



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Fred Nicholson School

**Westfield Road
Dereham
Norfolk
NR19 1JB**

Lead Inspector
David Welch

Announced Inspection
23rd January 2007 11:08

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	Fred Nicholson School
Address	Westfield Road Dereham Norfolk NR19 1JB
Telephone number	01362 693915
Fax number	01362 693298
Email address	office@frednicholson.norfolk.sch.uk
Provider Web address	http://frednicholson.norfolk.sch.uk
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Norfolk County Council Education
Name of Head	Mrs Alison Kahn
Name of Head of Care	Mr Peter Page
Age range of residential pupils	7 to 16 years
Date of last welfare inspection	27 th February 2006

Brief Description of the School:

Although Fred Nicholson School, a Residential Special School, which opened in 1973, provides services for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties, increasingly it has been admitting children and young people with quite complex needs and, in some cases, associated emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school has expanded to provide 95 places in total. At the time of the inspection, 19 children were boarding. Pupils are able to board at the school for up to 4 nights a week. Facilities cater for boys and girls from 7-16 years.

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

The children who stay overnight do so in 'dorms' for up to 4 children each. Girls live on the ground floor and boys, who make up the majority of boarders, on the first floor of the building. Each dorm has a small sitting area, with television, shower and toilet facilities. There is also a small staff office attached to each dorm. Staff sleeping-in facilities are on each floor. One of the dorms on the first floor is designed like a small flat with a kitchen/diner and lounge.

Care staff are on duty in a Children's Support Unit during each classroom day to provide a sanctuary for children who are finding the educational setting stressful.

SUMMARY

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

Thank you for helping me in January when I came to see how your school was getting on. As you know, somebody like me has to visit every year to see how well the staff are looking after you.

As well as talking to as many of you as I could, I also talked to Mrs Kahn, the Headteacher, to Mr Page, the Head of Care, your keyworkers and other people who work in the school. I also asked your parents what they thought about the school. Your parents said things like:

- "The staff do a good job",
- "My son now smiles. He is happy",
- "Staff tell me what is going on", and,
- "We are encouraged to visit the school".

These are all good things about the way the school works with your families

You all filled in one of my questionnaires and they were very helpful, indeed. I managed to speak to every one of you either in small groups or elsewhere around the school. When I asked you what you thought about the school you said things like:

- "It's really fun" and
- "It's good here".

You liked the activities and trips out and you liked having your friends around you. One person said that he liked boarding because he could get away from somebody at home!

None of you said that you were being bullied in the boarding houses, but staff thought there was still some bullying in the classroom.

It was very useful being able to share some of your mealtimes. I thought the food was very good and healthy.

I have asked the school to do some things to make boarding better, but really, I felt that you are being well looked after.

What the school does well:

Below is a list of things that I feel the school do very well, indeed.

- The way the boarding side works with the classroom side of the school

- The number and variety of activities provided. I especially liked the drumming session I sat in on!
- The way that staff help and support you.
- The efforts that have been made to give you more privacy in your dorms.
- The healthy food and the way that food is shown as 'red' if it is not so good for you, and 'green' if it is something you can eat a lot of.
- The steps that the kitchen staff take to make sure that if there is something that makes anybody ill, it will be easier to find out what it is.
- The Children's Support Unit where children who are having a difficult time in class can go and get some time out and help from care staff.
- The different ways that the school asks you all about life in Fred Nicholson and lets you choose for yourselves, where this is possible.
- Your new furniture in the dorms.
- The efforts made to protect you and keep you safe at school.
- The way that the staff encourage you when you have done well, recognise your efforts and explain things when you may have done something wrong.
- The way that the children and care staff get on with one another. You said that you liked the staff.
- The care staff group have been trained to know how to look after you.

What has improved since the last inspection?

These are the things that have got better since the last time Fred Nicholson School had a visit from us:

- A really good effort has been made to show you in a little booklet what life at the school is like. Some of you thought this still had too many words, but it is colourful and has some cartoon characters. Mrs Kahn said that she will make sure there are more pictures.
- The new showers, wash hand basins and toilets in the dorms. Although, there is still some work to do to make sure that the showers come on properly every time.
- Some new lights have been put up outside, but some places can still be quite dark and I have asked that some more lights are provided.
- Some really good efforts have been made to make the dorms homely.

What they could do better:

This is a list of things I have asked the school to do that would help to make boarding at Fred Nicholson School better:

- I have asked Mr Page to make sure that your keyworkers remind you what is in the Children's Handbook
- The care staff should have some more training in how to help you make a complaint, if you are not happy with anything.

- I have asked Mrs Kahn to make sure that all the records about you becoming a boarder are written up in one place.
- There should be at least one more member of care staff.
- I think you should have a telephone that you can use without asking staff permission.
- You should have chairs in the dorms that you can adjust when you are sitting using the computers there. Some of the smallest children are stretching to see the screen and this could lead to them having neck problems.
- The heavy doors in the dorms should be held back so that it is easier for the smaller children to go through them.
- The showers in the dorms should be looked at again so they work well every time.
- As I said before, some more lights should be put up outside so that on dark evenings all the gloomy places are lit up and people can see where they are going.
- There should be some changes that make it clearer who the school can help most.

But, on the whole, Fred Nicholson School is doing quite a good job looking after the children who sometimes stay overnight there.

I think that the school is an important place.

Thank you once again for all your help when I came to your school – you made the visit very enjoyable for me. The things you told me meant that I got a very good idea how the school was working.

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

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

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

14 and 15

The quality in this outcome area is good. The children's health needs, including personal care issues, are well met and good attention has been paid to planning mealtime experiences.

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

EVIDENCE:

The school does not have a School Nurse and neither does a doctor make any routine visits to hold surgeries. The children were asked during the pupil survey what happens if they are ill and they were clear that they could go to the Sick Room, have a lie down and sometimes be given 'a tablet'. The school approach is that if the problem is acute then the child's parents will be informed and he or she will go home.

The staff confirmed that in one case recently it had been necessary for a young child to have some assistance with intimate personal care. This appears to have been done appropriately and in a way that safeguarded his privacy and dignity with protocols observed. The assistance provided seems to have resulted in a real improvement in the child's self help skills in this area.

A number of boarders take prescribed medication and the staff have received training in administration. No child self medicates.

Several meals, including a couple of lunches, a supper and a breakfast, were shared with children and the staff supervising the dining room. Meals were balanced, appetising and nutritious. A 'traffic light system' operates that children understand. Food that is healthy is 'green', with unhealthy items shown as 'red'. There were only one or two red items available a day. Mostly they were amber or green. The children were very positive about the food. Mealtimes were quite relaxed affairs and the children were not hurried or pressurised to finish. Quantities were adequate. The children exercise choice of dishes the day before. A child can change his or her mind, but has to wait so that others are served with their first choice. They took turns to help stack crockery and cutlery afterwards. The 3-week menu was seen. Chips ('red') are only available once for the midday meal and once for the evening meal in a three-week period. In fact, during this inspection chips were offered on the Tuesday evening and Wednesday midday. The Catering Manager may wish to look at this. The cook in charge takes and keeps a sample of food so that Environmental Health Officers can check this in the event of an outbreak of food poisoning. This is good practice.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 26 and 27.

The quality in this outcome area is adequate. Children are generally safe in this school. Child protection protocols are satisfactory and while they know how to complain, documentation in different formats would ensure the availability of the procedure to all children. Bullying in the boarding houses is not an issue and children are well led in developing social habits. Recruitment procedures could be tightened with benefit.

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

EVIDENCE:

Information is shared on a need-to-know basis. Discussion of a particular matter during the inspection demonstrated this principle in practice. Nothing of a personal nature goes up on the staff notice board.

Children know how to make a complaint and it was clear that they are not shy about talking to a wide range of staff if they are unhappy about something. The Head of Care (HoC) said that there is no formal training for staff in relation to complaints along the lines of the National Minimum Standards (NMS) – what constitutes a complaint, what is the procedure for dealing, to whom a complaint is made outside school, the process if a complaint is not resolved within time scales set down and assisting a child to make a complaint. **A recommendation has been made about this.** There is still no complaints procedure in any form other than written and **the recommendation that this is developed will be repeated.**

The member of staff responsible for child protection was impressive. She said that everybody receives an initial induction on taking up his or her post. Staff confirmed this. More in-depth training takes place after about a year. She is well-qualified and clearly up to date with the latest thinking. She is very child-centred in her approach.

Every boarder said that they were not being bullied. They confirmed this during discussion groups. It was clear that there were some verbal challenges made during the 3 days of the inspection, but nothing physical was seen. This was as much to do with children's individual conditions as the conscious decision to bully somebody else.

The school does have a policy and procedures for a child going missing. Staff confirmed that this does not happen very often. Staff are aware of where children are. There is a policy of 'keeping tabs on children'. If they leave the school staff will follow at a safe distance.

It was agreed with the Head of Care that he would err on the side of caution when informing the Commission about serious things that happen in the school. He has already told CSCI about one matter last year. Following the inspection, some further guidance about the basis on which notifications should be made was shared with the school. After April 1st these notifications will go direct to OFSTED.

There is an emphasis on recognising good behaviour. Children knew about sanctions for being naughty and what happens when staff are pleased with them. The children mentioned going to bed early if they misbehaved. They

said certificates are awarded in assembly. Detentions were discussed with the Headteacher and the arrangements are satisfactory. Four of the eight care staff present at a handover meeting said that they should not physically restrain a boarder due to their own health issues. This represents almost half the staff team. Team Teach calls for physical restraint not to be carried out by one person so this limits what can be done and should be dealt with. The deputy Head of Care said that on one occasion a young female boarder was physically restrained in circumstances that were not ideal. **A recommendation has been made about this matter.**

As far as the safety and security is concerned, this is a very large site and clearly there is the potential for trespassers. Lighting is still poor in certain areas. A recommendation was made about this last year and not fully implemented. **The recommendation has been repeated.**

The children confirmed that they do have fire drills and they explained what they do if the alarm goes off.

The Bursar was interviewed and the recruitment procedures were looked at in respect of all the staff employed since the last key inspection. In most respects the checking and vetting of staff prior to appointment were seen to be suitably robust. Two references, usually on headed notepaper, one from the previous employer, had been obtained in most cases. Generally, if telephone references had been used the Bursar had written to the referee in question for written confirmation – not always successfully. Good practice suggests that telephone references should not be used.

However, one disturbing issue did arise. People had been offered posts before references had been taken up. This included the vacancy for a Deputy Headteacher. **A recommendation has been made about this.**

Thirteen people had been employed since the last inspection. Of these, 5 are in post without any details of their CRB on file in school. **A recommendation has been made about this.**

It was suggested that the Application Form in all cases invites applicants to provide a full employment history. And it is a good idea to include in the CRB a request that the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) list is also examined.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

12, 13 and 22.

The quality in this outcome area is excellent. The residential contribution to education is very well established. Children and young people are actively encouraged by staff to take part in leisure activities both inside the school and in the community that aid their social, emotional, physical and educational development. Children's individual needs are recognised and well met.

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

EVIDENCE:

It is clear that residential provision supports the educational side. Care staff work in the Child Support Unit (CSU) during the day. This is a real sanctuary for some children and a good use of resources.

There are lots of activities for boarders after school. Children said they liked the activities and the trips out. A number of activities were observed from the use of the Club Room for snooker and pool, to cooking cheese straws, to Danish rounders and an extremely exuberant drumming session using an outside sessional worker who was excellent with the children.

There is lots of support for children. A number of examples were seen of staff being aware of a child who was in distress and they took time to talk quietly with the unhappy pupil. The school supports children on an individual basis.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

2, 9, 11, 17 and 20.

The quality in this outcome area is good. The major concern relates to matters outside the school's control and a positive contribution is being made despite the local education authority's failure to provide admission criteria and support that decision. Family contact is not an issue here. Relationships between children and staff are warm, leading to mutual respect. Care planning and review are good.

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

EVIDENCE:

Children can make a choice about what to have for their meals, how to spend pocket money, what clothes to wear after school, what activities to do, to stay at school or go home. They also make some décor choices about duvet covers and pillowcases, plants and pictures and posters. There is a School Council

with one boarding member. These meetings are minuted, but the HoC said that he does not always get a copy. **A recommendation has been made about this.**

Children said they liked the staff. Relationships are very good between staff and children. Some very good examples of this were observed. Staff acted very professionally, with a deal of understanding and sympathy. The CSU is an example of this. It deals with children who are upset and/or angry. The children said that they have a lot of people to talk to if they are unhappy.

The Headteacher, the Head of Care and the care staff were asked about admissions. It is clear that the school can make an input into decisions about who comes here, but in the last analysis if the local authority says the child is to be placed at Fred Nicholson School (FNS) it has the last word.

One matter continues to be the source of considerable concern. This has been raised before and was the subject of 'Letters of Concern' from the Commission to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the local education authority (l.e.a.) as far back as February 2004. It was mentioned again following inspections last year and the year before. An extremely poor response was received from the local authority

There is a great deal of unhappiness being expressed by staff, and certainly recognised by the Headteacher and her senior colleagues, that the nature of the children placed here is changing. The school is designated for children with a moderate learning disability and increasingly, it seems, children with more complex needs are coming here. On the accepted rating scale, with '1' being mild learning disability and '4' being children with very complex needs, FNS seems to have children closer to '3' than '2'. The mix is often quite difficult to manage and certain children will be at a severe disadvantage. Staff who came into post expecting to care for children with mild learning disabilities feel exposed and under skilled when confronted with children with emotional and behavioural difficulties, which can be quite different. **A recommendation was made that the l.e.a. provides criteria for admission as soon as possible. This has not happened. The recommendation has been repeated in the strongest terms. The Commission is so concerned at this increasingly disturbing situation that it will write to the DfES about this with a copy to the l.e.a.**

Care planning is good with each child having a Placement Plan that care staff are aware of. One Placement Plan was completed in pencil but this was work in progress. Also, the HoC said that he could not guarantee that in every case there was an audit trail from the first suggestion that a child boards to him or her actually taking up that boarding place. In most cases this is so, but not always and it was suggested that the recording relating to this process, which could take several months, is up to date, accurate and comprehensive in its detail. **A recommendation has been about this.**

Family Contact is not an issue here as no child spends more than 4 nights in residence before going back home. In any case, children confirmed that they can phone home if they wish using the care staff office phone. Some children have mobiles as a part of an independence programme. It should be possible for a child to have access to a telephone without asking a member of staff. This does bring up the question of the child having either cash or a phone card. **A recommendation has been made about this.**

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):

16, 21, 23, 24 and 25.

The quality in this outcome area is adequate. The 'institutional' character of some parts of the boarding houses, especially the stairwells and corridors, the physical layout and the difficulty in supervising the dorms detract from the quality rating in this area. Decisions about the shower/WC areas also leave something to be desired and do not 'fit' in every sense with the needs of the children. Good efforts have been made to provide a more homely environment, however.

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

EVIDENCE:

Children described the pocket money system. They bring in a certain sum at the beginning of the week or term and care staff keep this. It is given out for trips, non-uniform days and Wednesday tuck shop (maximum 50p). Parents are responsible for uniform purchase and personal clothing.

Preparation for leaving care is mainly handled through the school curriculum, but some basic cooking was seen.

The school is on a very large site that is shared with two other schools. There is plenty of space.

The boarding accommodation, however, is quite institutional in parts – typical of the time it was built. It has open-plan staircases with metal banisters. These are not carpeted. The corridors are confusing in layout. The Site Manager said the metal window frames are 'a nightmare to paint'. The boarding accommodation is extremely difficult to supervise. Lots of efforts have been made to introduce some homeliness to the actual dorms, though. They are nicely decorated. There are pictures and posters and the children have been encouraged to personalise their bed spaces. There were lots of soft toys and model in evidence. Efforts have been made in the past year to introduce some privacy for boarders by providing curtains. The children appreciated these. The ideal solution would be for single rooms, but that would be difficult and expensive. There is some lovely matching bedroom furniture. However, the children were using low plastic chairs when sitting at the new computer workstations in the dorms. These are too low and health and safety requirements mean they should have adjustable chairs to maintain a comfortable and safe position. **A recommendation has been made about this.** Some doors are held back with magnetic catches. In some cases the doors are heavy and have round handles that not all children can manage. This applied in particular to one very young child. **A recommendation has been made about this.** The Site Manager has been asked to involve the children when she embarks on her endless programme of decoration in the dorms.

The children said the dorms are warm enough and the beds comfortable.

The dorms are clearly not suitable for children with certain physical disabilities that impair their mobility, or for staff for that matter. The Site Manager mentioned that some contrasting colours have been introduced in certain areas for children with visual impairment.

There have been some real improvements in bathroom and WC provision. One rather bizarre decision was taken to put in 4 wash hand basins in the showers with two hot air blowers while no hand drying facilities have been installed in the toilets. The showers are not suitable, however. Four showers were tested and every one of them 'locked out', protecting the user even on a medium setting. This is frustrating for children and probably very uneconomic. The Site Manager said that they are mains fed and when there are other demands, as there normally are, the showers do not work. She said that 2 different showers were to be piloted – tank fed. **A recommendation has been made about this.**

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

1, 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33.

The quality in this outcome area is adequate. While a very creditable attempt has been made to provide the children with their own simplified Statement of Purpose, this remains 'too wordy' and needs to be available in pictorial and graphic formats so that every child has a chance of understanding it. The number of care staff is 'thin' at times, which means that colleagues have to be endlessly flexible and supportive of each other. The governing body has not yet put in place adequate arrangements for monitoring the operation of the school half termly and for receiving reports of these unannounced visits.

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

EVIDENCE:

The school has a brochure that contains the required information for others. It has also made a very good attempt to provide a Children's Handbook that is user friendly – colourful and with some Clipart characters. But everybody spoken to recognised that it is 'too wordy'. The children said that it had too many words. Two children in particular said that they had difficulty with reading and no care staff member had read it with them. They may have forgotten, but this is an area that the school have to keep re-visiting. **A recommendation has been made about this.**

The case files of 4 children, selected at random, were looked at. They contained the required information.

The care staff were spoken with in a group and individually. It seemed that they were 'operating on two levels'. On the one hand, they were mightily supportive of each other, endlessly flexible about covering colleagues and additional duties. They stepped in for colleagues on sick leave and courses and one person gave an example of fellow workers supporting her through a particularly difficult time personally. Examples were seen of them offering to cover for a colleague who was off site for a meeting and unable to do his shift. They are clearly very child-centred. On the other hand there is a great deal of disaffection with the local authority and with certain aspects of management. They feel undervalued, and to an extent isolated, although they had hoped that the county's move to a Children's Services Department would provide easy access to training, which they said they often do not hear about until it is too late. They would like a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) always to be at their 2.00pm briefing meeting. They understand that the HoC's working hours have been changed to 2.00 to 10.00pm and they would like him to be more available, 'on the floor' at these times.

They are very worried about the I.e.a.'s move to admit children with complex needs almost, they said, 'by the back door'. They do not all feel confident in dealing with children with EBD and feel let down that they may have signed up for something that no longer exists. Some would have liked the opportunity to change their working situation if FNS is to become a school for children with complex needs – a move elsewhere, for instance. This provides, in part, the basis for the Commission's letter to DfES and the recommendation in the inspection report that the I.e.a. does state its position in regard to the school's admission criteria and supports the decision in practice.

The care staff were quite concerned that they are mostly the same age and felt that the introduction of younger staff members would be a good idea. **A recommendation has been made about this.**

Staffing levels in boarding are 'thin'. At times one member of staff covers two dorms, which are not easily supervised because of their physical layout. The care staff identified the need for an extra member of staff who could 'float' to provide support where needed. This seemed to be a very conservative request bearing in mind the difficulties of supervising this building with the number of carers employed and taking into account the other pressures on their time such as sickness and training. **A recommendation has been made about this.**

The staff confirmed the availability of individual supervision half termly.

They said that Inset was quite good.

Individuals in the care team are very well qualified. The qualifications include a couple of degrees, the Diploma in Social Work (DipSW), NVQ's at level 3 and 4. One person has almost finished his NVQ3. Two others have applied for enrolment so this aspect has been well addressed.

There is a named governor with particular responsibility to make half-termly visits to the school and write a report that is then sent to the Headteacher and to the governing body. However, this is not happening. A recommendation was made about this two years ago. The inspection report of February 2006 noted that these visits were due to begin, but hadn't yet started so no recommendation was made. **A recommendation has been made about this.**

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	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3
4	2
5	3
6	3
7	3
8	3
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	3
9	3
11	1
17	3
20	3

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

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

Yes

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1.	RS1	While good efforts have been made to provide a simplified version of the Statement of Purpose for boarders, it should be available in different formats. It should be age appropriate and limited in the amount of prose used.	
2.	RS1	The Head of Care should ensure that children are given regular opportunities to become familiar with their version of the Statement of Purpose. They might need reminding of its contents on a regular basis and those children who find reading difficult should have assistance from key workers.	
3.	RS2	The Head of Care should receive the minutes of every School Council Meeting.	
4.	RS4	There should be training in complaints for all care staff.	
5.	RS4	The complaints procedure for children should be available in different formats. This is a repeat recommendation.	
6.	RS10	There should be a clear 'audit trail', available in one place on a child's file, that shows the progression from first suggestion that the child might benefit from boarding to actual admission.	
7.	RS10	Those responsible for the school should examine the health issues relating to care staff that might limit the application of Team Teach techniques.	30/04/07

8.	RS11	The LEA should inform the school as a matter of urgency of its designation of criteria for admission and ensure that the necessary resources and supports are in place to safely admit children under that designation. This is a repeat recommendation and is very strongly advised.	30/04/07
11.	RS20	There should be a telephone available to children and young people that does not require them to ask permission from staff and which is in a location that offers some privacy. The Commission acknowledges that this might mean some innovative thought on the part of the school authorities in regard to how calls will be paid for.	
12.	RS24	Children using computers in the dorm areas should have suitable chairs that are adjustable in height etc.	
13.	RS24	The doors in the boarding area should, where they are heavy or have handles that require some strength to turn them, be fitted with hold-back devices that release when the fire alarms are activated.	
14.	RS25	There should be adequate hand-drying facilities in the toilets in the boarding areas.	
15.	RS25	There should be suitable showering facilities in the dorms.	
16.	RS26	The outside lighting around the school buildings, including the playground area, should be improved, as it can be very dark in the evenings. This is a repeat recommendation and is strongly advised.	
17.	RS27	Short-listing for appointments should only be made after written references have been obtained.	
18.	RS27	All staff coming into post at the school should have an enhanced CRB certificate on file prior to starting work.	30/04/07
19.	RS28	Those responsible for the school should consider increasing staffing levels by at least one post to make supervision and cover of the dorms by care staff easier.	
20.	RS28	Those responsible for the school should consider the age range of care staff employed.	
21.	RS29	Care staff should have access to all training events provided by the Department.	
22.	RS33	The governing body should ensure that the	

		governor with special responsibility for boarding makes half-termly, unannounced visits to the school. Reports of these visits should be made available within two weeks to the Headteacher and to each member of the governing body without amendment or summary.	
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