



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

BOARDING SCHOOL

Culford School

**Culford
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP28 6TX**

Lead Inspector
Cecilia McKillop

Key Announced Inspection
16th January 2007 01:00

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

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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 *Boarding 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.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of school	Culford School
Address	Culford Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP28 6TX
Telephone number	01284 728615
Fax number	01284 728631
Email address	hmpa@culford.co.uk
Provider Web address	www.culford.co.uk
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Dr R Mc Lone MA PHD
Name of Head	J F Johnson-Munday
Name of Head of Care	
Age range of boarding pupils	8-18
Date of last welfare inspection	08/12/05

Brief Description of the School:

Culford School traces its origins back to 1881 and has occupied its present site in the 488 acres of Culford Park since 1935, becoming co-education in 1972. The School is one of a group of independent schools founded by the Methodist Church and the local Governors are responsible to the Trustees of the Board of Management for Methodist Residential Schools, which owns the property.

The School aims to be a caring Christian family community worshipping and upholding Christian values and practices, whilst welcoming members of other faiths.

The School currently caters for approximately 600 pupils incorporating a nursery and a pre-prep department, and preparatory and senior schools.

There are currently 187 boarders aged between 9 and 18.

The preparatory School caters for children aged 8 to 13 and is run independently from the Senior School with its own boarding facilities in Cadogan House which is co ed.

Boarders in the Senior School are accommodated in Edwards, Cornwallis and Jocelyn House.

SUMMARY

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

This report follows a two day inspection conducted by two CSCI inspectors, and a Boarding School Professional Inspector.

The boarding houses were visited as part of the inspection and interviews were conducted with Boarding house staff. A number of additional staff including the Head of the prep school, the senior master, the catering manager, the school nurse, the Bursar and the member of staff responsible for school trips were also interviewed. Parents were written to prior to the inspection asking for their views on the care provided and boarding pupils completed a questionnaire on boarding life. Group interviews were held with seven groups of boarding pupils who were selected at random.

The inspection concluded with a feedback meeting with the Headmaster and Deputy Head.

What the school does well:

The school has its own medical centre, which is staffed on a 24-hour basis and able to quickly respond to young people's medical needs.

The accommodation provided particularly in the refurbished boarding houses is of a good standard but all boarders have areas in the boarding houses where they can study and kitchens where they are able to prepare drinks and snacks. The school has extensive grounds and good recreational facilities.

Young people have access to a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities after school and at the weekends. Parents commented on the efforts made by staff to expand the activities offered at the school.

Boarding staff are experienced, and knowledgeable about the needs of young people living away from home. The boarding staff meet regularly with senior staff to discuss pastoral issues. The boarding staff are supported by prefects who take their role seriously and are respected by pupils.

The pupils who were interviewed were clear about the school rules and the discipline systems in place. Boarders reported that bullying was not a large issue within the school and they were able to identify a range of adults across the school that they could talk to if they needed to share a concern.

Overall pupils were positive about their boarding experience.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There have been a number of senior management changes in the year preceding the inspection and the school is in the process of reviewing its policies and practices. A new senior master has been appointed to oversee the boarding practice at the school and has begun to develop practice and house management.

The inspectors found that the systems in place for listening to and obtaining the views of boarders are better integrated into the running of the school. Boarders spoke positively about the school council and their relationships with staff.

Pupils identified tutors, housemasters and mistresses as being very supportive and fair. Parents were positive about the school and a number reported that their children requested to stay at the school on weekends.

The refurbishment of the boarding houses is well underway. Two of the four houses have been completed to a high standard, and the facilities on offer have been much improved. A new sixth form centre has been opened providing 6th form pupils with an additional area to relax and study.

The school continues to review security on the school site and additional locks have been fitted on boarding houses. One further recommendation has been made in this respect but it was positive to note that the school has submitted plans to relocate the public footpaths crossing the school site, away from the boarding houses.

What they could do better:

Changes have already been made to the overall management of boarding but it is recommended that regular meetings are held of house staff and a training and development programme is implemented for the matrons.

The food committee would benefit from a higher profile throughout the school and it is recommended that portion sizes and the evening meal are reviewed as part of this process. The Headmaster agreed to clarify the arrangements for accessing fresh fruit and drinking water at night.

Overall the systems for staff recruitment were found to be more robust and there was evidence to demonstrate that staff and those living on the premises are subject of a criminal record bureau check. However it has been recommended that the procedures for recruiting peripatetic staff should be centralised and tied in with the existing processes.

A number of pupils raised the subject of privacy within the boarding houses and access to emails as issues of concern. It was agreed that this was an area that the school would take forward.

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. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders' health is promoted. (NMS 6)
- Safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records. (NMS 7)
- Boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary.(NMS 15)
- Boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill.(NMS 16)
- Boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal Problems.(NMS 17)
- Boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- Boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals.(NMS 25)
- Boarders are suitably accommodated when ill. (NMS 48)
- Boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered.(NMS 49)

The Commission considers Standards 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.

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

6,15,24,25,49

Quality in this outcome area is good.

Pupil health is monitored and promoted by staff.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

Health Education polices are in place but were in the process of being updated at the time of the inspection. This is currently provided in the Chaplaincy period, although this is being reviewed. Literature was on display at key locations to promote a healthy lifestyle. The school has clear disciplinary polices on smoking alcohol and substance misuse. Pupils can access support agencies through the medical centre.

The school has its own medical centre, which is staffed on a 24 hour basis by qualified nurses and provides medical treatment and first aid. Boarders who are ill are accommodated in the medical centre and the feedback from pupils

was that the arrangements worked well. A local GP holds a surgery at the school twice weekly and a female GP visits once months but additional appointments can be made if required. Medical staff report to the bursar and there was some discussion at the feedback meeting about ways that the medical staff could become better integrated into the boarding life of the school.

There are first aiders throughout the school and each department has first aid equipment. Medical kits are supplied for off site visits.

The school updates boarder's health records with information from parents and has systems in place to ensure that staff that need to be aware of boarders health needs are kept informed.

Medication was being stored appropriately in the medical centre and appropriate records were being maintained. Matrons in the boarding houses administer some medication but have not had any formal training in medication administration. The inspector was informed that medication audits were due to be undertaken by the qualified nursing staff on a termly basis, which is a positive step forward.

Meals are all served in the central dining room and choice is available at each meal. Vegetarians are catered for and there is a salad bar. Menus are published in advance and these evidenced that there was variety of healthy options on offer. The meals served on the days of the inspection were tasty and nutritious. The majority of young people who responded to the questionnaire reported that the school sometimes provided a balanced diet. The newly introduced "brunch" served at weekends was identified as very positive. A number of pupils identified portion size as an issue and requested that the evening meal be reviewed. Fresh fruit is available in some of the boarding houses and in the dining hall but it was agreed that access to this would be clarified. There is a food committee which meets regularly and to which the catering manager is invited.

All the pupils in the senior houses have access to a kitchen in their boarding house and can prepare drinks and snacks. Some boarders had raised issues regarding access to drinking water at night and the headmaster agreed to make staff aware that pupils should be able to have drinks by their bed if they wished.

There is a central laundry but some of the houses have in house facilities which young people can use which young people interviewed valued. The arrangements for the collection of lost laundry would benefit from further clarification.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are protected from bullying.(NMS 2)
- Boarders are protected from abuse.(NMS 3)
- Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate.(NMS 4)
- Boarders' complaints are appropriately responded to.(NMS 5)
- The operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- Boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school.(NMS 22)
- Boarders are protected from the risk of fire. (NMS 26)
- The welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school.(NMS 28)
- Boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities.(NMS 29)
- Boarders' personal privacy is respected.(NMS 37)
- There is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders.(NMS 38)
- Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises.(NMS 39)
- Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. (NMS 41)
- Boarders are protected from safety hazards.(NMS 47)

The Commission considers Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.

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

2,3,4,5,13,26,29,37,38,39,41

Quality in this outcome area is good.

Pupils are offered protection by the school systems and procedures.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

Boarders who completed the questionnaire reported that there was an extremely low level of bullying within the school. Only a very small number of pupils reported that they had been bullied however one young person identified an issue which has been passed back to the school.

The school bullying policy is very clear that all allegations should be carefully investigated and records maintained on the outcome.

The school has a clear procedure in place for responding to child protection concerns. Training is provided on a rolling programme to staff although one of the staff interviewed had not attended this and the school might benefit from coordinating the child protection training information to better highlight gaps. Prefects receive guidance on reporting matters of concern and the feedback from boarders was that staff made efforts to keep them safe.

Boarders who completed the questionnaire and those who were interviewed expressed some confidence in the school systems and in the staff at the school. A significant number were able to identify an adult within the school that they could go to for help.

The school has a clear complaints procedure and information about this is readily available. Complaints suggestions boxes are also available.

There was evidence that most staff had regard for the overall privacy of pupils however, a small number of issues were raised with the inspectors by pupils. The areas identified included the very close supervision of washing in one boarding houses, staff knocking but walking straight into bedrooms and the schools oversight of the pupil email systems.

Pupils throughout the school expressed concerns that the school email systems were not private. This was discussed with the Head at the feedback meeting and he informed inspectors that emails were private and were not read by staff. The school filtering system identifies emails when pupils use inappropriate language and returns such emails to the pupil in question marked as 'undeliverable'. It was agreed that further discussion would take place with boarders to clarify the position.

The policies on behaviour discipline and punishments were clear and boarders were aware of them. Staff spoke of boarders in a positive light. Boarders reported that sanctions were fair and spoke positively about the prefect system.

The school no longer appoints educational guardians and parents are responsible for these appointments. Assessments of risks on school trips and organised activities are undertaken. The school tours committee scrutinises the documentation prior to a trip taking place.

Fire risk assessments were in place and regular fire drills are undertaken each term. The Bursar confirmed that the actions required by the fire officer's last inspection have been actioned.

The school has risk assessments in place to identify hazards in the premises and grounds and has taken steps to ensure that areas are free from safety hazards. Key pads have been fitted on the boarding house doors to improve overall security however one of the entrances to the prep school boarding houses was without a keypad and it has been recommended that this is fitted. Concerns have been identified in the past about the location of a public footpath, which runs close to the boarding houses, and it was positive to note that the school were making efforts to redirect this path.

Staff interviewed reported that there are clear systems in place to undertake repairs and this correlates with the risk assessment process.

A sample of staff recruitment records were examined as part of the inspection. The inspectors found that the checks on teaching staff comply with the standards and requirements and it was positive to see that a clear checklist was in place.

A small number of gaps were found in relation to one member of peripatetic staff and ancillary staff. These gaps related to one reference being in place instead of the required two and no employment history in place. It was acknowledged that the Bursar had had efforts in the case of the ancillary staff to obtain additional information and had recorded this on file. Criminal Record Bureau checks are undertaken on all adults who move into the school premises and there are clear arrangements in place for visitors to the school premises.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities.(NMS 11)
- Boarders receive personal support from staff.(NMS 14)
- Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination.(NMS 18)
- Boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands.(NMS 27)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision to study.(NMS 43)
- Boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas.(NMS 46)

The Commission considers Standards 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.

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

11,14,18

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

Pupils are supported by staff and assisted to access a wide range of activities
This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

Boarders were very clear about which staff they could go for personal support and boarders identified a range of staff across the school. Information is displayed about contacts who are not boarding or teaching staff whom boarders can approach. The school are currently recruiting a school counsellor who will operate from the school medical centre and to whom pupils will have better access.

The school has pupils from a number of different cultures and the inspector was informed that staff are given training on cultural differences. Pupils informed the inspectors that staff make efforts to help new pupils integrate into the life of the school and discrimination is challenged.

Boarders confirmed that they had good access to a wide range of stimulating activities both after school and at the weekends.

The boarding houses have a number of recreational areas for pupils to use to relax outside the school day, which include TV and DVDs. The school is set in extensive grounds and has its own sports complex. Trips out are arranged at weekends to London or local towns. Staff reported that this was an area that the school had recently developed and additional staff had been made available to assist. All the boarding houses have areas where pupils can study.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school.(NMS 12)
- Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families.(NMS 19)
- New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in.(NMS 21)
- Boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school.(NMS 30)
- There are sound relationships between staff and boarders.(NMS 36)

The Commission considers Standards 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.

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

12,19. Quality in this outcome area is good.

Boarders are enabled to make contributions to boarding life. They are able to maintain family contact but would value greater access and privacy.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

The school has a number of mechanisms in place to consult with pupils including the school council, house committees and food committees.

This area has been developed since the last inspection of the school and boarders were better informed about the role of these groups. Inspectors were informed that questionnaires have been undertaken with some of the young people and parents as part of a quality audit. Boarders interviewed said that staff were generally approachable and good at responding to new ideas. Food was raised as an issue by a number of pupils and some queried whether the food committee would benefit from meeting more regularly

There are a number of public telephones and pupils are able to have a mobiles in the boarding houses although give them to staff at night. Some pupils said that the mobile reception is poor on some of the networks. Pupils have access to email and the Internet but as outlined earlier in the report pupils have concerns about staff access to their emails.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders' possessions and money are protected.(NMS 20)
- Boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation.(NMS 40)
- Boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation.(NMS 42)
- Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities.(NMS 44)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day.(NMS 45)
- Boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school.(NMS 50)
- The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted.(NMS 51)

The Commission considers Standard 51 the key standard to be inspected.

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

51

Quality in this outcome area is good and boarders at Culford are able to sleep in comfortable accommodation.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

The refurbishment of the boarding houses has continued since the last inspection. Two of the four boarding houses have been completed. The accommodation in the newly refurbished boarding houses is of a high standard and the rooms were comfortable and nicely furnished. There was lots of storage space. The bathing and showering facilities are separate, providing young people with considerable privacy.

The accommodation in the older boarding houses is generally satisfactory but is a bit tired and worn. Boarders residing in the older accommodation highlighted the washing and bathing facilities as their priority area for improvement.

The inspectors noted that there was a high standard of cleanliness and maintenance throughout the school.

Lodgings are not provided for boarders of site.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- A suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- There is clear leadership of boarding in the school.(NMS 8)
- Crises affecting boarders' welfare are effectively managed.(NMS 9)
- The school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare.(NMS 10)
- Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders' welfare.(NMS 23)
- Boarders are adequately supervised by staff.(NMS 31)
- Staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site.(NMS 32)
- Boarders are adequately supervised at night.(NMS 33)
- Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training.(NMS 34)
- Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice.(NMS 35)
- The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

The Commission considers Standards 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.

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

1,23,31,34

Quality in this outcome area is good.

Boarders are looked after by caring staff who have clear systems in place to support them.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

EVIDENCE:

The school has a governing body, which meets termly. The Headmaster is assisted in the management of the school by the senior management team,

which is made of senior staff and the Heads from the Prep and pre prep schools.

The Deputy Head oversees the pastoral care and is assisted in the day to day management by the senior housemaster. The senior housemaster is a new role and at an early stage of development but is none the less very positive.

The senior housemaster meets with the senior boarding staff on a regular basis and undertakes appraisals. The senior housemaster will be undertaking yearly audits of in house records as part of the appraisal. The Head of the Prep school manages the prep school housemistress.

The Housemaster/mistresses supervise colleagues who work in their houses. Some but not all the housemistress/ masters operate weekly meetings and it is recommended that this is introduced across the boarding houses to ensure good communication and consistency.

Boarders reported that they were clear about the duty arrangements and that there was sufficient staff on duty, although a number reported difficulty in getting hold of matrons at times. Gaps were identified in some houses at weekends when matrons were on call to accompany young people to the hospital in the event of an injury and house staff were supervising matches. In some of the houses these issues were resolved in the weekly meetings. Regular roll calls are undertaken to monitor young people and there are clear arrangements in place for signing in and out of the boarding houses.

There is a staff handbook, summarising the school policies, and procedures, which is provided to new staff. Clear written guidelines are in place for non-residential staff undertaking boarding houses duties to ensure good practice. Each House produces a handbook, which provides information to parents on boarding life within the house. Boarders interviewed confirmed that they had received information about boarding prior to their admission to the school.

The inspectors were informed that the school has a statement of boarding principles which was reviewed and updated prior to the inspection.

The inspectors were informed that there are clear induction arrangements in place for newly appointed staff. There have been no new matrons appointed since the last inspection, and inspectors were informed that there were no ongoing training programmes for matrons, although they completed first aid training.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 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>
6	3
7	x
15	4
16	X
17	X
24	3
25	3
48	X
49	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	4
3	3
4	3
5	3
13	3
22	X
26	3
28	X
29	3
37	2
38	2
39	3
41	3
47	X

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
11	4
14	4
18	3
27	X
43	X
46	x

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3
19	3
21	X
30	X
36	x

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
20	x
40	X
42	X
44	X
45	X
50	X
51	3

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SCORING OF OUTCOMES Continued

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
8	X
9	X
10	X
23	3
31	3
32	X
33	X
34	3
35	X
52	X

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1.	BS24	It is recommended that pupils access to fresh fruit and drinking water at night is clarified in each of the boarding houses.	
2.	BS24	It is recommended that the food committee review the quantity of food served to the older pupils and the content of the evening meal.	
3.	BS41	It is recommended that all entrances to the boarding houses be fitted with keypad locks and the school continue its efforts to relocate the public footpath which runs close to the boarding houses.	
4.	BS37	It is recommended that there is discussion at different levels throughout the school involving both staff and pupils on subject of privacy and keeping safe.	
5.	BS38	The recruitment process for peripatetic staff should be reviewed to ensure that it is comprehensive and complies with the standards.	
6.	BS31	It is recommended that regular house meetings are established in each boarding house to ensure good communication and consistency.	

7.	BS34	It is recommended that a training programme for matrons is developed.	

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