



Champions for
Social Care
Improvement

inspection report

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

Radlett Lodge Schools

Harper Lane

Radlett

Hertfordshire

WD7 9HW

13th January 2004 and 14th January 2004

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

Radlett Lodge Schools

Address

Harper Lane, Radlett, Hertfordshire, WD7 9HW

Tel No:

01923 854922

Fax No:

91923 859922

Email Address:

Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school

The National Autistic Society

Name of Head

NCSC Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

25/02/03

Date of Inspection Visit	13th January 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit	10:30 am	
Name of NCSC Inspector	1	Julia Bradshaw
Name of NCSC Inspector	2	Cathryn Bramham
Name of NCSC Inspector	3	
Name of NCSC Inspector	4	
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 NCSC. 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	Lynda Tucker	

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) 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 NCSC in respect of Radlett Lodge Schools

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

Radlett Lodge is a purpose built school and residential facility for children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and is owned by the National Autistic Society. The home is located just outside the village of Radlett and approximately 2 miles from the city of St Albans. Both facilities are located on the same site and are integral to each other. The School and Lodge provide a service for 38 weeks of the year.

The Lodge is a two-storey house, which accommodates up to a maximum of 14 pupils at any time. The lounge and dining areas of the home are light and airy. There are televisions, videos and play stations available for all pupils to use, as well as a large selection of outdoor equipment, for use in the garden area. There are also computers that can be used for homework or leisure.

The Principal is Mrs Lynda Tucker, who has overall responsibility for both the school and the Lodge. The Head of social work manages the residential care provision. At the time of this inspection this post was vacant but interviews were due to be held shortly. The staff group are contracted to work in both the school and the Lodge.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

Radlett lodge should be congratulated on the service it provides to its boarders. Both the School and the residential facility has an ethos of integrity rather than expediency. It both empowers and listens to the children and recognises that each has a valuable contribution to make. The lodge offers a safe environment that, paradoxically also offers each boarder challenges that promote his or her confidence and skills. Children and students who use the lodge benefit from a residential experience that helps improve their independent living skills. While health and personal care needs are met, these do not dominate, and the atmosphere in this residential school is both happy and relaxed. Mutual affection and concern is very evident. The Lodge achieves the goals of its mission statement by integrating education, care and therapy, thereby promoting the self-esteem and personal autonomy of the pupils. Everyone living at the lodge is treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. This excellent care setting has been created by using the philosophy of "low arousal", to ensure pupils live in a calm, controlled and where possible, relaxed environment. Care starts from the needs of the individual.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

There are no significant areas of improvement identified. The only issue highlighted from the two-day inspection was that water temperatures within the Lodge were recorded at an unsafe level and therefore immediate action was required to safeguard the pupils and staff from any health and safety risk. The principal agreed to make regular daily temperature recordings and to investigate the possibility of having individual thermostats fitted to the hot water systems within the lodge. The Lodge is currently without a head of social work however the Principal is hopeful that this post will be filled soon in order to ensure the Lodge maintains its consistency within the staff team.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

This is the second inspection of Radlett Lodge under the Care Standards Act 2000 school. It is to the credit of the School that, from an NCSC perspective, there is only one recommendation made as a result of this announced inspection. The inspection team were impressed with the inclusive approach to welfare that has been adopted by all staff and there are no concerns about the quality of care provided to the boarders in the Lodge. The Principal and, her Deputy, the staff and the children at Radlett Lodge are thanked for their openness and co-operation.

NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

Is Notification of any failure to safeguard and promote welfare to be made by the National Care Standards Commission 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	
		None	

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended action and any advisory recommendations 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	RS26	The hot water at taps accessible to the pupils must not exceed 43 degrees C.	14/01/04

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

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

Date of Inspection	13/01/04
Time of Inspection	10.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	X
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	3

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 NCSC 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
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The school has produced a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes the purpose and function of both the school and its residential unit and contains all of the information required by this standard. The Principal stated that this document is due to be reviewed in February 2004. It is written in a manner that is easy to understand and describes the speech/oral approach to education and care provided. There is a good working link between the School and the Residential Unit that creates a continuum of care for weekly and respite boarders. Read in conjunction with the school prospectus, the Statement of Purpose provides a full picture of the range of services on offer. The lodge can only accommodate children who meet the stated criteria and provision of service and are within the autistic spectrum, and only then if there is a peer group for the new child to join.

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

The opinions of children are sought in a variety of ways, despite communication difficulties. Pupils are provided with pictorial aids to assist with communicating their requests, issues and concerns about the service they receive. Consultation uses the child's preferred means of communication, which is well documented in care plans. Staff are made aware of how children with an autistic spectrum disorder communicate and are trained in the strategies needed to support them in this. Staff stated that observation of the pupils is also a way of gaining feedback. During the inspection, there were many examples of pupils being offered choices, whether in terms of drinks or meals, or activities. A small number of children come from different ethnic backgrounds to the majority. Children spoken to during the inspection confirmed they are consulted when choosing colour schemes, personal bedding and menu planning within the Lodge.

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?

3

Residential staff have access to comprehensive policies in relation to privacy and confidentiality. Pupil's records are kept in lockable filing cabinets. Staff spoken to stated that they had received training in child protection and were aware that on occasions information which they are given in confidence by a child may have to be shared with a third party. Most pupils need assistance with the making and receiving of telephone calls. The Statement of Purpose provides information on contact and in relation to the telephone it states that 'a comfortable and private place should be provided, staff should be present if requested by the pupil, or if they need support to make and maintain the call'. Arrangements are made for pupils to meet their parents in private. Where possible, personal care is provided by staff of the same gender as the pupil. All pupils require some degree of assistance with their personal care, which is undertaken either in the privacy of the bathroom or in their bedrooms. Each pupil has his/her individual plan for personal care. New staff work along side established members of staff to learn about the best way to meet each child's needs. Manual handling is included in induction training and is updated annually.

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

There is a formal complaints procedure outlined in the school's prospectus, and Statement of Purpose. The National Autistic Society provides the procedure and it encourages parents and others to address complaints to the Head teacher or any member of the governing body. The school has recently introduced a new pupil's version of the complaints procedure in pictorial format and all children are offered the support of their key worker or their preferred person to help them clarify and make their complaint. The Lodge also receives the support of an outside support/advocate on a regular basis. The complaints procedure is also included in the staff induction programme and annual training programme. Staff who completed a questionnaire as part of this inspection were asked how they would handle complaints made by the children. Their responses confirmed that they were aware of the complaints procedure.

Number of complaints about care at the school recorded over last 12 months:

1

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

Number of complaints received by NCSC about the school over last 12 months:

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

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

The Deputy Principal is the designated person for Child Protection issues in the school. Staff have access to a policy encouraging them to challenge poor practice and they are encouraged to report any concerns to a manager under the staff code of conduct. The current Child protection policy is both comprehensive and detailed and used in conjunction with the Hertfordshire Child protection procedure and policy. Training on child protection issues is included in induction and in foundation training. The Lodge has appropriate links with other agencies, such as placing authorities, GPs, hospitals, and the local Social Services Department. The designated child protection officer completes an induction programme with all new members of staff, in relation to all the policies and practice guidelines relating to child protection and anti-bullying policies. There is also a key worker system in place that also acts as an advocate for each pupil. The lodge has some excellent risk assessments, which are used in conjunction with the behaviour support plans.

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

Policies and procedures regarding the bullying are both comprehensive and detailed. Pictorial aids to assist pupils, are displayed within the Lodge regarding the anti-bullying policy that operates within both the lodge and the school. All staff are inducted into the anti-bullying policy by the Child protection officer and training in anti bullying strategies and procedures is part of the behaviour management training programme. Staff who were interviewed showed a good knowledge of the policy and an awareness of the likelihood of some degree of bullying in any group of children. Staff are assisted in their assessment of whether or not bullying is taking place by the record of children's usual responses. Risk assessments consider the potential for bullying behaviour in different situations and action is taken to reduce any perceived risk. Groupings within the school and the Lodge have recently been reviewed to reduce inappropriate interactions to other pupils and lunch and play times

have been reorganised to allow for more peer compatibility with less crowding. Staffing levels allow for the pupils to be supervised at all times.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied	100 %
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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
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The school is aware that all significant events should be notified to parents, NCSC and appropriate authorities. Any member of staff who was dismissed for unsuitability to work with children would be notified to the relevant party under the Protection of Children Act. There have been no serious incidents requiring notification in the past year. Any action or investigation of a notifiable event would be fully documented, a written record kept and the appropriate authority informed. The residential staff have a system whereby parents receive prompt notification of any allegation that a child has committed an offence. The school is aware that any serious concerns about the emotional or mental health of a child would refer to the G.P in the first instance.

NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO NCSC DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:

• conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children	0
• serious harm to a child	0
• serious illness or accident of a child	0
• serious incident requiring police to be called	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
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There is a detailed procedure in place for staff to follow in the event of a child going missing. This includes notifying the most senior member of staff on duty, the manager on call, searching the home and the grounds, contacting the police and parents. There have been no serious incidents of children going missing in the past year. High security fences and a keypad system for entry and exit into the grounds of the home protect the grounds. Care staff are aware of the measures that they may take to prevent a child from leaving without permission. There is a policy on physical restraint but such measures would normally be part of a package of care, agreed in advance and recorded in the care plan. Parents are aware that they must notify the school by telephone or writing of the reason for their child's absence. Any un-notified absence is followed up immediately by staff.

Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:	0
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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

Relationships between staff and pupils were observed to be very positive and appropriate. At all times, staff spoke to pupils (using appropriate communication methods) explaining what they were doing and why. Choices were offered at every opportunity. Due to the complex needs of the pupils living at the lodge there are very comprehensive guidelines in place that need to be adhered to and these are used as part of the behavioural support plans for each pupil. The lodge uses various systems to recognise and reward positive behaviour and achievement, including “star charts” and certificates of achievement. Also displayed in the home were choice boards. There was no sign of favouritism. The home operates a key worker system, which provides that essential role of advocate for each pupil.

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?

4

The school has a comprehensive policy and detailed guidance on the management of pupil behaviour, which covers the issues of control, discipline and physical intervention. The policies address the nature and characteristics of autism, the impact of these characteristics on pupil behaviour and the need for a problem solving approach to helping pupils manage their behaviour. Each pupil has an individual support plan (BSP), devised by the residential and day staff working with the pupil and the school’s psychology team, which is reviewed annually or more frequently as required. Its purpose is to clarify the intentions behind the behaviours, ensure consistency of response to pupil behaviours and assist pupils to become more independent. BSP’s are shared with parents to give greater consistency. The inspectors were informed that physical intervention is used as the last resort. All staff receive training in the management of pupil behaviour as part of their induction and take part in the rolling programme of 8 training modules based on the behaviour guidance document. The school’s psychology team work with staff and senior management to refine, develop, modify and evaluate all behaviour management programmes and are available to support staff and pupils with advice, guidance and interventions.

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?	3
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Prospective pupils are able to visit and view the Lodge prior to admission. Parents are involved in the planning process for admission. This is done on a gradual basis, starting with the pupil joining others at teatime and then staying overnight. The school has devised a pupil's 'Welcome to our Lodge' information pack which is provided to each prospective pupil prior to admission. This is in written, pictorial and sign format so that all pupils can understand it. Detailed recording of the pupil settling in is made in the home/school diary. Handover, between the school and the Lodge takes place on a regular basis and a group evaluation is also carried out. Feedback to parents is given on how the child is settling in. The Lodge has a 'Look after Children' (LAC) review programme. An initial review is held during the first six weeks of admission. Six pupils files were inspected. Each has a profile information sheet, parents contact form, medical consent form, Social Services report, annual review minutes and a behaviour support plan. Each pupil has a Development Learning Outcomes (DLO) programme, which includes self-help skills, daily living skills. A psychologist carries out a baseline assessment of achievement after admission and an individual educational care plan with objectives is devised in conjunction with the educational needs. Individual educational targets are set by a multi disciplinary team with the involvement of the pupil (where appropriate) and the parents. All pupils' departures are planned over a 12-month period and they are given appropriate information and guidance to assist in the process of transition.

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

There are very close working relationships between the Lodge and the school. A 24-hour 'handover' book is in use where care staff and teachers record the pupils' activities whilst in their care. There is also a daily verbal handover between the care staff and the teachers. Care staff attend the IEP (Individual Educational Programme) meetings. The Personal, Health and Social Educational (PHSE) curriculum is carried out jointly by the care staff and teachers. All staff work towards encouraging each child's personal, social and educational development and achievement. Independent living skills are promoted throughout the Lodge.

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

Due to the nature of autistic spectrum disorders, pupils often need extra support in order to participate in recreations, sports and cultural activities. Recreation and free times are structured to encourage participation and achieve maximum benefit from the activity. A wide range of leisure activities are arranged for the pupils including outdoor and community trips. The lodge holds theme nights when food is brought and pupils engage in paintings, decorations, dressing up and listening to different music to promote awareness of diverse cultures. At the time of this inspection pupils were making Chinese lanterns to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Significant events such as birthdays are celebrated and in the evening of the day of the inspection one of the pupils was celebrating his birthday party with his parents and relatives. Bouncy castles are also used for evening parties and pupils go out for meals, Bowling etc. Although the evenings are structured, pupils can chose to play and engage in other activities as they wish. They are provided with appropriate magazines, toys, games and music facilities. Cinema Nights are held at the Lodge and pupils have the opportunity to visit the local cinema. The Lodge has the use of a mini bus to enable pupils to visit local attractions such as 'Activity World', local parks, bowling alleys, shops and cafes. Pupils have the opportunity to use the school gymnasium and the garden apparatus. Individual and generic risk assessments are carried out and personal interests and hobbies are recorded in care files. However, the lodge is closed at weekends.

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

Personal care is given by staff in a way of training pupils to care for themselves. Intimate care plans and other related policies are in place for each pupil. A School Nurse is not employed. If any pupil requiring medical attention a local doctor would be contacted. Any pupil visited for medical attention would usually be accompanied by a member of the care staff, who would sit in on any consultation due to the relatively young age of the pupils. Routine screening for teeth, hearing and sight are the responsibility of parents but the school offers medical, optical and dental check ups from the Health Education Department. Each pupil is a boarder and has their own GP at their normal place of residence. Written records of any significant illnesses, accidents or injuries to children during their placement at the school are maintained and full health records on each pupil are also maintained. There is no pupil who has a refugee or asylum seeker status. There are some pupils from the ethnic minority communities and their cultural needs are met. The lodge has a dry marker board, which identifies the trained First Aider on duty each shift. Pupils are only given prescribed medication or a mild analgesic for which parents have given consent. Only one pupil currently boarding at the Lodge requires prescribed medication. The supply of this medication and the associated records were inspected. The medication is kept securely and the records were well maintained.

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

The Lodge provides all meals and employs a cook who offers a varied and nutritional diet. Fresh fruit is delivered on a weekly basis and offered to pupils each day. Staff discuss with pupils the choice of foods available by showing pictures of food in order to devise the menu, which is compiled on a weekly basis. Choices of two main courses and alternatives are provided and ample drinks are made available. There are two sittings in the dining room with different groups at different times. Vegetarian meals and cultural needs of pupils are met. Some pupils require verbal prompts with their meals. One of the inspectors joined a group of children for supper and thoroughly enjoyed the interaction and manner in which mealtimes were organised. Pupils were encouraged and supported in making their own choices of food and assisted in the serving their own meals. There was plenty of food available and the choice of two main meals that was provided was both nutritious and attractively presented. The inspector wishes to thank the children that helped provide her with a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

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

Pupils are able to bring and keep their own clothes for the duration of their stay. The school Bursar keeps £2 per pupil per week and parents are asked to contribute this if they are able. Pupils are taken for shopping to spend their pocket money by care staff. Pupils do not manage their own money and parents or the school provide their pocket money.

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
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All pupils have very detailed care plans and IEPs (individual education programmes). All placements are voluntary and parents are very involved with the devising of care plans, from providing information to attending review meetings. There are annual reviews of IEPs and parents and pupils are invited to attend these. Local Authorities are held responsible for 6 monthly reviews of the placements, while care plans are reviewed every term within the school. Each child has a key worker. Five care plans were inspected were found to contain all the required information, with sufficient detail to enable staff to meet assessed needs.

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

Pupil's individual care files are kept in a lockable steel cabinet. Residential care staff sign and date each entry in a boarder's care plan. Care staff stated that pupils are made aware that they can access their care plan on request to any member of the residential team. All of the details required to be contained in the files were recorded in a satisfactory manner and were signed and dated. The inspectors were informed that the school retains records for at least 21 years from the date of birth of the individual.

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?**

3

The Lodge maintains clear records on pupils and the school has full records of the staff it employs. Major events that affect the pupils are recorded. Some of the records listed in this section, (such as personnel files and the accident book) are maintained in the main school. Others, (such as past menus) are retained in the Residential Unit. During this inspection four staff files were inspected and these contained all of the required information. The pupil accident book, menus, a duty rosters were inspection and were satisfactory. A diary of events occurring at the school, including the names of visitors to the school and the reasons for their visits is maintained.

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

Pupils are positively encouraged and enabled by the Lodge to maintain contact with their parents and other family members. The Statement of Purpose states that 'any restrictions on contact between the pupil and those significant to them will be detailed in the placement plan and must be strictly adhered to. It is the right of the pupil to remain in contact with those significant to them, and due to differences in communication, social understanding of children with autism, staff will usually need to provide encouragement and facilitate this'. During the week, staff contact parents regarding any welfare concerns and there are currently no restrictions placed on contact with any of the parents imposed by a court or on the grounds of risk of significant harm to a child. Pupils can meet in private with their parents should the circumstances arise. Staff do receive some training develop their skill to work with the pupils and their parents.

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?

9

This standard is not applicable as none of the pupils are in care.

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

Each Pupil has an individual care placement plan (and each pupil has an individual education plan). All residential staff are available to pupils to support them with any personal or welfare concerns and they also take care to ensure that no pupil is left isolated within the Lodge. All Pupils receive individualised support as detailed in their care plans. Pupils are encouraged to participate in social groups and isolation is minimised by the school choosing not to admit pupils without a peer group of young people with similar needs. Communication is facilitated through a variety of aids including Makaton and Symbols. Pupils may contact any member of staff with their concerns, although it is most likely that staff members will first notice a difference in mood or behaviour of the young person and ask what is the matter. Psychologist and speech and language therapy are provided within the school. No therapeutic techniques are employed other than those under the instruction of the qualified Psychologist and speech and language therapists. Referrals are made for other specialist support as required. While personal, health, social education commences in the classroom, it is reported to carry over into the residential unit. Support is given to pupils following any traumatic incidents, and the school states that it will facilitate a particular expertise in bereavement counselling if required.

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

Radlett Lodge is situated in the village of Radlett which has open spaces and pleasant country side. It is purpose built and is within the grounds of the school. The main entrance has electronically controlled security gates and the boundaries are fenced providing a safe and secure environment. Radlett Lodge is a two-storey building. On the ground floor there are three separate lounges, three toilets for children and two for adults. There is also a kitchen, dining room and a small quiet/relaxation room. The first floor has nine bedrooms, two bathrooms with toilets and four other bathrooms. There are a further four toilets, a staff shower room, two staff sleeping in rooms, a laundry room and a linen room. None of the children accommodated have disabilities and therefore aids and adaptations are not required.

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

A tour of the Lodge was undertaken as part of this inspection and it was noted that it was homely, clean and free from any offensive odours. The paintwork in several areas was damaged and the Unit Manager informed the inspectors that quotes are currently being obtained for all of the building to be redecorated. Pupils are encouraged to furnish their rooms with personal possessions and there was evidence of this in the rooms. Possessions brought into the Lodge by pupils are recorded. The Lodge has nine bedrooms which are located on the first floor of the building. Two of the bedrooms occupied by pupils are not carpeted. The reasons why laminate flooring is provided in these bedrooms is stated in the pupils care plans and the inspectors were informed that when the current pupils no longer occupy these rooms carpets would be fitted. A portable telephone is available for pupils use. There is a vast range of materials to enable pupils to pursue hobbies and interests. There is a laundry facility for bedding and some clothing but the majority of each pupil's clothes are taken home to be washed. Visitors can be seen in private, if wish. There are two members of waking night staff and two sleeping-in on each night.

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?**

3

There are adequate numbers of toilets and bathrooms facilities for the number of pupils in the Lodge. On the ground floor there are three toilets for pupils and two for adults. The first floor has two bathrooms with toilets and four other bathrooms. There are a further four toilets and a staff shower room. Bathrooms and shower rooms are suitably equipped and accessible. Privacy of pupils is ensured, although some pupils may require staff assistance.

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
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The Lodge undertakes regular fire drills. Emergency lighting is tested on a monthly basis and weekly fire alarm tests are undertaken. All of these tests are recorded. All staff have received fire safety training and this training includes the use of fire extinguishers. Comprehensive risk assessments have been undertaken and recorded and risks assessed include the school's premises and grounds, children's known and likely activities, risk arising from pupils not able to appreciate risks themselves and potential risks to children from public access to pupils during activities or outings and fire risk assessments. The Principal stated that a record of the temperature of the hot water running from the baths is not undertaken and during this inspection it was noted that the temperature of the hot water was in excess of 43 Degrees C. Therefore it was agreed that with immediate effect, that the water temperatures would be tested and recorded daily, in order to ensure the health and welfare of the pupils living at the lodge. The principal also will be perusing the possibility of having individual thermostatic controls fitted to all water appliances within the Lodge.

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?

3

The school carries out the appointment of staff working within the residential setting. Five staff files were inspected and all contained the information required by this standard. Staff files are held securely within the school offices. The inspectors were informed that agency staff, volunteers and students on placements are required to complete Criminal Record Bureau checks. Evidence to confirm this was not inspected on this occasion.

Total number of care staff:

21

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

5

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 Lodge is managed by the Deputy Principal of Care who is supported by a Senior Team Leader. The staffing is divided into three teams led by a team leader and the team is made up of 3 staff. The Lodge provides adequate staffing for the needs of the current pupil group. There are 9 members of staff on duty from 7.30 a.m. to 3.30p.m with the Deputy Principal of Care supernumerary to these numbers. This provides three members of staff per group of children. The evening staff arrive at 2.45 p.m. and work until 9.45p.m. During the night there are two staff sleeping in and two waking night carers on duty. The home currently has two full-time vacancies.

There is a full time cook in the residential unit. Therefore agency staff currently covers this post. The assistant caretaker carries out domestic and routine maintenance jobs within the home.

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**

All staff receive induction training within the first six weeks of appointment. A schedule of training needs is identified as part of the supervision process. The home provides both internal training from senior staff members and through the NAS rolling programme and also through external professional trainers. Staff spoken to during this inspection stated that they had the opportunity to attend a range of courses. Courses attended include behaviour management, child protection, SCIP, manual handling, food and hygiene, and SPELL. There are several staff who are currently working towards achieving either NVQ level 3 in caring for Children and Young people and NVQ level 4 in management.

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?****3**

The Deputy Principal of Care is line managed by the Principal. All staff received MSD (supervision) from their line manager which is formally provided at least six times a year. All staff receive an annual appraisal. Staff meetings between the two staff groups are held weekly and there is an expectation that all staff attend these meetings. The agenda is set and all staff are encouraged to contribute. As part of this inspection members of staff completed a written questionnaire asking them to state the systems that are in place to support them. Ten completed questionnaires were forwarded to the inspectors and all staff stated that they receive support through a variety of means including supervision, training, teamwork, de-briefing sessions at the end of each evening shift, through the senior members of staff, shadowing and induction. Staff confirmed that they have written job descriptions. These were inspected and it was noted that these related to the Statement of Purpose and that they clearly stated that duties expected of the staff member.

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

The Head of Social Work post is currently vacant. However the current staff team within the Lodge have a wealth of experiencing and knowledge within the field of Autism are currently receiving support form the senior management team with the school. The Lodge has good systems of communication, with three handover shifts per day to ensure the consistency of approach is maintained. The School and Lodge have planned responses to all foreseeable crises. Residential care staff will become registered with the General Social care Council once it is fully operational. The Lodge provides adequate staffing levels for the needs of the children, currently using the service. On occasions additional staffing is provided where a risk assessment has dictated that a child requires additional support, in order to ensure the safety of both the child, other children living at the lodge and staff. The staff team appeared both knowledgeable and professional in their approach with the children and should be congratulated on providing a safe, stimulating and homely environment for everyone using this service.

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

X %

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

The National Care Standards Commission 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 National care Standards Commission is notified of any significant events that occur within the Residential Unit. The Principal signs and monitors all the records listed in this standard except where records are delegated to a senior member of staff. The Head of Social work and the Principal take action in relation to any concentration, trend or pattern in recorded issues. There are annual reports prepared for governors and for parents. The home is part of an overall audit, which is carried out on an annual basis. There are clear and comprehensive policies in relation to the budgeting and financial responsibilities of the home. Financial control is carried out by the Principal and supported by the Bursar and administration staff. The home is also part of the overall planning and reviewing of the annual budget and linked to the schools development plan.

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

A representative of the National Autistic Society visits the home on a monthly basis and written reports following this visit are sent to the school. Copies of the reports were available for inspection. The school has a comprehensive policy detailing the role of the Appointed Visitor. This policy also details staff responsibilities and states that 'any member of staff within the residential setting may be required to host an inspection and will be expected to understand and support the process'. Further guidance in the policy includes the role of the Appointed Visitor, an example of an official National Autistic Society Identity Card, Interviews with residents, representatives, parents and staff, issues to consider and guidelines for making a complaint. The school and home also have a Service Support Committee who monitor and review care practices, the welfare of the children and current policies and procedures. The membership of this committee includes, professional involved in the school, professionals from other educational establishments, a representative of the local council, parents and staff representatives. Communication links are clear and policies and procedures are both comprehensive and detailed regarding the health and welfare of the children living at the Lodge. The home has worked hard in establishing positive and open communication links with families, carers and relevant professionals.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

A Lay Assessor was not present during this inspection.

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

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 13 & 14 January 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

Comments are available from the area office.

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

- Amendments to the report were necessary
- Comments were received from the provider
- 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 _____, 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
- Action plan was received at the point of publication
- Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion
- Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion
- Provider has declined to provide an action plan
- Other: <enter details here>

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 L Tucker
Signature _____
Designation Principal
Date 30.03.04

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.