



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Bramfield House School

**Walpole Road
Bramfield
Halesworth
Suffolk
IP19 9AB**

Lead Inspector
Joe Staines

Announced Inspection
25th 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	Bramfield House School
Address	Walpole Road Bramfield Halesworth Suffolk IP19 9AB
Telephone number	01986 784235
Fax number	01986 784645
Email address	bramfieldh@aol.com
Provider Web address	www.woodbridge.suffolk.sch.uk
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Acorn Care and Education
Name of Head	Mrs D. Jennings
Name of Head of Care	Mark Allen
Age range of residential pupils	
Date of last welfare inspection	19 th September 2005

Brief Description of the School:

Bramfield House was established as a School in 1970. In 1986 it became approved as a school suitable for the admission of pupils for whom statements are maintained, and has kept this status and remains approved by the Secretary of State under Section 347(1) and (3) of the Education Act 1996.

The School has been purchased since the last inspection and is now owned by Acorn Care, a company that is involved with other residential special schools and therapeutic settings. The School is run on a day-to-day basis by the Headteacher, Deirdre Jennings, supported by senior staff, teachers, and a team of pastoral and ancillary staff.

The School is situated in a rural setting, on the outskirts of Bramfield - a small village in the northern part of Suffolk. The actual location of the School is between the villages of Bramfield and Walpole. The nearest towns are Halesworth, Beccles, and Southwold.

The School premises comprise the main Hall, which includes the boarding accommodation, and a range of separate school buildings used for teaching and recreation. The School is set in 10 acres of grounds used for sports and recreation, and there is also an indoor swimming pool.

At the time of this inspection, a total of 41 boys were on the Roll, and being educated at the School. Of these, 32 were boarders, with a further 9 attending the School on a daytime basis only. The School is open weekdays Monday to Friday, during term times. All boarders returned to their own homes at the weekends, and some boarders also went home for overnight stays, during the school week.

SUMMARY

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

This was a key inspection, which focused on the core standards relating to residential special schools. The report has been written using accumulated evidence gathered prior to and during the inspection. This inspection took place over two day, the 25th & 27th September 2006. The inspection was undertaken by Joe Staines, Regulation Inspector and Cecilia McKillop, Regulation Inspector.

During the course of the inspection, the inspectors joined boarders and staff for lunch and the evening meal, spent one evening observing boarders and staff interacting and one morning where breakfast was taken with boarders and staff. For this inspection, the lead inspector decided to ascertain the views of boarders through individual and small group discussions. This proved a useful method and approximately 95% of boarders joined in either one of the groups described above, with the remainder making a positive choice not to speak to inspectors. Discussions were also held with members of care staff, members of the management team including senior care staff, the head of care and the head teacher. The examination of school records and policies relating to the assessed standards were examined

Questionnaires were also sent to all parents of boarders, with 14 responses in total received. The responses received from parents were consistently positive, with no adverse comments made apart from one reference to a specific complaint, which was being investigated. Examples of the views expressed by parents were,

- "XX has become a well adjusted young lad and I have to say this is thanks to the staff at Bramfield House",
- " They always have time for you",
- "staff are excellent, very patient with the boys and go out of their way for the boys and their families",
- "The members of staff are brilliant",
- "They involve me in everything XX is doing",
- "He loves coming to school now, a few years ago I couldn't get him out of the door, when I did he was sent home because he couldn't cope",
- "All big decisions are made between myself and staff".
- "I think all the staff at Bramfield house do a very good job indeed and I have seen a big improvement in my son XX since he has been there. Not just in the ways he follows rules and boundaries but in his confidence as well".

What the school does well:

Bramfield House provides care and education to boarders with identified emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many of the boarders have histories of challenging behaviour and difficulties forming attachments with their peers and adults alike. As stated above, the feedback received from parents was extremely positive about the support received from staff at the school, and the way their children had responded to the care received.

One of the best ways in which the schools supports boarders is the way in which the school works with boarders, many of whom have histories of challenging and unsafe behaviour to promote positive behaviours and responds appropriately to incidents of negative behaviours.

Staff communication and support was identified as very good by all of the staff interviewed.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has implemented a number of initiatives to counter the ongoing problem of bullying within the school. "Circle time" and face-to-face meetings were reported to have had a positive effect for victims and perpetrators of bullying. The senior care worker showed that the school was continually trying to assess and address any problems boarders were experiencing or presenting to staff.

The school has also introduced some additional means by which staff can maintain good communication with each other and ensure greater levels of staff supervision of boarders.

What they could do better:

The school needs to introduce proactive strategies for responding to staffing shortfalls, whether they be as a result of the needs of boarders in order to keep them safe, or in respect of issues relating to staff sickness, training needs, or the pressures of creating and maintaining adequate records/plans in respect of boarders.

Staff vetting needs to include all the required checks, and the schools recruitment strategies and systems may need to be looked at to ensure this does not compromise the safety of boarders.

The overall observations of this inspection identified that the staff team do a very good job of working directly with children whose needs are diverse, complicated and challenging. However, there is a need for the school to look at ways in which it can maintain the high quality interventions it provides, whilst improving the record keeping and planning activities required to provide a service that is both high quality on a personal level, and demonstrates the required levels of recorded and evidenced planning.

Further improvements are also needed in relation to medication records, staff supervision, maintenance of the building,

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.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

CONTENTS

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

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)

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

14 & 15

Quality in this outcome area is adequate.

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

Children, and those responsible for them can expect to live in a healthy environment, but the school needs to improve it's medication recording procedures to provide full confidence in this area.

Children, and those responsible for them can also expect the school to provide freshly prepared meals, in a good setting, but there is room for more availability of healthy, nutritious meals.

EVIDENCE:

The pre inspection questionnaire confirmed, *"Medication is kept in a locked cabinet in an allocated room. Medication is administered by nominated senior staff in the absence of the school nurse. Records are kept of any medication administered. Regular medication, for example Ritalin or Concerta X, is taken to the child while they are having their meal, either breakfast, lunch, or tea".* The same document also confirmed *"Children have regular dental and optician appointments, although this is becoming problematic, as there is not a National Health Dentist at the practice at present. If a child needs to see a doctor, an appointment will be made at the local surgery, by the School nurse".*

One of the Inspectors met with the school nurse and examined the storage and record keeping arrangements in respect of medications. These were found to be well maintained, however, a flaw was identified in the procedures the school has in place for the recording of evening medication. Currently the school nurse prepares the evening medication for children by placing the appropriate tablets in named pots, these are given by care staff in the evening and, following feedback from the senior member of staff the next morning, the

school nurse signs to confirm that the medication was administered. This system does not provide satisfactory levels of protection to children, and the school will need to revise the system to ensure that records are only completed by the person who actually gives the medication. The sick bay was tidy, with all medicines stored in appropriate containers, and there was a range of information leaflets / booklets regarding drugs, smoking, abuse, and sexual health for men.

The inspectors joined the boarders and staff for three meals – breakfast, lunch, and tea. Meals were well ordered affairs, with boarders and staff assigned to specific tables, each of which had a nominated “clearer” who was responsible for removing all used crockery and cutlery. Bearing in mind the needs of children placed at the school, it was impressive how orderly and well managed the meals were, with staff working hard to ensure all children were engaged with. Conversation was encouraged and good table manners were promoted. Each of the meals sampled contained vegetables, however the feedback from boarders confirmed that the levels of fresh fruit, salads and raw vegetables was normally low. The inspectors confirmed the recent developments in the area of providing healthier meals in the form of the provision of low sodium salt and raw cane brown sugar for meals. The head of care also reported that staff were ensuring boarders were not having unhealthy amounts of sugar on their cereals. The inspectors did notice that a number of children at the school appeared overweight, and advice was given by the inspectors that the school may wish to consider providing healthy meal options in the form of a salad bar, or baked potato option with fillings. Advice was also given that the school may wish to consider approaching a nutritionalist for advice on healthy meal provision.

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)

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

3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 & 27

Quality in this outcome area is adequate.

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

Children, and those responsible for them can expect that the school respects the privacy of boarders, deals effectively with complaints, and responds appropriately to the problem of bullying and children leaving the school site without permission. They can also be confident that the school promotes positive behaviours through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and good relationships between boarders and staff. However, the number of child protection referrals and slow response from the proprietors to identified child protection concerns means confidence around children's physical safety cannot be completely assured, and some improvements are needed to records in

relation to restraint and risk assessments. Similarly, the school cannot provide adequate assurance in relation to staff vetting procedures

EVIDENCE:

The inspectors spoke with approximately 95% of boarders during the inspection. Privacy was not generally identified as an issue, although some boarders reported that on occasions, some boarders had flicked open one of the curtains provided in the showers. Showers have double curtains, one separating the shower itself from a small changing area, which was also sectioned off from the main room by another curtain. Staff and boarders confirmed that staff supervise the area when showers are being taken.

Boarders confirmed that there was always a means available to them to make telephone contact with their families, whilst their privacy was maintained. Children's records were secured within filing cabinets in lockable rooms.

All of the boarders who were interviewed stated that they were aware of how to make a complaint, and would approach any member of staff if they had reason to complain. There were notices around the school giving information about how to contact external agencies, such as child line, if anyone wished to speak to someone from outside the school about concerns/complaints. The school had produced a leaflet entitled "worried and complaints, If something goes wrong-this leaflet explains what you can do". There was also information about what to do if you are unhappy in the handbook provided to children on their admission to the school as a boarder. However, the feedback from some boarders was that they did not have complete confidence in the informal means of making complaints, and that they were not fully aware or confident in the use of the "I want you to know" forms.

The school had a clear child protection procedure, with information included about the procedure for investigating child protection matters and the procedure for selecting staff to work at the school. The head of the school, Mrs Jennings, was the named person responsible for coordinating child protection matters and liaising with other agencies.

The examination of records held at the school and provided by other agencies as part of the pre inspection information gathering exercise showed that there had been a number of child protection referrals made since the last inspection that confirmed child-to-child abuse had taken place. As a result of the subsequent enquiries, it had been identified that staffing levels at the school were not sufficient to ensure adequate levels of protection to all boarders. Some minor changes to the staffing structure had been implemented, including altering the hours of one senior member of the care team so he is available in school throughout much of the day. An action plan had been produced by the proprietors to address, amongst other things, this issue. The action plan

included a review of care staffing arrangements, which had resulted in a commitment by the proprietors to appoint three new members of care staff, including one extra waking night member of staff. However, the new staff were not in post at the time of the inspection. The child protection issues required a more urgent response, and the inspectors would have expected the school to implement some emergency additional staffing whilst longer-term measures were considered. Roughly half of the boarders spoken to during the inspection reported that supervision of boarders at night was inconsistent, with the waking night staff having to occasionally leave their post on the main landing, to answer the telephone, or for some other reason, this left boarders vulnerable, and some reported that some other boarders waited until the waking night member of staff had left the landing, at which time they bullied other boarders. As a result of one child protection enquiry, specific training had been provided to all care staff in child protection by the local authority safeguarding children team and the equivalent branch of the local police force. Other interim measures had been taken to provide additional levels of supervision during the day, including providing walkie talkies to care staff, and changing the rota to provide more supervision of activities.

Regarding bullying, it must be noted that Bramfield School accepts children with high levels of challenging behaviour, including children with a history of violence towards others. Levels of reported bullying were lower than at previous inspections, and the school had implemented a number of measures to continue tackling this difficult problem. Feedback from staff confirmed the statement made by the head in the pre inspection information that staff are aware of who presents a risk through bullying behaviour. The pre inspection material produced by the school also identified the excellent relationships experienced between boarders and staff as one of the key ways the school tackled bullying, and this was evidenced by the interaction observed between boarders and staff, and in the responses by boarders, when interviewed, about their levels of confidence in staff to tackle problems of bullying. Posters were seen, promoting respect and tolerance by everyone, and new "I want you to know" forms had been introduced, giving young people a way of reporting bullying confidentially, although there was little evidence of these forms being used. The head and head of care reported that the school had placed an emphasis of face to face meetings between the perpetrators and victims of bullying, where appropriate, which were described as "very successful" in the pre inspection documentation, and had assured the victim that the matter had been dealt with. Most boarders confirmed that staff responded to any observed incidents of bullying, but did highlight one or two boarders who were seen as consistent offenders. This information was passed to the head, who agreed to respond accordingly.

The examination of records showed that risk assessments and care plans were in place for all boarders, however, these often did not tally, with a number of risk assessments and/or care planning identifying issues that were not addressed in the corresponding document. A number of care plans had been

marked “no change” where examination of other records showed that issues had been identified that warranted an updated plan.

The school’s procedures for children missing without authority were described in the pre inspection questionnaire. They included initial contact with the family and placing authority in cases of a failure to return to school from a weekend break, and procedures in relation to cases of children going missing from the school, including liaising with the police via an agreed protocol.

The School continued to encourage mutually respectful relationships – between boarders, and between boarders and staff. The 4pm meeting, designed to reflect on the events of the day, helped to focus attention on positive points, as well as making mention of things that had not gone so well. Boundaries were in place, and supervision of boarders was such that there were, as far as was possible, staff on hand to anticipate and deflect what could otherwise become significant events or challenging situations. This was particularly noticeable at mealtimes, when each table of pupils included at least a member of staff, keeping a watching brief on table manners, and interactions between pupils sitting together.

Each of the house dormitories also had named pastoral staff who had responsibility for supervising these areas and supporting the boarders sleeping in those rooms. It was clear from the discussion groups that some staff working at Bramfield House are held in high esteem by the boarders, including staff who boarders they felt they could talk to, if they had a worry or concern.

The School operated a Points system, designed to encourage and reward pupils who are able to maintain a reasonable attitude during the day. Additional points could be earned for volunteering with extra chores. Points were deducted for significant misbehaviour and disruptive attitudes. The boarders understood the Points system, and they felt it was one way in which they could positively achieve. One boarder drew the inspectors attention to what they felt was an inappropriate sanction. This was passed to the head to investigate and report on under separate cover. The whole school meetings, held in the morning before School, and in the afternoon, at the end of the School day, included discussion about points that had been achieved and deducted. The feedback from parents of boarders contained some particularly impressive comments about the way their children’s behaviour had improved since boarding at Bramfield. The records of restraint were missing some important data, including a description of the debriefing given to boarders following an incident of restraint, or the antecedents to the incident in question. Through discussion with the head and other staff, it was clear to the inspectors that the head monitors the records of restraint, and responds appropriately to any concerns arising from them, however, time restraints meant that this monitoring was not always recorded. However, the school did maintain its own analysis of restraints, which enabled them to identify any trends and patterns regarding particular staff members, year groups, or individual boarders. The

head was able to provide very good evidence that she was fully aware of, and had responded to, the trends identified in this analysis document.

The discussions held with inspectors and boarders led to several positive comments about the relationships between boarders and staff, including confirmation that the staff were caring and could be approached by boarders who had personal problems.

The examination of staff files confirmed the statement, made by the head in the pre inspection material that some members of staff had started working at the school before their CRB certificate had been returned. This practice does not provide the levels of protection needed for boarders and is not in line with the requirements set out in National Minimum Standards 27.2 and a recommendation has been made in respect of this. The head reported that such practice was only considered when staffing levels were felt to place children at risk.

The examination of fire safety records showed that routine testing was ongoing at appropriate intervals.

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)

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

12, 13 & 22

Quality in this outcome area is good.

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

Children, and those responsible for them can expect that the school will promote the education of boarders, and provide ample opportunities for boarders to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities. Children, and those responsible for them can also be confident that individual support is available, based on the needs of the child concerned, however, the lack of an identifiable independent person, to whom boarders could turn to, reduces the level of confidence Children, and those responsible for them can have in the range of support available.

EVIDENCE:

Care staff spend portions of their time supporting boarders during the school day and therefore have a good understanding of boarders educational needs and progress. The records seen included school reports and statements of educational needs. Boarders confirmed that they have access to school equipment during the evenings, if they require it.

The School had a good programme of activities and real choices could be made. These were decided on at the time of the 4pm meeting, when boys were asked to say what activities they would like to join in, and were given a choice of at least 3 / 4 activities, each night. Some of these activities were based in the School, and some involved trips away. Some offered quieter activity,

whilst others offered exercise, noise, and fun. If a boy had received a sanction, his choice of activity might be restricted for a particular evening.

This inspection took place during the late summer, and it was positive to see a number of boarders enjoying outdoor games, supervised by staff. The evening activities were highlighted by a number of boarders as the most positive aspect of the school. Activities were planned on a daily basis, and included, amongst other things, football, use of the gym, mountain biking (for which staff have trained to use safely), indoor games, such as pool, snooker and table tennis, and trips to organised activity centres including roller skating, go karting, paintball, lazer quest and trips to an activity centre. One member of staff was a trained horse riding instructor and has organised this for some boarders.

The observations of the inspectors, and feedback from both boarders and parents, confirmed that children do receive help, guidance and support from care staff and teachers who understand and respond to the needs of boarders at Bramfield. The care staff were seen actively encouraging children to join in activities as a group. Boarders confirmed in one to one interviews that they could approach all staff with problems, and that staff were caring in their responses. The attitude of the staff team up to and including the head was the subject of praise from parents in the responses received to the pre inspection survey undertaken by the inspector as part of this inspection.

In terms of the development of an independent advocacy service for boarders, this remains to be addressed. Boarders identified, in discussion with inspectors, that they would welcome the availability of an independent person who was visible, and to whom they could turn to in times of worry or distress. Advice was given that the school may wish to consider approaching the local authority, who employ children's rights officers to undertake regular visits to establishments accommodating looked after children, to see if they could access this service. Previous recommendations have been made for this area of the Schools provision to be developed, but, to date, the School has been unable to find anyone local, who would be willing or suited to take this on. To it's credit, the school has identified a number of organisations, such as childline, who boarders can contact independently if they wish to discuss concerns, with numbers displayed around the school. However, the Inspectors felt that it was an important area that needed to be addressed – particularly for boarders who could benefit from the opportunity to talk to someone who was neither connected directly to the School (i.e. a member of staff), or was a member of their own family, or a friend. A repeat recommendation was therefore made, in this regard.

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)

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

2, 9, 11, 17 & 20

Quality in this outcome area is good.

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

Boarders, and those responsible for them, can be confident that the school gives boarders a voice in the school, however, more work could be done in ensuring boarders are aware of, and use the systems available to them.

Relationships between boarders and staff, including senior staff, provide Boarders, and those responsible for them with deserved confidence in the work the school undertakes with boarders.

Boarders, and those responsible for them can expect to receive a detailed and sensitively handled admission process.

More work needs to be undertaken in relation to producing updated care plans, before confidence in this area can be assured.

Boarders, and those responsible for them can be confident that the school provides good methods and resources to support ongoing contact for boarders and their families.

EVIDENCE:

The school has produced a handbook to life at the school. This document was informative and easy to read with lots of pictures and details of activities. Young people who wish to make a complaint are referred to staff, the head, the head of care, or national organisations, such as the youth advisory service.

Young people are given tools to raise issues such as the "I want you to know" form, and this was seen to be used during the course of the inspection. Regular meetings are held with the young people that are minuted, although these are not displayed for young people to read. While these meetings provide a good forum for discussion items were not always carried over from one meeting to another and would appear to get lost. One young person expressed some dissatisfaction and said that items that young people raise are not taken forward.

The relationships between staff and children was identified as very positive by parents who replied to the pre inspection survey of their views. Some of the comments made have been referred to in the summary of this report. The observations of the inspectors confirmed the view that relationships were indeed based on honesty and respect. A number of boarders had histories of very challenging behaviour, and difficulties with forming relationships with adults. It is to the credit of the staff and the school, that boundaries were generally maintained and staff were able to communicate their expectations of young people in a consistent way. Boarders stated to inspectors that being at the school had helped them manage their behaviour better, and living at the school was a more positive experience than their previous placements. Another boarder stated that "staff treat you as a family". Staff training included an in house induction, which included sections on privacy and respect, and that tied in with the school's mission statement, which makes a clear commitment to its core values of dignity, empathy, communication, care, fun and positive interactions, all of which the care staff demonstrated a commitment to in interviews and observed practice. The Headteacher and senior team took particular interest in the pastoral care of boarders including those with complex and difficult family situations and backgrounds. This was borne out by the fact that they were prepared to visit these families during school holidays.

One boarder, who spoke with the inspectors, confirmed that the admission process to the School had been good. It had involved a visit from the former Head of the School, a visit to the School before deciding whether or not to move there, and a chance to get to know the staff, and other boys. The head played an active role in ensuring new boarders were settling in well, and identifying any potential problems. Boarders confirmed that they got allocated another boarder to help them settle in when they first arrived at the school. Members of care staff confirmed that they received a good handover from the

senior staff about the information the school had been able to obtain about new boarders.

As stated in the pre inspection information provided by the school, the inspection of records showed that each boarder at the school had a care plan. However some contained a lack of clarity when identifying performance indicators in respect of identified plans. Other plans contained insufficient information about how to manage identified needs. The head, and head of care, both reported that this was an area the school intended to develop, but low staffing levels meant that in order to review all the plans, and develop up to date ones, would take care staff away from their primary task, that of providing day to day care for boarders.

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):

23 & 24

Quality in this outcome area is adequate.

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

Boarders cannot be completely confident that the accommodation is designed in accordance with their needs, or maintained to a high standard.

EVIDENCE:

Two boarders guided the inspectors around the boarding accommodation. The overall state of decoration and furnishing was best described as “tatty”. Overall, the carpets were worn, one carpet was torn, with a temporary tape fixing in place. Some of the paintwork needed repainting due to chips and flaking paintwork, and doors were in need of repainting.

The boarder’s feedback about nighttime safety included comments about the movement between dormitories during the night. Some of the dorms had inter connecting doors, and it was stated that some boarders moved into connecting dorms during the night, unnoticed by the waking night officer, and bullied boarders in other dormitories.

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)

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

1,28, 29, 30, 31 & 33

Quality in this outcome area is poor.

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

The schools statement of purpose needs to reflect the change in ownership, to before boarders, and those responsible for them can have 100% confidence in the document. Whilst individual staff clearly understand the needs of boarders, the schools systems for ensuring adequate numbers of staff, and for ensuring adequate supervision and training is undertaken by those staff, need to be improved to give the necessary assurances to those using the service.

The school clearly monitors, and responds to all events affecting boarders, however, better records will provide the necessary assurance to those using the service.

Boarders, and those responsible for them, can be confident that the school is monitored by the proprietors.

EVIDENCE:

The school has a prospectus and a mission statement, which describe the way the school operates, however, the new proprietors confirmed, prior to the inspection, that they had not yet reviewed the statement of purpose, as identified in the National Minimum Standards.

As identified earlier in this report, the school have procedures in place for vetting all new members of staff, which includes the checks identified in the National Minimum Standards, however, there had been occasions when the school had appointed staff before the receipt of a CRB check and this practice does not provide the levels of protection needed for boarders. The head reported that such practice was only considered when staffing levels were felt to place children at risk.

Recent safeguarding children investigations highlighted the need for higher staffing levels to provide adequate protection of boarders from abuse. In addition to this, the head teacher and head of care both reported that the staffing levels currently operating at the school did not allow sufficient time for the development and implementation of care plans and risk assessments in respect of boarders.

Supervision records showed that the majority of care staff had not received one to one supervision, as identified in the National Minimum Standards.

One of the positive developments regarding staffing was the development of the post "senior care worker". The postholder was an experienced member of care staff who, feedback from staff confirmed, was held in high regard by the care staff, and who had implemented a number of positive developments, including developing specific strategies with boarders and members of staff where difficulties had been identified.

A training programme had been produced by the school, including a good in house induction that included an introduction to the schools child protection procedures, and a schedule for staff to undertake the skills for care induction, and NVQ training. There were three members of care staff beginning the process of undertaking NVQ training on the last day of the inspection. However, the head of care reported that, with current staffing levels, the estimated time it would take to achieve the level of 80% of care staff holding the NVQ level 3 in caring for children and young people was between 5 and 6 years.

The inspectors saw a report, produced on behalf of the proprietors to report on the conduct of the school. Because the proprietor's representative was new to the school, the report identified the actions taken to gain an understanding of how the school operated, and to meet key people. The report was sent to the commission, as identified in the National Minimum Standards.

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	2
15	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3
4	3
5	1
6	3
7	X
8	3
10	4
26	2
27	2

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3
13	3
22	2

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	X
21	X
23	2
24	2
25	X

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	2
18	X
19	X
28	2
29	3
30	2
31	2
32	3
33	3

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

YES

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1.	RS26	The school should ensure that risk assessments completed in respect of boarders contain clear control measures the school has identified to reduce or eliminate risk. NB: This is a repeat recommendation	30/11/06
2.	RS22	The school should identify at least one person, independent of the school and/or the child's placing authority, whom they may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. NB: This is a repeat recommendation	30/11/06
3.	RS27	The school should ensure that staff members do not begin work (or residence) until satisfactory completion of all checks and receipt of references. NB: This is a repeat recommendation	30/11/06
4.	RS31	The school should produce a written action plan, detailing the measures it intends to take, and the timescales involved, to ensure 80% of care staff have completed their level 3 in the caring for Children and Young People. NB: This is a repeat recommendation	30/11/06
5	RS14	The school should ensure that medication policy and practice provides that medication records are only completed by the person administering the medication.	30/11/06

6	RS5	The school should ensure that it's child protection procedures allow for the emergency appointment of extra staff where this is warranted.	30/11/06
7	RS1	The new proprietors of the school should review and update the school's statement of purpose.	30/11/06
8	RS23	The school should provide staff with a means of being alerted to movement between inter connecting dormitories.	30/12/06
9	RS24	The school should ensure that all parts of the boarding accommodation are kept to a good state of repair and decoration	30/11/06
10	RS28	The school should produce a staffing policy containing the information identified in National Minimum Standard 28	30/11/06
11	RS28	The school should ensure that staffing levels are adjusted at short notice where child protection concerns identify such a need.	30/11/06
12	RS30	The school should ensure that all staff receive recorded one to one supervision, covering the areas identified in the National Minimum Standards, at no less than half termly intervals.	30/11/06

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Suffolk Area Office

St Vincent House

Cutler Street

Ipswich

Suffolk

IP1 1UQ

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

Email: enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.csci.org.uk

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