



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Vale of Evesham School

**Four Pools Lane
Evesham
Worcestershire
WR11 6DH**

Lead Inspector
Martha
Nethaway

Announced
13, 14 & 15 June 2005 10:00 am

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

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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 Vale of Evesham School

Address Four Pools Lane
Evesham
Worcestershire
WR11 6DH

Telephone number 01386 443367

Fax number

Email address

**Name of Governing body,
Person or Authority
responsible for the** Worcestershire County Council, Education
Department

Name of Head Mrs Wendy Wheeler

Name of Head of Care

**Age range of residential
pupils**

**Date of last welfare
inspection** 11 May 2004

Brief Description of the School:

The Vale of Evesham School provides education for children and young people with Moderate Learning Disabilities, for those with Severe Learning Disabilities: Autistic Spectrum Disorders and those with Communication Disorders and for those with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities. The majority of children receive day education but there is provision for boarding, always described as the boarding school, which can accommodate 15 children and young people up to the age of 19 years as weekly boarders. The boarding accommodation is placed on the first floor and consists of three suites, one of which is very separate from the other two. Each of the suites is staffed with its own team of care staff under a care officer, all of whom were responsible to the head of care. The school is maintained by the local education authority, Worcestershire County Council Department of Education, and is directly responsible to a governing body.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection was announced and commenced at 10:00am. It took place over 2 ½ days. Three inspectors visited the school and one inspector observed the morning, evening and nighttime routines. Four children's files were examined and other records were sampled. A full range of staff were interviewed and spoken to. The Headteacher gave a guided tour of the school. On the days of the visit, children and young people were spoken to. A number of the young people communicated by using sign language or widget signs and symbols. For those that did not, observation was a key feature along with discussion and observation of the care staff on duty. In addition, 9 questionnaires were received from parent/s and or carer/s and 3 questionnaires were returned from social workers.

What the school does well:

The school sets out a clear ethos for caring and educating the children and young people. There is a fundamental culture and belief in pupil's wellbeing and continual development and progress. The school benefits further from a staff group that is capable, experienced and well trained. This achievement enables pupils to receive good quality care.

What has improved since the last inspection?

All of the previous recommended actions have been followed up and implemented. Staff are now fully qualified at NVQ level 3. A new CCTV system has been introduced at the school to provide children with greater security. Extensive improvements have been made to the grounds, including a new sensory garden and young people were involved in the process of designing and planting out the gardens.

What they could do better:

The records maintained in relation to behaviour management should be improved to ensure children and young people are properly protected. The complaints procedure and child protection procedures need some minor alterations. The school nurse should be provided with basic counselling training to facilitate her role as school counsellor.

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 standard(s) 14 & 15

Pupil's health care needs are monitored and reviewed. All pupils are provided with food that formed part of a well balanced diet.

EVIDENCE:

The school identifies healthy eating as a key feature in relation to food. Good arrangements exist to ensure that all young people are provided with suitably prepared food. Special dietary needs are catered for including Gluten Free, Diabetic and Dairy Free food. The school had a central kitchen that catered for the midday meals. The breakfast and the evening meals are served in the boarders dining room. Lists of the menus are displayed in the kitchen including a rolling 10-week menu. The Head of Care and the Cook regularly reviews the quality of the food in relation to nutritional value. Meal times were observed to be well ordered social occasions. A number of staff provided extra support and guidance to pupils in relation to prompts with socially acceptable eating habits including using cutlery according to the pupil's ability.

Some pupils discussed their favourite foods including pasta dishes and chocolate sponge puddings. The kitchen and dining area are maintained to a high standard and staff were commended for this achievement. Environmental Health had issued a 'Seal of Excellence' and a 'Heartbeat Award'. All staff had been provided with basic food hygiene training.

During the evening young people were observed and had the opportunity to prepare a light snack and choice was available in relation to the dessert menu after the evening meal.

All health and care needs of each pupil are met with sensitivity. A health care policy was available that covered guidance and advice organised by the school nurse. There were some good examples of consultation and communication by the nurse. Consent for treatment had been obtained from parent/s or carers. Pupils are supported to attend appointments with health care professionals according to their health care needs.

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 standard(s) 3,4,5,6,7,8,10,26 &27

Good structures and systems exist to protect and promote the welfare of pupils. Clear expectations, structured routines and staff support are provided to pupils in relation to the management of behaviours. Recruitment practices are sound and good health and safety practices are clearly adhered to.

EVIDENCE:

Staff illustrated sensitive and caring practices in relation to maintaining privacy and valuing and respecting children and young people as individuals. Staff clearly understand the importance of confidentiality and are aware of Child Protection procedures.

Pupils are encouraged and supported to help maintain contact with their parent/s and carer/s. There are no specific space designated for meeting family members although there are a range of rooms and outdoor spaces available should the occasion arise.

There are clear guidelines available for intimate care contained in the 'Care of Pupil Policy'.

Since the last inspection a new complaints system had been introduced. The complaints system was not fully developed to meet the criteria of making it accessible to disabled children in a suitable form. For example in a manner that suits a child's preferred mode of communication.

Staff awareness of child protection issues and reporting are good. Staff clearly understand the need to ensure processes are in place to safeguard and protect pupils. The school's procedures in relation to responding to allegations or suspicion of abuse needs some minor amendments.

Good strategies and awareness of issues relating to counteracting bullying in the policy are referred to by staff. Prevention was a key theme that emerged from discussions and interviews. To complement the good practice a risk assessment should be completed to address the issues in the pupil's individual behaviour programmes. There were no issues relating to pupils being absent without authority. Good environmental and staff practices exist for the monitoring and supervision of pupils. It was advised that the school should adopt and work in conjunction with Worcestershire County Council's Joint Protocol with West Mercia Police.

There is good emphasis on incentives, also praise and positive behaviour management. Further amendments are required to the sanctions and restraint books.

The school follows its own policy and procedure in relation to health and safety. Risk assessments are available and identified as the designated role and responsibly of a staff member. Residential staff reported that they regularly contributed to the assessment of risks in relation to the pupils. In addition, risk assessments are now available electronically on the networked server at the school. All utility checks were current, including fire checks.

The recruitment of staff is well organised at the school. All appointed staff had the necessary checks completed. The LEA had provided advice to the school that was contradictory in relation to CRB advice. The school was to seek further clarification from the LEA. The school intends to follow the updated advice provided by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in the meantime.

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 standard(s) 12, 13 & 22

The 24-hour curriculum inclusively supports pupils with their educational, social and emotional needs. Pupils regularly participate in leisure and social activities that stretched pupil's abilities and skills. Communication needs are well catered for at an individual level.

EVIDENCE:

Education is a particular strength of the school and the residential staff support the pupil's performance to meet the educational targets. The school operates a 24-hour curriculum and there are excellent examples of a fully integrated system that supports both the school and the residential setting. The returned questionnaires of the parent/s and carer/s highlighted this achievement.

Leisure and recreational activities are well organised. During the first evening of the visit, pupils used the trampoline in the gym hall, walked alongside a canal and went on a shopping trip to a supermarket. In addition, all of the dormitories had a good range of books, magazines and toys to occupy and stimulate the pupils. Pupils were observed using some of these items with staff support and guidance.

The residential staff team are very aware of individual needs and the dynamics of the resident group. Every effort is made to include pupils in the domestic and social routines. This was underpinned by the 24-hour curriculum. There are a range of communication aids used including picture exchange communication (PECS), widget signs and symbols and weekly schedules to aid and assist pupils.

The school is able to access specialist medical and psychiatric services. The school nurse was employed as a counsellor. It was advised that basic training in counselling should be organised.

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 standard(s) 2,9,11,17& 20

Overall the training policies and procedures including care practices and the ethos of the school all contribute to an atmosphere of mutual respect and clarity of boundaries. Arrangements for admissions and leaving are clearly organised. Care planning was well established. Regular contact with parent/s and or carer/s was actively promoted and encouraged.

EVIDENCE:

Questionnaires received from parent/s and carer/s indicated that the school consults regularly. Staff were praised for consistency in their approaches to the varied needs of the pupils.

Some of the boarders participate in the school council. There is a strong commitment to providing a caring and supportive environment, enabling all pupils to feel protected and respected. This was outlined in the care of pupil policy and the behaviour management policy. The school had in place a clear admission and post 16-transitional process. A young person spoke positively about the practical support and arrangements to visit further educational establishments received from staff at the school. This was consistent with information available in the young person's file.

Care plans are comprehensive and reviewed every term. Each pupil has an allocated keyworker. The keyworker arrangements are well established at the

school and dialogue takes place on a regular basis between staff and parent/s and carer/s.

Arrangements for contact are clearly stated in the care plan and regular phone contact with parent/s and or carer/s and visits were promoted. A good example of this was the use of a diary that was circulated between the school and the parents and staff. The diary always stays with the child or young person.

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 standard(s) 16, 21, 23, 24 & 25.

The school's ethos establishes the importance of pupils being treated with respect and dignity. Young people's experiences of moving on are positive and one person cited the support received from staff. Pupils are provided with a comfortable, homely environment that was well cared for and maintained to a high standard.

EVIDENCE:

The arrangement for providing clothing are principally the responsibility of the parent/s and or carers. Pupils are presented as well groomed and good facilities exist for laundering clothes. Pupils are able to exercise choice in relation to wearing their own clothing after school.

Good arrangements exist for transitional planning. Young people, parent/s and or carers are actively supported in gathering information and visiting establishments to consider the range of options available. The Principle was particularly skilled with proactive planning to secure a placement and organise the funding so that the pupil had a real choice for further educational options.

Developing life skills, social skills and independent living skills are part of the 24-hour curriculum. On the first evening of the inspection, one young person was observed doing his own personal shopping. Staff supported the budgeting and it was positive to observe that the young person chose and paid for the purchases.

The boarding accommodation is in two wings on the first floor. The residential setting serves the needs of the children well. Since the last inspection a new CCTV had been installed providing increased security. The grounds had been extensively developed and there were areas for pupils to sit and enjoy the sensory gardens. A number of the pupils regularly used this area. The structure, decoration and furnishing of the two boarding suites, Dilwyn and Seymore, reached a very high standard. Linked by the use of natural woods, calm paintwork and quality soft furnishings, the two suites presented very attractive living areas.

There are sufficient bathrooms, showers and toilets to meet children's needs. Staff are conscious of the children's need for privacy and dignity and for safety.

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 standard(s) 1, 18, 19, 28, 29, 31 & 33

The management of the school is organised well and roles of responsibility are clearly understood. Pupils and staff are well supported. Staff training is promoted and this ensures pupils receive care from a competent staff group.

EVIDENCE:

The ethos and the philosophy of the school are clearly set out in the statement of purpose and the children's guide. Records are well organised at the school and the progress of pupils are recorded in the educational plans and care plans. The school uniquely benefited from an established, experienced group of staff. Staff made favourable comments about the support and guidance received from the management team. Staff considered the approaches 'open, honest and transparent'.

All staff are fully trained. The school is commended for the proactive approach in releasing a staff member to become an NVQ assessor to facilitate the

speedy qualification of all staff to NVQ level 3 in caring for children and young people. This was undertaken in partnership with Bromsgrove College. Since the last inspection one of the governors visits the school every half term. Two reports were available.

The Headteacher was retiring and his final term will be the summer term. The school has already appointed a successor and the Headteacher regularly meets to ensure a smooth transition.

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	3
15	3

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

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

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	3
21	3
23	3
24	4
25	

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

NO

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1.	RS4	The complaints system should address all the elements in Standard 4.
2.	RS5	The child protection policy should be written in accordance with Standard 5 with particular attention given to Appendix 1.
3.	RS6	Risk assessments should be carried out in accordance with Standard 6. 5 and cross referenced to the child's placement if appropriate.
4.	RS8	The school should adopt and implement the Worcestershire County Council's Joint Protocol with West Mercia Police.
5.	RS10	The records related to sanctions and restraints should comply with Standard 10.9 and 10.14 respectively.
6.	RS22	The school nurse should be formally trained in basic counselling.

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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