



Champions for
Social Care
Improvement

inspection report

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

Ripple Vale School

Chapel Lane

Ripple

Deal

Kent

CT14 8JG

9th February 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

Ripple Vale School

Address

Chapel Lane, Ripple,
Deal, Kent, CT14 8JG

Tel No:

01304 373866

Fax No:

01304 381011

Email Address:

info@ripplevaleschool.co.uk

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

Mr C Danican/Mr C Davies

Name of Head

Mr D Wilton

NCSC Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Residential Special
School

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

15/02/04

Date of Inspection Visit		9th February 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10.00	
Name of NCSC Inspector	1	Josie McCabe	080135
Name of NCSC Inspector	2	June Davies	
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		Linda Dennis (Head of Care)	

CONTENTS

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

Brief Description of the school and Residential Provision

Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings

What the school does well in Boarding Welfare

What the school should do better in Boarding Welfare

Conclusions and overview of findings on Boarding Welfare

Notifications to Local Education Authority or Secretary of State

Implementation of Recommended Actions from last inspection

Recommended Actions from this inspection

Advisory Recommendations from this inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods Used & Findings

Inspection Methods Used

- 1. Statement of the School's Purpose**
- 2. Children's rights**
- 3. Child Protection**
- 4. Care and Control**
- 5. Quality of Care**
- 6. Planning for care**
- 7. Premises**
- 8. Staffing**
- 9. Organisation and Management**

Part C: Lay Assessor's Summary (where applicable)

Part D: Head's Response

- D.1. Head's comments**
- D.2. Action Plan**
- D.3. Head's agreement**

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 Ripplevale 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

Ripplevale School is a residential special school, situated in the village of Ripple, near Deal, Kent. It is about ten minutes drive away from the main town, beach and facilities of Deal. The school provides day and boarding education within a 'supported Learning Environment for up to 45 boys aged 10-16 years who are described as having emotional and behavioural difficulties.'

The school is set within its own large grounds and the boarding accommodation is contained within the main house. The residential provision is managed by a Head of Care, Deputy Head of Care and team of residential support workers, with the Head Teacher and two working Proprietors overseeing matters. At the time of the inspection there were 16 residential pupils and 12 day pupils. The school has achieved the Investors in People award.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

Evidence was seen of a culture of openness at the school, with all the staff working together as a team to meet the needs of the boarders. There are internal and external monitoring systems in place. Staff informed the Inspectors that they enjoyed working at the school and they were seen interacting with the boarders in a caring and considerate manner. There is good support for individual boarders. Boarders informed the Inspectors that they liked the staff, knew who to go to if they had any concerns and the staff helped them. They also liked the activities organised and their redecorated and refurbished bedrooms. The school has worked hard in meeting the recommendations from the last inspection and has reviewed its policies and procedures.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

Refurbishment of areas as detailed within this report. Increase in staffing levels as planned for. Formal consultation with parents and placing authorities to include post placement questionnaires as part of a quality assurance system.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

The Inspectors would like to thank the young people, staff, Head Teacher and Proprietors for their time during the inspection. The boarders were keen to accompany the Inspectors on the tour of the boarding accommodation and recreational areas and they were polite and assertive. There were some boarders who displayed challenging behaviour during the inspection and have particular needs. Staff were seen to be managing this behaviour in a calm manner. On the whole, the care of boarders is good at the school. However, the increase in staffing levels would give more time for staff to carry out their duties and the increase in boarder supervision that is currently required of them. Staff and the school are to be applauded on their commitment to the boarders.

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	RS26	Boy's showers to be refurbished.	01.06.04
		Staff washing facilities to be refurbished.	01.06.04
		Locks on w.c. doors to be replaced.	01.04.04
		Portable appliance electrical testing to be completed.	01.06.04
		Radiators covers to be installed.	01.06.04

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	RS3	To include details of help-lines, the Independent Visitor and the National Care Standards Commission area office within the student handbook.
2	RS14	Ritalin to be stored and administered as a controlled drug.

3	RS14	Checklist to be drawn up to monitor the contents of the medicine cupboard and to ensure that no out of date medicines are being stored.
4	RS15	Choices for the menu to be ascertained via the student council or house meetings.
5	RS25	Locks on w.c.'s on senior boys landing to be replaced. Staff washing facilities to be refurbished.
6	RS26	An outcome section to be included within the health and safety checklist.
7	RS27	Telephone references to be recorded.
8	RS28	The new staffing structure to be forwarded to the lead Inspector.
9	RS32	The Head Teacher to include the details as detailed in 32.4 of this standard within the yearly report of the school.

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	NA

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	NO
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	NA
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	NO
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	09/02/04
Time of Inspection	10.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	16.5
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	2

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?	3
The school has a Statement of Purpose which has been reviewed and accurately reflects its purpose and aim. It is available to parents, boarders and staff. There is also a useful student handbook, which explains rights and expectations in a brightly produced form. There is a prospectus, which gives information about the school.		

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way that the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.
- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.

Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

Children's opinions, and those of their families or significant others, are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and their future. Feedback is given following consultations.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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Boarders opinions and those of families and significant others are collected in various ways. This includes daily residential house meetings, the student council, via the link working process, tutor system and formal reviews. Evidence was seen in records of contact with families and placing authorities. There are home/school books for residential staff to liaise with families when boarders go home and they ring them on a weekly basis. Feedback was given to the senior management team with regard to some comments from placing authorities and parents in that they did not always feel consulted over the way the school was run, however, the school confirmed they were in the process of sending out questionnaires in this respect. Evidence has been given of the school keeping parents and placing authorities informed of events and they are involved in the setting up of placement plans and attend reviews. Action taken by the school as a result of listening to young people have been changes to the menu, purchasing of resources, bedroom changes, provision of the telephone kiosk, school lunchtime arrangements and the purchase of a DVD player and new television. Action taken by the school as a result of consulting with parents have been closer monitoring of individual boys with reports home, home/school books provided, transport arrangement changes, planned curtailment of independent activities for safety reasons.

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?****3**

There are policies for staff to follow with regard to privacy and confidentiality. Boarders have access to their records and have the opportunity to sign and agree records made about them. Records are kept safely and securely. Boarders have their own telephone in the house where they can make and receive calls and they have been involved in making a telephone kiosk in woodwork lessons. Several boarders have their own mobile telephones and can also make calls in private in the residential staff office, to their parents and social workers. Information about help-lines was displayed in the telephone box to include the Independent Visitor and National Care Standards area office details. The school provides space for boarders to meet privately with parents and significant others. There is a procedure for the searching of possessions.

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?****3**

The complaints procedure for boarders is contained within the student handbook and information given to parents and significant others. Young people confirmed that they knew who to go to if they had any concerns and that they were recorded and investigated by staff. The Inspectors recommend that the details of help-lines, the Independent Visitor and the National Care Standards area office is also included within the complaints section in the student handbook, however it does inform boarders where to go to get this information. Comments from questionnaires were fed back to the senior management team in that some boarders, parents and placing authorities had not been told how they could make a complaint. The Head of Care agreed to follow this up by arranging for a letter to go out to parents and placing authorities reminding them of the complaints policy and procedure and for this to be reiterated to the boarders. Details of all complaints are recorded to include complaints from neighbours. The Inspectors saw evidence of how complaints were taken seriously and investigated. It was noted that a neighbour had not been informed of the outcome of one complaint and the Head Teacher agreed to rectify this. Neighbours have been informed of the school's complaints procedure and the school meets regularly with them.

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

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?

3

The school's child protection policy follows the area child protection policy and procedures. It is also designed to help young people 'acquire the principals of personal safety'. It is included within the PSHE curriculum which is carried out within the school and residential provision. Staff have confirmed that they have received child protection awareness training to include induction training. Key staff responsible for the co-ordination of child protection matters have attend external training. Staff demonstrated their knowledge of the procedure and reporting of any concerns to the appropriate persons within the school and the area social services child protection team. Risk assessments have been completed. The Head of Care agreed to get the in-house child protection training verified by the area child protection co-ordinator.

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

0

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)

The school has, and follows, an anti-bullying policy, with which children and staff are familiar and which is effective in practice. Where possible children in the school contribute to the development of the policy.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

There is a policy statement on countering bullying and this shows evidence of the school taking issues very seriously and putting strategies in place to address issues. The policy is also clearly laid out in the pupil handbook. There is a 'No Blame' approach to bullying, 'recognising that many of our young people have learnt to resort to inappropriate behaviours such as verbal and physical abuse to mask their own insecurities and low self worth.' The school seeks to work with individuals in relation to their behaviour, and positive behaviour is rewarded. Young people confirmed to the Inspectors that any incidents of bullying are recorded, investigated and monitored by staff and young people are sanctioned as necessary. Staff interviewed showed a good understanding of the countering bullying policy. The percentage of boarders reporting never or hardly ever being bullied is ascertained from the total number of their questionnaires received which were seven. A staff training day has been arranged for the charity KIDSCAPE to deliver training on countering bullying.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

51 %

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?**

3

Comments received from placing authorities, records seen and communication from the Head Teacher to the lead Inspector, confirms that significant events are reported with incident reports being completed.

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

1

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)		
The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
There is a written procedure for staff to follow for boarders who are absent from school without permission which includes a flow-chart for staff guidance. The procedure includes a search of the school, grounds and locality, informing the police and significant others, welcoming and supporting young people upon their return, extra staff supervision and the monthly monitoring of the number of incidents that may occur.		
Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:		7

CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour.

Standard 9 (9.1 – 9.8)

Relationships between staff and children are based on mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries which are effective for both the individuals and the group.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Relationships between staff and boarders is good at the school and staff were seen approaching them in a caring, patient manner but having to instil boundaries for the management of challenging behaviour as appropriate. Boarders confirmed that they have link workers and other staff who help them and positive behaviour is rewarded. Staff confirmed they follow the school's policies with regard to positive care and the behaviour management policy.</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
<p>The school has a behaviour management policy, which rewards positive behaviour by way of boarders achieving a daily number of areas targeted which links into the school day. A daily record is kept and fed back to the boys during the daily house meeting. Negative awards affect individual activities and such like. A weekly record of targets is also kept which highlights areas for praise or concern. The school accommodates boarders with differing needs and challenging behaviour and obtains external specialist input as required. A record of sanctions and restraints is kept in bound and numbered books, are monitored and incident reports cross-reference with these records. Staff have received training in physical intervention, and one of the Proprietors is an area trainer.</p> <p>The Proprietors informed the lead Inspector that strategies for the prevention of some boarders roof climbing are being put in place. There is also a new senior member of staff, Ted Schofield, who will be responsible for co-ordinating behaviour support both in the classrooms and residential provision. He was previously the school's Independent Visitor. He has several years experience in a senior role, of working with young people who display challenging behaviour in a residential school setting.</p>		

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
<p>The school's admission and leaving procedures ensures that boarder's needs are identified and assessed. Staff visit them prior to admission and relevant reports and information is obtained. Young people are invited to visit the school with parents and placing social workers and can stay for a meal and have overnight stays. Boarders leaving the school are prepared and a planned process is carried out. The school gives a lot of support to boarders to help them remain in education, however it also takes into account the safety and welfare of others, before giving notice of permanent exclusions.</p>		

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

Evidence was seen of the care staff team working alongside the school in ensuring that boarder's educational progress is maintained. The Inspectors sat in during the staff handover meeting and important information was communicated from a member of the school's support staff to the care staff to ensure consistency of care and behaviour management.

Computers and educational facilities are provided within the boarding accommodation, and it is the schools intention to purchase another computer for the boarders use. Link workers give boarders support for homework and projects and attend school functions and review meetings. All boarders have Individual Education Plans and Statements of Special Educational Needs.

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?**

3

Activities are planned on a weekly basis with the boarders and they include individual and group activities. On the first day of the inspection, the Inspectors witnessed activities being organised and carried out which were a ten-pin bowling trip, playing basketball in the school gym, board games and young people listening to their music in their bedrooms. Other activities carried out are attending a local gym, attending clubs in the local community, such as youth club, life-saving, football and cubs, swimming, cinema, ice-skating, rock climbing, out for walks, riding bikes and trips to places of interest. Activities in-house include arts and crafts, videos/DVD's, bingo, snooker, table tennis and football in the grounds. All activities are risk assessed.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)

The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets any intimate care needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school has a health care policy and medicals are completed by the school's G.P. Health information is recorded on young people's files and parental consents for routine and emergency treatment and the giving of non-prescribed household medication has been obtained. There is a written protocol agreed by the parents and school G.P. for the giving of non-prescribed household medication. Medication was seen being kept in a locked cupboard in a locked room. Advice was given for Ritalin to be stored and administered as a controlled drug as recommended by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and details of their guidelines were given to the Head of Care to obtain. The lead Inspector also advised that a checklist be drawn up for the person responsible for the medication cupboard to use, to ensure that no out of date medicines are being stored.

Parents and placing authorities have the option of maintaining the responsibility for dental and optical examinations if they prefer.

Boarders have individual health care plans and these form part of the placement plans. Staff confirmed they have received first aid training and staff responsible for the administration of medication have received training. External health care services are provided as required in placement plans, for example, drug counselling, anger management, psychological and psychiatric input, external therapy. Education and advice on health care and sex education, is provided through the PSHE programme in the school and from link workers. A written record is kept of illnesses and accidents and boarders are encouraged to return home if illness persists. There is a no smoking policy at the school.

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.15)

Children are provided with adequate quantities of suitably prepared wholesome and nutritious food, having regard to their needs and wishes, and have the opportunity to learn to prepare their own meals. Where appropriate special dietary needs due to health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background are met, including the choice of a vegetarian meal for children who wish it.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Boarders have confirmed that they like the food and get on well with the Chef. The Inspectors joined the boarders and day pupils for meals during the inspection. Evidence was seen of the mealtimes being well-managed occasions. There were tablecloths and napkins and orange squash provided. There is a choice of hot and cold meals and vegetarian options on the menu. There were large portions and the boarders could have seconds. Boarders informed the Inspectors that they liked the food but would like a greater choice at teatime and this was passed on to the Chef. Choices for the menu are ascertained individually by the Head of Care and individual diets are catered for. The Inspectors recommend choices could also be ascertained through the student council or house meetings. A record of all food is kept and staff are trained in food safety.

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

Boarders were seen dressed in school uniform and in clothes of their choice after school. Evidence was seen of personal requisites in bedrooms to include clothes, individual toiletries and quilt covers. Clothing is laundered in the school by a designated laundry person. Valuables are not encouraged to be kept at the school but boarders can lock personal items away securely. The provision of pocket money was discussed and the school has had to stop providing boarders with large amounts of money, to prevent the purchasing of cigarettes. Pocket money given by placing authorities is put into savings accounts and records are kept of this.

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

Placement plans (known as care plans) are drawn up for boarders following admission and assessment and reviewed at the formal review meetings and as required. Link workers and senior care staff are responsible for progressing the plans and boarders and parents are consulted. Written progress reports are provided to parents and placing authorities. Boarders are consulted and attend the review meetings.

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

Boarder's individual files are kept in lockable storage in a room that is locked when not in use. Files contain all the appropriate information and boarders and parents have access to records. Records were seen signed and dated. Files are archived as required by the standard.

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 school keeps accurate records of boarders and staff and these were seen during the inspection and the Inspectors signed the visitor's book. School records are monitored and counter signed by the Head of Care and Head Teacher as required.

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 school has a policy with regard to contact and this includes their aim to work in partnership with parents and family members as required. Parents and significant others are encouraged to visit the school and contact arrangements are contained within care plans. A record of contact is made and boarders are encouraged to maintain contact via telephone, letter or fax. Parents can contact the school at any time and the boarders have their own house telephone number.

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

The school liaises with placing authorities and leaving care teams as necessary. Areas covered for the preparation of independence are addressed in the school curriculum and care plans for boarders. This would include work experience placements in the local community and guidance and support given by link workers to assist boarders in life skills.

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

Boarders individual needs are addressed within care plans and the Head Teacher is trained in and has experience of working with pupils from multi cultural backgrounds. Individual support is also ascertained from other agencies and referrals to health specialists and counsellors. Young people confirmed they could talk to any member of staff of their choosing if they had any concerns. All boarders have somebody independent of the school and there is an Independent Visitor, Angela Offen, who has been introduced to the boarders and her details are posted on notice boards and in the boarder's telephone kiosk. She has experience of working with boarders in residential special schools and has a good knowledge of child protection policies and procedures. Boarders are given support with personal, health, social and sex education.

PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children live in well designed, pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.
- Children live in accommodation that is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.
- Children are able to carry out their ablutions in privacy and with dignity.
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. It serves the needs of the children and provides the sort of environment most helpful to each child's development, and is sufficient for the number of children.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The school's location, design and layout is in keeping with the Statement of Purpose. There is plenty of space within the school grounds for young people to play games. The boarding accommodation is situated within the main house and provides areas for noisy and quieter activities.

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?	3
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The staff team have worked hard in redecorating the boarding accommodation and areas were seen to be home-like and individual in colour and décor. New furniture has been provided in bedrooms and new carpet laid in the house and several bedrooms. The school has also ordered custom built furniture for use. A new television with digibox and a DVD player have been purchased. A new roof was laid in the summer holidays and the school gym is in use and has had a new floor and new external lighting has been put in place. During the tour of the boarding accommodation some areas required attention and these were pointed out to the Deputy Head of Care and the Bursar by the Inspectors. The school has a development plan which covers attention to the boarding accommodation.

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?**

1

There are a sufficient number of baths/showers/w.c.'s/ urinals for the boarders use. During a tour of the accommodation it was noted that two locks on the w.c. doors on the senior boys landing were broken. It was also noted that the staff washing facilities are in need of refurbishment. The senior management team confirmed that this would be completed to include refurbishment of the boys' showers. Baths and w.c.'s have safety locks. Risk assessments on boarder's vulnerability on the use of hot water have been completed and a record of the hot water temperature is kept for monitoring purposes.

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?**

1

Evidence was seen of completed health and safety risk assessments and key staff have been trained in health and safety. The Inspectors recommend that an outcome section on the health and safety checks could be included which would record the follow up of works needing completion. Staff confirmed they have received fire safety training and boarders and staff and records seen confirmed that fire drills are carried out. Evidence was seen of the fire safety system and equipment being maintained and the mains electrics were inspected during the summer. Portable appliance electrical testing still needs to be completed. Gas boilers have been serviced and the employee liability insurance is up to date. Maintenance is carried out by the maintenance team and outside contractors as required. During the inspection the house was warm but some of the radiators on the first floor landing were hot to touch and the Inspectors recommend that radiators covers be installed.

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 has a written recruitment and selection procedure and evidence of this and completed checks to include the taking up of references and CRB checks were seen on staff files. The Inspectors recommend that telephone references are recorded. The school is currently recruiting more residential support workers. Reasons for staff leaving are due to personal circumstances, moving to work in other areas and not being suitable for the post.

Total number of care staff:

7

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

5

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 staff rota seen showed care staff working during the week, with at least four staff on shift and this includes two staff sleeping in at night. In addition, senior staff, the Head Teacher and the two Proprietors are on call. The boarders were boarding on a weekly basis due to the staff vacancies at the school, which were being recruited for. Boarders will stay at weekends when the staffing numbers increase. The school is looking to undergo restructuring of staff and roles and the Head Teacher agreed to forward the new structure to the lead Inspector.

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 training and development needs are ascertained in supervision and through the appraisal system. Staff and records confirmed they receive induction training, core training and are working hard to achieve N.V.Q. training. Chris Danican (Proprietor) holds the Diploma in Social Work qualification.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)

All staff, including domestic staff and the Head of the school, are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Evidence was seen in records and given from residential staff confirms that supervision is carried out. The Bursar agreed to arrange for the supervision and appraisal of the support staff. Teaching staff receive appraisals from the Head Teacher and there are residential, whole school, teaching, heads of department and senior management team meetings. The Head Teacher is supervised by the Proprietors and has agreed to access professional supervision.

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 role of Head of Care is being redefined at the school and will be shared by the existing Deputy, David Bremner and the new behaviour support co-ordinator Ted Schofield. David Bremner is currently studying for the combined N.V.Q. Level 4 qualification in the care of children and young people and the registered managers award and has several years experience working at the school. Staff are working hard to complete their N.V.Q. Level 3 training to meet the 80% national minimum standard target and to complete their care tasks due to the staff vacancies.

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

34 %

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?

2

Evidence was seen of records and trends being monitored by the Head of Care and Head Teacher. The Head Teacher needs to include the areas as detailed in 32.4 of this standard in his yearly report on the school.

Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.7)

The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body receive a written report on the conduct of the school from a person visiting the school on their behalf every half term.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Evidence was seen of the Proprietors carrying out their monitoring visits on an unannounced basis and a written report being made to the Head Teacher for action. Reports were made available to the Inspectors during the inspection.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Empty box for Lay Assessor's Summary content.

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 9th February 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

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

YES

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 6th 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: <enter details here>

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I, Don Wilton of Ripple Vale School, 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	<u>Don Wilton</u>
Signature	<u><i>D Wilton</i></u>
Designation	<u>Headteacher</u>
Date	<u>31.03.04.</u>

Or

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

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.