

inspection report

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

Walton Hall

Stafford Road

Eccleshall

Stafford

Staffs

ST21 6JR

10 & 11 January 2005

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

Walton Hall

Address

Stafford Road, Eccleshall, Stafford, Staffs, ST21 6JR

Tel No:

01785 850420

Fax No:
Email Address:
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school

Staffordshire County Council

Name of Head

Mr R Goldthorpe

CSCI Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Residential Special
School

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

11/2/04

Date of Inspection Visit		10 January 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	David Morgan	080096
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Wendy Salt	075841
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):		Not 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.		Not applicable	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		Not applicable	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Mr Rod Goldthorpe	

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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 Walton Hall. 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

Walton Hall is a special residential school situated in a rural part of Staffordshire. It provides day and residential education to pupils with moderate learning difficulties aged between five and nineteen years. The boarding provision is available for up to 4 nights per week. The school is able to accommodate up to 40 residential students at any one time.

The residential units are situated in two buildings placed within the school's extensive grounds. Goldstone House is a purpose built unit offering accommodation for five younger boys and five senior girls. The Old Hall is a Victorian listed building and provides three residential units. Gainsborough offers 10 full time residential placements for senior boys; Broughton provides 10 places for post 16 female students and Shugborough, which accommodates 10 post 16 male students.

The school is situated within its own extensive grounds, which offer a range of facilities including football, tennis and basket ball, a motorcycle riding and maintenance area, an adventure play area, a small animal farm and a conservation area.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

The atmosphere, approach and presentation at the school and by the pupils and staff are positive. The inspectors noted that demand for the boarding service far outweighed supply (35 to one) and was perceived as an attractive option by students who did not currently attend.

There is a “whole school” approach to pupils that is evident in the approach of management to their boarding provision and is also reflected in the 24-hour curriculum. There is an understanding of the additional benefits to both students and their families of boarding.

Target setting is used positively and resourcefully with boarding pupils. A positive emphasis is placed on the schools goals of competency, confidence and independence.

Management responded enthusiastically to the previous report and to this inspection.

Thorough organisation was evident at all levels and included the provision of link governors in certain matters.

The inspectors found a good standard of care provided in the majority of areas.

Children reported positively on the attention to their individual needs; the Oasis Centre; the motorbikes; the large amount of space. Parents were impressed by the communication by the school; the excellent care; the fairness of staff and the welcome they receive.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

The recruitment process should be reviewed to ensure best practice in the recruitment and vetting of staff. This was also raised last time.

Further development is necessary of the systems to audit health and safety in all areas of the school including activities.

Consideration is necessary about how best to develop the identity of the whole care team to maintain and improve standards.

See also the recommendations included in this report.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

This was a positive inspection, which found evidence of good practice in most areas.

There was evidence that the children were content, settled and well cared for. There was a clear demonstration of an holistic approach to childcare, ensuring that the children's personal and family needs not just their educational needs were being taken into account.

The visit found evidence that the school had addressed previous inspection recommendations; some were part of ongoing development.

The school clearly demonstrated a positive approach to maintaining and raising standards.

This report makes recommendations in several areas to help the school maintain and further improve standards.

NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

Is Notification of any failure to safeguard and promote welfare to be made by the Commission for Social Care Inspection to the Local Education Authority or Department for Education and Skills under section 87(4) of the Children Act 1989 arising from this inspection?

NO

Notification to be made to:

**Local Education Authority
Secretary of State**

NO

NO

The grounds for any Notification to be made are:

Not applicable.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION

Recommended Actions from the last Inspection visit fully implemented?

YES

If No, the findings of this inspection on any Recommended Actions not implemented are listed below:

No	Standard	Recommended actions	

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	RS3	Improve privacy arrangements in the shower/WC facilities.	TBA
2	RS15	Introduce a system to monitor the temperatures of fridges and any freezers in the boarding houses.	10.4.05
3	RS19	Clarity is needed on the policy for obtaining CRB's and repeat disclosures for existing staff.	10.4.05
4	RS26	The site manager should introduce monthly checks, e.g. hot water temperatures and vehicle checks (including tyre pressures).	10.5.05
5	RS27	Staff files should be reviewed and the policy implemented to ensure recruitment procedures are as thorough as possible. Files should reflect this Standard, including two references (for all staff including volunteers); a written question to referees regarding suitability to work with children; interview notes; application form; qualifications; tracking sheet.	10.5.05
6	RS30	It is recommended all staff receive regular supervision, attend appropriate meetings and are appraised in respect to all their roles.	10.4.05

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
1	RS4	Parents and other complainants should be given details of the CSCI.
2	RS14	There should be a single medication administration-recording sheet for each child.
3	RS14	Adopt a whole school approach to the teaching of personal health and sex education and consider how the residential staff and the nurse support that approach.
4	RS14	It is recommended weight recording be reviewed and that a file auditing system be introduced by the new manager.
5	RS15	Adoption of a whole school approach to healthy eating is recommended.
6	RS19	It is suggested that the school only use staff that have been fully cleared and that a tracking sheet be used on staff files.
7	RS24	It was recommended the lighting in the senior boys lounge be reviewed; that wardrobes be secured to prevent them falling over.
8	RS26	The formats for risk assessments of children should be reviewed.
9	RS29	Individual staff training records are necessary.

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	NO
• Independent Person	NA
• 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	NO
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	YES
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	NA
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	NO
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	10/01/05
Time of Inspection	09.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	47.5
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?	3
<p>There was evidence that good information is provided about the school, its faculties and the manner in which education and support/care is provided. The school last reviewed this information in December 2004.</p> <p>Separate parent and student handbooks are available to describe the boarding arrangements. Young people were involved in writing their handbook, which also contains photographs of facilities and activities.</p> <p>Parents and children confirmed that they were provided with accurate information about the school.</p>		

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?	3
<p>During this inspection several examples of good practice were found in this area, e.g. staff were observed continually consulting and involving children in decision making. It was found that children's behaviour in the boarding provision was generally good. Staff and the inspectors interpreted this as a reflection of the respect and care they were offered.</p> <p>Records maintained by the school also indicated routine consultation with families; this was confirmed in the parent's questionnaires and was an important feature of the care offered.</p> <p>The school also has systems to regularly obtain the views of students in addition to statutory reviews; examples include the Youth Council and house meetings.</p>		

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?****2**

Since the previous inspection the school has expanded its policies and procedures to include the use of mobile phones, the use of the internet and the action of staff regarding room searches. This is good practice.

The bathroom and toilet arrangements in the Old Hall remain of concern because privacy is compromised by gaps at the top and bottom of some WC partitions. Also there is insufficient privacy in the changing area by some shower cubicles. It is recommended that privacy be improved in the shower/WC areas.

The children have private access to pay phones and several children have mobile phones. There is an access to records policy and children sign to indicate that they understand it. Several children were interested in showing the Inspectors their care files and the information about their targets.

Records are kept securely and information is handled sensitively.

Staff were observed ensuring that pupils maintained their own privacy, e.g. when showering. There was minimal need for staff to be involved in personal care of pupils. A policy is now in place to cover searches of children's belongings.

Some children benefited from single bedrooms but most did not. This has an obvious effect on privacy but it was not an issue for young people.

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**

It was reported that there had been no complaints: staff endeavour to address any concerns as soon as they arise. Complaints are responded to in writing. The inspectors considered that the ethos of the school promoted confidence in the children to advocate for themselves and other students. There was little use of the complaints books that were available but this may simply represent the fact that children prefer not to write their concerns. The inspectors suggested other ways that could be used, e.g. good ideas or suggestions. Senior staff checks the records regularly.

The school enabled the children to make maximum use of the inspection and provides them with other opportunities to raise concerns.

Throughout the boarding areas the details of the usual CSCI inspector are available to children. The inspectors did not see evidence that parents and other complainants were given clear details of the role of CSCI; this should be reviewed.

Staff were aware of the complaints procedure.

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

There are extensive child protection procedures in place, which are in line with ACPC guidelines. No issues of concern have been related to the inspectors by the local child protection team. Pupils may have social workers because of difficulties at home.

All staff including ancillary/support staff, volunteers and governors receive basic training in child protection procedures. One omission was identified by the inspectors and was brought to the attention of the head teacher. Discussions with all levels of staff confirmed their involvement in training and their awareness of procedures. Staff are also provided with written guidance in the residential staff handbook.

Two members of staff, Mr Goldthorpe, head teacher and the head of care are the designated Child Protection co-ordinators.

Currently, the home does not have an independent visitor. This is being addressed by the head teacher and will be revisited next time.

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 ethos of the school clearly indicates to children that bullying is not acceptable. The inspectors learnt from staff and children that bullying occurred from time to time but was addressed promptly. In their questionnaires, two children reported this had been an issue but had been resolved by staff. In discussions and from questionnaires, the inspectors considered that there was minimal evidence of bullying occurring.

Written information about the schools principles and policies are available to parents and to children.

Practices within the school such as the careful grouping of children support the anti-bullying policy.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

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 head reported that incidents had been notified to the relevant authorities as appropriate since the last inspection including a potential child protection issue arising at the child's own home. As previously recommended the headmaster retains a central record of all notifications. CSCI records show that the inspector has been notified of incidents on six occasions; this is good practice.

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

1

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**

Clear procedures are in place. It was reported that there have been few incidents of children trying to abscond other than leaving their designated area and going elsewhere in the grounds.

Written guidelines are available to staff to advise them in the event of a missing child. Written information is also provided to parents about the action of staff if a child goes missing.

During the period of inspection, the inspectors were impressed by the level of supervision applied by staff and their knowledge of the whereabouts of every child.

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
<p>The quality of relationships between staff and children is a particular strength of this school. The inspectors were favourably impressed with the relationships that were observed between staff and children. Staff were seen to take a genuine interest in the children and appropriate boundaries were maintained. Children were able to approach staff without hesitation and were relaxed in their company; this included appropriate physical contact. This feature was facilitated at least in part by the low level of staff turnover.</p>		

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
<p>Staff had access to clear behaviour management strategies, e.g. in their handbook. Inspectors witnessed interventions that were caring, patient and reasonable. Sanctions and rewards were recorded and there was an emphasis on praising good behaviour. The inspectors felt this was an important factor in the culture of the school.</p> <p>Children reported that the methods used by staff were fair and reasonable. Measures of control that have been used include temporary removal of radio; loss of an activity; temporary minibus ban, early bedtime and sometimes fines for deliberate damage have been sent to parents.</p> <p>All staff are trained in physical interventions (SCIP). It was reported and recorded that physical interventions were few in number; this is good practice. The former head of care was the SCIP trainer and new staff now have to attend external training courses.</p>		

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?	
Not inspected.		

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

The school offers a 24-hour curriculum that benefits each child in his or her education and care needs. There is effective communication between the school and the boarding provision to ensure consistency of approach and agreed targets are met. Specialist staff knowledge is shared, e.g. during inset days. Care staff were observed ensuring that children attended school on time. The ethos of teamwork was a recurring feature of the inspection.

The care teams are now beginning to introduce programmes of independent living skills and making good use of the domestic-style facilities. This was well balanced with free time.

The schools aims of confidence, competence and independence were evident in the practices of boarding staff and staff felt this helped make learning easier. The head teacher also felt this was an important reason to maintain the boarding provision for this group of children (unlike other areas of the country) and was compiling statistics to help represent the improvement in achievements. The inspectors considered there was effective input to children's social education that helped them at school and was likely to have lasting benefits. This was also acknowledged by some parents.

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**

This standard is influenced by the fact that boarding only occurs between Monday evening and Thursday evening; also, there were no children from a different cultural background that may have required specific activities. The care staff team recognised the importance of occupying children with interesting, age and understanding appropriate, activities. There was a sensible balance between structured activities and free time and a range of activities available to students both within the school and in the community. The school offers activities within the small animal farm and work was planned to convert a nearby, unused house into a farm classroom.

The children spoke particularly positively about the motorbike activity sessions. Within the grounds there are also outdoor sports facilities. The recently opened Oasis centre provides very popular recreational facilities and children explained that good work, behaviour or progress resulted in a ticket to use the centre.

One aspect of the activity programme for the older students concentrates on the development of independent living skills. Although this area was challenging for some of the young people their comments indicated the value of the programme. Individual target setting sessions were introduced during this inspection visit and planned activities included laundry tasks, shopping, cooking and money management /budgeting. This will be reviewed next time.

Children indicated in their questionnaires and in discussion with the Inspectors that they thoroughly enjoyed the activities offered by the school.

Records examined included risk assessments of specific activities, the records highlighted action to be taken to reduce risk including the level of supervision required.

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**

A review of health care needs has recently been completed, indicating a range of needs including nutrition/diet, sight and hearing, epilepsy, continence and mental health issues. None of the children has significant physical disabilities. Several are diagnosed as having Aspergers' Syndrome or Autistic Spectrum Disorders. The inspectors had the benefit of discussions with the nurses involved at the school.

The records indicated a satisfactory system to obtain and to share information about health care needs between the school and parents. As recommended in the previous inspection report the school has reviewed records to ensure that all relevant health information was available to residential staff.

The previous inspection report supported the head teachers concerns about the provision of specialist nursing support to the school. During this inspection it was reported that this issue has now been satisfactorily resolved. The head teacher also raised with the inspectors his concerns about the high proportion of female students who leave and become pregnant within a short time. This will be discussed further next time.

The documentation sampled included information about specific health care needs and detailed the required action by staff to meet needs. Children's weights are recorded. However, some have not been done for many months. It is recommended this be reviewed and that the new manager introduce an auditing system.

Satisfactory arrangements were in place for the storage and administration of medication. Medication is received from parents every week and the school is not involved in ordering them from the pharmacist. It was suggested that a less time consuming individual recording sheet could be used.

A discussion was held about the way in which the school teaches personal health and sex education. It was recommended that the school develops an overall "whole school approach" to this subject rather than addressing it in a somewhat fragmented manner. The Inspectors suggested that once the whole school approach is established, it would be easier to see how the residential staff and the school nurse fitted into and supported that approach.

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**

There was evidence that cookery was a regular activity enjoyed by many of the children. Shopping and cooking is also a feature of the independent living skills programme for older pupils. These were areas that staff were developing.

The school provides a range of catering areas throughout the boarding provision. The lunchtime meal is provided within the school building by the school's catering team. The evening meal is prepared in the Old Hall and Goldstone House by kitchen staff. It was reported that the boarding kitchen staff consult with the school cooks to ensure appropriate balance and variety in menus.

Each house within the Old Hall also has its own domestic style kitchen used for breakfast, supper and snacks. This is good practice as this range of facilities offers good opportunities to the young people to practice independent living skills and to enjoy meals in small group settings. Standards of safety, health and hygiene within the kitchens were good although it was advised that a system is introduced to monitor the fridge temperatures in the house kitchens. It was discussed that this could easily be incorporated into the independent living programme.

Supplies within the kitchens were good and children commented very favourably on the menus and the standard of meals provided. One noted in the questionnaire that the dining room was very noisy and this may be something for staff to keep under review.

A few of the children were identified as having specific dietary needs and it was reported that the cook was planning to discuss the menus with the school nurse. Although the menus appeared to be well balanced and of satisfactory nutritional value the Inspectors felt that menu planning was an area that may benefit from greater attention (e.g. use of refined carbohydrates and sugar intake). It was felt that a whole school approach to healthy eating would be best practice rather than the existing practice of providing a healthy option at each meal. The Inspectors felt that this change of emphasis would be of benefit to the health (and education) of all of the children in addition to those with specific dietary needs.

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**

Children board at the school for a maximum of 4 nights per week and the responsibility for clothing remains with individual families. Children under 16 years wear school uniform during the day. During this visit the Inspectors observed staff helping children to look after their clothing/belongings and to get ready for school. No concerns arose regarding the presentation of children.

Records of money held in safekeeping for children were examined, these were satisfactory and involve children.

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?

3

The previous inspection report recommended guidance be provided on the implementation and monitoring of care plans. It was reported that guidance and additional training had been implemented and that senior staff routinely monitored care plans (see also Standard 14, above). The head teacher is implementing strategies to improve the measures of progress that will be significant for the school and for individual children. It is particularly important at present when the boarding provision in all special schools is under review and there is a fear amongst stakeholders that the benefits are underestimated by decision-makers.

Records sampled during this visit demonstrated that individual needs were identified and action plans were in place to meet those needs. Care documentation included a profile of daily activity and specific needs, agreements on bedtime arrangements, health information and risk assessments on specific behaviours or activities. Information was also provided about specific targets identified for each term.

Several of the children discussed their care plans with the Inspectors, they were familiar with the contents of their care plan files and were eager to demonstrate the progress they were making. During the visit the Inspectors spent some time with the older children in an independent living skills session. The Inspectors were impressed with the way in which staff helped the young people to identify individual areas that needed development and to set their own individual targets. Staff were intending to refine this process further.

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

The previous inspection report recommended a review of the existing system to ensure that all relevant information was available to residential staff. Individual files sampled during this visit in the boarding settings provided satisfactory information.

Care records were appropriately maintained and confidentially stored.

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?**

0

The inspectors understand that appropriate registers of staff and children are in place; these were not inspected this time.

See below, Standard 27

Accident records were satisfactory.

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

No problems were identified in this area by parents or children. Phones are available for children's use. Many have mobile phones for which a policy is in place that is accepted by children. Contact with parents varies, as does the number of overnight stays some children have; in any case it is up to a maximum of only 4 nights.

Inspectors were not made aware of any restrictions on contact with parents.

Staff have various ways of maintaining links with parents including home/school diary; monthly meetings; phone calls.

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?**

0

Inspectors did not inspect this area in detail. However, the use of the post-16 independent training was inspected (see other parts of this report).

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?**

3

Inspectors received 6 questionnaires from children. No concerns were raised regarding care and various positive comments were made. No child currently requires specific help with cultural matters. There was evidence and examples provided by all the staff, about how issues for individual children have been addressed. There was also evidence that children support each other and advocate on each other's behalf.

Specific therapeutic techniques are not used. External agencies are used as appropriate. As mentioned elsewhere, the school does not currently have an independent visitor but this is being addressed and will be reviewed next time.

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 benefits from an attractive and spacious location. There are a variety of buildings both modern and old. Its layout is compromised by the protected nature of some buildings and it does not have immediate access to local amenities. However, each negative has counterbalancing positive points. The old building in particular is unsuitable for children with physical disabilities. Such issues will have to be carefully assessed as part of the alterations to the service next year as will certain safety issues if dependency levels are going to rise.

Improvements are ongoing as part of budget-planning, e.g. fencing, windows, disabled access, hot water pipe covers.

Space is usually generous except in some communal areas in the old building. This was brought to the head teacher's attention in the context of overall numbers and dependency levels. This is important because of its impact on behaviours and therefore on both staff and the larger resident group. Staff should keep this factor under consideration when planning new admissions and any behavioural problems. The inspectors have provided guidance to the head teacher on the space that should be available per child.

Electronic monitoring is not used.

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?****3**

Inspectors found the school to be clean, tidy, warm, well presented and -decorated throughout and this is to the credit of everyone concerned, especially considering the listed status of the old building. Maintenance and improvements were ongoing. The head teacher reported that the accommodation is used in a way that best reduces the chances of bullying.

It was recommended the lighting in the senior boys lounge be reviewed; that wardrobes be secured to prevent them falling over.

No concerns arose regarding sleeping arrangements or the facilities and none were identified by students. There is adequate space for homework and recreational activities.

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?****2**

Recommendations were made previously regarding several matters including the numbers of WC's and this has been reviewed by the head teacher in light of funding and planning issues. The inspectors on this visit were satisfied with the provision but expressed concern again about lack of privacy in some shower and w/c areas including the spaces above and below some w/c partitions, these issues should be revisited.

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?****2**

Health and Safety was one of the areas of greatest concern during the last inspection. Since then substantial effort has been invested in addressing the issue.

County Council audits occur six-monthly but internal health and safety issues have been reviewed and the deputy head has been appointed to oversee this area. Also, a link governor has been allocated to take a special interest and a sub-committee formed to which termly reports are made; this is good practice. The deputy head reported that he has researched the subject, taking previous reports into account, and conducted an audit. The site manager intends to introduce monthly checks that will include hot water temperatures and vehicle checks; the inspectors will review this, as well as the progress made on window glass safety measures. The inspectors considered that there is now an effective framework in place for dealing with this complex area: implementation will be reviewed next time. The role of individuals and groups of staff as well as students will also be reviewed.

The Fire Service fire safety officer has reviewed fire safety recently and a report has been made to the head teacher; this work is now being progressed. Fire equipment servicing was overdue at the time of inspection but the site manager reported that the engineers were visiting later the same week. Records examined during this visit indicated termly fire drills and weekly alarm bell tests.

Risk assessments are in place for the various parts of the site and for children. Those for children were comprehensive but followed two formats, one of which was not a risk assessment although it contained useful information. This should be reviewed.

It was reported that the site has its own sewerage system that requires routine attention. This was not inspected during this inspection. The inspectors understand the area is completely safe.

There is no gas on site and the central heating uses oil. Electrical appliances are checked annually. An asbestos safety strategy is in place and signed by staff. Maintenance issues that need attention are recorded centrally; this is good practice but, given the size of the site, introduces the chance that issues will not be reported. It was therefore suggested that each floor has its own book that is checked and signed-off by the maintenance team.

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?****2**

Recruitment was an area of major concern during the last inspection and important issues that could affect children's safety remain outstanding. In several areas there appeared to have been little progress made.

A sample of staff personnel records was inspected. They were found to be inconsistent in their content and incomplete: some lacked references or had a reference 'To whom it may concern'; some had no evidence of qualifications, no application form or interview notes; also, files had no record of training (although a central record is kept elsewhere). Referees were not being asked specific questions about the candidates' suitability to work with children. Effective tracking of such issues is not in place but could for example be overseen by the bursar.

It was reported that the policy of the council is that staff can be employed whilst CRB checks occur. The inspectors accepted this but said that best practice (NMS 27.7) indicates that staff do not begin work until CRB-clearances are in place. It is suggested that the school only use staff that have been fully cleared as this (a) best protects children, (b) reflects the schools aim to achieve the highest standards, and (c) reflects the fact there is minimal staff turnover and therefore little need for urgent employment of new staff.

The head teacher acknowledged that work was needed in these areas to bring files up-to-date where possible and to introduce a new system that addresses these issues. This is essential from a child protection point of view.

Gap students are not used. Four people currently live on site in staff houses.

Some staff are designated childcare officers while others who undertake some shifts have other designations. The number below is for the former.

Total number of care staff:**7****Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:****1**

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?****3**

The boarding provision is staffed by childcare officers and extraneous staff from other departments. This appeared to ensure that sufficient staff were on duty. On call managers are always available and the senior officer routinely contacts each flat. Staff carries radios. Sleep-in staff are used in each unit. The principal childcare officer (PCCO) has recently resigned and other staff are now covering her hours; her duties are currently being addressed by the senior RCCO.

Staffing levels appeared to be sufficient to meet the needs of the children and records show at least two staff on duty in each flat. This reflects both the competency levels of staff (which were seen to be high), and the relatively low level of dependency of children. However, this must be kept under review especially in anticipation of the reorganisation next year.

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**

Staff training was seen to be in place and to include NVQ-assessments and training in core subjects such as child protection and autism. The senior CCO had obtained NVQ 3. The head teacher agreed to confirm that all staff, including volunteers, had received the training that was provided on child protection. It was observed that there was useful sharing of knowledge between teaching and care staff.

It was recommended there be individual staff training records; these could be linked to and maintained at staff supervision meetings.

Personal development plans were not inspected.

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?****2**

Staff spoke highly about the general level of support they receive from management and various examples were given. It has been agreed that individual supervisions occur but this has yet to start for all staff, partly because the principal childcare officer has left. This should now be undertaken by the senior RCCO.

The inspectors were also aware that several staff who undertook childcare duties also had other duties in the school including domestic, catering and teaching roles. This is acceptable but raises issues of supervision. It is important that such staff are kept up to speed with the ethos and practicalities of the caring role and it is not sufficient for them to be peripheral. The inspectors consider them to be an integral part of the care team and would expect them to operate to the same standards even if there were different levels of seniority. To this end, it is recommended they receive regular supervision. The same issue arises regarding attendance at meetings, e.g. care team meetings, and appraisals. Additional duties in a care role must not be separated from formal lines of accountability.

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?

3

Each boarding house has a dedicated member of staff responsible for the overall needs of that group of children. There was evidence of good co-ordination of the needs and requirements of each of the houses. Additional staff are provided to support the core residential staff and there was evidence of consistency in this arrangement. The senior childcare officer is currently providing support as acting head of care. There was evidence of routine checks to each house and regular radio contact by the acting head of care. The Head and Deputy head teachers provide evening and over night on call support, staff reported that management support was reliable and positive.

Individual and group staff supervision sessions are held although it is accepted that the system of formal individual supervision needs to be developed. Staff meetings and routine handover meetings were also in place.

All care staff were involved in NVQ training.

Crisis management strategies were not inspected on this occasion.

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

X %

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 inspectors were impressed by the overall presentation of the school and its focus on children's needs. Management was committed and effective in the vast majority of areas with initiative being taken where necessary. Children and parents raised no major concerns and this is to the credit of all concerned. The board of governors appears to be most active and the inspectors received much useful information from the chairperson who is also the link-governor for boarding.

The financial management of the school is not a primary concern of the inspectors. However, the head teacher demonstrated how the school remains financially viable despite the various financial stringencies it faces including maintaining a large listed building and receiving a low level of central government funding.

Monitoring is improving in several areas (e.g. care plans; health and safety). This will be reviewed next time when a new head of care is in post.

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

Representatives of other schools make visits as part of the quality assurance process. Routine local authority inspections are made.

The inspector's recommendation that a governor become involved in overseeing boarding provision has been acted upon; this is good practice.

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 10 January 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

A copy of the Providers comments and action plan are available at the Area Office, where these have been submitted.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

☐ NO

Comments were received from the provider

☐ YES

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

☐

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 18 May 2005, 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:

☐

D.3 HEAD’S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I _____ of _____
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 _____

Signature _____

Designation

Date _____

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 _____

Signature

Designation

Date _____

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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