



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Furness School

**Roxhill Road
Hextable
Swanley
Kent
BR8 7RP**

Lead Inspector
Alison Spreadbridge

Unannounced Inspection
26th September 2006 10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school Furness School

Address Roxhill Road
Hextable
Swanley
Kent
BR8 7RP

Telephone number 01322 662937

Fax number

Email address

Provider Web address

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

Name of Head Mr Dawson

Name of Head of Care

**Age range of residential
pupils**

**Date of last welfare
inspection**

Brief Description of the School:

Furness School is a residential /day special school for 72 secondary aged boys experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties; it is maintained by Kent Education Authority. The school is situated in semi-rural surroundings on the outskirts of Swanley, Kent. The buildings are Victorian and were built as a 'home for little boys' for the children of deprived London families in the mid 19th Century. In 1955 Furness School was established to take children with learning disabilities and since 1986 has been a school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The School is about to undergo some major refurbishment, which has necessitated the temporary closure of one of the houses. Its closure will enable the school to move the children more easily around the site while the building works are in progress. Part of the refurbishment programme will take place during the summer holidays when the school is closed.

The two boarding houses in use are situated in separate buildings each accommodating up to 14 boys. There is one other house which is used as a base for the day pupils. Each house is equipped with its own lounges, dining rooms and kitchen areas, with no more than four boys sharing a room, and the majority of the children in single rooms. The proposed refurbishment will include single rooms with en-suite facilities.

The children have access to large playing fields and a swimming pool in the grounds.

SUMMARY

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

This was an unannounced inspection for the year running from April 1st 2006 to March 31st 2007. The visit was made over two days, including evening and early morning visits to the residential houses.

The visit was spent talking directly with the pupils privately and collectively, care staff, ancillary staff, Head of Care, the Head teacher and administration staff.

At the time of the inspection there were fifteen children boarding at the school.

Additional information was obtained from the children's and relative's questionnaires, the Chair of Governors, a tour of the premises and looking at documentation.

The children's families and the pupils are very satisfied with the service and care the school provides. The inspection took into account the information received prior to the inspection. This information was received in the pre inspection questionnaire completed by the school, together with responses from children and parents.

Since the last inspection Red House has been refurbished to a very high standard. Each child will have their own room with either en-suite facilities or a personal bathroom close to their bedroom.

At the time of the inspection Yellow and Blue Houses were packing ready for their house moves so that the refurbishment of Blue House can begin.

What the school does well:

Furness school is able to provide the children with a safe, secure and stable environment in which to grow and develop. The children benefit from a committed, motivated team of teaching and residential staff. The children are assessed prior to moving into the school and the staff team get to know the children very well. The children spoken with valued the teachers support 'especially when they got things wrong'. The children had a positive regard for

the monitoring system used in the house and in the school and said 'they thought it was fair'.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Red House has been refurbished to a high standard and now offers the children single bedrooms with en-suite facilities or a personal bathroom adjacent to their rooms. It has good sized day space and is comfortable and welcoming.

The new nature sanctuary is being created and should offer the children not only a fine environment for their studies but also a nice place to relax and an extension to the school curriculum.

The behaviour monitoring system used in the school and houses has been separated so that behaviour in school does not affect the chart at home. This is more in line with the day-pupils experience of school life while not effecting the ethos of the system.

What they could do better:

The school would benefit from one of the staff undertaking a more intense medication course and then offering their expertise to the three residential units.

The staff files while containing all of the required information, would benefit from being sectioned and streamlined.

When reflecting on the opportunities the school currently offers for work experience, the children would benefit from a more in depth preparation for adulthood, this might include widening the opportunities the children have to learn new skills.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.(NMS 14)
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.(NMS 15)

The Commission considers Standard 14 the key standard to be inspected.

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

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

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

The children are provided with a very healthy and well balanced diet. They are well cared for and their health and welfare needs are being met.

EVIDENCE:

The school houses are currently going through a refurbishment programme. Red House has just been completed and now offers the children individual bedrooms with en-suite facilities, and spacious lounges and dining rooms. The children are able to use the school grounds for football after school finishes

At the time of the inspection Blue House and Yellow house were in the throws of packing ready for the move so that Blue House could begin its conversion.

The children waiting to move into Red house were spoken with and said they had visited the house and were keen to move in.

All of the houses are able to offer the children access to computers, games and a snooker table as well as other activities which support their school work. The children have access to additional books and work sheets provided by the school teachers.

The school has introduced a new menu plan which meet the government's requirements for healthy eating. The children said they missed some of their

favourite puddings and that sometimes the deserts were repetitious as the borders had the same choices at lunch as well as at their evening meal. They did however say the meals are well cooked and they have a choice of main courses. The menus were seen pinned up on notice boards in the houses as well as in the corridor next to the dining room. The children in Yellow House have changed their lunch-time meal to sandwiches and have a cooked meal in the evening provided by the house staff. The children said they liked their 'old lunches better'.

Some of the children's placement plans were inspected and found to include the required information. Risk assessments were being reviewed on a regular basis. Consent forms for emergency treatment were seen in the files, but a signed parental consent form for the children's work experience was not. The process of student undertaking work experience should be reviewed to ensure the children's safety is maintained.

The children spoken with were very happy with the care they received from the staff at Furness school.

Medication was seen to be stored correctly. Consent forms have been signed by the parents or carers to enable the school to use the local surgery or hospital in an emergency. The children's files contained a picture of the child together with their medical notes. These can be taken to the hospital with the child's medication record if necessary. Some of the staff have received medication training. The school would benefit from one member of staff taking overall responsibility for the medication in the homes and undertaking more in depth training.

Some of the children in the school, with parental consent, are involved in a medical trial which is looking into the effects of 'fatty acids' and children's behaviour patterns. The trial is being overseen by the Maudsley Hospital. The school has followed the proper protocols and have involved an ethics committee prior at the start of the programme. The children spoken with were very pleased to be involved in the programme.

Yellow House still has the damp problem in the dining room and damp can be smelt at the bottom of the stairwell. Staff said this will be addressed when the house is refurbished.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.(NMS 3)
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.(NMS 4)
- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.(NMS 5)
- Children are protected from bullying by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(NMS 7)
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.(NMS 8)
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour.(NMS 10)
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.(NMS 26)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

The Commission considers Standards 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.

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

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

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

The children's safety is maintained through robust policies and procedures supported by sound recruitment practices. However the school's policies and procedures for work experience should be reviewed.

EVIDENCE:

The children's privacy is respected and all information about them is kept securely. The school has clear guidelines in place on when it may be necessary to search a child's possession. Specific health issues and social backgrounds are included in the children's notes.

Each house has a notice board with information on it about confidential help lines and up to date information on drugs, child protection and alcohol abuse. The children have access to an independent advocate who visits the house on a monthly basis.

The children spoken with were aware of the school's complaints procedure and said they would feel quite happy speaking to any member of staff. There have been no complaints recorded in the complaints book since the last inspection. Staff spoken with had all received training in child protection issues.

The school's policies and procedures ensure that children are protected from bullying. The staff and children spent some time last year discussing the issue of bullying and what the children response should be. The children can also speak to the independent visitor who has visited the school eight times since November of last year.

The school provides an effective support team who are available throughout the school day and ensure children who leave their classrooms without permission are quickly returned.

The maintenance certificates for all of the residential houses were found to be up to date.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

The Commission considers Standards 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.

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

Quality in this outcome area is excellent

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

The children have ample opportunity to enjoy activities both inside and outside of the school

EVIDENCE:

The children are encouraged to join in the leisure activities available and staff support the children with their homework.

The majority of the children in Blue House have joined the local army cadets. They said they really enjoy the activities and go to the cadets twice a week. They said they had been to a camp with the cadets on the previous weekend. This was undertaken with the co-operation of parents or carers.

The children said that they have been involved in the planning of the nature garden. The nature area is still under construction and expected to be completed by the spring. It is proposed that this area will also be used by the local community at weekends.

Some of the children in Yellow House are interested in music and play their guitars together. They hope to join the music group which meets after school.

The computers and computer games are popular with all of the boys. The games are available to those boys whose behaviour has been very good.

The school has two buses which they use to take the borders out to the local swimming pool and leisure centres, cinemas and shops; on the evening of the inspection one group of young people were going out to shop at Blue Water, a local shopping complex.

The children are achieving academically as well as socially. The house staff assist with the children's homework after their evening meal and before after school activities begin. The work is then marked by teachers and the right books and worksheets are made available in the houses if the children wish to do more.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.(NMS 2)
- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.(NMS 9)
- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.(NMS 11)
- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.(NMS 17)
- In accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

The Commission considers Standards 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.

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

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

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

The children are encouraged to make decisions about the running of the residential houses and their after school activities.

EVIDENCE:

The children needs are fully assessed prior to joining the school. Their progress is continually being reviewed. Risk assessments are reviewed monthly or more often if needed. The children's behaviour charts are reviewed on a weekly basis and then amended so the children know what is expected of them.

The responses received from the parents' questionnaires were very positive and supportive of the school's policies on behaviour monitoring.

Weekly children's house meetings are held. The children are encouraged to choose menus for the evening meals and to suggest ideas for evening activities. Concerns about school can be discussed or issues raised with the school forum.

Parents and carers are encourage to contact the school whenever they wish to discuss their child's progress. Contact books are also used to help keep families informed of school life.

Children are assisted by one of the members of staff to access further education or work experience. The procedure for accessing work experience was discussed and there is a need for the school to review its policies to ensure the children's safety and the health and safety of the placement is correctly assessed.

Following a suitable risk assessment the children are able to ask for their pocket money and go to the local shop to spend it.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.(NMS 16)
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.(NMS 21)
- Children live in well designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- Children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.(NMS 24)
- Children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity.(NMS 25)

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

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The economic wellbeing of the children is assured, however a review of finances would be beneficial..

EVIDENCE:

The children change into their own clothes at the end of the school day. In the main the children's clothing is provided by parents and brought in from home.

The children have the opportunity to undertake one day work experience in the last year at the school. A member of the staff team is responsible for arranging the placements. It was noted that a signed consent form for the work experience was not in the children's placement plans. The policy and procedures for placing the children should include a health and safety report.

The house the children live in are all to be upgraded and will include single en-suite facilities one of the house has just been refurbished to a very high standard.

The children's pocket money is provided by parents and has to cover the outings to the swimming pool, as well as cadets and personal purchases from the local shop. The household budgets are limited and cannot cover additional

costs for extra activities to such places as the cinema. As some of the children have very limited money to enable them to participate in outside activities the household budget should be reviewed.

The children are able to visit the local shop depending on their current behaviour and risk assessment.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.(NMS 1)
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.(NMS 19)
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.(NMS 28)
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.(NMS 29)
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.(NMS 30)
- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.(NMS 31)
- Children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.(NMS 32)
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.(NMS 33)

The Commission considers Standards 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.

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

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

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

The children benefit from a well run school which offers them opportunities to develop both socially as well as educationally.

EVIDENCE:

The school's refurbishment programme is progressing well. The finishing touches to Red house were being made at the time of the inspection with a

view to the children moving into their new home on the Thursday. All of the children will be provided with single rooms with en-suite facilities or an adjacent bathroom. The upstairs accommodation has been brought up to a very high standard. The ground floor toilet area should be made good to reflect the rest of the house. There are two lounges a dining room and a games room in the Red House.

A new build is also taking place in the school, once completed this will provide new offices, classrooms and a reception area.

The school is well run and the staff team is dedicated to the welfare and development of the children. Opportunities for improving the school curriculum are continually sought, recently the school held a heritage day which involved the participation of both children and staff in researching the school's history. An open day was held to which the local community was invited. The day reflected the school's long social and nautical history. The in depth research has now become part of the children's history GCSE material. The children also had the benefit of a very enjoyable day dressing up and reliving history.

The school has re-evaluated the behaviour monitoring system and has separated school from home to more reflect the day boys' experience of being in school; while continuing to help the children develop suitable behavioural skills. The children said they were 'o.k.' with the charts and they were 'fair'. New pupils are put onto the C level as a starting point and they said they soon realised they needed to do better to enjoy all the activities on offer in the houses and stay up later. The staff offer care with clear, control and consistent approaches to the children's acceptable behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour is responded to by constructive disciplinary measures.

The relationship between staff and children is one of the strengths of the school. This is based on mutual respect and clear professional and personal boundaries which effect both the individuals and the group.

The school is visited by one of the governors who will render a report to the head teacher following the visit.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

4 Standard Exceeded (Commendable) **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)
2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls) **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion
 “N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

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

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

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

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

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

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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