



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

**St Francis**

**Wickenby Crescent  
Ermine Estate  
Lincoln  
Lincs  
LN1 3TJ**

*Lead Inspector*  
Alison Marshall

*Announced Inspection*  
15th November 2005      10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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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](http://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](http://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

<b>Name of school</b>	St Francis
<b>Address</b>	Wickenby Crescent Ermine Estate Lincoln Lincs LN1 3TJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01522 526498
<b>Fax number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	Lincolnshire County Council
<b>Name of Head</b>	Ms Ann Hoffman
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Ms Linda Booth
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	<b>11- 19</b>
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	23 November 2004

## **Brief Description of the School:**

St Francis Special Residential School is a day school that also provides planned residential care within a 24-hour curriculum for boys and girls up to the age of 19 years old with medical and/or physical disabilities.

The school provides a full curriculum from Nursery to Primary and Secondary through to the age of nineteen.

All pupils attending the school have a Statement of Special Educational Needs and are placed by the Special Needs Panel of Lincolnshire County Council Educational Directorate.

Up to 15 pupils were recorded as using the residential places at the school either on a full time or part time basis. Boarding is available from Monday to Friday during school term time.

All accommodation is on one level and there are 3 separate living areas. Each of these has a lounge with adjoining bedrooms and bathrooms. There are 2 main dining areas and a number of facilities within the school that are utilised by the pupils during the evenings for a variety of activities/hobbies. A kitchenette is also available for the young people to prepare their own snacks and hot drinks in the evenings should they wish to do so. The residential area is equipped with a wide range of moving and handling equipment to meet the assessed needs of the young people. The school has its own swimming pool, which is available up to 5 pm.

The school is situated on a residential estate in Lincoln. It has its own transport available for pupils and these are used to access the community facilities and for other outings.

The staffing of the residential area of the school consists of a team of Residential Care Officers who are led by the Principal Residential Care Officer. The usual staffing ratio is 7 staff for 15 young people. This includes 24-hour nursing care provided by qualified and registered nurses – 2 during school hours and 1 during the evenings and night.

# **SUMMARY**

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

The inspection took place over 3 days: from 15-17 November and was carried out by one inspector. The inspector spent time talking with the young people, the staff, the manager and key people within the school. The inspector joined the young people for an evening meal, breakfast and lunch. A number of records were looked at.

## **What the school does well:**

Essentially the school did everything well. In particular the provision for health care was excellent. A nurse was on duty 24 hours and ensured that all of the medical and specialist health needs of the young people were met. The nursing staff had a strong role within the whole school, contributing to Personal, Social and Health Education and the training of staff.

The direct care provided by the residential team was of a high standard. There were clear policies in place for maintaining privacy and dignity of the young people and for providing personal care. Young people felt that staff respected their individuality and encouraged them to work towards their own independence goals.

The relationships between staff and young people and the young people themselves were excellent. The school focused on working positively with the young people and encouraging them to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The young people responded appropriately and relationships appeared to be based on mutual respect. The young people were polite and courteous to staff, visitors and each other. They helped each other to complete everyday tasks and said that they rarely argued amongst themselves.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The school had addressed all of the recommendations from the last report. Significant improvements had been made to the environment and furnishings including new fire doors, new blinds and new beds. Further work was planned for the near future: a new heating and hot water system which was badly needed. Following the completion of this work all bedrooms and lounge areas were to be redecorated.

A new care plan review sheet had been introduced to ensure that the plan contained all required information and that it was updated regularly. Four staff had started on the NVQ 3 and were being assessed by an external assessor.

The school had introduced a rotating post-16 boarding system. This allowed young people over 16 to spend a half term as a boarder to work towards specific independence targets. It also gave them experience of residential boarding as part of their preparation for a potential move to a further education residential college. The young people who had experienced this were very positive about it and the benefits they had received from it.

### **What they could do better:**

Some improvements could be made to administrative processes and records: the fire log, accident recording, and care plan independence records. The biggest challenge for the school concerns the development of the role of the senior residential staff team and the individual roles and responsibilities within that.

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](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

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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 and 15

Young people's health needs were well promoted. The quality of health care provided was excellent.

### EVIDENCE:

The young person's parent/guardian retained the overall responsibility for their child's own health care and this was clearly stated in the Statement of Purpose.

The school provided 24-hour nurse cover to ensure that the medical and health needs of the young people were met at all times. Nursing staff were responsible for the administration of all medication and parents liaised directly with them regarding any changes in medication or health. Residential staff had completed the Certificate in the Safe Handling of Medication. The nursing staff were also involved in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) throughout the school. This included taking some lessons, providing resources and materials, and putting up displays. In service training was given to residential staff on meeting needs such as gastrostomy feeding.

There was good input from other health professionals such as physiotherapists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and consultant paediatricians. As a result the health and medical needs of each young person were well met and were updated at the annual review.

There were detailed guidelines for staff on the delivery of intimate and personal care. Young people said that staff were respectful when supporting them in this area.

The chef and kitchen staff provided a varied menu based on healthy eating. Fresh ingredients were used and 13 out of the 15 respondents to the questionnaire reported that the food was very good or usually good.

# 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, 7, 10 and 26

The safety of the young people was taken seriously and there were good systems in place to ensure that their safety was maintained at all times.

## EVIDENCE:

There were detailed guidelines for staff on privacy and confidentiality. From discussion and observation it was clear that the guidelines were put into practice by staff. Following the last inspection the residential area had produced a policy on the intercom system. Each young person had a form on their file that was signed by the young person where able, and the parent, agreeing to the use of the intercom

All those who completed the pupil questionnaire and those spoken to said they had never had to make a complaint but were aware of how to do so if they wanted to. There had been no recent complaints. The Principal Residential Care Officer kept a record of 'grumbles', such as clothes going missing, and recorded all action taken to address the issue.

There was a clear child protection policy in line with Local Area Child Protection Committee procedures. All staff attended a training day in September 2004 and the Head teacher as the designated responsible person attended four days of training in December 2004. Staff spoken to had never had any concerns regarding child protection but were able to say what they would do if they had a concern.

The Statement of Purpose contained a summary of the Bullying policy and the full version was available in the staff handbook. All pupils completing the questionnaire responded to the question 'are you being bullied at school at the moment' with 'not at all'. It was recognised within staff group and all pupils that bullying was not an issue.

The Head teacher was aware of her responsibility to notify significant events to the appropriate authorities. Given the needs of the young people and the high staffing ratio no young people had been reported as absent without permission. The school did have a procedure for staff to follow should somebody be reported as missing.

The Statement of Purpose outlined the approach to behaviour management with regards to the young people. The approach was based on positive reinforcement and praise with young people being encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and develop their own self-control. From discussion with young people and the staff it was clear that these principles were put into practice. Young people said that they were not punished and if they did 'do anything wrong' then staff just talked to them. They said that they were never 'told off' or restrained. Staff confirmed that they young people managed their own behaviour very well.

The security of the site was good. There was fencing around the whole of the site and electronic gates on the main entrance that closed at 5 pm and opened at 6 am. This ensured that all visitors to the residential wing were monitored by staff. A new fire logbook had been introduced but all checks and drills were not being recorded properly. For example, staff, pupils and visitors reported a fire drill had taken place in September 2005 but this was not in the logbook. The visitor said that the drill had been organised and that the young people had responded appropriately.

Staff recruitment was not assessed as no new residential staff had been employed since 2003. The Principal Residential Care Officer had set up staff files and had copies of checks required by law in place as far as she was able

given that most staff had worked at the school for a number of years. This included all volunteers and regular visitors to the school. Some staff had worked at the school for number of years and had been police checked when they started: the school was in the process of obtaining CRB clearance for all staff.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.(NMS 12)
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

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

12, 13 and 22

There were plenty of opportunities for all young people to enjoy and achieve at different activities, both within school and in the community.

## EVIDENCE:

The 24-hour curriculum was promoted through the stated purpose of the residential wing. This included directly supporting young people with their schoolwork through the homework club which was held every day after school.

The residential wing had full use of the school facilities during the evening – this included the hall, swimming pool, art rooms and post-16 area with computers and kitchen area. School clubs took place every evening from 6 pm to 7.30 pm. Residential pupils could choose whether to attend these or not. Some young people had just started to work towards the Duke of Edinburgh award.

The young people were positive about the amount of activities to do in the evening including 'girlie nights' and one pupil said that 'being able to do and try things I couldn't do at home' was one of the reasons he enjoyed boarding. There was a range of in house activities from the clubs, board games, pool and play station. Trips into the community were planned on a termly basis.

Each young person received individualised support in terms of their communication needs, health and medical needs and personal care needs. Appropriate records were kept and there was good contact between all staff to ensure that changes were noted.

# **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, 11, 17 and 20

All young people were able to make a positive contribution to the school and their own development.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Each class from school nominated a class member to represent them on the School Council. This met every two weeks to discuss any issues, including those about boarding, that were important to pupils. Boarders gave examples of things changing as a result of these meetings.

Within the residential area there was a suggestions box that all boarders could use. This was emptied at the end of every term at a residential meeting and the contents were discussed. The Principal Residential Care Officer gave examples of changes made as result. Residential meetings were also held at the beginning of each term.

It was very clear from observation and discussion with staff, young people and visitors that one of the strengths of the school was the nature of the relationships between staff and young people and also between the young people themselves. The relationships were very positive and based on mutual respect. There were clear understandable boundaries in place that encouraged

young people to manage their own behaviour. Throughout the inspection the young people were keen and enthusiastic to take part with the process. They were always polite, helpful and cheerful. They were very aware of each other and supported each other by fetching things and helping with eating.

The admission process was very clear. Boarding had to be part of the statement of special educational need. To start with a care plan meeting was held with the young person, parents and other professionals involved in the young persons life. The young person then had an opportunity to look round the residential part of the school with their parents and to meet staff and other young people. Then the young person completed a questionnaire called 'Me'. This provided details that enabled the staff to provide the right level of care and support. This was detailed in the young persons care plan and this was reviewed annually. The care plan included independence targets that the young person wanted to work towards. These were drawn up by the young person and the assistant head with an overall responsibility for independence skills. Although it was clear from discussion with young people and staff that targets had been set and were being worked towards these were not always recorded and up to date in the care plan.

Young people boarded for 2 nights or 4 nights a week and all young people went home at weekends and holidays. Whilst boarding they could keep in touch with family and friends via phone or email and families and friends were welcome to visit.

# 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):

16, 21, 23, 24 and 25

The accommodation provided was satisfactory and the school was continually working to improve the environment.

## EVIDENCE:

The young people brought in their own clothes from home. They could choose to have these washed at school or to take them home. Some young people washed their own clothes at school as part of developing their independence skills.

An assistant head took the lead on transitions and leaving the school. He worked closely with other agencies involved such as Connexions, social worker and the Learning Skills Council. All young people had a transition review and the school supported each young person to achieve their wishes for when they moved on.

Since the last inspection a number of improvements had been made to the environment: wide fire doors had been fitted to the bedrooms; all fully-dependent young people had height adjustable beds; independent young people had new beds; new blinds through out the residential area; new outside play area and specialist equipment; new televisions and the electrical wiring and fittings had been replaced.



The school experienced problems with the heating and water system during the inspection. This was managed very well and ensured that there was no impact on the welfare of the young people. However, it did take up time that could have been better spent. This was an on going problem which was due to be addressed within the next couple of months with the installation of a new system. Once this had been installed there were plans for the residential area to be completely redecorated. The school should also consider replacing the overhead lights in the lounge areas, as these were large, bright and office like. Consideration could also be given to the replacing of the sinks in the bedrooms with hi/low sinks.

# 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, 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33

The residential wing was well managed and a proactive approach ensured the continued development of an already excellent service.

## EVIDENCE:

The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed since the last annual inspection. This document covered all aspects of the boarding provision of the school as recommended. It was also available on an audio CD and in a power point format.

Appropriate records were held for each young person which detailed their progress and development throughout boarding. General school records were also in order. However, the recording of accidents could be improved upon as the majority of accidents were recorded on forms that required the accident to

be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under health and safety legislation (RIDDOR – The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995). These were completed regardless of whether the accident did actually have to be reported.

Rotas showed that there were always sufficient staff on duty at all times. There was a very consistent staff group, some of whom had worked at the school for a number of years: the longest being 33 years. There was a very low turnover of staff which ensured consistency of care for the young people. Staff received appropriate training to help them to provide the support to meet the needs of the young people. The school were using an outside training organisation to provide an NVQ assessor to supervise 4 residential staff through the NVQ 3. All residential staff received regular supervision and an annual review.

The residential wing was very well managed and the Principal Residential Care Officer (PRCO) was due to complete her NVQ 4 by Christmas 2005. From looking at records and talking with staff it was apparent that the manager undertook the majority of the work that was not direct care. For example, she completed most records and reports. The other staff had very little responsibility besides providing direct care to the young people. Although the direct care provided was of a very high standard this meant that some things might not be recorded and any new developments were implemented only because of the manager's commitment and drive. The school should look at the role of the Lead Residential Care Officer and the Senior Residential Care Officer with a view to developing and differentiating their role to allow them to take on more responsibility and to allow the PRCO to have a more strategic overview.

The residential governor visited regularly and produced a report covering all of the areas as stated in the national minimum standards. The senior management team of the school had established a clear system for monitoring records on a regular basis. The system identified if there were any patterns or outstanding issues that needed to be addressed.

# 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

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	4
<b>15</b>	3

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

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

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

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

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

NO

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)

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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