:

01727 754064

Email Address:

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

Hertfordshire County Council

Name of Head

Ms M G Davis

CSCI Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

25/11/03

Date of Inspection Visit		30th November 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		3:00 pm	
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	Julia Bradshaw	075411
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Ann Kidd	
Name of CSCI Inspector	3		
Name of CSCI Inspector	4		
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):			
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		M/s Louise Burdge	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Mr Frank Harding	

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

Inspections assess the extent to which the school is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, published by the Secretary of State under Section 87C of the Children Act 1989, and other relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 as amended. Residential Special Schools are not registered as children's homes unless they accommodate, or arrange accommodation for, one or more children for more than 295 days a year.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Heathlands School

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

The report will show the following:

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

INSPECTION VISITS

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

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

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Heathlands School and its residential wing, Heath House, was purpose built in 1975. It was originally designed to accommodate primary age hearing-impaired children who need Total Communication. The School has been extensively modernised and is well resourced with a thriving nursery and specialist rooms for audiology, speech and language therapy and sign language training. It is located half a mile from the centre of St. Albans.

Heath House is a two-storey building that offers single or shared study bedrooms spread over four wings. Bedroom groupings are segregated by age and gender. The facility is also well served with communal areas and there is access to the main School library after school hours.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

The whole School has an ethos of integrity rather than expediency. It both empowers and listens to the children and recognises that each has a valuable contribution to make. Heath House offers a safe environment that, paradoxically also offers each boarder challenges that promote his or her confidence and skills. Staff were observed to be interacting with the pupils in a caring and professional manner. One of the greatest achievements at Heath House is the care it provides for the pupils, which is excellent. Each pupil is seen as a whole person and is given the experiences, within their abilities that other youngsters would have. While health and personal care needs are met, these do not dominate, and the atmosphere in this residential school is both happy and relaxed. Mutual affection and concern is very evident. Heath House achieves the goal of its mission statement by integrating education, care and therapy, thereby promoting the self-esteem and personal autonomy of the pupils. Everyone living at Heath House is treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. The environment that has been created by the staff team within Heath House, has helped develop an atmosphere where children and students live in a calm, controlled and where possible, relaxed environment. Care starts from the needs of the individual. All are given the opportunity to make a wide range of choices. Each person is encouraged to do as much as he or she can to facilitate independence. The admissions procedure and care planning process is excellent.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

There is little that Heath House staff need to do in terms of improving the current standard of residential care as there is wealth of evidence that demonstrates the high standards that staff and pupils continue to achieve during the past year and since the last inspection took place. However, there is an ongoing concern that is outstanding from the previous inspection which relates to CSF's inability to provide an adequate system of "bank" staff, in order to ensure temporary staff cover during periods of staff vacancies/training and staff sickness. This issue remains a priority on the school/residential staff's agenda and must be addressed and resolved urgently in order to ensure Heath House pupils receive the best possible from Hertfordshire County Council. There is also an on going problem with the heating system within some areas of Heath House, which was identified during this inspection. Some parts of the home remain very cold which is apparently since the new boiler was fitted in 2003. The Head Teacher has continually raised this issue with Hertfordshire County Council but the situation remains unresolved. This is particularly worrying with regard to the predicted changes in weather condition for the next two months. This situation must be resolved as a matter of urgency in order for Heath House to continue to be fully operational.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

This was the third inspection carried out under the National Care Standards Act 2000 and the Head Teacher, head of care and the staff should be congratulated on their achievements in meeting the new minimum standards. The care of the children and students continues to be of a high quality and the organisation of Heath House is both clear and comprehensive with staff commenting on how professional and supportive the senior staff team are within Heath House. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging children and students to reach their full potential, within the framework of the risk assessment process. The children communicated positively about the service they receive at Heath House and appeared to be comfortable and proud to show the inspectors around. Everyone working with the pupils at Heath House appeared to treat the children with dignity, respect and ensure they have the best quality of life despite the severity of their special needs. Once again the inspectors would like to thank the children, students and staff for their hospitality during this inspection.

NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

NO

NO

NO

The grounds for any Notification to be made are:
Not Applicable.

Not Applicable.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION					

NO

No	Standard	Recommended actions	
1	RS28.11	In order to ensure that sickness, training and staff absences can be covered, it is recommended that Hertfordshire C.S.F. Department develop a 'bank' system whereby skilled residential staff are available to provide cover.	31/03/05

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended actions are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare.

No	Standard*	Recommended Action	
1	RS28.11	The home should continue to lobby the Hertfordshire C.S.F. department in order to resolve the ongoing issue of the current inadequate system of providing appropriately skilled bank staff to cover vacancies with Heath House.	31/03/05
2	RS24	The home should endeavour to resolve the problem of the inadequate heating system within Heath House, which currently is only partly functioning.	31/12/04

ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

Identified below are advisory recommendations on welfare matters addressed in the main body of the report and based on the National Minimum Standards, made for consideration by the school.

No	Refer to Standard*	Recommendation
		None

Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. RS10 refers to standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS AND FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods were used in the production of this report

Direct Observation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Accommodation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas	YES

Checks with other Organisations

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	NO
• School Doctor	YES
• Independent Person	NO
• Chair of Governors	YES
Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	YES
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	NO
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	YES
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	30/11/04
Time of Inspection	3.P.M.
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	11.5
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	2

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

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Age Range of Boarding Pupils **From** **To**

NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

BOYS

GIRLS

TOTAL

Number of separate Boarding Houses

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the CSCI assessment of the extent to which standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

"9" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not applicable.

"X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

The school has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for those children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement can be made up of other documents, e.g., Letter of Approved Arrangements and school prospectus, which are required to include specific information.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

The School has produced a written Statement of Purpose that accurately describes the purpose, function, ethos and philosophy of the School and its Residential Unit, Heath House and was last reviewed on the 27th January 2003 by the governing body. It is couched in a manner that is easy to understand and describes the approach to education and boarding. Also available is a child-friendly version that reflects the wide range of ages accommodated and is in line with the School's accessibility plan. There is also a good working link between the School and Heath House that creates a continuum of care for weekly and occasional boarders. Read in conjunction with the school prospectus, the Statement of Purpose provides a full picture of the range of services on offer. The governing body reviews and updates the Statement of Purpose at least once a year

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way that the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.
- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.

Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

Children's opinions, and those of their families or significant others, are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and their future. Feedback is given following consultations.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

The staff should be congratulated on the systems that have been created to encourage and support pupil involvement. The opinions of children are sought in a variety of ways through various systems of communication. Heath House operates a key worker system and children and students are encouraged to attend at least part of their review. The home provides a range of pictorial aids to assist with communicating their request, issues and concerns about the service they receive. This appears to be an effective system of communication. There is a system of contact books between home and school. Boarders are, as far as possible, at the centre of decision-making and 'house rules' have been agreed and published. Boarders follow a variety of religions and although staff are sensitive to their needs, religious beliefs appear to be kept private and followed at home. The School has the services of an independent listener. Consultation uses the child's preferred means of communication, which is well documented in care plans. During the inspection, there were many examples of pupils being offered choices, whether in terms of drinks, meals or activities. The school and home have also introduced a "red box" system into Heath House where pupils are encouraged to post suggestions and comments on the service that they receive and possible suggestions on how to improve aspects of the home or requests for specific equipment. These boxes are emptied each month and reviewed on a half termly basis. The responses are written and displayed on the board, next to the red boxes. There is also a comments/concerns book available.

Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.11)

The school and staff respect a child's wish for privacy and confidentiality so far as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child.

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

The Deputy Head Teacher has been assigned as the Child Protection Officer and residential staff have a range of policies available for guidance that include guidance on the subjects of privacy, confidentiality and gender-related issues. Four of the boarders are on a full care orders and appropriate information is available to staff. All files in Heath House that contain sensitive or personal information are kept in a lockable steel cabinet. The home has implemented a written policy regarding privacy and confidentiality since the last inspection took place. Children tend to have their own mobile telephones and there is a text phone available (although the office telephone could be made available should total privacy be needed). Children also have access to facsimile and e-mail as required. There is also a videophone available. Parents and other appropriate visitors can meet privately with individuals.

Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)

Children know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the school, and feel confident that any complaint is addressed seriously and without delay.

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

There are two pupil representatives within the upper school. There is a formal complaints procedure outlined in the school's prospectus, and Statement of Purpose. This encourages parents and others to address complaints to the Head teacher or any member of the governing body. Relationships with the parents and Heath House are generally positive and any queries or concerns appear to be resolved informally. All incidents are recorded in the children's log and the home has a "comments" book. The School is aware that the CSCI should be notified of any serious complaints or incidents. The home receives the support of an outside independent listener on a weekly basis. The complaints procedure is also included in the staff induction programme and annual training programme. All children are encouraged to attend the weekly pupil meetings, which are held on a Monday afternoon, once the pupils have returned from school.

Number of complaints about care at the school recorded over last 12 months:

Number of above complaints substantiated:

Number of complaints received by CSCI about the school over last 12 months:

Number of above complaints substantiated:

CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.
- Children are protected from bullying by others.
- All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the school are notified by the Head of the school to the appropriate authorities.
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded positively to on return.

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

There are systems in place in the school which aim to prevent abuse of children and suspicions or allegations of abuse are properly responded to. These are known and understood by all staff (including junior, ancillary, volunteer and agency staff).

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Deputy Head Teacher is the designated Child Protection Officer and all staff receive on-going training from induction on the prevention of abuse of children. The Local Education Authority has drawn up protection procedures and local interagency protocols on the prevention of abuse etc. are included. All staff are in fact trained in the prevention of abuse and a copy of the policy is displayed in Heath House office. There is written guidance for any staff that are subject to allegations against them. The Head of Care is a designated teacher in Child Protection training.

Number of recorded child protection enquiries initiated by the social services department during the past 12 months:

0

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)

The school has, and follows, an anti-bullying policy, with which children and staff are familiar and which is effective in practice. Where possible children in the school contribute to the development of the policy.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The home has excellent procedures in relation to anti-bullying and both the anti-bullying and PSHE policies were available on the day of the inspection. The home is very pro-active in encouraging pupils to discuss these issues at an early stage and resolve them to a satisfactory conclusion. Where necessary, risk assessments are held within Heath House regarding the children that are identified as being at risk of being bullied or where they are the perpetrator. Guidelines in the behaviour management of these pupils are also drawn up.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

X%

X%

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

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.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The designated person ensures that all significant events relating to the protection of children in the home are notified to the appropriate authorities. The home is also aware of its responsibilities under the Protection of Children Act. Any action or investigation of a notifiable event would be fully documented, a written record kept and the appropriate authority informed. The Residential staff have a system whereby parents receive prompt notification of any allegation that a child has committed an offence. It also has a similar system for notification to the authorities and individuals of any serious concerns about the emotional or mental health of a child and has access to a special outpatient resource. The home has effective and comprehensive procedures in place in relation to communicating these issues to the relevant parties.

NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO CSCI DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:

- **conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children**
- **serious harm to a child**
- **serious illness or accident of a child**
- **serious incident requiring police to be called**

0

0

0

0

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9) The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The School and home has procedures covering absences and has a comprehensive procedure for if a child goes missing. Should a child report that they went missing because of abuse, the School would notify the appropriate services dealing with Child Protection and create a behaviour support plan if appropriate. Where children have parental permission to be absent from Heath House, the level and circumstances are agreed in advance. Care staff are aware of the measures that they may properly take to prevent a child from leaving without permission. There is a policy on physical restraint but such measures would normally be part of a package of care, agreed in advance and recorded in the care plan. All residential care staff have recently received training in NAPPI (Non Abusive Physical or psychological intervention)</p>		
Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:		0

CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

Relationships between staff and children are based on mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries which are effective for both the individuals and the group.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The staff should be congratulated on their relationships with the children, which were observed to be very positive and appropriate. At all times, staff spoke to the children and students (using appropriate communication methods) explaining what they were doing and why. Choices were offered at every opportunity. Due to the complex needs of the pupils living at the home there are very comprehensive guidelines in place that need to be adhered to and these are used as part of the behavioural support plans for each child or student. The home uses various systems to recognise and reward positive behaviour. There was no sign of favouritism. The home operates a key worker system, which provides the essential role of advocate for each child and student. There are regular meetings held for and by the boarders and a range of topics (including preferred outings) is discussed. As far as possible, and considering residential staff numbers, children are able to choose who provides them with personal care.		

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.26)

Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour, and where the behaviour of children is regarded as unacceptable by staff, it is responded to by constructive disciplinary measures which are approved by the Head of Care.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
There is a list of potential disciplinary measures published that are age-appropriate and boarders are aware of these. There is also a written policy on this and associated topics available to staff. Senior staff approve any disciplinary measures used in Heath House. Staff employ control through positive reinforcement and the physical intervention book (kept in the main School) is rarely used. The home also maintains an incident book that is signed by the children. Excellent standards of recording were noted. The Deputy Head Teacher reviews any sanctions and physical intervention used. Children are given opportunities to discuss incidents and staff hold a de-brief session each morning where they would be discussed, as well as at the weekly staff meetings. The Head of Care confirmed that sanctions would not be applied to groups of children for the offences of an individual child. The school has a policy on physical intervention and the circumstances in which it may be used. There are occasions when there is police involvement in the School and in Heath House (usually at the request of staff to reinforce issues).		

QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.
- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within school and in the local community.
- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.
- Children 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.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

Admission and leaving processes are planned and agreed with the child – and as appropriate, with parents and carers and placing authorities – as far as possible and handled with sensitivity and care by those concerned.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There is a clear admission policy and the Head of Care usually makes prior contact with an initial offer for an overnight stay before full weekly boarding is offered. It is acknowledged that some of the boarders need planning for the transition onto their next stage and there is an independence programme for each child. The four looked-after children will have a planned leaving care process when the time comes (but they are placed in Heath House in connection with their educational needs and not because of other matters). Most children and students who use Heath House do so because of the distance that they have to travel (although some only stay over on activity nights). Heath House staff obtain as much information about a child as necessary to ensure a satisfactory stay. They do not accept emergency admissions of children who have had no previous involvement with the Unit. Staff are also aware of the likely effects of individuals on the regular weekly boarders. Children who seek admission to Heathlands School have a requirement for sign language incorporated in their Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.7)

Care staff and the school's residential provision and activities actively contribute to individual children's educational progress, and care staff actively support children's education, ensuring regular attendance, punctuality and a minimum of interruption during the school day.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Residential care staff and the School staff have an integrated 24-hour approach to ensure individual children's educational progress. Care staff receive copies of the children's and students educational plans and set target plans that also cover social skills. Heath House offers a central study area for younger children and study bedrooms for the older students (where each has their own identified space where they can complete their homework). Staff are on hand to provide guidance and encouragement. They also have access to two computers that are designated for study use, as well as the main School library. All staff work towards encouraging each child's personal, social and educational development and achievement. Independent living skills are promoted throughout Heath House, where appropriate and with the necessary risk assessments in place.

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9)

Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Children who board have opportunities to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities and boarding numbers swell on nights when certain activities in the community (such as bowling) are organised. Secondary aged children have after school clubs; children also enjoy activities such as weekly art sessions, weekly cookery sessions, swimming and ice-skating. Children and students are also encouraged to join local deaf clubs. There are regular shopping outings for those who need escorting. Hobbies are encouraged and supported. Children tend to bring toys etc. from their homes. Cultural awareness is raised as appropriate and the Unit organises cultural evenings. Residential care staff undertake risk assessments in respect of all activities as risks are identified. The residential staff within the home supervises access to the internet. Staff also ensure age appropriateness by supervising video choices and there is also a compact disc player. The home purchased a new "plasma" television in 2003, which is based in one of the main lounges within the home and has proved to be a very popular addition to the existing system of home entertainment. There is also a new gym currently being constructed within Heath House and this should be completed before the next inspection takes place.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)

The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets any intimate care needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The home has detailed and comprehensive policies in relation to the intimate care of children and all RSW staff receive this information as part of their induction programme. Currently, care staff are not called upon to meet any intimate needs. They are sensitive to individual emotional and physical needs and actively support individuals (each child has a care plan that includes a health section). There are specific plans drawn up to cover individual needs and these include protocols and emergency procedures. The School has a Health Education programme that is also promoted by the residential staff as appropriate. Residential staff receive first aid training and will assist with or oversee the use of prescribed medication (there is a drugs cupboard available and children also have lockable facilities). The home now records all medication received into Heath House. Issues of personal hygiene are dealt with sensitively. Children have an annual medical examination as part of their statement of educational needs. To a large extent, parents deal with routine medical, optical and dental appointments, although a number of children are registered with a local G.P. and with the family G.P. on a visitor basis. Staff will accompany a child to an appointment as is appropriate to their age, wishes and the circumstances.

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.15)

Children are provided with adequate quantities of suitably prepared wholesome and nutritious food, having regard to their needs and wishes, and have the opportunity to learn to prepare their own meals. Where appropriate special dietary needs due to health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background are met, including the choice of a vegetarian meal for children who wish it.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The inspectors joined the pupils for tea and were able to observe that the food provided was both nutritious and flavoursome. The home is currently reviewing the current menu's in consultation with the pupils. All main meals are taken in the dining room with varying age groups seated at specific tables. Vegetarian meals and cultural needs of pupils are met, where required. Dining rooms and their furnishings are suitable for the needs of pupil using them. There is a domestic scale kitchen in Heath House and most of the secondary aged boarders make their own breakfasts. The residential unit currently uses the main School hall as a dining room for main meals (this is not ideal as it does not create a homely environment or provide a separation from the functions of the school).

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.7)

Children are provided for adequately on an individual basis and encouraged to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing and personal requisites. Children who require assistance to choose what they wear and/or how they spend their money are provided with the assistance they need, in a way which maximises their choice.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Boarders are encouraged to change into their own clothing as soon as school is over for the day. Some children and students can access local shops in the early evening and others go out on organised shopping trips. As weekly boarders, young women usually bring their own supply of sanitary protection from home but can obtain emergency supplies from the female first aid worker. Usually, children manage their own money on a weekly basis (a maximum of £5 is recommended) although support is available to the younger children (when this happens, they have an individual pocket money book and there is a record of transactions kept on their individual files).

CARE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT PLAN

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.
- 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.
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.
- Children receive individual support when they need it.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

There is a written placement plan specifying how the school will care for each boarding pupil in accordance with his or her assessed needs, the school cares for that child in accordance with that plan, monitors progress in relation to that plan, and updates that plan as necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
Each child who boards has an individual care plan (ICP). The plan is discussed between the child and the key worker, and staff stated that they actively encourage involvement by the children. These care plans are stored in a lockable filing cabinet. The plan details the Child's assessed needs and details how needs are to be met. Each child has an assigned residential worker. Weekly logs are written on each child. These logs are used to contribute towards the annual review and provide information on the child's progress. The children's statement of needs is reviewed annually, or more frequently if appropriate. Looked after children have regular Status reviews. There are excellent systems of recording and the home should be congratulated in providing comprehensive and detailed individual care plans for the pupils living at Heath House.		

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.5)

Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress which can, in compliance with legal requirements for safeguards, be seen by the child.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
On the day of the inspection four care plans were examined. The care plans were found to be written in a clear accessible style. Changes in behaviour were carefully noted. Generally the recording was undertaken in a positive style, noting progress and development. Children are involved in reviewing their own progress and there was evidence of involvement with children's signature's and comments, likes and dislikes being included in the plans. Staff stated that any requests for access to the records are supported, subject to the Data Protection Act. The Head Teacher is fully aware that these records must be kept for a period of 21 years, or passed on to the next school.		

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.3)

The school maintains clear and accurate records on the staff and child groups of the school, and major events affecting the school and children resident there.

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

Records were sampled during the Inspection and those for staff and children contained all the elements required by this standard. Recruitment procedures were thorough. The Head Teacher is fully aware of the need to keep details of anyone living or working on the schools premises. Some records are kept in the school building, such as staff records (personnel) and the accidents book. Records relating to menus, risk assessments and child health care needs are kept within the residential home. Each child has their own independence checklist record, as skills are attained so they are recorded as being met. This checklist is clearly presented and provides a quick reference point to a child's attainment. The Head Teacher was aware of the need to keep these records for a period of five years and menu's for one year.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.6)

Subject to their wishes, children are positively encouraged and enabled by the school to maintain contact with their parents and other family members (unless there are welfare concerns) while living at school.

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

Children are encouraged to maintain contact with their families during the week. The children board for four nights. Contact is maintained by using Email, text messages and the video link telephone, Mincom and facsimile facilities. There are rooms for the children to meet with their families in private if they wish to visit during the week. Restrictions are imposed where necessary for the four looked after children. During the inspection one child explained how he used email to keep contact with his family and also stressed the usefulness of the videophone.

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.2)

Where a pupil is in care and will be leaving care on leaving the school, the school agrees with the young person's responsible authority what contribution it should make to implement any Pathway or other plan for the pupil before the pupil leaves school. These arrangements are in line with that young person's needs, and the school implements its contribution where feasible from at least a year before the pupil is expected to leave care or move to independent living. The school works with any Personal Advisor for the child.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The Head Teacher stated that an individual plan is agreed for any pupil leaving the school. There are several children in Heath House that are reaching the age for leaving and the school appear to be very supportive in ensuring all the pupils have the guidance and encouragement they require to make this important and significant move.

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.13)

All children are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes, and children identified as having particular support needs, or particular problems, receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

Each Pupil has a plan of care (and each pupil has an individual education plan). All residential staff are available to pupils, to support them with any personal or welfare concerns and they also take care to ensure that no pupil is left isolated within the home. All children and students are given individualised support as detailed in their care plans. Everyone is encouraged to participate in social groups and isolation is minimised by the school's philosophy in choosing not to admit pupils without a peer group of young people with similar needs. Boarders also have access to the independent visitor and there is a prominent poster reminding children that anything can be discussed. Each child also has an adult family member available to support them. None of the boarders have English as their first language although this is not a disadvantage in this setting. The professional services of audiologists, Speech & Language Therapists etc. are available to pupils as needed. Communication is facilitated through a British Sign Language, symbols etc. These files were observed in use during the inspection. Pupils may contact any member of staff with their concerns, although it is most likely that staff members will first notice a difference in mood or behaviour of the young person and ask what is the matter. Support is given to pupils following any traumatic incidents and the school states that it will seek the support and advice of a bereavement counsellor, if required.

PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children live in well designed, pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.
- Children live in accommodation that is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.
- Children are able to carry out their ablutions in privacy and with dignity.
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. It serves the needs of the children and provides the sort of environment most helpful to each child's development, and is sufficient for the number of children.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The school was designed and purpose built for primary age children and the secondary aged boarders attend mainstream schools. Whilst there has been creative application to maximise the facilities on offer, maximum numbers have now been reduced in order to accommodate and adhere to the National Minimum Standards. Staff are cognisant of the need for gender separation and provide for children who want or need a single occupancy bedroom. However, it is acknowledged that for most children in this school, partitions in bedrooms are a hindrance to communication. Specialist equipment available to boarders includes minicom, vibrating fire alarms and vibrating alarm clocks. There is also a listening device used to alert waking night staff to potential problems (this is noted in the prospectus and all boarders know about its use). All external doors are locked against entry from the outside during out of school hours.

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.19)

The school provides adequate good quality and well-maintained accommodation for boarding pupils, which is consistent with their needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Heath House was purpose built and could provide accommodation for 30 boarders in a combination of single and double bedrooms. It is maintained to good decorative standards. Each bedroom is appropriately appointed and each boarder has a surface on which they can study. Boarders share through choice and age appropriateness. Bedrooms are equipped with flashing fire alarms and vibrating pillows. There are communal areas, a games/study/art & crafts area, a domestic sized kitchen and a utility room. All boarders have a lockable facility. It was noted that boarders could bring in their own bedding if they wish, although the linen provided is not institutional in appearance. There are staff sleep-in rooms at each end of the unit. There is auditory monitoring available at night. However, the home failed to meet this standard as the heating system within some areas of the home was dysfunctional and ineffective. The Head of Care stated that this has been a re-occurring problem since the new boiler was fitted in 2003. The building is owned and maintained by Hertfordshire County Council and therefore they are responsible for this problem. The Head Teacher has been vigilant in trying to resolve this problem but the home remains insufficiently heated in some areas. There is a concern that when Pupils return from the Christmas holiday the weather will be very cold and the home will have difficulty in ensuring that the temperature is adequately maintained. This problem requires immediate action.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.7)

The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets, all of good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children. The school has appropriate changing and washing facilities for incontinent children where necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Based on current occupancy, Heath House offers a ratio of 1:4 toilets, three baths and two showers (the younger children have two of the baths available to them and staff and visitors to the unit have a separate provision). Bathroom, toilet and shower doors are fitted with locks that can be overridden by staff in the event of an emergency. There are en suite wash-hand basins in all the bedrooms except those used for single occupancy. Hot water is thermostatically controlled at the boiler to ensure safe temperatures. Heath House does not currently accommodate physically disabled children, but adaptations would be introduced as required. Some of the bathroom and shower units could benefit from being updated.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)

Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, in accordance with Health and Safety and Fire legislation and guidance.

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

The school conforms to fire safety legislation and staff are alert to Health & Safety issues. A new emergency lighting system has been fitted since the last Inspection took place. A few initial problems with this system appear to have been resolved and the Head of Care reported that the system is now working effectively. The last fire drill was carried out on the 16/11/04. Regular fire drills are undertaken, gas installations are checked annually and electrical equipment and installations are checked every three years. Risk assessments are completed as risks are identified. Hot water to which boarders have unsupervised access is regularly checked by the Handyman and regulated to ensure safe temperatures by means of thermostatic controls on each hot tap. There are no hoists or lifts used at Heath House. Radiators are provided thermostatic controls. Risk assessments exist for activities such as use of the school grounds, walking to school, off site activities and minibus journeys. Other risk assessments relate to in-house activities. No medical devices or equipment are used. No animals are kept. Records pertaining to the inspection of gas installations and electrical equipment were kept in good order.

STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- There are careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those employed on a contractual/sessional basis) and volunteers who work with the children in the school includes checks through the Criminal Records Bureau checking system (at Standard or Enhanced level as appropriate to their role in the school), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The school carries out the appointment of staff working within the residential provision and all relevant documentation is maintained and held confidentially within the school offices. Four staff files were inspected and were found to be satisfactory.

The Head Teacher has a very good understanding of the current requirements of the Criminal Records Bureau. A minimum of three written references is required. The measures described under this Standard afford sufficient protection to children. Agency staff, volunteers and student placements all require a CRB check. All staff working within the home receive Child protection training from the Deputy Head and Head of care.

Total number of care staff:

5

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

X

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)

The school is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the minimum level specified under standard 28.2. Records of staff actually working in the school demonstrate achievement of this staffing level.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

Heath House is staffed from 12 noon to 10.00a.m. the following day on a Monday and from 3.00 p.m. Tuesdays to Friday and there is always a staff gender balance. There are two members of staff providing sleep-in cover and a female waking night supervisor. The School's Health & Safety policy records that there are appropriate arrangements for escorting children off site. Rotas demonstrated that the Unit is adequately staffed, but in order to ensure that any absences caused through sickness and training can be covered, ***it is still recommended that Hertfordshire C.S.F. Department develop a 'bank' system whereby skilled residential staff are available to provide cover. This continues to be an outstanding issue that has remained unresolved since 2003. This issue requires an urgent response from CSF in order to provide adequate, specialised temporary staff for the home.***

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)

Staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the school.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Evidence was seen of a thorough induction training for all staff and there is an ongoing training Performance management for staff as part of the supervision process. All staff have received in-house training in Child Protection from the Deputy Head teacher. No agency staff are used at the Home. All RSW's employed at the home are currently working towards their NVQ level 3. Recent training courses attended include, NAPPI 09/04, First Aid 21/10/04, Counselling and listening to children 2/9/04, designated teacher (child protection training) 29/6/04, risk assessing – serious challenging behaviour June 04. The school also has a rolling programme for sign language and deaf awareness. The school, through its five inset days per year and co-ordinates and provides the majority of this training through CSF.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)

All staff, including domestic staff and the Head of the school, are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

All Residential Unit staff receive formal supervision and a confidential record is kept. The Head Teacher felt that she received adequate professional support through daily contact with the Chair of Governors, the Special School Forum and peer group support. Residential care staff are included in the whole School annual appraisal process. They are also supported through a range of written policies and procedures (a 'read and sign' system is used to ensure that they have each had access to the latest revision). Residential staff meet each day for debriefing meetings and also meet with School staff as necessary. Staff meetings are also held every Monday and minutes are taken. Staff are expected to read and sign these minutes. There is no smoking permitted on the site.

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.
- Children enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

The school is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible childcare.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

The Head of Care has five years experience as a Residential Social Worker working with deaf children. He holds a professional qualification and is currently completing an NVQ level 3 in work with children before embarking on level 4. All the care staff working in Heath House will be working towards their NVQ Level 3 in 2005. As far as practical, the first 20 minutes of each shift is dedicated to handover sessions and planning. The School has planned responses to all foreseeable crises. The home is managed both professionally and effectively and staff spoken to on the day of the inspection stated that they felt supported and encouraged by the management team. The staff team have created a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere with the children's needs and well being at the forefront of the provision of care.

Percentage of care staff with relevant NVQ or equivalent child care qualification:

0 %

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

The Commission for Social Care Inspection is informed within 24 hours if a receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy becomes responsible for the school. Such persons on becoming responsible for the school have ensured that the school continues to be managed on a day to day basis by a Head who meets recruitment and qualification requirements for a Head under these Standards. Such a temporary Head must make sure that the operation of the school meets the requirements of these standards in relation to the day to day running of the school.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Commission for Social Care Inspection is notified of any significant events that occur within Heath House. The Head Teacher signs and monitors all the records listed in this standard except where records are delegated to a senior member of staff. The Head Teacher and the Head of Care take action in relation to any trend or pattern in recorded issues. There are annual reports prepared for governors and for parents. The home is part of an overall audit, which is carried out on an annual basis. There are clear and comprehensive policies in relation to the budgeting and financial responsibilities of the home. Financial control is carried out by the Head Teacher and supported by the administration staff. The home is also part of the overall planning and reviewing of the annual budget and linked to the schools development plan.

Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.7)

The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body receive a written report on the conduct of the school from a person visiting the school on their behalf every half term.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

There is a high level of support and monitoring by Governors in the school and the Inspectors had the opportunity of meeting two Governors during the evening of the Inspection. The Governors make visits to Heath House at least half-termly and appeared to have a relaxed relationship with the pupils. The Governors annual report is sent to all the parents and Guardians.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor

Signature

Date

PART D

HEAD'S RESPONSE

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 30/11/04 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

We are working on the best way to include the providers response in the published report. In the mean time responses are available on request from the Hertfordshire Area Office.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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

Note:

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

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

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I M G Davis of Heathlands confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the recommended actions made and will seek to comply with these.

Print Name	<u>M G Davis</u>
Signature	<u></u>
Designation	<u>Headteacher</u>
Date	<u>12/01/05</u>

Or

D.3.2 I of am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

--

Print Name	<u></u>
Signature	<u></u>
Designation	<u></u>
Date	<u></u>

Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Head both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.

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