



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

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

## **Priory School**

Mount Road

Bury St Edmunds

Suffolk

IP32 7BH

12th October 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**

Priory School

**Address**

Mount Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP32 7BH

**Tel No:**

01284 761935

**Fax No:**

01284 725878

**Email Address:**

prioryadmin@talk21.com

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

Chair of Governors

**Name of Head**

Mrs L Preece

**CSCI Classification**

Residential Special School

**Type of school**

Local Authority school for pupils with Special Needs.

**Date of last boarding welfare inspection:**

03/02/04

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		12th October 2004	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		02:00 pm	
<b>Name of CSCI Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	David Welch	077308
<b>Name of CSCI Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Jan Davies	077448
<b>Name of CSCI Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>	NA	
<b>Name of CSCI Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>	NA	
<b>Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):</b>		NA	
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.		NA	
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>			
<b>Name of Establishment Representatives at the time of inspection</b>		Mrs Preece (Head Teacher), Mr R Mackenzie (Deputy Head) Mrs G Lewis (Head of Care)	

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**Inspection Methods Used**

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## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) 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 CSCI in respect of Priory School. 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

Priory School is owned and managed by Suffolk County Council and administered from the Western Area Education Department. It provides education for children between the ages of 9 years (Yr.4) and 16 years (Yr.11), who are subject to a Statement of Special Educational Need. All of the children will have been assessed as having a learning disability at some level and a number will have associated emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The school is located on the northern edge of the town of Bury St Edmunds. More recently-built housing is now beginning to surround it. The local authority had other facilities close by.

The site is sloping and this has led to the premises and playing areas having a number of different levels. There were a great number of steps outside the school buildings and inside. Thus, any child, or visitor, with mobility problems would find progress around the school quite difficult. The boarding provision, in particular, was not suitable for children with physical disabilities that might impair mobility. In all other respects the school had a very inclusive culture.

The boarding provision could accommodate up to 25 children and young people in two boarding houses, Abbey and Priory. Because of the large number of boys for whom residential provision was thought to be appropriate, the boarding arrangements were, in Abbey, all male and, in Priory, boys upstairs and girls downstairs.

The design of communal areas downstairs in boarding houses was open plan with a separate kitchenette area curtained off. There was space to eat around a dining table and an adjoining television/sitting area. There was an open wooden staircase. The atmosphere could be a little claustrophobic as natural light and view was restricted by the design of the building.

There were plans to refurbish the two boarding houses when finance becomes available. Sleeping accommodation was in single bedrooms and dormitory areas in groups of 4's and 5's. This is the object of a recommendation later. The school had undertaken a refurbishment scheme in the large downstairs dorm in Abbey. The different levels upstairs, under the eaves, provided an interesting, and possibly quite exciting setting, for children to sleep.

All children, day and boarders, ate in a central Dining Hall with adjacent kitchen, staffed by employees of the County's Catering Team.

The ethos was very much that Priory School was an educational establishment that had some residential provision for children who it was thought would benefit emotionally and socially from the experience. As such, boarders attended school from the residential units as day children would from their own homes and had limited access to the boarding houses during the classroom day.

The approach was one of developing children to their full potential, instilling appropriate routines and habits, teaching the life skills sufficient to enable them to be as independent as possible and encouraging them to flourish.

**PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS**

**WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE**



At this inspection the Commission for Social Care Inspection included in the pupil survey two questions about what was the best thing about being a boarder at the school and was there anything about being a boarder at Priory that was not so good. The children thought long and hard about these issues and, despite some having limited literacy skills, they made their feelings very clear to inspectors. They liked the activities such as cycling, being supported by staff, having friends around, 'going out to places', the teaching, the people, the living skills that will be good for the future, the food and 'table tennis'.

The school had a very pleasant 'feel' about it. Visitors were welcomed, yet matters of access were addressed with a Visitor pass system. An audit of security measures had been undertaken and some changes made to further increase the security of the entrance. The children were eager to co-operate with the inspection process. They were very friendly and open in their dealings with inspectors. Staff worked hard in delivering good childcare to the children who boarded either for one night a week or for four nights. Their commitment was clear.

There was a high degree of parental satisfaction with Priory School, its staff and with the quality of service. On visits to the school parents found they were met politely and pleasantly. This, too, was the inspectors' impression. Parents felt the school developed in their children an independence that they welcomed.

The staff were seen as 'caring and considerate'. The addition of a male carer within the last 12 months has gone some way to redress the gender imbalance and was a welcome appointment. A new childcare officer has clearly made an impact showing real knowledge, expertise and commitment to the post.

There was a happy, caring, relaxed, yet orderly atmosphere. The staff showed that they knew about the children and had thought about his or her needs.

The school rules, in many respects drawn up with the help of the children, were fair and reasonable.

There was an emphasis on teaching life skills.

The children identified a wide range of staff at the school, but also including their parents and friends, who they could talk to if they were unhappy. There were arrangements for independent listening that were very suitable.

Staff were aware of child protection procedures and this included those working in an ancillary capacity. Care staff confirmed that they have had appropriate training in physical control and restraint procedures. The Head and her Deputy were shortly to train as School Safe trainers.

The care staff team showed its stable nature by retaining the same core members, which provided much needed consistency for the children who boarded. The team included a male carer. Duty rosters, although at times punishing for staff, provided continuity of care for children, with the same staff on duty when they went to bed and when they got up.

Care plans had been introduced for each boarder. This was a good development although there was some re-thinking to do in organising the information.

A 'mentoring scheme' for each child, an adapted keyworker scheme, had been introduced.

The training for some staff in British Sign Language (BSL) was to be welcomed.

The boarding arrangements, whereby children returned home every weekend and for longer periods during the holidays, allowed shared care with family members. This was a protection for children who had regular contact with their families.

Some of the information provided for parents and children was available in different formats. Some parents will have limited literacy skills and the provision of information in different ways will be of help to them.

Meals looked appetising, balanced and nutritious, with a choice of dishes. Inspectors particularly liked the balance between healthy dishes and the occasional item such as homemade cakes. Efforts had been made to make the breakfast and supper experience a more homely and domestic one.

The pupils' personal files had up to date photographs attached. This is good practice, especially as old photos were kept so that changes in physical development could be seen.

All staff, day and boarding, worked collaboratively towards providing an integrated service. Individual needs were recognised and responded to.

Good risk assessments had been made of the premises and surrounding grounds.

It was possible to audit the progress of a child from the first suggestion that boarding might be of benefit to actual admission.

**WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE**

In answer to a pupil survey question about what was not so good about being a boarder at Priory the children made few comments. These included not sleeping at home, 'sometimes others are a bit nasty', 'I miss my Mum' and the food. One young person said they did not like 'biking'. Interestingly, seven children said that they liked everything or that there was nothing that wasn't good about being a boarder.

The location of the school is not ideal. For children with mobility difficulties to be admitted would require a major re-design.

Management should ensure that the Commission for Social Care Inspection is notified appropriately and in a timely manner.

The school was designed and constructed over 30 years ago and the residential provision did need some updating. The Head confirmed that plans were in train to refurbish the boarding houses, but the finance had not been available to carry out this much needed work in other than one or two places.

Efforts were made to inform parents about certain matters. Despite evidence to show that contact information was available in the foyer and some written material in different formats, feedback was had that in some cases parents had not been given information or a leaflet that told them how to make a complaint. This was an on-going issue and one that the school maybe has to continually reinforce with parents and social workers.

Some recruitment procedures should be strengthened in line with requirements in other residential fields such as children's homes.

Despite the appointment of a 'floating' childcare officer, staffing levels remain 'thin' at times.

There should be risk assessments for all children, but especially for those that staff think may harm themselves or others.

## CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

Twenty-four of the National Minimum Standards were met or exceeded. Nine actions were recommended and six areas of advice identified.

Recommendations related to: -

1. Making additions to the written guidelines to address the vulnerability of boarders and staff especially at night,
2. The complaints procedure
3. Child protection procedures
4. Notifications
5. Additions to the restraint form
6. The five-bedded dormitory
7. Provision of both baths and showers
8. The robustness of recruitment checks
9. Risk assessments for children

Advisory recommendations related to: -

1. Updating first-aid qualifications
2. Adaptation of Care Plans
3. Arrangements for ensuring that parental and staff responsibilities are clear when children are resident
4. The provision of lockable space for every child
5. A recruitment matrix
6. The drawing up of a supervision contract.

The quality of the care provision was high within what was a carefully defined brief. There was a generally positive reaction from stakeholders and others.

The addition of a male carer continued to redress the gender imbalance for the good and the addition of a new child care officer had created some flexibility in supporting front-line staff who might otherwise have been isolated with quite large groups of children with very special needs. Inspectors felt that every effort should be made by the local authority to make permanent any temporary contracts that could see staff numbers cut. The staff team work 'split shifts' that, while tiring for the people concerned, provide continuity of care for boarders. The commitment of the pastoral staff for the children they look after was clear.

The children were generally very well behaved, very polite and good humoured. They provided useful information for inspectors about how the school operated and how, as boarders, they were looked after. They were eager to cooperate with the inspection process. Inspectors saw a good range of out of school activities.

The school was being knowledgeably managed by experienced and committed senior staff.

The welfare of the children was being safeguarded and promoted to a high degree in this much needed resource for vulnerable children with special needs.

**NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE**

**Is Notification of any failure to safeguard and promote welfare to be made by the Commission for Social Care Inspection 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:**

NA

**IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION**

Recommended Actions from the last Inspection visit fully implemented?

NO

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION**

**Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended actions 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	RS3	Those responsible for management should protect the vulnerability of boarders and staff by providing written guidance and ensuring appropriate procedures that cover contact with boarders at night.	Immediate
2	RS4	Those responsible for management should continue to take active steps, and maybe to find alternative ways, to remind parents and others of the Complaints Procedure. This might involve addressing the matter specifically at parent evenings.	Immediate and on-going

3	RS5	Those responsible for management should include in the school's written guidance arrangements for progressing an allegation that bi-passes senior management (in the event they could be implicated).	Immediate
4	RS7	Those responsible for management should ensure that the Commission for Social Care Inspection is notified appropriately of incidents in line with local procedures.	Immediate and on-going
5	RS10	Those responsible for management should make amendments to the documentation to enable comments from a child to be reported following an incident of restraint. Performance indicator 10.14 refers.	Immediate and on-going
6	RS24	Those responsible for management should ensure that dormitory areas are only used for a maximum of four children.	Immediate
7	RS25	Those responsible for management should consider ways in which both baths and showers can be provided for children in the boarding houses.	Immediate
8	RS26	Those responsible for management should ensure that risk assessments are carried out in the case of every child, but particularly where it is felt that individual children pose a danger to themselves or others.	Immediate and on-going
9	RS27	Those responsible for management should ensure that recruitment procedures are as robust as possible. This to include obtaining a CRB disclosure for the governor holding the child protection brief.	On-going

### 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
10	RS14	Consideration could be given to providing opportunities for pastoral staff, particularly senior staff, to update their first aid qualifications.
11	RS17	Care Plans could be adapted to provide more information about care needs and what, exactly, staff will do to meet the needs of individual children.
12	RS20	Parents could be dissuaded from personally involving themselves at times when their children are boarding in ways that cut across accepted pastoral practice and when procedures already exist to deal with perceived problems.

13	RS24	Arrangements should be made so that each young people sharing a bed space (because they maybe stay overnight at different times) has there own lockable space.
14		The Bursar could devise a suitable matrix to keep abreast of the dates on which checks are made on applicants and newly appointed staff.
15		A supervision contract between supervisor and supervisee could, with benefit, be introduced.

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.

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

Date of Inspection	12/10/04
Time of Inspection	14.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	16.25
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	5

**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 CSCI 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's Statement of Purpose (Intent) was produced following a whole school Professional Development day focusing on the aims and objectives.

The Head had been asked to 'fine tune' the school's Statement of Intent to include those matters described under the banner standard, but particularly in performance indicator 1.3. These included the range of pupils needs for which the school catered, its admission criteria, the approved number of day and residential pupils, age range and gender accommodated, any special religious or cultural aspects of the school and any special features of the school. They were covered appropriately in the School Brochure, having been updated in September 2004.

Pictorial information indicated that the brochure was available in other formats. There was an invitation at the entrance to the school in symbol/sign format and in the foyer there was a manual with useful contact information for parents in a friendly format. This is good practice.

The brochure covered both teaching and boarding aspects. The school catered to a good degree for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

No therapeutic or 'alternative' models of care were used.

The statement of the school's boarding principles and practice was available to parents, boarders and staff.

The statement was included in the prospectus/brochure, boarding handbook and related information about the school. The children's guide was child-friendly and available in pictorial form and signs and symbols.

The standard was met.

## **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**

No young person was assumed to be unable to communicate his or her views, whatever their level of ability or dependency. Staff who knew them well, advocated for young people, involved their families and significant others in the process of making decisions. Two boarders were able to demonstrate the close and appropriate relationship they had with a teacher designated to help them with their special needs and how this facilitated their communication.

Personal files for young people recorded when young people were offered choices and how decisions were made with them and included personalised contributions including children's signatures, where practical and appropriate.

Parents who responded to the questionnaire were generally very satisfied with the care provided at Priory School. The parents were particularly pleased that the school attempted to develop the children's independence.

Seventeen boarders were surveyed for their opinion of the school, who they talk to if unhappy, whether staff listen to them, the rewards and consequences, the complaints system, bullying and some other matters. Again, the children were very positive about the residential experience.

Mrs Preece said that the culture was very much a verbal one with a great deal of contact with parents by telephone and in person. Each child had an annual review of their Statement of Educational Need.

The Residential Council met regularly and was chaired by a boarder. This is good practice.

Two girls and nine boys whose views were canvassed said that staff listen to what they say. Five girls and two boys said that staff 'sometimes' listen to what they say. This is a matter that boarding house staff may wish to consider in their meetings. Every child confirmed that staff noticed, to some extent, when they did something good.

Nine boys and four of the girls said that staff in the boarding house noticed if they did anything naughty. One boy and two girls said that staff did not notice and two other children said that they 'sometimes' noticed.

Residential house meetings were held half termly. The independent living skills programme provided opportunities for young people to make their opinions known.

There was a very effective Independent Listener.

The standard was met.

**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?**

2

From discussion with staff and from observation during the inspection, young people's privacy was being respected. Staff were clear about when and under what circumstances information was shared about children. There was guidance for staff on the need to respect young people's right to confidentiality and how confidential records should be stored. This referred to the maintenance of clear and professional boundaries in their work.

Staff members were observed to go about their duties in a professional and sensitive manner.

There is procedural guidance on preserving privacy and dignity.

Staff members involved with intimate care have had appropriate guidelines and documented training on provision of such assistance. This was recorded on individual staff files. There is always a female carer available. However, as the care staff team was composed of male and female staff, information available to them should include reference to boundaries to be observed during provision of personal care to young people of the opposite sex and take account of any care needed at night.

Pupils confirmed that they could use the telephone and some had mobiles.

Staff endeavoured to give children sufficient privacy at bath times, but did have to assist some children.

The standard was only partially met.

**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?****2**

The school's complaints procedure was made available to parents at the beginning of the Autumn term. This was viewed and was comprehensive.

However, some parents were still saying in surveys that they were not aware of how to complain using the procedure. This was an on-going problem and whatever the school did to remind parents of the Complaints Procedure it seemed that a small minority always said that they had not been given this information. This matter was discussed with the Head of Care who agreed to make it a focus of one of her meetings with parents at the Open evenings. This is an area where the school has to make continual and repeated efforts to give parents the information.

The Head of Care made the complaints mechanism known and available to boarders from information contained in the children's guide to boarding. From comments received by inspectors during the inspection, pupils would be appropriately assisted to complain using the school's complaints' procedure. Boarders and care staff confirmed this to be the case and added that issues were usually resolved by being 'talked through' with the appropriate people in school. Everybody who was asked were clear that they could raise any issues that might concern them and that these would be appropriately dealt with.

The inspectors were confident that children had been told how to complain. Several children said that they had complained successfully.

The procedure does contain contact information for the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

The inspectors were particularly impressed with the arrangements for children to have access to an Independent listener.

It was recommended that the school's complaints procedure be given a higher profile with parents in line with the discussion inspectors had with the Head of Care (and the school's own plan's to promote this).

The standard was only partially met.

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

 X

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

 X

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

 X

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

 X

## **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?**

2

There was a written child protection policy that was consistent with the requirements of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

The school's policy and practice required staff to report to a designated senior member of staff any concern or allegation of abuse or other serious harm. All staff, including newly appointed and ancillary staff, had been given a briefing, either during an induction process or through direct training on the action they should take in response to such suspicions or allegations. There were staff designated with specific 'welfare' responsibilities for boarders to talk to should they wish to do so and also a named Independent Person known to and accessible to pupils.

However the school's procedure for child protection must also include arrangements for progressing an allegation that bi-passes senior management (in the event they could be implicated) and provide information for boarders and others on how to do this.

All care staff had received child protection training.

The governor with particular responsibility for residential care had also been child-protection trained since the last inspection.

Ancillary staff , too, were aware of child protection issues.

The inspection included writing to the county's Head of Child Protection who confirmed that in recent times there had been two investigations after allegations of inappropriate conduct. In one case, of long standing and which did not involve any child at the school, charges were brought against the person concerned and the legal process took its course.

In another case, two strategy meetings were held after a child made an accusation against a member of staff. Investigations concluded that the person concerned was entirely vindicated.

The matter of the school not notifying the CSCI has been dealt with in Standard 7 below.

This standard was not wholly met.

**Number of recorded child protection enquiries initiated by the social services department during the past 12 months:**

1



**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

There was a suitable policy on countering bullying that was clearly known to parents and which was implemented successfully in practice.

The policy was provided to parents of boarders, and was known to both staff and boarders where this was accessed.

The inspector made efforts to explain to the children during the survey what bullying was (others being verbally or physically hurtful to them) and what probably did not constitute bullying, such as a falling out with a friend or an argument. Despite this, four of the girls and five of the boys said that they had been bullied at the school. There was certainly no evidence to suggest that there was a bullying culture in the school, rather the reverse. And in discussion groups, pupils did not identify bullying as a problem at the school; they were clear that should bullying occur it would be dealt with and suitable support and guidance provided. Inspectors felt that this was an inclusive and very supportive atmosphere where bullying was not tolerated and, if it did appear, it was immediately confronted appropriately.

The school authorities were well aware of the areas where bullying might take place and steps were taken by staff to ensure that children were rarely in small groups in these places. This applied to access to bedrooms during the day and at leisure times.

There was evidence that children had been involved in drawing up rules about how they should behave towards others. These were very much related to respect for self and others. Assemblies were also used to reinforce the expectation that everybody at the school would behave towards others in a proper way.

The standard was met.

**Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied**

47 %

**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?**

2

Mrs Preece had put in place measures to ensure that the Commission for Social Care Inspection was notified about events that affected the life of the school, the children or the people working there. However, in one child protection matter, CSCI had not been notified by the school (in line with the National Minimum Standards Appendix 1 paragraph 4) that strategy meetings were to take place, or of the outcome of the enquiry, and in this respect the school was remiss. This was clearly an issue where the Commission for Social Care Inspection should have been notified. Inspectors discussed notifications with the Deputy Head Teacher and again during the exit meeting with the senior staff, including the Head Teacher.

Parents were kept informed of any matter that affected their child at Priory.

The standard was not met.

**NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO CSCI DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:**

- **conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children**
- **serious harm to a child**
- **serious illness or accident of a child**
- **serious incident requiring police to be called**

X

X

X

X

**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

There was written guidance in the school brochure on young people going missing. Staff members were aware of the policy and the practical requirements it placed upon them. However, in view of the dependency level and situation of young people currently placed, children going absent from the boarding house would be a rare occurrence. No such situations had occurred/been reported since the last inspection.

Mrs Preece said that she was considering bringing in an additional register procedure to combat school refusal or unauthorised absence. But with the comparatively small number of boarders, and the supervision arrangements in place, it was likely that staff would know immediately if a pupil's whereabouts were in doubt.

Staff were aware of one child who had a propensity to run away from school.

The standard was met.

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

X

## **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**

The core boarding staff group had undergone only one small change since the last inspection and children had benefited from the stability this produced. The consistency of this arrangement and the leadership of experienced staff had in general created clear professional boundaries which were effective for the individual child and the group.

Inspectors spoke in private with the two newest members of boarding staff about the care practice they followed and were confident that in almost every respect appropriate procedures were in place. The two people concerned were seen during the two-day inspection to relate extremely well with the children in their care.

Relationships between staff and children were clearly based on mutual respect and at the time of the inspection, as at previous times, young people were observed to be comfortable with staff and to respond positively to them.

On the early morning visit, waking routines were seen to be sensitive.

The house rules had been developed with the involvement of the children and were displayed. When the inspectors asked the children about what they could and could not do they showed that they understood these areas well.

Only four boarders who said that they did not like at least 'some of the staff'.

Inspectors observed no favouritism or antipathy towards individual children.

This was a small staff team and they were all on shift for the four nights that children were resident. Continuity of care was achieved.

Each child's targets were displayed on his or her notice board, appeared suitably specific in content, they did not include intimate details and did not appear to compromise their privacy or dignity.

There was not a keyworker system as such, but more one that involved each child having a named childcare officer and a senior, taking account of individual roles and responsibilities. This appeared to be working well. It did not detract from every child receiving attention and input from all staff members.

The standard was met.

**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?**

**2**

The staff team were observed to respond positively to appropriate behaviour and to deal calmly with young people at all times. There were behaviour guidelines and a code regarding control and restraint. A sanction/unacceptable behaviour record was being kept. Instances of unacceptable behaviour were also recorded on children's individual files with the Head Teacher or Head of Care monitoring these.

It was recommended that the information should contain the follow-up action the school takes to demonstrate how children were 'listened to', with their version of events, and to evidence the good practice the school had in place.

At the time of the inspection the behaviour of boarders was not observed to be placing them at risk. There appeared not to be a need for physical restraint for their own, or others, safety. The Deputy Head said that training had brought about a considerable reduction in incidents of physical restraint. The Deputy Head said that he and his senior colleague are to be trained as trainers in School Safe. They will then be able to provide refresher sessions for staff.

However, the school might in future admit young people who require restraining under some circumstances. Staff should continue to receive the necessary training in relation to unacceptable behaviour of children, including the records to be kept and notifications made, and how to manage this by constructive and known disciplinary measures approved by the Head Teacher.

The staff operated in a regime that encouraged good behaviour and recognised achievement – taking into account each individual child's starting point.

No unreasonable sanctions (known to children as 'consequences') were used and children generally saw staff as being fair in dealing with them.

Children continued to be able to make suggestions at the Residential Council meetings.

The school had a police liaison officer and a beat officer who visited. Information relating to this was displayed in the school entrance. This is good practice.

On occasions children are excluded and this procedure seemed to be used appropriately.

Inspectors were informed that the Residential Governor now makes reports available to his governor colleagues and to the Head Teacher.

The standard was not wholly met.

## 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?	4
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There appeared to be a greater need for places for boys than girls and the make up of the resident group reflected this. Inspectors were able to see how a child progressed from being a day pupil to a boarder. The school did not admit children in emergencies.

Preparations for leaving the residential provision were well developed. Mostly, this coincided with the end of Yr. 10, but was extended in some circumstances, where it was thought that a particular young person would benefit from the additional boarding experience, perhaps as a result of social isolation or other factors. If this happened, it was arranged at review, with all parties, including the children themselves, being involved.

There was a life skills programme that had been operating for a number of years and was a part of the curriculum. This was well developed and had undergone improvement, fine-tuning and modification to reach its current status. It was well reported on by parents and placing social workers.

Residential pupils were being encouraged to keep more account of their pocket money.

The standard was well met.

**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

The residential provision was integral to the work of the school and pastoral staff supported the educational component. There was an effective procedure for sharing information between the day and boarding settings.

Care staff assisted with homework functions such as reading and spelling practice.

There was an accredited life skills programme that used the Flat as a realistic base for practising activities that were necessary for everyday living and which would be needed later on when pupils moved to less supported settings. Inspectors observed during the late evening session young people cooking and undertaking other life skills teaching.

The standard was met.

**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?**

4

The school provided a wide range of activities for boarders, including the opportunity to be involved in things going on outside such as shopping. On the evening that inspectors were present a group of older children was away from the site enjoying a social activity.

Inspectors observed the children in activities during the evening. The boarders had use of the gym for physical activities during the early evening. There was a well equipped computer room to which boarders had access. It was clear that they thoroughly enjoyed the activities and pastimes arranged for them by staff both inside and outside the school. There was also time available to simply 'chill out'.

The school was not open at weekends.

There was increasing involvement with the local community.

The selection of any videos watched by children was age appropriate.

Boarders could bring favourite toys to school and inspectors saw evidence of this in the many soft toys in bedrooms. Games were available.

The standard was exceeded.

**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

There was no sickbay or Sanatorium on site. Since the last inspection a School Nurse had been appointed. Inspectors had the opportunity to speak in private with her when she visited the school by arrangement. Inspectors were grateful that she gave up her time to meet with them.

With a background in paediatric nursing, this was a very significant appointment. Both professionals reported in the survey of other agencies involved with the Priory School that they saw children and their parents on campus. Referral to the Medical Officer was either through the school direct or from parents, Social Care Services, Occupational Therapists or the School Nurse.

The school nurse will be responsible for health assessments, ADHD assessments, one to one support for older children, hearing tests and the provision of health related education. She informed inspectors that she was working towards health care plans for children and that she had already completed some training for staff in the use of Epi-pens. No firm arrangements had been made for regular surgeries at the school. The nurse was at the time of the inspection engaged in child protection training for herself. She was familiar with confidentiality protocols.

Care staff assisted one or two children with intimate care such as bathing and showering. Some children were given help with doing their hair.

Staff were first aid trained. Following the last inspection in February 2004 it was recommended that the Senior Child Care Officer update her first aid training, but this had not been done.

Inspectors observed the administration of daily medication and the procedures were satisfactory, with written records kept. In one case medication that required storage at low temperatures was being kept insecurely in a fridge. This matter was discussed with the School Nurse and mentioned again at the exit meeting. The Head gave assurances that the storage arrangements would be tightened up with immediate effect.

Staff did not use any intrusive medical procedures.

Most dental and eye checks would be arranged by parents, but if care staff felt that there might be a difficulty with this then they did so themselves in consultation with parents.

If sick, a child would go home to their family and if taken ill at night staff would monitor and make arrangements for a return home next morning.

The children confirmed during the survey that they had been told about healthy eating and exercise.

The standard was met.



**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 menu was wholesome and nutritious with a choice of dishes. Children were given drinks at meals. There was a good reaction from boarders to the matter of the school's food.

The school had a healthy eating award. The inspectors saw evidence of fresh fruit and a mixture of items, including home made cakes.

Individual dietary requirements were catered for.

Mealtimes were well managed, with a number of sittings. The dining experience seemed a pleasant and relaxed one for pupils. Pupils were not expected to hurry up and finish and if they wanted to socialise over the meal that was allowed.

The children took turns to assist with laying up and clearing away the used crockery and cutlery.

Boarders took their midday meal with other day children, as the approach was one that involved the children who stayed overnight being viewed as day children once they left the boarding house until they returned after classes had finished for the day. They ate breakfast and supper as a group in the Dining Hall. At the inspection in February the inspectors were of the opinion that these two meals could be made to feel more cosy and homely affairs and recommended that steps were taken to try to 'soften' the atmosphere for boarders, perhaps by changing the environment, using different cutlery and by having tablecloths etc. Mrs Preece said that there were insufficient funds to allow *all* this to happen although different china had been provided. During this inspection the inspectors noticed that colourful tablecloths had been provided that went some way to make the dining experience even more pleasant.

When at the previous inspection inspectors asked whether all staff had been food handling trained they heard at that this was covered by use of a CD-Rom. Mrs Preece was asked to make enquiries from Environmental Health Department as to the status of this training product to find out whether it provided a sufficient level for instruction and qualification. During this inspection the matter was again discussed. Inspectors were informed that the school had received assurances that the CD-Rom was an appropriate training tool and covered all aspects of this important subject.

The standard was met.

**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

Children confirmed for inspectors that they brought personal clothing with them from home. Those who stayed for only a night or two probably took their laundry home, but there were good facilities on site.

The Head confirmed that the school generally supplied no clothing, but did maintain spare items in case of hardship or accident. Every child was in school uniform with the items differing slightly in style and colour.

The children did have an opportunity to go shopping in town, accompanied by a member of staff. This was a popular activity.

The girls were given advice and guidance about sanitary protection by the female staff.

The children's pocket money was usually kept by staff and distributed as required, but some efforts were being made to encourage boarders to take more responsibility for their own money as a life skill.

The standard was met.

## **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**

At the heart of planning for a child's placement was the Statement of Educational Need (SEN). Individual care plans had also been introduced. Care staff had put a great deal of effort into this important record.

At the previous inspection, inspectors discussed with the Head of Care and her pastoral colleagues the need for care plans to be real 'working tools' that provided staff with the framework of care they must deliver for boarders, but also showed any changes that had taken place. They must be updated and accurate.

The format had been refined and extended since the last inspection and inspectors had an opportunity to track several boarders through their care plans. It was the view of inspectors that the care planning process had come a long way, but some re-thinking was necessary to provide more information about what actual care needs each child had and what staff actually did to meet these needs. When this matter was discussed at the exit meeting pastoral staff said that much of the 'missing' information could be seen on the Behaviour Management form in each child's personal file. This information must not be used to manage behaviour, as it is, very much, care related.

Each personal file had an up to date photograph of the child concerned. Inspectors saw this last year and it remained an example of good practice.

The school had one or two Looked After Children and in these cases there was LAC documentation.

The Head of Care had further developed the 'mentoring scheme' whereby each child had an identified senior and childcare officer to take special interest in him or her. Rostering constraints meant that the keyworker role could not be developed to the point that care staff routinely wrote reports and then spoke to them at reviews, or took responsibility for contacting parents, negotiating with other professionals etc. These responsibilities remained with the Head of Care and the Senior Child Care Officer (SCCO).

The inspectors felt that from what children said they were consulted and informed of plans being made for, and with, them.

The standard was met.

**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

Each child had a personal file that was kept securely. All the required information was recorded. Learning targets were worded quite simply.

There was evidence of half-termly monitoring by the Head of Care. This procedure had been further refined to take account of some minor shortfalls exposed during the last inspection.

The child's file also contained a behaviour management plan.

Each child had a diary that was currently held on computer.

The new boarder checklist was a useful addition. This was signed by the member of staff and the child and was good practice.

The standard was met.

**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

Inspectors 'tracked' a number of boarders through their school files. These showed all the required information including a care plan, SEN, review details, short-term targets and longer-term objectives, stating how these were to be met on a termly basis. School files were not seen on this occasion.

The files showed that children had been consulted about what they wanted to happen.

Each staff member had a personnel file. Inspectors examined the personnel files of the nine staff identified by the Bursar as having been employed since the last inspection.

Menus and duty rosters were kept. Also an Accident/Incident record.

There was a very secure system for keeping track of visitors to the school. A written record was made and all visitors wore a name badge. Visitors were reminded that the badge must show the date on which they had been cleared to be present. A security audit had been undertaken by a governor with skills in this field and certain changes made to the admission arrangements for visitors.

The standard was met.

**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

No child spent more than four nights at school in any one week, as the residential provision was open only from Monday morning to Friday afternoon. The school did not operate at weekends or during the holidays. For these reasons, parental contact was maintained at a frequent level.

There had been some training for staff in British Sign Language.

Children were able to telephone their parents and friends if they wished using the school phone, or in some cases, their own mobiles.

In the rare cases that there may be contact restrictions, staff were aware and acted accordingly.

There was quite extensive contact in various forms between parents and staff. This included telephone, face-to-face meetings and by mail. Senior staff reported that on occasions dealing with some parents had proved difficult and they had developed some coping skills to protect themselves in these situations.

In one case inspectors found details in a diary of two occasions when a parent had visited to 'examine' the child and later to administer medication. This was not appropriate and in such cases the assistance of the School Nurse should be sought. An advisory recommendation has been made in this regard.

The standard was met.

**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?**

4

The school had provided opportunities for all older children to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for their likely future living arrangements. There was a great deal of input by care staff into these aspects.

From Yr. 10 onwards there was emphasis on life skills and practising the techniques that will be needed later on. This might include living in the Flat, planning meals and budgeting. Inspectors observed two simple cookery sessions with boarders during which extremely appetising items were being cooked, and later eaten.

One boarder who during Year 11 had lived permanently in the Flat had since moved on. Inspectors had a chance to meet with the young person concerned when he returned for a visit. The residential experience had clearly been of tremendous value to him.

The standard was well met.

**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?**

4

Mostly, children said they felt 'safe' at school. Three exercised their right to say that they 'sometimes' felt safe.

The School Medical Officer confirmed that specialist medical input was available. The School Nurse, similarly, said that wider health care needs could be met by referral to other agencies outside.

Staff knowledge of BSL would be an undoubted advantage.

The children confirmed that they had a wide range of people to whom they could talk if they were unhappy.

It was the inspectors' view that the needs of individual children were being recognised and responded to at Priory School. Support was available to children undergoing particularly difficult periods in their lives.

Older children had appropriate sex education and guidance.

The school had identified an Independent Listener. While inspectors did not feel that it was necessary to interview the Independent Listener again so soon after seeing her at the last inspection it is worth repeating that they were particularly impressed with her experience and approach to the task in hand. It seemed to represent the best arrangement of its type. The person concerned maintained a suitable professional distance between herself and the staff. She saw herself as 'being there for the children'. In her professional capacity elsewhere she was used to maintaining confidentiality, but aware of what might trigger a child protection referral. It was clear that her professional knowledge informed the skills she brought to the role.

No specific therapeutic techniques were used at Priory School.

The standard was met.



## 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
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It has previously been said that if Priory School was being designed today it might well not be located on this site – on the side of a hill - which introduces tremendous difficulties in terms of the many different levels that have to be catered for.

Everywhere one went in the school, and in the grounds, involved the use of stairs and steps. This meant that children with mobility problems could not easily be admitted. Neither did the physical layout of the school lend itself to easy adaptation by means of ramps, changes in floor levels, stair lifts or shaft lifts.

Notwithstanding the above, the school did at times cater for day children who it felt could cope with the differing levels despite having some physical disability. Everybody was aware of what to do to assist, when required. More handrails had been installed and some high visibility features to help children safely and more easily make their way around the school.

The residential provision was certainly not suitable for children with severe mobility problems.

The school maintained appropriate links with the local community and had a good reputation in the community.

The boarding accommodation was due for refurbishment and some change, but lack of finance had not permitted this work to proceed. The current design of boarding houses was somewhat outdated and could feel claustrophobic especially at the back where it could be dark and rather gloomy.

The site was fenced and there was a locking procedure in place that tried to safeguard the security of the school after dark and at weekends when only resident staff were present.

On balance, the standard was met.

**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?**

2

There school looked to be well maintained both inside and out. During the evening when inspectors were present and there was a heavy storm, water seeped in and caused a minor flood. This matter was immediately attended to.

The grounds had attention from the county's grounds staff who worked in an eco-friendly way in consultation with the school.

The school was not used for activities that impinged adversely on the privacy of boarding children.

Both boarding houses had been re-decorated recently, Priory in consultation with the children, but Abbey without the children's involvement. In Abbey House one large downstairs dorm had been completely refurbished and redecorated in consultation with an outside agency. The refurbishment included new furniture and fittings.

The boarding houses did have some single bedrooms. Where pupils who stayed overnight on different days of the week shared bedspace, there was some confusion over who had access to the lockable storage facilities. A youngster who stayed only one night a week might not have anywhere to store his personal things and valuable items. Two boarders reported not having any safe place to keep their things such as best clothes and valuables.

In one place in the boarding houses, there was a dormitory for 5 boarders. The National Minimum Standards preclude this, the maximum being four young people sharing a room.

Staff had completely separate facilities in sleeping in rooms.

The children could personalise their rooms and large pin boards had been provided for this purpose. The Head of Art had been into the boarding houses to advise children on the appropriate use of these pin boards.

There was some study space. Staff assisted with reading and spelling practice.

Laundry was done centrally on site, but there were some facilities used by older children as part of the life skills programme. The school provided bedding. The children took turns to carry dirty items to the laundry. Clean clothes were returned to the boarding houses. Since the last inspection the system had been redefined so that clean items could be more easily located.

No emergency call system was required.

Because of the 5-bedded dorm, the standard was not met.

**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?**

2

Toilet, washing, bathing and showering facilities were readily available to boarders and with the appropriate privacy. These were provided to boarders in a good ratio and were not being shared by any boarders with widely differing age range.

The children in Abbey House had a choice between bathing and showering according to their needs and preference. The same choice was not available in Priory as the boarding accommodation did not include a showering facility. Two of the girls said in the survey that they could not have a shower or bath when they wanted.

The Head of Care was recommended to consider how showering provision be made equally available in boarding accommodation where they were not currently available.

The standard was not wholly met.

**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

The person responsible for maintaining risk assessments on the premises and surrounding areas had done a particularly good job.

The inspectors were concerned about one matter that was discussed during the inspection. This involved the possible, indeed probably, admission of a young person with very particular needs. The youngster, as identified by care staff, might pose a risk to him or herself and to other children. No risk assessments had been seen for other children in Care Plans, even where it was clear that some potential risk was there. It was felt by inspectors to be important that risk assessments were developed in all cases a, even where risks were minimal or almost non-existent.

Children confirmed that fire drills were held and they did know what to do in an emergency.

Water temperatures were maintained at a safe level.

The standard was only partially met.

## **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?**

**2**

The recruitment procedures being used were checked in respect of nine staff who had come to work at the school since the last inspection. Four of the people concerned were volunteers. One person's appointment was 'on hold' pending satisfactory receipt of all checks.

Only staff with police/CRB checks in place, and visitors with appropriate authorisation, were being allowed unsupervised access to the school. There was a visitor's book and pupils and their relatives or representatives had been given information about the home's visiting policy.

It was stated that the school did not confirm appointment to staff until a satisfactory CRB result had been received and that it was aware that staff would need a new CRB in relation to the new appointment. However, at the time of the inspection, it was not clear in every case that recruitment checks for all staff and volunteers had been made.

While the Residential Governor had now obtained a CRB disclosure, no CRB disclosure had been obtained in respect of the governor who held the child protection brief. And because of the nature of the appointment this should be done as soon as possible.

Some references had been accepted from the previous employer on unheaded notepaper. Sensible and safe practice suggest that all written references from professionals should be on headed notepaper. This was a shortfall found during the last inspection.

Inspectors found in one recruitment file what was thought to be a testimonial (rather than an appropriately sought written reference). Testimonials should only be used as a starting point for recruitment checks. This, too, was a shortfall found during the last inspection.

Also, found in the personal file of one staff member was information relating to other staff. This was not acceptable.

One applicant had sent documents to the school rather than present herself in person as required under CRB procedures. The Head Teacher confirmed that the member of staff did later come in person.

Inspectors recorded details of the date of the disclosure and the numbers of the certificates in relation to five new staff.

The school keep copies of the documentation confirming identity of staff employed and a record of having seen original certificates and relevant qualifications. This is good practice.

Interview notes were being kept. This, too, is good practice.

No agency staff were used.

The advisory recommendation will again be made that the Bursar devises a suitable matrix into which the dates of checks, and re-checks, can be put so that nothing is missed.

A recommended has been made that the recruitment procedures should be as robust as possible.

The standard was not met in full.

<b>Total number of care staff:</b>	X	<b>Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:</b>	1
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**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.

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	3
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Records of staff working in the home including staff rotas, staff profiles, risk assessments, and key working arrangements demonstrated achievement of an appropriate staffing level.

The Head of Care was not using agency staff and staff from the existing staff group 'covered' the rota between them. Consistency of care was being provided in this way. The staff team was well established and provided a range of skills related to care of children with special needs.

Staffing levels were adequate both day and night and children knew how to rouse a member of staff sleeping in. The residential childcare officers worked split shifts covering the five mornings and four nights that children were present in the boarding houses. The two senior staff on the team worked some hours during the classroom day to enable them to carry out the responsibilities additional to their posts. This involved report writing and some attendance at reviews. For the Head of Care there was a requirement to attend Senior Management Team meetings.

Because staff were on shift at all times during the waking day, with two identified to sleep in or be on call, continuity of care was achieved.

A Child Care Officer was attached to each boarding house, with seniors 'floating' between. A newly-appointed member of pastoral care staff had been brought into post also to 'float' between the two boarding houses. This enabled her to be available, particularly when her male colleague was on duty with girls, to get involved in some of their personal care needs such as washing and brushing their hair. This has to an extent gone some way to addressing the matter of isolation for junior staff, but staffing levels were still not excessive. Staff informed inspectors that the new staff member was on a short-term contract only until Easter 2005. The school should do everything possible to make this a permanent appointment.

A close note was kept of who was present at night.

Teaching and ancillary staff carried out 'extraneous duties' at times during the week to allow a range of activities to take place.

The standard was met.

**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

There was an induction training programme for staff including an introduction to child protection procedures, fire training, medication procedures and recording.

All staff had a personal training plan and accessed training in house, opportunities for personal development through the local authority Inset days and on selected external courses in line with their identified needs.

A written record was available for training provided and the staff files were checked.

Inspectors were given a list of the courses attended by pastoral staff that was impressive.

The standard was met.

**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**

There was an appropriate process by the Head of Care for the regular review of the performance of each member of staff with boarding duties and a clearly understood system of accountability.

The Head of Care was aware of the recommendation to provide supervision to pastoral staff at an appropriate frequency ( and that in Residential Special Schools this would be of not less than once every half term). New staff should receive individual supervision fortnightly. Pastoral staff were appropriately supported and they reported a high level of satisfaction in this regard. Supervision notes were being kept. Supervision included topics such as childcare, school routines and behaviour management issues. It was discussed that personal development be added to supervision. Staff members received annual appraisals and these were held on their staff file.

Inspectors recommended last time that a supervision contract was drawn up between supervisor and supervisee detailing the issues to be covered, including the time and place of meetings and whether personal matters were to be on the agenda. The matter was again discussed and inspectors were told that no contract had yet been devised.

Staff spoken with confirmed that they had been issued with job descriptions.

The Head Teacher confirmed that since the last inspection arrangements had been put in place for her to receive professional supervision.

There was a clear staffing structure with oversight maintained by the Western Area Education Office.

There was a Policies and Procedures folder that inspectors were able to look into.

Care staff met on a daily basis before the children arrived back in the boarding houses after school had finished.

The school had a non-smoking policy and staff never smoked in front of pupils.

When necessary, external specialists were available to children.

The Head Teacher met with, and was immediately responsible to, a Board of Governors.

The standard was met.



## 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
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The pastoral staff were well qualified and experienced in looking after the needs of learning disabled boarders.

The Head of Care was looking to update her training to achieve NVQ Level 4 in care, the required qualification relevant to her post and to supplement her practical knowledge and experience.

The team continued to do 'split shifts'. Management saw this as providing the necessary continuity of care to boarders.

There was no prefect system although children were given the chance to take responsibility, usually for tasks and chores rather than over other children. The Residential Council provided an opportunity for some of them to show leadership.

The figure of 50% below was based on the NVQ assessments of the SCCO and the Child Care Officers.

The standard was met.

<b>Percentage of care staff with relevant NVQ or equivalent child care qualification:</b>	50 %
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**Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)**

The Commission for Social Care Inspection 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

This is a local authority school so was not likely to go into Receivership or liquidation. However, the Head Teacher stated that the school was 'massively under funded' and she was in discussion with the local education authority in this regard.

Continual oversight was maintained by senior staff on aspects of care such as placement plans, duty rosters, menus, and accidents. The Head of Care monitored certain records and documents.

All staff had annual appraisals.

The police were likely only to be involved if there was unauthorised access to the premises, say at weekends, or if there was a child protection investigation.

The standard was met.

**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

The Governing body had identified one of their number who took responsibility for the residential provision and who visited the boarding houses on a regular basis. He carried out visits half-termly and sometimes these were unannounced . He provided reports for his colleagues.

There was also a child protection governor.

The standard was met.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

A Lay Assessor was not part of the inspecting team and therefore this section is not applicable.

**Lay Assessor** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**D.1 Head's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.**

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

### **Overall Impression of the Inspection**

The inspection took place only 6 working months after a full inspection on 3.02.04. It had been agreed to add a short inspection so that the next full inspection would take place during the summer months. Although the school agreed to this short inspection it was on the basis that there would be a 'light touch' approach – especially given the positive report of 3.02.04. The inspection appeared to be conducted in a positive, supported manner and the internal feed back confirmed my view that the school was continuing to make progress and raise already high standards. The initial summary of inspection findings continues in this positive vein but I have been surprised to note the number and nature of the recommendations and advisory recommendations. More importantly I am concerned that this latest inspection suggests that school standards have dropped in 6 disciplines.

I intend to address these recommendations below:

### **Recommended Actions**

1. RS3 Immediate action will be taken
2. RS4 Disagree – this standard refers to pupils not parents, though every possible effort is made to inform parents
3. RS5 Already in place
4. RS7 This is noted
5. RS10 This documentation has been in place for 3 years
6. RS24 This is now school practice
7. RS25 This is noted but will be subject to budget allocations – the shower/bath situation has not changed since the last inspection and yet the school has been downgraded
8. RS26 Already in place – the school risk assessment system has been consistently praised for its quality by outside agencies and all necessary risk assessments are completed. It is part of the culture of the school to risk assess whenever there is a need and this includes individual children. Why has the school been downgraded when our systems are as they were during the previous inspection?
9. RS27 The management constantly tries to ensure that recruitment procedures are as robust as possible. We have a statutory duty to be fully in line with LEA procedures. The issue of CRB disclosure for the child protection governor requires further discussion.

### **Advisory Recommendations**

10. RS 14 This is noted – it is part of our regular practice to update qualifications.
11. RS 17 This is noted
12. RS 20 Disagree – our standard practice is to involve parents in as many practical and positive ways as possible to help them improve their parenting skills. If parental involvement is inappropriate it is always addressed.
13. RS 24 This is noted
14. RS 14 The recommended matrix is already in place – implemented immediately following the February 2004 Inspection
15. RS 15 This is noted – the relevant standard does not require a contract and I am not sure that a contract would enhance the current process.

### **Conclusion**

I am not impressed with this inspection report. I believe the recommendations to be largely insignificant and peripheral. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that the school has lowered its standards in 6 disciplines. It is my view that the school constantly tries to raise its standards against a backdrop of ever increasing pressures, under funding and lack of

professional support from outside agencies. If I allowed our hardworking residential staff to read the full contents of this report they would feel demoralised.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

YES

Head's comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report

YES

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

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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.3.2 I **Roger Mackenzie** of **Priory School** 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:

Please see attached Head's response

<b>Print Name</b>	<u>ROGER AUSTIN MACKENZIE</u>
<b>Signature</b>	<u><i>R A Mackenzie</i></u>
<b>Designation</b>	<u>Deputy Headteacher</u>
<b>Date</b>	<u>16.12.04</u>

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.



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