



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Appleford School

**Appleford School
Shrewton
Nr Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP3 4HL**

Lead Inspector
Tina Baker

Key Announced Inspection
12th & 13th June 2006 09:00

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	Appleford School
Address	Appleford School Shrewton Nr Salisbury Wiltshire SP3 4HL
Telephone number	01980 621020
Fax number	01980 621366
Email address	secretary@appleford.wilts.sch.uk
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Dr Peter Gardner Mr Mark Petherick
Name of Head	Ms Stella M Wilson
Name of Head of Care	Mr David Bawden
Age range of residential pupils	7-13 years
Date of last welfare inspection	13 th & 14 th June 2005

Brief Description of the School:

Appleford School is a co-educational school for children with dyslexia aged 7-13 years. The school is set in its own spacious grounds in the village of Shrewton. Boarding is divided between two houses and then sub-divided into dorms. The aim of the school is to work towards addressing the child's problems with literacy, to restore their self-confidence and to improve their self-esteem. The school works towards each child realising their full potential. The boarding provision aims to work with the children in developing their personal organisational skills and facilitating a growing sense of independence. Children are helped to prepare to move to their next school whether this be mainstream or another specialist school

SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place on the 12th and 13th June 2006. The inspectors informed the school that they were coming. The school was inspected for a total of 35 hours by two inspectors and a Pharmacy inspector joined them for 2.5 hours. The inspectors were able to spend time talking to boarders in planned discussion groups and informally during the evening. Inspectors also spoke to a range of care staff and a good cross-section of support staff. Inspectors received 29 parental questionnaires and 13 boarders replies from questionnaires.

The judgements contained in this report have been made from evidence gathered during the inspection, which included a visit to the service and takes into account the views and experiences of people using the service.

What the school does well:

The relationships within the school are very positive. Boarders were very complimentary about all staff and the support that they receive. Staff demonstrated a strong level of commitment and understanding of individual needs. Their communication with young people is honest, respectful and caring.

Boarders are very involved in all aspects of school life and in decisions about their own personal goals for the future. The school provides a nurturing and developmental environment that supports personal growth.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The Head of Care has attended a three day Child Protection training course.

There is clear written guidance for all staff on Child Protection.

The school has developed a sanctions record as required.

Medication is stored, administered and recorded appropriately.

The school has developed clear and comprehensive placement plans which fully account for each individual child's specific needs. These are developed with the child and reviewed regularly to evaluate goals. Each child is treated with respect and in a way that best supports their progress.

NVQ progress and staff motivation is good.

There has been some progress made around staff supervision since the last inspection.

The staff are confident in the new management structure and are enthusiastic about the future of the school.

What they could do better:

There continue to be issues around fire protection that the school must address.

More attention needs to be paid to information held on staff files to ensure that all protective steps are taken during recruitment.

Staff need to receive annual appraisals, have personal development plans and regular supervision .

Whole team meetings should occur regularly to promote effective communication and consistency of care.

The school should improve privacy in areas highlighted.

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

Children live in a healthy environment where their health and intimate care needs are identified and promoted.

Children are provided with healthy and nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.

EVIDENCE:

All children remain registered with their home GP, but a local practice provides cover for emergencies and illnesses. A medical history is taken from parents at the time of admission and any medical conditions and medication is noted. Staff throughout the school are made aware of any medical conditions or allergies that may affect the child during the day. Parents sign consent forms for the administration of medicines and any changes are recorded. Medication is stored, administered and recorded appropriately. Beds are available in the surgeries if required for sick children.

Bedwetting is dealt with sensitively and hygienically.

First aid boxes are available in all appropriate places and are checked regularly. A list of staff who have first aid training is updated as training is undertaken.

Meals at the school are freshly prepared, well-balanced and provide a wide variety of foods. The inspector examined menu plans, spoke to the Head Chef, visited the kitchen and saw fresh food being prepared and sampled food served over a two day period. Fresh fruit is available at every meal. Pupils have input to the menus via the School Council. Children who are from different racial and religious backgrounds are supported with dietary needs.

Religious observances such as fasting are supported and monitored to ensure that the child's health is not affected.

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):

3,4,5,6,10,26,27.

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

In general, school policies, procedures and practice helps to ensure boarders safety and well-being. However, there are some specific shortfalls in practice around fire safety and recruitment of staff that have affected this judgement.

EVIDENCE:

Children's records are stored securely and information is only shared on a need to know basis.

The school has three telephones for boarders to use, one in each of the boarding houses and one in the school courtyard. Since the last inspection, Elston House has created a private space that is designated for this use and has useful and informative posters on its walls.

The school has a clear Complaints policy. There have been no complaints over the last year. Children interviewed were aware of how to raise complaints.

The designated Child Protection Officer has undertaken in depth Child Protection training provided by the Independent Schools Council. This person is supported by the Head but requested that a second Child Protection Officer be designated. The Commission would support this action because it would further enhance Child Protection in the school. Staff interviewed had a sound knowledge of child protection issues and how to deal with situations should they arise.

The school has a robust anti-bullying policy and procedure. Boarders interviewed were clear on how to report issues of bullying and in fact all spoken to seemed to share a "zero tolerance" attitude towards bullying in any form.

The school has a designated log to record absconsions. There have been no abscondings this year.

The school has a sanctions log which also shows a record of incidents. This is monitored by the Head.

There is a restraints log. Whilst it was reported that the school does not at this time need to use restraint, it was recommended that the log should provide an opportunity to record feedback/"debrief" with the child involved in the restraint. The school would need to review this log should the need to use restraint in the future arise. There is a policy for Restraint. Staff have not yet been trained in the safe use of physical intervention The school has previously raised at inspection the possibility of having it's own designated trainer and the Commission would support this action as forward planning should needs change. The school has developed a strategy for boarders with particular behavioural issues and produces an Individual Behavioural Plan with the young person themselves. Goals and smaller targets are agreed by the tutor and the individual and support is given to achieve these goals.

The school has clear records of fire drills and checks on equipment and the alarm system. It was reported that the staff do not receive regular fire prevention training. The inspectors saw fire doors being propped open in Shrewton House. Doorstops have been fitted to all fire doors in Elston House and therefore it is no longer an issue in that area.

There is a clear Health and Safety policy and there is a contract which all contractors sign.

On inspection, some staff files were found not to contain all information required. There was no evidence of proof of qualifications or CRB checks for one of the counsellors and for some staff there was no evidence of a record of interview or direct contact from the school to verify references.

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

The education and care staff work closely to meet the care needs of each child. The children have a wide range of age-appropriate activities. Individual placement plans support children by identifying and creating opportunities that help them to achieve their full potential.

EVIDENCE:

The good links between the boarding and educational aspects of the school continue. There are weekly meetings between care and teaching staff. An information board in the staff room is updated on at least a daily basis and this contains information that is considered important for all staff pertaining to individual support and welfare, thus ensuring effective communication to all staff.

The school provides a varied range of activities for the boarders both on and off site. These activities have completed risk-assessments. There is photographic evidence of the activities undertaken throughout the school. Boarders told inspectors that there are plenty of activities after school and at weekends and that they can make suggestions for trips and activities.

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):

2,9,17,20.

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Open and honest communication between staff and children ensures that individuals are afforded good opportunities to participate in the running of the school. The school has a thorough admissions programme for new boarders. Their needs are thoroughly assessed and a detailed plan of care is provided for each individual. Contact with families is encouraged and staff facilitate this.

EVIDENCE:

The whole ethos of the school is that of supporting each individual to develop to their full potential in all aspects of their life. The emphasis is on raising their self-esteem and confidence which in turn encourages them to explore new activities and experiences. There is a School Council which enables the young people to raise issues of concern and put forward ideas for change. Boarders are fully involved in their care plans and take ownership of their individual targets as they help to set and review them regularly. All boarders interviewed felt that they were listened to by all staff and that their views were acted upon whenever possible. The school conducts a satisfaction survey with parents and

boarders every two years and it was reported that it provides very positive comments indicating that parents and boarders are happy with the service provided. This view was confirmed in the responses to the questionnaires completed by parents that were sent by the Commission.

Relationships between staff and boarders is a noticeable strength of the school. All young people asked felt able to approach any member of staff. Staff were seen to be very caring and respectful.

The boarders files contain a great deal of detailed information. The school has written Placement Plans for each individual and has developed Individual Behaviour Plans for those who need them. Individual targets are set with the young person and they have a working knowledge of the expectations and goals.

The induction process for new boarders is thorough and includes pre-admission visits, overnight stays and probationary periods. Information provided by the school for parents is of a high standard.

Young people are equally supported in planning their departure to another school when the time comes.

Parents who replied to the Commission's questionnaires felt very involved with their children's school life. They spoke highly of the commitment of care staff and the communication that they receive concerning their child.

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):

23,24,25.

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The school is generally in good structural and decorative order. There are, however, some specific changes that could further improve the facilities. Consideration should be given to adequate ventilation of some areas.

EVIDENCE:

Boarders are able to wear their own personal clothing outside of school hours. Toiletries are brought from home but there is stock if boarders run out. Boarders have pocket money. Tuck shop items are acquired on a "tab" system which is then deducted from the child's account. Full boarders have access to money at weekends for excursions and items that they may wish to purchase. Houseparents keep records of these accounts.

Elston House provides adequate and homely accommodation in the main building that was converted from a large private home. Shrewton House was purposely built and provides adequate accommodation which boarders appeared on the whole to be happy with. They did comment on the décor and

asked that decoration in some rooms be made more age-appropriate, describing it as "awful and babyish." Also that the boys common room could be decorated in a more subtle way that also brightens the room. Inspectors encouraged the individuals to raise these issues through the School Council or their own House Meetings.

The weather was very warm at the time of inspection and the accommodation in Shrewton House was very stuffy and humid. There was a lack of circulating air and many boarders and staff commented on how uncomfortable the atmosphere was, especially at night.

Inspectors were told that the plans for the refurbishment of the dining room were "on hold" at present. The dining room was extremely hot and stuffy on both days of the inspection and would benefit from some additional form of ventilation or temperature control.

Boarders are able to bring belongings and personalise their rooms. There are suitable beds and bedding for young people. They are able to have tuck boxes which can be locked. The boarding houses are separated by age and gender. Boarding accommodation is used exclusively for boarders and day pupils have their own common area.

Questionnaires completed by boarders and discussions with them during the inspection, suggested again that there is not enough privacy in the showers. They reported that there are shower monitors and feel that these young people can watch them whilst they carry out personal hygiene. The inspector saw that the frosted shower doors in Shrewton boys bathroom still do not provide adequate privacy and the bath did not have a shower curtain at all, despite the fact that previous recommendations have been made by the Commission about this. The walls in Shrewton House shower room have some damage to them and are in need of repair. Young people reported that door locks are frequently broken and the inspector found evidence of this in two of the toilet doors in Shrewton.

The school grounds are extensive and well-maintained. Boarders commented that these areas are well used.

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):

18,19,29,30,31,33.

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Overall, the school is effectively run and well-managed. The appointment of the new Head is seen by staff as positive and they expressed confidence in the new management style.

They were all very enthusiastic about the future of the school and its development.

However, there are areas of deficiency highlighted under the "Staying Safe" heading of this report which the Senior Management Team must rectify.

EVIDENCE:

The school provides accurate information about the services that it offers. Each child has an individual file containing all the required information. These files are stored securely.

Boarders confirmed that they are able to access staff at all times of the day. Care staff are on duty in each house and cover is provided throughout the day. The school does not employ agency or bank staff or "gap" students. The staff demonstrate a good understanding of each individual's needs and continuity of care and consistency of approach is extremely beneficial to their overall development.

NVQ progress is good with support being provided by "Olympic Training". Both houseparents in Shrewton are hoping to complete their NVQ Level 4 by July. The rest of the staff team, with the exception of three, are proceeding well with NVQ Level 3.

Staff appraisals are not done for all staff and staff do not have personal development plans. It was suggested that a review of the appraisal process is undertaken and a plan devised for the near future.

Supervision for new staff does not take place as required on a fortnightly basis. There has been some improvement with regard to supervision and staff report that they have this on a termly basis. The content of supervision and its recording should be expanded to include all issues recommended in the standards.

Monitoring visits are carried out by the proprietor as required and there was evidence of these visits. It was not apparent if they were announced or unannounced visits.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	X
21	X
23	3
24	3
25	2

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last YES inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS5	Consideration should be given to appointing a second designated Child Protection Officer to enable the responsibility of the role to be shared.	
2	RS10	All logs should be reviewed at least twice a term by either the Head or Head of Care to monitor compliance with policies and procedures.	
3	RS10	Staff should receive training on issues of behavioural management and restraint	
4	RS24	The school should improve ventilation in Shrewton House and the dining room.	
5	RS25	The school must improve privacy in the shower rooms especially in Shrewton House. This has been recommended on two previous occasions.	
6	RS25	All toilet and bathroom doors must be fitted with appropriate locks that work.	
7	RS26	Fire doors must not be propped open. This has been recommended on two previous occasions.	01/09/06
8	RS26	Staff should receive regular Fire Training by a competent person in accordance with Health and Safety at Work Regulations.	01/09/06
9	RS11	Recruitment processes must comply with all aspects of Standard 27.2. This has been recommended on two previous occasions.	01/09/06
10	RS29	All staff must have annual appraisals, personal development plans and supervision as detailed in Standard 30.2, 30.4 and 30.6.	
11	RS33	Records of visits should indicate whether they are announced or unannounced.	

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