



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Ash Field School

**Broad Avenue
Leicester
Leicestershire
LE5 4PY**

Lead Inspector
Joanne Vyas

Announced Inspection
7th November 2006 11:00

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

Reader Information	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
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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	Ash Field School
Address	Broad Avenue Leicester Leicestershire LE5 4PY
Telephone number	0116 273 7151
Fax number	0116 273 9762
Email address	office@ashfield.leicester.sch.uk
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Leicester City Local Education Authority
Name of Head	Mr D Bateson
Name of Head of Care	Mrs Beverley Snow (Acting)
Age range of residential pupils	5 - 19
Date of last welfare inspection	29/11/06

Brief Description of the School:

Ash Field Residential Special School is a school for boys and girls who primarily have physical disabilities and some also have a learning disability or communication difficulties.

The residence is sited on the ground floor, running on a flexi-boarding basis, with up to 18 students staying over night at any one time. Most students stay in residence for four nights in four weeks. Some students stay only for an 'extended school day' visit, these students staying only for activities and tea. All students stay on a voluntary basis.

The residence also incorporates an Independent Living Flat where up to two students can reside from the age of fourteen to practise their independent living skills.

SUMMARY

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

This summary has been written in the following style so that children and young people can understand it.

The inspector went to the school on the morning of 7th and 8th November. The staff knew the inspector was visiting. The inspector talked to pupils as much as possible during her visit; at lunchtime, teatime and breakfast, during activities and as a group.

The inspector also spoke to Mrs Booth and Bev and other staff, looked at some files, watched how staff and young people get along together and looked at some questionnaires returned to her by: six parents and twelve pupils. To help the inspector to write the report Mrs Booth also sent the inspector information about the school. The inspector also used other information, which she already knew about the school.

What the school does well:

These are some of the good things that the inspector found and pupils and the staff told her about.

Students feel safe at the school. They really like the activities, especially sport, swimming and computing. They said that staff are caring and parents also said this. Staff have lots of training so they can look after the pupils properly and they know the pupils really well. Pupils were clear about who they should talk to if they were unhappy and said that staff listen to them and take what they say seriously. Staff are very interested to hear what pupils think about Resi. They also make sure parents are told what is happening in Resi. Pupils said that they have not experienced any bullying at the school and staff said it is very rare but they will not tolerate any form of bullying.

Parents said that the staff are great and that they are caring.

The inspector saw staff and pupils getting on well together. Pupils said that staff help them with allsorts of tasks from eating and drinking to homework. The inspector saw that the staff were very helpful towards pupils. Some pupils are working towards a special award in Resi called an AQA unit award.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Resi has been painted and some pictures and new blinds have been put up in bedrooms. The Independence Flat has also had a make over. All pupils said the food has also improved.

What they could do better:

No recommendations have been made at this inspection but pupils said they would like to go swimming and trips out more often. They also said that they like to share a room with their friends – sometimes this doesn't happen.

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

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

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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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

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The health of students at this school is promoted.

EVIDENCE:

Pupils said that meals have improved and are getting better. Pupils appeared to enjoy their meals and mealtimes are lively, sociable occasions. Staff are sensitive to the needs of pupils, for example, while supporting pupils with eating and drinking. Meals are all cooked from fresh ingredients. Pupils are offered a choice at mealtimes, which always includes a vegetarian option. Specialist diets are catered for. Occasionally, in residence, they have theme evenings where pupils and staff dress up in traditional costume for the country and prepare, cook and eat the food of that country. These have been very successful and enjoyable evenings.

The school has excellent links with healthcare professionals such as nurses, Speech and Language therapists, Physiotherapists and Occupational Health therapists. Nursing staff provide training to the residential staff team to carry out healthcare tasks such as gastronomy feeds and giving specialist medications. They also provide training about epilepsy and are producing a comprehensive training and assessment package for the safe administration of medication. Other healthcare professionals also provide training.

Medication procedures are robust. Two staff always receive medication into school from a pupil's home and administer medication to pupils. Medication is securely and safely stored and administration records are comprehensive and accurate.

Most pupils' healthcare needs are comprehensively assessed and planned for. However, information was missing from the healthcare assessment of one pupil, which was important to the care the pupil receives. The Deputy Head of Care assured the inspector that this piece of work would be carried out prior to the pupil returning to stay in residence.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

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

Staff are competent and have the skills necessary to ensure pupils are kept safe while residing at the school.

EVIDENCE:

All pupils the inspector spoke to said they felt safe when they stay in residence. Staff receive child protection training annually and were competent in their knowledge. Pupils were clear who they should talk to if they are unhappy and are given numerous opportunities to put their views forward, which they take full advantage of. A parent said, "All the staff are very approachable at any time and quick to deal with my queries."

Pupils said that staff listen to them and take what they say seriously. This was observed many times during the inspection. Pupils said that they are not bullied and have not witnessed anyone being bullied. Bullying is discussed in assemblies and there are "stop bullying" posters around school and residence. All pupils were given a "We can stop bullying" wristband to wear and one pupil proudly showed the inspector hers. Staff said they do not tolerate any kind of bullying but it is very rare. Pupils are positive towards themselves, each other and the school, showing understanding and compassion towards each other reflecting the school's ethos. Pupils said they have never known anyone to run away from the school and staff said it hasn't happened for many years. The Positive Ethos policy discusses physical interventions and sanctions. However both staff and pupils stated that these are not used. A positive approach is taken with students using incentive and reward schemes. Health and safety checks are carried out at appropriate times. Environmental and activity risk assessments are in place. Visitors are asked to sign in and out of the school. Recruitment checks and procedures are robust.

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, 13, 22

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. The judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Staff provide pupils with the appropriate level of support. Education and leisure activities are a valued and intrinsic part of the agenda in residence.

EVIDENCE:

Pupils said that one of the best things about staying in residence is the activities especially sport. The inspector observed the sport session, which was run by a sports coach from the community college across the road, and all pupils seemed to thoroughly enjoy the activity. They also said that other things they enjoyed about residence are, "sharing a room with your friends", socialising and listening to music. However, one pupil said that "sometimes you don't get to share with friends" and this was something he didn't like. Other activities pupils like doing include the parachute, swimming, trips out, art and crafts and computing. One pupil became very excited about his love for computing activities. A pupil said that they can only go swimming (which he really enjoys) when there are enough staff, and they haven't been for a while. A parent also said, "However on occasions when there are cutbacks because of staff shortages that is a huge disappointment to the children." The Head Teacher said that swimming is a very staff intensive activity but they are currently working on a restructuring within residence with a view to increasing staff to help resolve this issue and ensure other activities like trips out can happen more frequently.

After school, pupils settle into residence and then start a homework session where they are fully supported by staff. A member of staff told the inspector that she also has a small group of pupils she is teaching in order for them to gain the Assessment Qualification Alliance (AQA) unit award. The inspector observed part of this session and noted that the pupils were fully engaged and enjoying the lesson.

Pupils all said that staff give them help whenever they need it. Examples they gave of such times were, with dressing and undressing, going to the toilet, giving out tablets, homework, eating and drinking, and putting splints on. This was evident from observations made by the inspector. The inspector also observed that pupils were confident to ask for help whenever they needed it. Individual care is detailed within the care plans for each pupil.

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, 9, 17, 20

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

The Statement of Special Educational Need, Individual Education Programmes and care plans enable staff to provide a needs led service with the pupil at its centre.

EVIDENCE:

Residential staff hold a Residential Youth Council once a term – more if required. Pupils said they discuss “what’s good and bad in residence and ways to improve it.” They also discuss activities and what pupils enjoy. An activity evaluation is carried out for all activities to find out which were the most popular and record any comments made by pupils. The Head Teacher speaks to four pupils every week on a one to one basis to find out how they are getting on and what they like about the school. These discussions are recorded and offer many positive comments about their stays in residence. Pupils are consulted after tea about which activities they’d like to participate in. Pupils and parents have also been involved in devising the new school menu. Parents were invited to taste various foods on offer at the school at a recent parents evening and offer their opinion. Parents are also invited into school for coffee mornings and for training sessions such as signing using Sign Along. Pupils said they can contact their parents while staying in residence by using the

payphone or their own mobile. Currently the Residential Youth Council are helping to develop guidelines on the use of mobile phones in residence. All pupils have targets to achieve while they stay in residence. Staff said these must be achievable but should also challenge the pupil. Targets are discussed and agreed with pupils. Parents are informed what targets have been set. Sometimes, parents ask staff if they can set certain targets to correspond with what parents are doing at home.

Pupils said that staff care and parents agreed. The inspector observed sound relationships between staff and pupils. Staff are committed, caring and competent. A parent said, "Attention to individual needs & communication with parents. As a parent of a child who attends resi at Ash Field, I have complete satisfaction & peace of mind about my sons care in the unit. He loves to stay & gets on well with the carers."

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):

24

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

Pupils are accommodated in appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained premises.

EVIDENCE:

A number of improvements have been made to the environment in residence. Most rooms have been decorated with pictures mounted on the walls. Pupils seem to appreciate the new colour scheme. Also the independence flat has been refurbished, which will enable pupils to become more independent. The Head of Care said that they discussed the colour schemes with the Special Needs Teaching service who gave advise specific to the needs of pupils with a visual impairment. Some pupils complained that mattresses are uncomfortable. The school have purchased mattress toppers and these are available to pupils if they want them.

The Head of Care said they plan to finish the decoration and have a rolling programme for this. They also plan to replace the carpets and suite in the lounge and purchase a more appropriate bath.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

1, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32

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

The care staff team benefit from excellent management, leadership and direction, which ensure pupils receive consistent, quality care providing them with the skills they require for an independent life.

EVIDENCE:

The Acting Head of Care has been in a management position since 2004. She has a National Vocational Qualification level 4 in Care and the Registered Manager's Award. The Head Teacher stated that the school plans to appoint a permanent Head of Care in the near future. The staff said that training and support are very good. They said that there is an open door policy. Senior managers were available at all times and often wander through to residence to talk to pupils. The Head Teacher said this is an effective way of ensuring standards are maintained and raised. All staff are encouraged to complete a

National Vocational Qualification at least to level three. Staff said that management and staff work really well together, as a team. Staff are given a bi-annual appraisal and have management meetings once every two weeks. They also have training once every two weeks. During the inspection, staff were receiving training on Clicker 5 (an IT based approach for supporting children with a learning disability in education). Staff said that there is a unity between school and residence and felt that staff are very committed. Six parents returned questionnaires. All parents were satisfied with the care and support their child is receiving. A parent said, "During the time that my daughter has her stay in residence, she fully enjoys this, looks forward very much, to her stay. It also gives us as parents some time out in which we much enjoy too. Thank you." A very recent Ofsted inspection stated that, "The boarding provision is outstanding and makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' personal development, especially their moral and social skills."

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	3

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

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

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

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

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)

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