



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

High Close School

**Wiltshire Road
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1TT**

Lead Inspector
Stephen Webb

Announced Inspection
14th November 2005 10:00

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 High Close School

Address Wiltshire Road
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1TT

Telephone number 0118 9785767

Fax number

Email address

Provider Web address

**Name of Governing body,
Person or Authority
responsible for the
school** Mr A Paterson

Name of Head Mr A Paterson

Name of Head of Care Mr A. Fisk

**Age range of residential
pupils** 10-16 years

**Date of last welfare
inspection** 15/11/04

Brief Description of the School:

High Close School is operated by Barnardos. It provides for day attendance and weekday boarding for pupils aged from seven to sixteen years, with most boarders being of senior school age.

The school takes young people who have been unable to succeed in mainstream school and may have been excluded from previous schools, and have statements of special educational need arising from emotional and behavioural difficulties. The range of additional specific special needs with which the school is working is broad, and may include young people with ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, autistic spectrum disorders, speech and language difficulties and visual and auditory impairment.

Boarders are accommodated in four houses now with up to nine places in single bedrooms, but can accommodate an additional boarder sharing, for short periods. Each house has a designated staff team and unit manager.

At the time of this inspection there were ten girls and eighteen boys boarding. There were a further seven girls, and seventeen boys who were day pupils at the school. There were a further five pupils within their initial 'taster' period during the inspection process.

Since the last inspection in November 2004, the separate day unit has continued to develop its own identity for day and extended day pupils. The day unit has a separate dedicated staff team and is reportedly working very well, giving the day pupils a space and identity of their own.

The ethos of the school is to reward good behaviours, within the overall context of a behaviour management system called Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, (TCI), in which all care and teaching staff receive training. There are six accredited TCI trainers across the school, which has enabled ongoing improvements in the regularity of this training.

The head of care has become established in the school since the previous inspection and takes a clear lead role in the management and monitoring of the boarding service.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection was carried out between the 14th and 17th of November 2005, with feedback provided to the senior management team on the 18th. Time was spent in each of the four boarding units and with key staff within the school and units, as well as with young people. Parents, staff, funding authorities and boarding pupils all had the opportunity to complete questionnaires on their experience of the school.

This was again a positive inspection, with the recommendations made previously, all having been acted upon. The school has continued to develop and there was a sense that the units were in a fairly settled phase, although Cedars appeared to have had a difficult period in the previous term, from which it was emerging.

What the school does well:

The boarding units are purpose built, attractively maintained and furnished in a homely fashion. Young people are having some input into the choice of colours, from an appropriate selection, particularly in bedrooms.

The school has an effective admissions procedure, including an appropriate trial period, and has become good at identifying those pupils with whom it can work effectively, as well as those whose needs it cannot meet.

The in-house social work team continues to provide valuable support to young people and their families, during term-time and holidays; and supports young people as they approach the time to move on from the school, through liaison with colleges and work experience providers. Young people also receive ongoing support for six months after they leave the school.

The feedback received from parents was very positive about how the school looks after boarders, and about the level of communication and discussion with parents.

Boarders receive an appropriate diet, which has been improved. There are choices available including a vegetarian option, and young people can have an input into the menus. Catering and domestic staff felt part of the staff teams, and were positive about the healthy eating initiatives.

The school surveys pupils annually on the issues around bullying and reports the results of the survey back to them. It also holds an annual anti-bullying week to focus on the issue. A suggestions box has been set up for pupils to anonymously report any issues of concern.

The school pupil council provides an effective forum for elected pupil representatives from each unit and the day pupils, to bring forward ideas and concerns from the units; as well as opportunities to develop skills of negotiation, public speaking and representation. The meetings are minuted and copies made available in each unit.

Through the school council, young people have been able to influence decision-making and decide how to spend an annual budget allocation of £500 to benefit the pupils.

The recruitment system for staff is effective and includes an appropriately vigorous vetting system. Representatives of the pupil council take part in the interview process. The induction and foundation training system is good and residential staff commence NVQ once they have completed foundation training, unless they have an equivalent qualification.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The decision to retain single occupancy of the double bedrooms in each unit is a positive one, and more appropriate for the needs of the majority of boarders.

The new young person's unit handbooks and updated statement of purpose contain a good range of information. The ongoing involvement of young people in the annual review of the unit handbooks should be encouraged.

The school's new in-house counselling service is a very good initiative, and offers a valuable service to young people. It was also positive that the service was already being reviewed to develop an understanding about who it was reaching and who was not using the service. It is also positive that a draft policy was already in place for the service, (awaiting Governors approval), and that leaflets publicising the service are available across the school.

The school has begun its work within the government's Every Child Matters framework, and has identified areas for work within its business plan.

The school has embraced the healthy schools initiative in a number of ways, in addition to improvements in the ingredients and meals provided, healthier snacks and other initiatives. The young people appeared positive about the changes and feedback on the food was mostly very positive.

For another year there has been a significant reduction in the level of restraints, which is very positive. The ongoing improvements in TCI training appear to be effective here.

The establishment of TCI workshops and drop-ins should be a good way to further develop the skills and confidence of staff in preventing the escalation to restraint. The examination of restraint events for any relevant learning could also be a very positive addition.

The establishment of Willows as an all boys unit for the more vulnerable boys has worked very well, providing them with a chance for their needs to be met effectively without the distractions of those who tend to act out more physically.

Young people now have increased opportunities for involvement in shopping for snacks, supper ingredients and weekend food. The food provided was to a high standard and was well presented. Second helpings were available.

The range of available training to staff appears to have improved and good progress continues to be made with NVQ. The use of in-house workshops is also a positive development. TCI training is now more efficiently delivered by the larger number of in-house accredited TCI trainers.

The school has adapted its referrals and admissions procedure and this saves some unit manager time through a pre-filtering of referrals. The school has also become more sophisticated in identifying those young people whose needs it can meet effectively.

It is positive that each unit now receives a child-friendly copy of the Standard 33 monitoring visitor's report after each visit, and the reports indicate that visitors get involved in mealtimes and demonstrate a knowledge of the lives and interests of the young people.

The imminent plan to provide an additional computer to each unit, together with internet access is a positive step, once appropriate protocols and monitoring are in place.

What they could do better:

The school will need to build on the information provided in the bullying survey to look at how to address the identified hotspots.

A significant majority of reported bullying is within the school, in the playground and on transport. One of the key issues appeared to be the level or lack of staff supervision, which should be examined.

Reference to the school's initiatives and approach on bullying should be included in the unit's pupil handbooks to emphasise its position on bullying.

Some consideration should be given to the benefits of providing domestic and catering staff with elements of the TCI training to ensure they are aware of the appropriate approach to young people and understand what they see, in the context of the child protection and whistle-blowing training they receive.

It would also be beneficial to consider further development of the support to parents in terms of parenting skills and the preventive elements of TCI, to maximise consistency and continuity of approach between school and home, perhaps via the in-house social work team.

A potential health and safety risk was identified, from the spiral fire escape treads becoming slippery when wet. Appropriate steps should be taken to address this issue.

Consideration should also be given to improving the lighting of the hard-court and the football pitch, with due regard for the rights of neighbouring householders.

In the light of the old double bedrooms now being designated as single rooms, consideration should be given to removal of the old privacy divisions, which reduce the attractiveness and usability of these rooms.

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.

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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):

14, 15

Young people are provided with a healthy environment, within which their physical and emotional health needs are identified and addressed. Support is accessed externally as well as internally from a multi-disciplinary team.

Young people are provided with a healthy diet. The school has addressed the Healthy Schools programme effectively and made significant improvements in this area since last year.

EVIDENCE:

Each young person has an individual health care plan, which includes relevant history, details of medication, dietary issues, allergies, special needs, emotional/psychiatric support and details of annual medicals.

The approach of the school is to provide young people with a positive sense of their achievements and learning, and encourage their emotional well-being through positive reinforcement wherever possible.

Some senior staff have attended training on eating disorders, and the school has affiliated to an eating disorder clinic to obtain specialist advice and support where required. They also have resource pack for working on these issues with young people.

The units access relevant external specialist medical and emotional support when necessary to support their care of boarders. Specialist needs would also be identified within the individual's SEN statement.

As part of the 24-hour curriculum, all boarders undertake Personal Social, Health, and Moral Education (PSHME), work, primarily through working with keyworkers and other unit staff, through individual and group-work. Each young person has specific targeted elements of their PSHME plan, depending on their individual needs.

The majority of routine health-care issues are dealt with by all boarders being registered with a GP local to the school, with parental consent in place.

The school also has an in-house social work team who provide invaluable support to boarders and/or their families, both in term-time and during the holidays; and will arrange or advocate for any identified specialist support needs.

Team members also attend relevant reviews, especially where a young person is coming towards the time for moving on, and liaise with external employment and training bodies. One of the team also provides ongoing aftercare support for young people for six months after they have left.

There is a new in-house individual confidential counselling service called “Time 4 U”, which young people can access either on a planned basis or through a drop-in service. This new service has already been taken up by a number of pupils.

The service has been established within a detailed draft protocol covering relevant issues including confidentiality and child protection, which is due to be presented to the Governors for ratification. Statistics are already in place to enable early review of the take-up of this service.

Residential staff all receive training in first aid and the administration of medication, and work within clear policies and procedures. Written records are kept of any accidents or injuries to young people, which are monitored by senior management.

Young people were satisfied that the school met their health needs.

The school has achieved the bronze award in the Healthy Schools initiative and is currently working towards the silver award.

Menus and nutrition have been reviewed and improved with an emphasis on reducing the intake of sugar, excess fat, salt and processed foods, and an increase in the provision of fresh ingredients and fruit and vegetables.

These initiatives have proved popular with most young people, with many feeling that the food is very good. The observed relationships between the unit cooks and young people was very positive.

Young people now have increased opportunities to be involved in shopping for themselves and the group, and are now involved in shopping for supper items and snacks. Those present at weekends help with the food shopping for the weekend. Young people may also take some part in preparing evening meals.

Older young people who are preparing to move on from High Close are engaged in individual programmes to support the development of budgeting, shopping and food preparation skills.

Young people have weekly input into the teatime menu and can also have some influence in other areas of menus via school council. There are choices available at each meal, including a vegetarian option.

The meals sampled during the inspection were of good standard, with food well presented and tasty, and second helpings available.

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, 10, 26, 27

The privacy of young people is respected and provided for and their files are appropriately stored to maintain confidentiality. Young people's complaints are appropriately recorded and investigated.

The welfare of young people is promoted and the school works to protect them from abuse. The school continues to work to address the issue of bullying.

Young people are encouraged and supported effectively to maintain appropriate behaviour within a positive ethos, and are supported by staff trained in proactive behaviour management.

For the most part, the school provides well for the safety and security of boarders, but the reported issue regarding the fire escapes requires investigation. Appropriate staff recruitment / vetting procedures are in place.

EVIDENCE:

Each young person has their own bedroom, and the school has taken the decision, at present, to use the two potential double bedrooms in each unit only as singles, which ensures that young people's privacy and dignity are maximised. It is understood that this remains under review should the necessity arise in the future.

Young people can earn the right to hold a bedroom key if they demonstrate they can manage this appropriately. Each unit has a private pay phone available to young people.

The bathrooms, showers and toilets are all individual facilities with appropriate locks fitted. Staff knock and wait before going into bedrooms.

Although some issues relating to young people are dealt with in group-work sessions, sensitive matters are usually addressed through one-to-one work.

Young people's main files are held centrally, with only the necessary day-to-day records being held in the units. The staff operate within a system of team confidentiality. The young people's records held in the unit are stored appropriately in the office which is locked when not in use.

The protocol surrounding the new counselling service allows for confidentiality between the young person and counsellor, except where issues of child protection or criminality are overriding.

Each unit has its own complaints log, where informal complaints are recorded, together with brief details of their resolution. The logs are monitored and countersigned by unit manager, head of care and Standard 33 visitor. There is also a central record.

In addition there are complaint cards readily available to young people in each unit, which can be sent directly to Barnardos head office.

Young people are informed about how to make a complaint within each unit's "young persons handbook", and by posters. The complaints logs indicated an appropriate response to young people's complaints.

The welfare of young people is promoted within the boarding service which seeks to address their needs within a multi-disciplinary team. The school has an effective child protection system in place, and all boarding staff and teachers receive child protection and whistle-blowing training, including ancillary staff.

Any child protection issues which arise would be monitored centrally by the head of care.

The school has an anti-bullying policy and carries out regular surveys of pupils regarding their experience of bullying. The most recent survey also asked individuals whether, and in what circumstances they were bullies. The school also holds an annual anti-bullying week which was scheduled for the week after this inspection.

Of the twenty-five boarders who completed inspection questionnaires, three said they were bullied most of the time, seven that it happened sometimes, and fifteen said they were hardly ever or never bullied.

The school's survey (which included day pupils as well as boarders), found that the majority of young people felt that bullying was a problem, and identified school and break-times as the places where it was most likely to occur.

Young people came up with a range of suggestions for how the level of bullying could be reduced, some of which have been, or are being considered.

Consideration should be given to how the perceived bullying "hot-spots" can be addressed now that they have been identified.

The school continues to examine the issue of bullying in a proactive way and seeks to minimise the level of bullying. Action to try to address bullying is a major element of the school's ongoing "Healthy Schools" agenda. Additional CCTV cameras have been installed within the school and grounds and it is hoped these will help to monitor and prevent bullying. A suggestions box is also being established, where pupils can place notes anonymously, on a range of issues, including bullying.

The young people are encouraged to behave appropriately within an overall ethos of positive reinforcement, where good behaviour and conforming to the school/unit rules is rewarded. Each unit has a rewards log, where specific rewards for appropriate behaviour are recorded, as a counterpoint to the sanctions system.

Within school each young person works towards an individually set baseline daily points score, if they achieve this they receive rewards they can exchange for treats at the schools trading post. Within the units, if school points are achieved over an appropriate period, young people have an additional activity or trip off-site.

Poor behaviour may lead to young people receiving sanctions. Appropriate sanctions are defined within the school's sanctions policy. All sanctions are recorded within a sanctions log in each unit. The log is monitored and countersigned by unit management, head of care and Standard 33 visitor.

All of the staff receive training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, (TCI), which is a scheme for managing and diverting aggressive or challenging behaviour into more positive activity.

If other interventions fail and a young person may become injured, injure another party, or cause significant damage to property, TCI training includes a number of specific restraint techniques which may be used to hold the child until they become calm.

All staff receive TCI training as part of their foundation training, as well as subsequent annual updates. The school now has six in house TCI accredited trainers to deliver the training as required. TCI is approved by Barnardos Council and now accredited by BILD, (British Institute for Learning Disability).

Since the last inspection the school has established TCI drop-ins and regular workshops to enable staff to discuss and practice relevant issues. All instances of restraint are reviewed by management, to identify any possible learning to improve future practice.

The statistics collected by the school show a continuing downward trend in the level of restraints since 2002, which is a credit to both the improved early intervention skills of staff, and the development of TCI within the school.

Appropriate records of instances of restraint are in place within each unit as well as being maintained centrally, within a new NAES (National Association of EBD Schools), format. The restraint logs are monitored and countersigned by unit management, head of care and Standard 33 visitor.

The inspection feedback from young people on their experience of restraint indicated that 81% of boarders who responded said they had been restrained at some time in the school, (26 respondents). Of those who had experienced restraint 76% felt they had been restrained appropriately, (21 respondents). although 52% felt they had been hurt in some way during the process. (11 respondents).

These figures do not yet show a reduction in young people's experience of restraint, since the inspection questionnaire does not limit them to restraints within the preceding twelve months. The restraint logs clearly indicate the ongoing reduction in the use of restraints as a whole, and also that the figures can at times, be skewed by a significant level of restraints to one individual.

The inspector was able to see appropriate and positive relationships between staff and young people, from the interactions observed, which indicated a level of warmth and investment on the part of staff and the majority of the young people. There were examples of the effective use of distraction, planned ignoring and humour, by the staff.

For the most part, the staff appeared at ease around the young people and the units seemed to be going through a relatively settled period, though one unit seemed to have had a more difficult and unsettled time in the previous half-term. Of the young people who completed questionnaires, 81% felt the school was a good place to live (21 respondents), four young people were undecided, and one did not feel it was a good place.

Since the previous inspection the school have installed additional CCTV cameras on the campus and within the school to provide improved protection to young people. The boarding units already had CCTV cameras, which monitor the upstairs corridors throughout the day, and are monitored live at night, by night security staff who notify the sleep-in staff of any untoward activity.

All of the required health and safety-related servicing and testing examined was up-to-date and appropriately certificated. The school has an overall fire risk assessment, which is regularly reviewed, and a range of other specific risk assessments in place relating to specific activities.

All staff receive targeted health and safety and/or COSHH training. Each unit has designated health and safety representatives who monitor and report issues regularly. Some remedial work is undertaken by on-site staff, but more major issues are reported to head office.

The boarding unit staff receive appropriate first aid and food hygiene training.

During the inspection it was pointed out to the inspector that the spiral metal fire escapes on each boarding unit become slippery when wet. There was one recorded accident involving a young person slipping and falling on one of these fire escapes. The Principal was asked to explore what remedial action could be taken to address this potential hazard.

The level of lighting of both the hard court and the football field could be improved, to improve safety when these areas are in use in the winter months, as well as the general levels of ambient lighting in these areas. It is understood that this would have to be in the context of the needs of local neighbours.

The catering facilities were recently inspected and found to be satisfactory by environmental health.

Regular fire drills and alarm tests are carried out and recorded.

A sample of the staff recruitment and vetting records was examined and demonstrated an appropriately vigorous vetting process. It is very positive that representatives of the young people from the school council, have a role in the interview process for staff.

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

The residential units effectively support both the school and the progress of individual pupils, both educationally and socially.

Young people at the school have their individual support needs met via an excellent in-house multi-disciplinary team as well as external specialist services where necessary.

EVIDENCE:

Boarding staff support the education of young people directly through their focus on the PSHME elements of the curriculum which are integrated into the residential routine.

On return from school, young people gather together in the unit to have a snack and complete their homework with support from the residential staff available to them. Each unit also has a computer available to young people.

There are plans to obtain an additional computer with internet access for each unit, once appropriate protocols around their use are finalised. This will enable young people to research homework and other areas of interest more widely.

Residential unit staff escort young people to school and collect them, providing/receiving detailed handovers to maintain communication appropriately. Where an individual young person may need additional support in the classroom, this may be provided by a residential staff member remaining with them in lessons to support them in remaining on task.

Some of the teaching staff also opt to spend some time supporting young people within the boarding units, which enables them to observe the behaviour

of an individual in different environments, and also allows the young person to relate to them in a less structured environment.

Where an individual's behaviour is disrupting the classroom, they may be returned to the residential unit for a period to enable them to regain control of themselves and return to class.

Where a young person has failed to attain their baseline school points, this may be supported where appropriate by residential staff excluding them from activities or outings that evening.

Keyworkers meet young people's school tutors formally on a half-termly basis and more regularly on an informal basis where required to discuss progress in the school environment and ensure consistency of approach. Residential staff also take part in educational reviews.

As pupils move towards the age where they will move on from the school, the residential staff help them to develop their independence skills via PSHME work, and liaise with the in-house social work team to support the arrangements for their possible attendance at college, interviews and work experience placements.

Each young person receives individualised support on a daily basis via their keyworker and other residential staff as well as their school tutor. Each has a targeted PSHME programme, which is worked through individually and, where appropriate through group-work sessions.

Where there is an identified need, the school will seek appropriate support from external professionals including speech and language therapist, psychologist and psychiatric support. The school also has a well-established and effective in-house social work team which can provide support to a young person and/or their family. This is especially valuable in holidays, when the social work team remain available to provide individual support or advice to families, including home visits if appropriate.

One member of the social work team also provides ongoing outreach support for up to six months, to young people who have left the school.

In addition, since the last inspection, a confidential individual counselling service has been established for pupils, who can access the counsellor by referral from staff or directly via a drop-in service. Early indications are that this is already providing a valuable individual service to a significant number of young people, particularly around relationship issues both at school and home.

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

Young people are effectively supported to develop self-control and make appropriate day-to-day decisions whilst at the school. They have appropriate opportunities to influence the way the school is run, and to communicate their views to adults.

The needs of young people are appropriately assessed and detailed individual plans identify how the school will meet their needs.

Young people are encouraged to maintain contact with their parents whilst they are boarding at the school, and the school also maintains appropriate contact with parents.

EVIDENCE:

The opinions of young people about the operation of the school are sought through the school council, which has elected representatives from each boarding unit and the day-pupils. Young people have the chance to raise issues with senior staff, and through their participation, learn about representation, negotiation and other skills for adulthood.

The school council has an annual budget, the spending of which is decided within council meetings. Young people may also be given tasks to research

issues relating to the spending proposals and other council issues, which also teaches them useful skills.

Young people were able to identify a number of changes made as the result of their representations at school council, including changes to the uniform, improvements to campus safety and lighting, the provision of seating next to the hard-court, new play equipment, the introduction of fruit at break-times and the plan to obtain "reality babies" as part of the sex education curriculum.

Within each unit, young people take part in regular house/unit meetings to discuss the day-to-day issues relating specifically to the unit. These meetings are minuted. Young people can also voice their opinions via the complaints procedure, through their keyworker, or to the Standard 33 monitoring visitor.

Young people are involved in the pre-admission introductory meetings and their individual views and commitment to the school are sought. Decisions about their future in and beyond school are made within regular reviews, to which both young people and their parents are invited.

Young people are also individually consulted via annual questionnaires, about their views on the issue of bullying within the school, as part of the school's anti-bullying strategy.

The ethos of the school encourages individual young people to take personal responsibility for their actions and tries to help them develop the necessary internal controls of their own behaviour, through interventions designed to give them the opportunities to do this. The TCI system provides for this whilst also giving staff the skills to intervene physically where this is necessary.

The needs of young people are initially detailed within their assessment and SEN statement. Each individual young person is set a baseline daily points score, which is intended to be realistically attainable but to require some effort and encourage progress and development.

Within the boarding units the needs of individual young people are addressed via targeted PSHME work through individual keywork sessions and groupwork.

Individual behaviour management plans are also established for all pupils to identify relevant triggers and indicators, appropriate/inappropriate holds, should restraint become necessary, and to help young people develop their own inner controls. The plans are regularly reviewed, especially after a young person is involved in a restraint.

The individual plans are regularly reviewed every six months, alternating school and unit reviews, including the attendance of parents and the young person, as well as relevant professionals.

All boarders go home on closed weekends, returning on Sunday evening. On open weekends, some boarders do remain on campus. During the week young people are free to phone home as often as they wish. There is a private payphone in each boarding unit which young people can use when in the unit within reasonable time boundaries. If they need to ring home and do not have the money, staff will let them use the office phone where appropriate.

Parents can also ring in and speak to young people when they are in the units.

Keyworkers (or other staff in their absence) phone parents at least once a week, often twice, to keep them informed of young people's progress as well as any relevant issues. The units try to ensure that this contact is balanced and includes positive news and is not just focused on any negative issues. The units maintain individual written records of all communication with parents.

The in-house social work team may also be involved in regular contact with home, if they are involved in supporting an individual young person.

The school is currently reviewing the issues around the use of mobile phones by young people within the boarding units, in the context of their possible misuse, but young people are expected to hand in their phones on return from home and only to have them in the evenings. Some young people have abused this system by retaining a second phone.

Feedback from parent questionnaires indicates that parents are generally very happy that they are kept well informed by the staff, made welcome when they visit, and that their opinions are listened to.

Parents are sent a pre-review questionnaire ahead of their child's review, to obtain their views.

Parents receive a copy of the governor's annual report to parents and are invited to parent meetings.

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):

21, 24

Young people are well prepared for the transition to independent living and receive ongoing outreach support for the six months after they leave.

Young people live in well-designed purpose-built boarding units, which are appropriately decorated and furnished, and provide very good facilities.

EVIDENCE:

As a young person approaches the age for leaving the school the support from residential staff focuses more on the development of skills for independence, which would include budgeting, shopping cooking, and supporting their work experience or college placements, which are often arranged by the in-house social work team. Seventy eight percent of 2005 leavers have gone on to some sort of college course.

The aftercare fieldworker, (one of the in-house social work team), becomes involved in transitional planning and six-monthly reviews as a young person approaches the age to prepare for leaving.

Once a young person leaves the aftercare fieldworker continues to provide support for at least six months via regular phone and face-to-face contact.

Young people have increased opportunities to take part in activities which help them prepare for this all through their time as boarders, with more regular chances to take part in shopping and cooking now available.

The purpose-built boarding accommodation is appropriately designed and maintained to a high standard of décor. Furnishings are homely and domestic in nature and there are lots of plants, ornaments and pictures available, which for the most part are respected by the young people. The furnishings and décor help to foster a calm atmosphere. Furniture is replaced as required.

The decision to retain the potential double bedrooms as single rooms is a positive one, (it is unlikely, given the needs of the young people, that bedroom sharing would be seen as appropriate), and consideration should be given to the removal of the old privacy dividers, which detract significantly from the potential of these rooms.

Some young people have had the opportunity to choose elements of the décor of their bedroom, from a range of appropriate alternatives, which is a positive step. Young people can also earn the right to hold a bedroom key, and can personalise their room with posters etc. as well as bringing in a small CD player and other items.

The upstairs bedroom corridors are video monitored, passively during the day, and by night security staff at night. Recordings are retained for a period in case they are needed. The video monitoring does not impact upon the privacy of young people within their bedrooms.

The units provide for gender separation of the bedroom corridors, and one unit has now been designated for boys only. The units are appropriately secured from the outside.

The units have appropriate individual laundry facilities which young people can access freely. Dining and lounge facilities are very pleasant and well equipped, and the kitchens are appropriate for the units and for preparing breakfast, weekend and evening meals.

The units are provided with an appropriate range of activities, books, games etc. as well as TV and DVD/video players and games consoles. Each unit has a computer for use by young people, and is due to receive a second one with internet access, once the appropriate protocols are in place.

The units meet health and safety standards well. However, as already mentioned under Standard 26, there is a need to investigate the level of grip available on the unit's external spiral fire escapes in wet weather.

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, 29, 31

The school produces appropriate information in writing for placing authorities and parents, as well as providing accessible information for young people.

Young people are cared for by competent, well-trained, and positively motivated staff teams, within the context of a consistent management team.

EVIDENCE:

The school has produced a detailed prospectus covering both the day and boarding service, a statement of purpose and each unit now has its own young person's handbook.

These documents provide a good level of information about the school's ethos, methods and provisions.

The young people's handbooks contain a lot of useful information to young people in an accessible text and picture form. The efforts of the school to combat bullying are included within the prospectus and statement of purpose, but should also be included in the young person's handbooks.

The involvement of young people should be sought in the annual review of the young person's handbooks, to ensure they remain fresh and relevant.

Staff receive a broad training in areas relevant to their role. A comprehensive induction and foundation training programme is in place which provides each new staff member with the necessary core training. This includes fire safety, health and safety, food hygiene, first aid, medication training and TCI training, which is subsequently supported by regular refresher courses.

The school has six accredited TCI trainers and aims to have two per unit to ensure that regular updates can be provided. A system of TCI workshops and drop-ins has also been established, which staff have found useful. Senior management also review all instances of restraint to identify any relevant lessons for the future.

It is positive that domestic staff also receive child protection and whistle-blowing training appropriate to their role. Consideration could be given to the benefits of domestic staff also having some elements of the TCI training in the context of their role within the units, supporting the residential staff.

Copies of training certificates are retained within staff records.

Staff feedback indicated that they felt well supported through the training available. Progress on NVQ is very good, with all staff who have completed their induction and foundation training, having either attained their NVQ or actively working towards this.

Additional one-off training is also available on individual staff areas of special interest where these are relevant to their role. This has included attendance at a workshop on eating disorders. In-house workshops have also been provided on relevant areas.

The residential units do not use agency staff, preferring to cover from within the existing staff teams together with a small number of in-house bank staff, and support from teaching staff. The head of care remains on-site for his on-call duty every Thursday and divides his time between the boarding units.

The senior management team throughout the school has remained consistent throughout the year and there is a sense of teamwork and a common purpose.

Monitoring systems are in place and regular Standard 33 visits are occurring, with the visitor(s) now producing child-friendly versions of reports for all of the

units as well as those for the school itself. Representatives of the governors also visit on a rolling programme. The school was recently inspected by Ofsted and received a very positive report.

The school provides information to parents about the behaviour management ethos, TCI and other relevant issues, through the prospectus and statement of purpose. The in-house social work team provide support to families where necessary to encourage consistency of approach between school and home.

The school's policies and procedures have been reviewed over the past year and relevant new policies such as those for the new counselling service have been drafted, for approval by the governors.

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	X
8	X
10	4
26	2
27	3

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

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

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

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

NO

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	RS6	Consider how to tackle the identified bullying "hot-spots", in order to further improve protection from bullying.	14/11/06
2	RS26	The reported hazard from the metal fire escapes becoming slippery when wet, should be investigated and addressed.	14/01/06
3	RS26	Consider the provision of additional lighting to the hard court and football pitch areas.	14/11/06
4	RS24	Consider the removal of the old privacy divisions from the old double bedrooms to improve these facilities.	14/11/06
5	RS1	Consider the inclusion of details about the school's anti-bullying stance within the unit handbooks when they are next updated.	14/11/06
6	RS29	Consider the provision of relevant elements of TCI training to domestic staff to maximise their awareness of supporting the care staff.	14/11/06

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