



Champions for
Social Care
Improvement

inspection report

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

Fred Nicholson School

Westfield Road

Dereham

Norfolk

NR19 1JB

19th, 20th, 26th and 27th January 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

The role of CSCI is to:

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

Inspection Methods & Findings

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

'X' is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School

Fred Nicholson School

Address

Westfield Road, Dereham, Norfolk, NR19 1JB

Tel No:

01362 693915

Fax No:

01362 693298

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

Norfolk County Council Education

Name of Head Mr M J CLAYTON**NCSC Classification**

Boarding school

Type of school

Residential Special

School

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

18th Nov 02

Date of Inspection Visit		19th January 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of NCSC Inspector	1	Mrs Glynis Gawley	074944
Name of NCSC Inspector	2		
Name of NCSC Inspector	3		
Name of NCSC Inspector	4		
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):			
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Mr. Malcolm Clayton Head teacher Mr. Peter Page Head of Care	

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- 1. Statement of the School's Purpose**
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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

Inspections assess the extent to which the school is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, published by the Secretary of State under Section 87C of the Children Act 1989, and other relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 as amended. Residential Special Schools are not registered as children's homes unless they accommodate, or arrange accommodation for, one or more children for more than 295 days a year.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the NCSC in respect of Fred Nicholson 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

Fred Nicholson School, which opened in 1973, is a Special School for pupils who have Moderate Learning Difficulties.

The school has expanded to provide 95 places, of which approximately 28 are designated as boarding places. Pupils are able to board at the school for up to 4 nights a week. Facilities cater for boys and girls from 7-16 years.

At the time of this Inspection 94 children were attending the school including 6 girls and 15 boys as boarders.

Residential provision currently in use comprises of one 5 bed dormitory for girls, four 5 bed dormitory for boys and one 3 bedroomed flat for older children. An additional dormitory has been converted into an indoor recreation area for boarders.

Other facilities available to boarders include the school gym, the school workshop, the school library, a sitting room with an adjacent kitchen, the school dining room, a new atrium, a large clubroom situated in the school grounds and the outdoor playground equipped with climbing frames and swings.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

This school is a very special Special School. Its outstanding qualities are the commitment of the whole staff team to close teamwork and staff development, the nurturing culture that includes all its members, the dedication to the care and development of children, the continuous development of effective methodologies and the focus on the recognition of achievement of all children and staff.

The school was awarded Beacon Status by Ofsted in 2001, and was recognised as an Investors in People in 2002. The Site Manager was awarded Caretaker of the year, Norfolk, in 2002. The Well-Being project is valued by staff.

Some very impressive work has been undertaken by staff e.g. The Child Protection system, The Team Teach system, and the placement plan documentation.

The staff's determination to enable children with very complex and serious difficulties to lead fulfilled lives is profoundly moving.

Children and their families reported that they highly value the school. Comments from Children include,

"The school is 110% really good"

"It's a fun place"

"Children are looked after perfectly"

Comments from families include,

"My child went from being miserable in school they hated, to a happy confident youngster."

The best thing about the school is "The way the children are always first".

The staff do a "brilliant job"

"I have no problem with the way my child is being looked after. The compliments and achievements he has done since being there is far more than I could ever give or do for him/her. I am just glad a place like that exists at all."

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

Since the November 2002 NCSC inspection, the school has been directed by Norfolk LEA to admit **23** new children. Most of the children in this group have Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD).

While the Inspector acknowledges that the LEA was faced, in very unusual circumstances, with finding educational provision for a large number of children, the current concerns are:

- That the school, which specialises in provision for children with Moderate Learning Difficulties, was directed to take a large group of children with EBD and that this new group of children have very different needs to children already at the school.
- That only scant and sometimes inaccurate or ambiguous information regarding the needs of individual new children was available to the school prior to admission; in particular, risk assessments.
The school was unprepared for many of the serious risks posed by the behaviours of some of the new children.

- That the necessary resources were not provided by the LEA for the school to safely admit this group of children.
- That the admission of this group of children has had a serious impact on the welfare of the children already at the school and on the staff team.
The existing pupil population includes many physically fragile and vulnerable children. Staff expressed concern regarding the safety of these children as they are now exposed to risk despite the schools efforts to minimise this risk.

The Headmaster, Mr M J Clayton, who received the OBE this year, is on sick leave due to work related stress. It is unlikely that he will return to the school. Mr Clayton has transformed a previously failing school into a Beacon school and his achievement has been widely recognised. It is the Inspector's opinion that the school has undoubtedly been damaged by the situation outlined above and there is a risk to the safety and welfare of children.

The Inspector acknowledges and appreciates the exceptional circumstances which led to the admission of a large group of children whose needs are outside the usual scope of this school.

The Inspector wishes to register dismay that this was done with no apparent consideration of the scale of resources necessary to admit these children safely. There is need for urgent action.

A letter expressing these concerns has been sent to the Dfes, the LEA, and the School.

Other than these concerns the main shortfalls are:

The inherent institutional structure of the boarding accommodation including the lack of privacy for children.

The adaptation of the premises for children who are at risk due to disabilities, such as hearing impairment or epilepsy. This action was recommended in the last report as was a recommendation to seek an assessment by Occupational Therapist. The school has been unable to secure this assessment.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

Despite the inherent institutional structure of the boarding accommodation staff have imaginatively endeavoured to provide a warm, homely environment for the boarding children. This is commended.

The school has an abundance of goodwill and expertise within the staff team. The Headmaster, the staff team and the children are commended for the creation of a happy and nurturing environment where everyone's welfare is cared for. The Inspector is confident that the school will continue to strive to further develop its high standards.

However the current LEA admission policy has placed considerable pressure on the school and this has undoubtedly damaged the school.

There is a risk to the safety and welfare of children. Urgent action is recommended.

The Inspector thanks the Headmaster, the staff team and the children for their full cooperation and care during this Inspection.

NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

Is Notification of any failure to safeguard and promote welfare to be made by the National Care Standards Commission to the Local Education Authority or Department for Education and Skills under section 87(4) of the Children Act 1989 arising from this inspection?

NO

Notification to be made to:

**Local Education Authority
Secretary of State**

NO

NO

The grounds for any Notification to be made are:

While no formal Notification has been made to the Local Education Authority or the Secretary of State, a letter of concern regarding children's welfare has been sent to the Department of Education and Skills and to the Local Education Authority.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION

Recommended Actions from the last Inspection visit fully implemented?

NO

If No, the findings of this inspection on any Recommended Actions not implemented are listed below:

No	Standard	Recommended actions	
1	RS1	That the school includes an outline of provision for children with disabilities in the Statement of Purpose.	
2	RS4	That the school reviews the complaints procedure to include items listed in Standard 4 National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.	
3	RS7	That the school produces a written procedure for the notification of significant events as described in NMS 7.	

4	RS23	That the school arranges for an Occupational Therapist to assess the boarding accommodation so that it can be made safe for children with disabilities, such as hearing impairment, or medical conditions, such as epilepsy.	
5	RS24	That, following the school's request to the LEA in 2003 for funding for adequate boarding accommodation, the LEA informs the school and the National Care Standards Commission of its plans for the provision of up to date, non-institutional, domestic style accommodation which offers children adequate privacy and meets all the standards of NMS 24.	

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended action and any advisory recommendations are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare.

No	Standard*	Recommended Action	
1	RS1	That the school produces a children's version of the Statement of Purpose.	30 th June 2004
2	RS3	That any new building or re-development of the existing boarding facilities includes the provision of private space for each child.	When appropriate
3	RS4	That the LEA as the Responsible Body reviews its current position regarding its involvement in the investigation of complaints about the school.	30 th June 2004
4	RS30RS24 RS10RS6 RS1	That the LEA urgently reviews its policy regarding the category of need of children admitted to the school.	30 th June 2004
5	RS30RS24 RS10RS6 RS1	That the LEA provides the necessary scale of resources to safely admit children including in retrospect for the large group of children admitted to the school this year.	30 th April 2004
6	RS24	That window opening restrictors are fitted to the boarding accommodation windows.	1 st March 2004
7	RS23	The school does not admit any child who has a disability that would place him/her at risk if the necessary adaptations have not been made to the premises.	Immediate

8	RS33	That the LEA identifies a person to undertake Standard 33 visits on its behalf at the required frequency.	30 th April 2004
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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
1	RS29	That the LEA and LA Social Service consider the benefits of sharing training provision, including costs and interagency co-operation between staff, where the required staff training is the same for care staff in children's homes and schools.

Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. RS10 refers to standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS AND FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods were used in the production of this report

Direct Observation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Accommodation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas	YES

Checks with other Organisations

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	YES
• School Doctor	YES
• Independent Person	NO
• Chair of Governors	YES

Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	YES
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	NA
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	NO
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	19/1/04
Time of Inspection	9.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	36.5
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	4

Pre-inspection information and the Head's Self evaluation Form, provided by the school, have also been taken into account in preparing this report.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Age Range of Boarding Pupils **From** **To**

NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

BOYS

GIRLS

TOTAL

Number of separate Boarding Houses

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the NCSC assessment of the extent to which standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

"9" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not applicable.

"X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

The school has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for those children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement can be made up of other documents, e.g., Letter of Approved Arrangements and school prospectus, which are required to include specific information.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The school has produced several documents which contain the information required. The documents include The Whole School Policy document, the School Prospectus, The Residential Provision Statement of Purpose and a Staff Guidance document.

The School Prospectus and The Residential Statement of Purpose are given to Parents or Persons with Parental responsibility and placing Social Workers. More detailed information is available to them from the other documents on request.

The school aims to make this information more readily available, for example, on the internet and it is working towards the incorporation of the Statement of Purpose into the School brochure.

The school does not currently produce a Statement of Purpose specifically for children although a variety of mediums are under consideration, e.g. Comic strip format, Video. Children reported that they receive this information from their Parents and/or Staff. Please see Recommendation

It was Recommended in the last report that an outline of any provision for disabled children is included in the Statement of Purpose. The school's domestic Bursar is currently undertaking an audit of the premises and facilities so that this information may be included. Please see NMS 23 in this report.

Please see Recommendation.

Please see NMS 7 regarding notification of significant events.

The school reported a developing conflict between the Statement of Purpose and the operation of the school. The school is receiving more requests from Social Services for "Respite" residential placements. The purpose of residential care at the school is to provide the support necessary to individual children so that they may best benefit from the education offered.

It is not the purpose to provide parents with respite.

There is also a conflict between the Statement of Purpose and the LEA's current admissions policy, i.e. that the school is for children with moderate learning difficulties yet children with emotional and behavioural difficulties are being placed at the school in large numbers.

Please see Recommendation.

The Inspector advises the school to include the name of the designated member of staff for child protection in the School Prospectus so that this information is also available to non boarding children and their carers.

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?

4

Children spend frequent and regular time with their Keyworkers to discuss and agree targets which range from independence skills to specific social skills. The agreed targets are recorded in the child's house file which the children have access to at any time. Children and their families are encouraged to be fully involved in individual care planning and reviews.

Children reported that they are consulted regarding their care. Each dormitory conducts regular, recorded residents' meetings and the children have elected House Captains. The School has introduced a School Council and the house captains represent boarders on this council. A boarding pupil is the Head of the school council and he reported that "we are getting most of the things we want". Examples given included a variety of sports equipment and school ties. The children were very proud to show their new school ties to the inspector. The children's request for school ties which display the school emblem reflects the pride that children have in this school. This is commended.

Other examples of changes made as a result of listening to children include the provision of a pupil information board, the provision of rubbish bins in cloakroom areas, exploration of new evening activities, follow-ups to work experience and flexibility to accommodate family events as well as pupil's favourite activities.

Staff reported that emphasis is placed on listening to children and respecting children's views. The school council provides a further opportunity for children to be heard and empowered. This is commended.

The Care staff liaise closely with families and/or significant others via regular home visits, telephone calls, home/school diaries, newsletters, school open days and parents' evenings. Parents are very welcome to visit the school whenever they wish to and they can attend the Annual Governors Report Meeting. Some parents are active members of the Governing Body and contribute to decision making.

Parents reported that they are consulted regarding the care of their child, that staff are very friendly and that they feel welcome at the school. For example, "You can turn up when ever and they are very friendly and pleased to see you".

The level of consultation with children and their families is commended.

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

Generally children's privacy and confidentiality is very well respected

Boarding Children have two files. The main case files are housed in a locked records room and are only accessible to designated persons. The second file is kept securely in the child's dormitory.

Children reported that their privacy is respected although they would like to have more privacy in their personal spaces when they are changing their clothing. The original structure of the dormitories has prevented staff from finding a satisfactory solution to this problem. Although the children's personal spaces are more discrete than they were in the original layout they are still open to the dormitory. Staff continue to try to find a solution to this problem.

Please see Recommendation.

Each child has a lockable drawer in their bedside cabinet.

Children have unlimited access to private telephone use as the school provides mobile telephones when children wish to make a call.

Bathrooms and showers are single and private, although children have to leave the dormitories to access the bathrooms.

Please see NMS 25 of this report.

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**

Most children reported that they knew how to make a complaint and all children who said that they did not know the procedure reported that they knew who they would complain to. All children reported that they were confident that they could complain and that complaints would be taken seriously.

Children said that they are also able to make complaints and suggestions at their dormitory meetings and at the school council.

The School's Complaints policy is available to children and their carers on request and is contained in the Whole school policies document. The procedure is clear but limited to complaints addressed up to the level of the Governing body.

The Local Education Authority's (LEA) Complaints procedure expressly precludes any LEA involvement in the investigation of complaints about the school except in an investigation of a complaint that the school has failed to adhere to its own complaints procedure. Please see Recommendation.

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

Number of above complaints substantiated:

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

Number of above complaints substantiated:

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?

4

The score of 4 for this standard is for the high standard of child protection within the school.

This score does not reflect the current risk to children imposed on the school by the LEA directive to admit a large group of children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties without the necessary scale of resources for the school to safely admit this group of children. The existing pupil population included many physically fragile and vulnerable children. Staff expressed concern regarding the safety of these children as they are now exposed to the risk of physical violence despite the schools efforts to minimise this risk. Please see Recommendation.

The school's Child Protection System has been developed by the Designated member of staff to form a comprehensive and detailed procedure which ensures that any concern expressed by any person is fully recorded and addressed. The system ensures that all evidence and all concerns, however minor, are recorded so that a body of evidence may form to trigger Child Protection procedures.

The records include a chronicle of events and contacts with anyone involved in a case and the designated person is proactive in seeking pertinent information from and giving information to other agencies. The system is only accessible to the designated member of staff and the two deputy designated staff members. It is very well organised and is designed for easy use.

This already very impressive piece of work has been developed further since the last inspection. For example, a colour coded histogram has been introduced to record a comprehensive range of negative behaviours of individual children so that the outcomes of changes in known factors, such as medication, may be easily monitored. The histograms are also used for other monitoring, for example, as an indicator of unknown factors which require investigation. The system is highly commended.

The Designated staff member has developed close working links with other agencies such as Social and Health Services. The Designated staff member is responsible for Staff Child Protection Training. Care staff, teachers and administration and ancillary have undertaken this training. This is commended.

The designated person works closely with the member of staff responsible for monitoring

and staff training in Team Teach, the de-escalation and safe handling method used at the school.

A senior teacher, the designated child protection child care officer and the member of staff responsible for monitoring Team Teach have developed a draft Pupil Protective Behaviours Policy. This detailed and comprehensive programme aims to equip children of both genders with the necessary level of confidence, information and skills to protect themselves from hazardous situations, such as, road safety, stranger danger and sexual safety. It includes staff and pupil training. A pilot, "Protect Me" scheme was undertaken with a group of boarding girls and issues identified during the pilot are currently being incorporated into the programme. The policy will be integral to the school's existing policies, such as Child Protection and risk assessment. Resources, such as videos, slides, posters and leaflets have been acquired or produced by this team who are already sharing their work with other schools. This work is highly commended.

The school has made six Child Protection referrals to Social Services since the last inspection. All were regarding concerns for children's welfare outside the school.

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

6

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**

The school's anti-bullying policy, which is contained in the Whole School Policy document, recognises that bullying is difficult to eliminate and sets out a variety of means to minimise bullying at the school. The document details procedures for assessing and addressing bullying and the prevention and detection of bullying and is used in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy, PHSE Policy, Equal Opportunity statement and the Right to be Heard statement.

Bullying is a regular topic in assembly and tutor time, is one of the six half-termly themes focused on throughout the school and is part of the theme of "Get Smart Day". Notices about bullying are displayed prominently throughout the school.

Some children said that they did not always follow the school's advice as they thought that they may get bullied again for speaking out.

Staff are vigilant and children are well supervised. Children who are suspected of bullying or of being a victim of bullying are closely monitored.

Throughout the Inspection the Inspector observed many instances of kindness between children and was moved by the care and support some children gave to others. This is commended.

Of the seven children who completed the pupil's questionnaire, 6 reported that they were not bullied at all or hardly ever and one reported that they are sometimes bullied in school but not during boarding time.

Children asked about bullying during the inspection were very worried about the effect that the behaviour of the new group was having on the school. They were concerned for themselves and the staff. Children's comments included,

"All these new kids with behavioural problems. I don't think they (the staff) can cope. Since they've come to this school it's absolutely changed. When they put their foot in the door it changed. They need more staff. We haven't got the space."

"It's changed big time. Bad to worse. We are worried that it will get out of control."

"They can control some of the twenty odd but they can't control all of them."

The older children were worried that this situation was impacting on their education.

Children's comments included,

"We have exams coming up. That's going to affect GCSE, going to affect everything. (The teachers) can't be in different places at the same time."

This group were also very worried that they may respond negatively to the behaviour of some of the new children.

Children's comments included,

"They get me uptight but I can't control it"

"If they keep picking on me every day I will crack"

It is to the credit of the school that these children have not yet "cracked". They have learned to care for others and are struggling with the provocation to act otherwise. They reported that they have not yet taken matters into their own hands despite this serious impact on the school which they are so proud of. The group have reported their concerns to the Head

teacher.

Please see Recommendations 4 and 5.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

86 %

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

The School has had two occasions since the last inspection to notify significant events to the NCSC under Standard 7 but, although other agencies were notified, the school did not notify the NCSC. The school informed the inspector of this oversight and intends to notify the NCSC when required in future.

The Inspector did not see any documents regarding the school's system for the notification of significant events.

Please see recommendation.

NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO NCSC 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**

0

0

0

0

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9) The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The school's Written policy regarding Absence without authority is contained in the Whole School Policy document.		
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?	4
<p>An outstanding quality of this school is the care and respect that all staff give to the children. This is evidenced in all aspects of the school from the language used in policy documents and records, from the way staff talked about the children in discussions with the Inspector and the care taken completing the Inspectors Questionnaires, to the professional manner by which staff undertake tasks e.g. the Child Protection system, the Team Teach system and examples of individual work with children.</p> <p>All interactions between staff and children observed by the Inspector were respectful and caring.</p> <p>Children reported that staff are kind and helpful. For example "Children are looked after perfectly"</p> <p>Parents reported that the staff are very friendly and helpful and that they are confident that their children are valued and cared for by the school. For example,</p> <p>" My child went from being miserable in a school they hated, to a happy confident youngster."</p> <p>The best thing about the school is "The way the children are always first".</p> <p>The staff do a "brilliant job"</p> <p>"I have no problem with the way my child is being looked after. The compliments and achievements he has done since being there is far more than I could ever give or do for him/her. I am just glad a place like that exists at all."</p>		

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?****3**

The school's Behaviour policy is detailed and comprehensive and emphasis is firmly placed on the recognition and reward of children's achievements.

Children work with their keyworkers to set targets which sometimes include learning new, more acceptable behaviours. Progress towards achieving these targets is recognised and rewarded. There are a number of ways by which achievement is recognised e.g. merit stickers, recognition from a senior member of staff, public acclamation in assembly, award of pluses and credits in lessons, house points, pupil of the week, pupil of the term, class of the week and term, and sharing achievement with parents and other children. Examples of children's work and achievements are displayed to a high standard throughout the school. The focus on the recognition of achievement is commended.

Records indicate that sanctions are appropriate e.g. loss of activity, the completion of unfinished work, detention, and early bedtime. However, since the last inspection and the admission of the new group of children, sanctions now used include exclusion from the school. Records indicate that exclusion has been invoked in order to protect children and staff at the school.

A member of the care staff team is responsible for setting up and monitoring the Team Teach system used at the school. The role includes daily monitoring of any sanctions or physical handling employed by any member of school staff, informing the appropriate people for example, Senior staff, parents, or the designated Child Protection officer, keeping records and staff training. The very well organised system ensures that staff receive regular training and frequent updating and any patterns in children's behaviour and responses to behaviour are readily identified. The thoroughness of the work undertaken in this area is commended.

The school has three staff members who are qualified Team Teach Intermediate Tutors. They attend refresher courses annually for re-accreditation.

At the last inspection the school was rightly proud of the minimum use of sanctions and physical intervention within the school. Indeed, physical intervention was so rare that one of the Team Teach tutors at the school regularly undertook spot checks on staff skills so that staff did not forget their training.

Restraints are now recorded in a separate bound and numbered book as recommended at the last inspection.

This log reflects the impact of the new group of children on the school. From very rare incidents of restraint at the last inspection this log now records 33 pages of 5/6 records of restraints per page since 11/3/03. The member of staff responsible for monitoring restraints reported that a new major part of this role is staff support since the influx of this new group of children. Staff are finding this dramatic increase in the need for restraint a very stressful experience. Most staff had never been involved in restraint prior to the admission of these children. The inspector observed restraints during the inspection and the distress of the child, staff involved and other children was clearly apparent. As previously stated, children are aware of this stress on staff and themselves.

The incidents recorded in the restraints log give reference to more detailed records held

elsewhere. For example, on detailed record sheets held in the child's case file. Some of the reasons for restraint are very serious threats to the safety of other children and staff and threats of very serious self-harm.

This is of great concern.

Many of the existing children are physically extremely fragile and vulnerable, staff are stretched and stressed and previously unaccustomed to working with this number of children with this category of need, and other children feel that they, the staff and the school are threatened.

Only scant and sometimes inaccurate or ambiguous information regarding the needs of individual new children was available to the school prior to admission; in particular, risk assessments. The school was unprepared for many of the serious risks posed by the extremely violent behaviours of some of the new children.

The necessary resources were not provided by the LEA for the school to safely admit this group of children. The LEA promised that the school would be provided with additional accommodation. This has not happened. The school has had to rearrange its use of accommodation to provide a unit for some of the new children who require high levels of supervision. The staff no longer have a staff room. No additional resources, for example, staffing, training, support, have been made available to the school.

Please see Recommendations 4 and 5

QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.
- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within school and in the local community.
- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.
- Children wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

Admission and leaving processes are planned and agreed with the child – and as appropriate, with parents and carers and placing authorities – as far as possible and handled with sensitivity and care by those concerned.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Children who become boarders at the school have usually previously been day pupils so staff are equipped with a good knowledge of the child's strengths and needs prior to admission.

As mentioned earlier in this report, care staff work very closely with parents and children and the admission and leaving processes are no exception. Home visits are an integral aspect of this work particularly when children are being reintegrated into their homes and communities.

As stated in NMS 10 of this report only scant and sometimes inaccurate or ambiguous information regarding the needs of individual new children (particularly risk assessment) was available to the school prior to admission of this group. The school was unprepared for many of the serious risks posed by the extremely violent behaviours of some of the new children.

Throughout their attendance at the school children are encouraged to gain independent living skills. Care staff devise individual independence skills programmes for older children to work on after school e.g. cooking, shopping, budgeting and road safety. Children reported that they enjoyed and appreciated these activities.

The inspector accompanied a group of children and two care staff who were shopping for the items for a meal that the children would prepare for themselves as part of independence training. The group had previously discussed and agreed the menu within a set budget. The children demonstrated their skills at the supermarket when they agreed to change the menu in order to take advantage of a special offer. This enabled them to buy extra treats within their budget. The inspector was impressed.

The school is working closely with other agencies regarding the preparation of children for leaving school and support for children once they have left school. A Connexions Forum has been set up. Members include Fred Nicholson teaching and child care staff and representatives from Connexions, Norfolk Youth and Community Service, Health Service and an Educational Psychologist. This is a further example of the thorough and professional approach of the school and is commended.

Children who are being re-introduced into main-stream schooling are given full support by the school.

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

All of the school staff work as one team to promote children's progress. The level of formal and informal communication and support between staff groups is very effective and there is respect between groups. Each group works to a high standard and each team works in full co-operation with other teams to create a uniform service to the children.

Training often includes staff from different teams e.g. Team Teach, Whole school days.

Two of the male child care staff currently supervise one of the new children to enable the child to safely attend lessons.

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**

Staff and children reported a wide variety of activities offered by the school. The list includes the very popular school gym, bowling, badminton, rounders, basketball, football, cricket, tennis, golf, photography, sketching, pool, snooker, swimming, indoor games, keep fit, T.V. computer games, darts, cycling, country walks, athletics, cross country competitions, fishing, workshop, moped workshop, cooking, using trains shopping, arts and crafts, discos, dances, visits to the beach, cinema, theatre, libraries and to local attractions such as Water World , Holkam Hall , High Lodge and Gressenhall Rural Life Museum. An activities programme is produced in consultation with children who can choose from several activities each evening. Some activities, such as football, include attending professional football matches and participating in football matches in the community. A group of children attended a Norwich City football match one evening during this inspection. The school also holds special themed events such as Halloween and Victorian days when children have "Victorian packed lunches".

The school trips to Derbyshire and France have proved to be very popular and successful.

The "Arts Mark Award" scheme has helped to offer more opportunity for children, particularly boarding children, to participate in arts activities. This year boarding children were the main characters in a pantomime which was performed at the Forum in Norwich and the school have been asked to conduct a drama workshop at another school. The photographs of the performance were seen by the inspector. The glee on the children's faces in the photographs demonstrate just one of the many great benefits of this scheme. Other opportunities include the "Arts Partners" scheme under which visiting professional artists, dancers, musicians and dramatists conduct workshops at the school. Staff reported that they had seen outstanding achievements made by children under this scheme. The school has produced a "Gifted and Talented" policy and is in the process of identifying children who would benefit from this policy.

The school has introduced a new comprehensive and detailed risk assessment system for activities within and outside the school. The system includes transport with extensive safety checks prior to a trip, however short, and each venue is thoroughly risk assessed and continuously updated in the light of new information. The system ensures that there is a safe balance of staff and children's vulnerabilities and that staff have all the necessary information and equipment prior to the activity, for example, information regarding individual children's needs, from medical equipment to known best de-escalation techniques. Visits to the seaside include tide timetables. This is an impressive system which enables even the most vulnerable children to enjoy a full life and it is commended.

Children also have opportunities for work experience, visits to Colleges and other work related visits and are encouraged and assisted to join clubs, particularly when they are being reintegrated into their home communities.

Children have access to age and ability related books, toys, games and videos.

The variety of activities is commended. Staff have taken extraordinary care to enable some children with very special needs to take part in these activities. The Inspector was very moved and impressed by this care and highly commends the staff team for their efforts to

ensure that all children, whatever their difficulties, can lead fulfilling lives.

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?

4

The school's detailed and comprehensive health care policy documents include the procedures for administration and handling of prescribed medication and homely remedies and information from the Dfes regarding special health care needs e.g. asthma and epilepsy. The school's Personal, Social and Health Education programme, which is frequently addressed in all lessons and by care staff as well as in separate dedicated lessons and on Be Smart days, covers all matters listed in Standard 14.

Children with very special health care needs are enabled to be fully involved in school life through the dedicated efforts of the whole staff team. Designated members of staff are trained to meet specialised health care needs and are supported and guided by health care specialists who are in regular contact with the school. If possible children are encouraged to gain independent self care skills even when this care is specialised.

The school seeks specialist health care advice and training whenever necessary and maintains close working links with the community nurse, a named G.P. and a named Consultant Community Paediatrician .

The work undertaken to promote the health care of each child, particularly for those children with very special health care needs, is commended.

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?****4**

Children reported that the food provided is “definitely enough”, “beautifully prepared”, “ten out of ten”, and that the catering staff do a “magnificent job”, “make a real effort for the kids in school” and that they should “get a pay rise”. Food sampled by the Inspector endorsed this assessment.

As with all staff groups who discussed their roles with the Inspector, the catering team demonstrated a dedication to the care of the children by the way in which they referred to children, their commitment to quality and to the development of their skills. Staff skills are recognised and encouraged, for example, bread making.

The assistant Domestic Bursar is responsible for the catering team, the laundry, the maintenance of high food hygiene standard, the planning of the seasonal three week menu cycle in accordance with The Education (Nutritional Standards for School Lunches) Regulations 2000 and children’s choices, records of food served and the catering budget, and Health and Safety of the school premises.

The catering department has been awarded the Good Food Hygiene Award by Breckland District Environmental Health Department. The last visit to the school was February 2003.

The menu provides choice for children. A second hot meal option and a vegetarian option, salad, fruit, yoghurt, ice cream, home baked bread rolls, tea and coffee are always provided. The school provides special meals when required.

The assistant Domestic Bursar consults the children about menus and children’s requests to sometimes have breakfast in their dormitories have been met. The school council forwards children’s requests and ideas to the catering team.

Older children who are undertaking independence training obtain ingredients for some of the meals they prepare for themselves from the Domestic Bursar. The Domestic Bursar purchases all fresh meat and fresh vegetables from local suppliers.

Children said that they enjoy food shopping and cooking as part of independent living training and that they can make snacks and hot drinks in their boarding accommodation.

The provision of interesting, varied, nutritious and appetising food is commended.

The catering team has plans to upgrade the dining room so that it is more homely for the children. They are currently raising the funds for new flooring, curtains, lighting and tablecloths and so on. This dedication to the happiness of children is commended.

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 are encouraged to gain independence skills in all aspects of their lives including choice and money management. Older children are given the opportunity to learn to manage their own bank accounts. Individual Independence plans are devised which include learning to make budget estimates with small amounts of money in order to shop for and prepare simple meals. This is Commended. Records are kept of money held for safe keeping and children sign the accounts.

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

The School devised a detailed and comprehensive new placement plan format prior to the last inspection and have completed the plans for all boarding children except three new children.

Staff reported the difficulties arising from inadequate information prior to the admission of new children.

The plan includes all information required in Standard 17 and there is a section for the child to sign that the plan has been discussed, understood and agreed by him/her.

The boarding case files, which are kept in the boarding accommodation, contain written target plans. Some children reported that these were placement plans and that these had been fully discussed and agreed by themselves and their keyworkers.

The new format promises to be a very useful tool and the careful work undertaken by staff to produce this document is commended.

Teaching staff have access to these plans which are held on the school's computer and child care staff have access to teacher's reports and records on the same system.

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**

The children's main case files are kept in a locked records room and are well organised so that information is readily accessible. As previously stated in this report a second case file is kept in the boarding accommodation for each boarding child.

The main files contain colour coded Detailed Record Sheets which enable staff to readily identify different types of events e.g. Achievement, Physical intervention, Child Protection. The reports selected by the Inspector for examination were sensitive, positive, and insightful and reflected the professional and careful approach taken by staff in all aspects of their work. This is commended.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.3)

The school maintains clear and accurate records on the staff and child groups of the school, and major events affecting the school and children resident there.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****3**

The Admission and Discharge Register and the Staff Register are kept on Computer records.

The Staff Personnel files contain the required information. The files contain evidence that all required checks, including Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, have been undertaken. The School has reviewed its recruitment procedure in the light of the National Minimum Standards and all existing staff have been required to produce evidence of identity and qualifications. This is commended. The School has obtained the new CRB checks on all staff.

Two of the files examined did not contain a copy of a second reference. A satisfactory explanation was given for this. The inspector advised the school to ensure that copies of second references are held on file for all staff in future.

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**

The Care Staff team have developed very good skills and methods for working closely with the families of boarding children and it is the aim of the school to utilise this expertise for the benefit of all children at the school. The current work, particularly in the areas of reintegration into home communities and into mainstream schooling, is of high value and importance. A considerable amount of the work is accomplished because there is such a high degree of goodwill among the staff team i.e. work is undertaken in staff's own time.

Families reported very good communication from the school and replies to questionnaires indicated that families have a high degree of trust in staff. The school has several methods of contacting, informing and consulting families e.g. via telephone, letters, school/home diaries, newsletters, parents evenings, open days, careers evenings, sports days, Governor's Report, home visits and Reviews.

Staff actively promote contact between children and their families and there is evidence that staff have undertaken work with individual children to enable them to communicate with the person of their choice. This is commended.

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?****3**

As with all areas of work in the school, staff liaise closely with other professionals and agencies.

The Connexions Forum described in NMS 11 of this report has been set up to move forward the Connexions service within the school to enable the needs of pupils to be met.

Throughout daily life at the school children are given opportunities to develop self care and independence skills. Older children are able to live in a self contained flat which has a domestic style kitchen and bathroom. Individual plans are produced to give the children the opportunity to develop specific life skills e.g. cooking, budgeting, shopping, and road safety in addition to the development of social skills and work experience.

As there is only one self contained flat it is only available to either boys or girls in any given year. This year the flat is occupied by girls.

Please see Recommendation for NMS 24 regarding accommodation.

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.13)

All children are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes, and children identified as having particular support needs, or particular problems, receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****3**

As previously stated in this report the school is commended for supporting children with very complex and special needs. A considerable amount of detailed work is undertaken by staff to enable these children to experience fulfilling lives and to maximise their independence.

There is evidence that the staff and the children support children following any traumatic event. The sensitive and perceptive support and care given by staff and children was observed during this inspection. This is commended.

The community nurse is currently acting as the school's Independent visitor as she is a regular visitor to the school and is known by the children.

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?

1

The boarding accommodation is not designed for use by children who use wheelchairs as many areas are not accessible by wheelchair.

The school Domestic Bursar is currently undertaking an audit of the premises in regard to access for children with disabilities.

It was Recommended at the last inspection that the school arrange a full assessment of all boarding accommodation by an Occupational Therapist so that adaptations could be made for children with disabilities, such as hearing or sight impairments, and medical conditions, such as epilepsy. This is particularly relevant to children who cannot hear fire alarms or where a balance may need to be achieved between safety and privacy for children with epilepsy when bathing. The school currently produces its own written risk assessments in such cases.

The school reported that they held a meeting with the Head of Access and Pupil Support services but that they have been unable to obtain an assessment by an occupational therapist.

The school is unable to make the adaptations required to satisfactorily safeguard the welfare of children with these disabilities without the guidance and expertise of an occupational therapist. This year there are no children boarding at the school with these disabilities. The school should not admit any child who has a disability that would place him/her at risk if the necessary adaptations have not been made.

Please see Recommendation.

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?****1**

The original structure of this accommodation is essentially institutional and outdated and this limits the possibility of providing more private and more homely accommodation for children. The situation of bathrooms outside the dormitories, the lack of privacy within dormitories and the institutional style WCs in the dormitories remain unsatisfactory.

The children were particularly concerned about the lack of privacy within dormitories.

The stairwells are uncarpeted as they are fire exit routes and therefore appear unwelcoming and unhomely despite staff efforts to cheer them up with posters.

Despite the Institutional structure of the accommodation buildings, the school has refurbished the dormitories to provide attractive, homely and warm living areas for children. The choice of decoration is bright and cheerful and the dormitories have good quality fitted carpet, curtains and furniture. This is commended.

There are five dormitories (one for girls and four for boys) and a self contained flat currently occupied by year eleven girls. Each dormitory is currently partitioned to provide five sleeping areas and one communal area. There is a sitting room and kitchen available to boys and girls, which is adjacent to the girls' dormitory.

Currently year eleven boys sleep in a five bedded dormitory. The second dormitory is currently occupied by four boys. The third is occupied by three boys, as is the fourth boys' dormitory. The girls' dormitory is occupied by three girls. It is advised by the Inspector that the monitoring of bullying is particularly important when there are an odd numbers of children sharing a dormitory. The school and the inspector discussed reducing the number of beds to a maximum of four in each dormitory to meet NMS 24.5. and the school intends to do so when the current combination of age range, gender and numbers of boarders permits.

The flat for older children offers single bedrooms and is self- contained. Staff have endeavoured to make this area homely. It is well decorated and furnished.

There are no safety devices fitted to limit the opening of windows in the accommodation which is all on the first floor. While this was not an issue at the last inspection, this is now a risk as some of the new children have threatened to jump from these windows.

Please see recommendation.

The School has gone as far as it can to minimise the institutional nature of the boarding accommodation and, as previously stated, the school is commended for this achievement. A major rebuilding programme would be necessary to bring the provision of accommodation to the required standards.

The impressive quality of the work with children who have very complex needs certainly merits financial investment.

It was Recommended at the last inspection that the School sought funding for up to date, non-institutional, domestic style accommodation which offers children adequate privacy and meets all the standards of NMS 24.

The school reported that a person from Norfolk LEA visited the school in response to this recommendation. Work to bring the accommodation up to the standards was discussed during this visit but the school has not heard any more from the LEA on the matter.

The LEA promised extra funding to provide accommodation within the school and within the

boarding facility when it directed the school to admit the new group of children. The school has not received this.

Please see Recommendations 4 and 5.

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

There are sufficient numbers of baths, showers, and WC's. The bathrooms have been refurbished and are homely and warm. As already stated the situation of the bathrooms outside the dormitories and the situation and institutional appearance of the WCs remain unsatisfactory.

Please see recommendation NMS 24

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?

3

The school has a Premises Committee which is responsible for identifying, prioritising and arranging finance for the rectification of any damage, potential hazards and maintenance needs. The Site Manager and his team are responsible for daily assessment of maintenance needs, all maintenance tasks except major works, liaising with contractors and ensuring that the school vehicles are safe. As with all staff there is no shortage of goodwill. The Site Manager voluntarily transports children on outings and for the after school club so that children may take part. The Site Manager was awarded the Caretaker of the Year 2002 Norfolk. The team's dedication to the safety and care of children is commended.

All recommendations made at the last inspection for this NMS have been met. This is commended.

As noted in NMS 13 of this report the school has set up a new extensive risk assessment system. This is commended.

STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- There are careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those employed on a contractual/sessional basis) and volunteers who work with the children in the school includes checks through the Criminal Records Bureau checking system (at Standard or Enhanced level as appropriate to their role in the school), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The School reviewed its recruitment procedure in the light of the National Minimum Standards and all existing staff and new staff have been required to produce evidence of identity and qualifications. This is commended. The School has obtained the new Criminal Records Bureau checks on all staff.

The care staff team is comprised of the Head of Care, Deputy Head of Care and seven Child Care Officers.

The school intends to promote one of the Child care officers in order to have two Deputy Heads of Care as the existing Deputy is undertaking a DipSW course. This will enable the school to provide a senior member of the team at all times that children are boarding.

Total number of care staff:

9

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

0

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)

The school is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the minimum level specified under standard 28.2. Records of staff actually working in the school demonstrate achievement of this staffing level.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The care staff team and teaching staff ensure that the school is adequately staffed at all times.

There are two more Child Care Officers than at the last inspection as a result of a recommendation made at that inspection. This is commended.

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**

Staff reported that the school is committed to the provision of training and development opportunities for staff.

Specific training subjects, such as Child Protection and De-escalation and Restraint techniques are the responsibility of trained members of staff. The designated member of staff for Child Protection is responsible for training and updating the whole staff team. The Headmaster, The Head of Care and a Child Care Officer are responsible for training and updating the whole staff team in Team Teach, the de-escalation and restraint method used at the school.

Training undertaken by various staff includes Autism, Citizenship, Better Management of challenging behaviour, Receptive and expressive language difficulties, Introduction to counselling, First aid, ICT, Food Hygiene and Fire safety.

As stated in the last inspection report, the care staff are employed by the County Council Education Authority so they are not informed of relevant training which is provided by the County Council Social Services for care staff employed at the Council's Children's Homes.

As most of the training programmes listed in Appendix 2 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools are the same as those listed in the NMS for Children's Homes Appendix 2 the benefits of interdepartmental training provision and "Working Together" are obvious.

The school reported that it has been unable to gain access to courses provided by Social Services.

Please see advisory recommendation.

The Ancillary Staff team discussed Child Protection Issues with the Inspector and, like all staff groups at the school, they demonstrated commitment to the care of the children.

Ancillary staff have received child protection training as recommended in the last inspection report. This is commended.

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?****4**

Outstanding qualities of this school are the total commitment to whole school teamwork, the Headmaster's full support of all staff, and the support that staff give to each other. The school operates a formal supervision system for care staff, which leads to formal annual appraisals.

The School was recognised as an Investor in People in October 2002. The Investors in People Report quoted from the School's Vision Statement, "We will provide a caring, nurturing environment that recognises and caters for the needs of the pupils, staff, parents, governors and anyone concerned with the progress of our school".

There is ample evidence that this happens in practice. The school is commended for its care of all its members.

The high score of 4 for this standard is for the school lead by its very special Headteacher. The school was recognised as a school of excellence in 2001 when it was awarded **Beacon Status**. The last report from Ofsted in 2000 stated that "in 1994 the school was found to be in need of special measures" and that the headteacher's "exceptionally strong and effective leadership had "led directly to the excellent progress made".

The Headteacher has been in consultation with the LEA regarding the high levels of challenging behaviour since the admission of the new group of children and he has written to the LEA regarding staff wellbeing.

The Headteacher, Mr M J Clayton, who received the OBE this year in recognition of his achievements, is currently on sick leave due to work related stress. It is unlikely that he will return to the school.

Please see Recommendations 4 and 5.

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.
- Children enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

The school is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible childcare.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Head of Care has experience of senior work with children since 1986 and has been in his current role since 1999. He holds the Diploma in Social Work, Certificate in Health and Social care (OU), Certificate HE (Care and Education in the Community) and DipHE Social Work (OU). He has undertaken ACPC Foundation Training Child Protection and LEA /ACPC Designated Teacher Training and is a Team Teach Intermediate tutor.

The Deputy Head of Care has held a senior child care post at the school since 1993 and is currently undertaking DIPsw. He has also undertaken LEA/ACPC Designated Teacher Training.

Two Child care officers have NVQ level 3 in Child Care, and the other child care officers have begun working towards NVQ level 3 in Child Care. In addition to NVQ level 3 and NNEB, one child care officer has also undertaken ACPC Foundation Training Child Protection, LEA/ACPC Designated Teacher Training, ACPC "Preparing for New Legislation", ACPC Domestic Violence Training, and training in Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Care of the Dying and Bereaved. Another child care officer, in addition to NVQ level 3 is a Team Teach Intermediate Tutor, and has completed training in Protective Behaviours, Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Care of the Dying and Bereaved. Most care staff have undertaken Emergency First Aid, Basic food Hygiene and Fire Safety training. The new staff will undertake these courses in the near future. One child care officer has a Diploma in Sports Science and another holds a Certificate in Health and Social Care (OU).

It is planned that all Care Staff will become qualified to at least NVQ level 3 by 2005.

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

44 %

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

The National Care Standards Commission is informed within 24 hours if a receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy becomes responsible for the school. Such persons on becoming responsible for the school have ensured that the school continues to be managed on a day to day basis by a Head who meets recruitment and qualification requirements for a Head under these Standards. Such a temporary Head must make sure that the operation of the school meets the requirements of these standards in relation to the day to day running of the school.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The School produces a termly report and an annual report for the Governors.
The Head of Care sits on the Governing Body in an advisory capacity so that the governors of the school are kept abreast of developments.
Monitoring of matters such as behaviour, restraint and child protection is conducted on a continuous basis and reported to the Headteacher weekly. The Head of Care reports daily to the Headteacher.

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?**

1

The school reported that the designated visitor has given solid support to the school in care and welfare issues but has been unable to maintain the necessary frequency of visits due to heavy commitments with Industrial and Race Relation Tribunals and JP duties.
Please see Recommendation .

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

PART D**HEAD'S RESPONSE**

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

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 19th January 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

Providers comments and any action plan are available at the Area Office, where these have been submitted.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

☐

Head's comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate

☐

Note:

In instances where there is a major difference of view between the Inspector and the Head both views will be made available on request to the Area Office.

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 13 April 2004, 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

☐

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

☐

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

☐

Other:

☐

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

Head's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies.

D.3.1 I _____ of _____
confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation
of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that
I agree with the recommended actions made and will seek to comply with
these.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

Or

D.3.2 I _____ of _____
am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

--

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Head both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.