



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Fred Nicholson School

**Westfield Road
Dereham
Norfolk
NR19 1JB**

Lead Inspector
Mr Roger Andrews

Announced Inspection
27th February 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

Reader Information	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
Further copies from	0870 240 7535 (telephone order line)
Copyright	This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI
Internet address	www.csci.org.uk

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	Alison Kahn
Name of Head of Care	Peter Page
Age range of residential pupils	7 - 16 years
Date of last welfare inspection	10 th – 12 th January 2005

Brief Description of the School:

Fred Nicholson School, which opened in 1973, is a Special School for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties with complex needs and associated emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The school has expanded to provide 95 places and, 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 clubroom situated in the school grounds and the outdoor playground equipped with climbing frames and swings.

SUMMARY

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

This inspection of Fred Nicholson School was announced and took place over two and a half days. The purpose of the inspection was to make sure that those children who board at the school are properly cared for and, as far as possible, kept safe. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Commission for Social Care Inspection, (CSCI).

Time was spent talking with children, staff and members of the senior management team such as the Head teacher and the Head of Care. Care files, health and safety records and other documents were looked at and the inspectors joined the children at mealtimes on both days, including breakfast and tea. Questionnaires were sent to parents who have children boarding at the school and to members of care staff. Some of the comments they have made are included in this report.

As a result of this and previous inspections the Commission thinks that Fred Nicholson School does a good job offering a good level of care and interesting activities to the children. However, the school are still waiting for the Local Authority to give them some clear guidance on the needs of children that they will have to offer a service to in the future so that they can make effective plans. There are some matters that need attention and these are set out at the end of this summary and at the back of the report.

What the school does well:

The staff have good relationships with the children. They receive ongoing training and meet regularly with teaching staff so that children receive a consistent service.

Care staff and teaching staff work well together so that individual children can receive one to one support and this also helps other children to continue with their work with less disruption.

The food is very good. It offers healthy eating choices and the children obviously enjoy their meals.

Children have individual programmes which aim to help them gain greater independence with things such as managing their money and their personal care.

Staff encourage children to show good manners and polite behaviour.

There is good communication between the school and other agencies and between the school and parents which helps children receive a consistent service and meets, for example, their healthcare needs.

Children have a varied and interesting activity programme outside of school lessons which the children obviously like joining in with.

The majority of parents who completed questionnaires are very positive about the school.

Child protection matters and anti bullying practices are given a high profile and are monitored by the school so that children feel safe. New staff are checked to help prevent unsuitable people from working with the children.

What has improved since the last inspection?

A new permanent Head Teacher has been appointed which will help the school plan for the future.

Windows have been fitted with restrictors to help prevent accidents.

Supervision is in place for staff and occurring half termly which will help in their professional development.

A statement about services for children with disabilities has been added to the school brochure and the school have talked with the Occupational Therapist about assessments of individual children who may need special equipment to help them be as independent as possible.

What they could do better:

The design of the children's dormitories needs improvements so that the privacy of children is protected and so that they feel more homely.

Safeguards need to be taken to protect the children against the risk of hot water and hot radiators in the dormitory areas.

Fire points need testing weekly and documenting to help ensure the safety of children from fire.

The lighting in the playground area could be improved so staff and children are less vulnerable in these areas.

The children need their own information about the school and boarding and how they can complain if they are unhappy. This could be in writing, pictures or on a CD.

The level of detail in one of the accident records needs to be improved.

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

Health matters are properly supported and staff communicate with parents and carers where they need to and support them.

The food provision is of a high standard and the children enjoy their food.

EVIDENCE:

Health issues were clearly documented on children's files and there was good evidence of collaboration with other agencies and professionals including consultants, psychologists, disability support workers and community nurses. Written notes by care staff reflected their involvement in supporting health issues for children and supporting parents. One member of staff, for example, has supported a child's mother by going with her by request to a medical appointment for the child.

Medicines are stored appropriately in a locked medication cabinet secured to the wall in the staff sleeping in room. A record of medicines which have been administered is kept and was up to date. The staff received training on the administration of medicines from the Community Nurse and medication is dispensed to children directly from its original container. Only one child was reported to self medicate under the supervision of a member of staff. Permission from parents to manage medication is documented on file.

Previous inspection reports have reflected and commented on a high standard of catering for the children. This inspection was no exception. Breakfast, lunch and teatime meals were sampled on both days of the inspection. All of the food is prepared in the school's kitchen including the baking of bread rolls. All of the children spoken to said the food was good and from observations at mealtimes they clearly enjoyed what was on offer and could have second and third helpings. There is always a choice including a salad. The choice of different salad ingredients alone can only be described as excellent

The menu follows a healthy eating policy, though this does not appear to limit the variety and tastiness of the food available. There is a three weekly rolling programme of menus which are overseen by a small committee including the Head Teacher, the Catering Manager and the Head of Care. A copy of the menu programme is displayed in dormitory areas for the children. The Catering Manager sources many of the foods from local suppliers such as vegetables and the local butcher is used for meat supplies.

Examples of food sampled during the inspection include cottage pie, baked potatoes, home made cheese cake and apple crunch. The breakfast consisted of cereals, boiled eggs, toast with a selection of preserves and tea and coffee.

Where children had specific food related needs such as particular food intolerances these are recorded in their files and the information passed on to the catering Manager. There was also evidence of a good degree of collaboration between the school and parents on food related issues. One example was a student who needed support to lose weight prior to an operation and there was documented evidence of collaboration between family and school on the diet to be followed.

Some of the school's 'home cooked' food was on offer to parents on the second day of the inspection when a parents' open evening was held.

There was a good deal of informal chat observed between the catering staff and the children about the food and what was on offer.

All catering staff have undertaken food hygiene training.

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, 7, 8, 10, 26 & 27

The privacy of children is respected, but the premises do not help staff to promote this aspect to the extent they would like.

Children know how to complain, but should be given their own plain English version in written or other form, e.g. audio.

The school's anti bullying policy achieves a high profile and children felt safe and that staff would deal with problem issues.

Staff patiently and consistently reinforce good patterns of behaviour which is reflected in the politeness of the children.

Proper checks are carried out on staff, students and volunteers prior to employment.

Child protection issues are properly monitored by the staff and training is in place.

The design of the building is institutional and aspects such as hot radiators, hot water, outside lighting and weekly tests of fire points need to be addressed.

EVIDENCE:

From discussion with staff the privacy of children is an important factor, though parts of the premises, (i.e. the dormitory areas), do not lend themselves to promoting this aspect as the sleeping areas are open plan and limited in size. There are plans to improve this by putting up curtains around each child's bed space, though this will still be below the quality of boarding accommodation that the Head Teacher and staff would wish to provide for the children.

Bathrooms have locks on doors to allow for privacy, though some of these facilities have to be accessed by leaving the dormitory areas.

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

Each child has their own lockable cabinet in their dormitory area.

The children spoken to during the inspection were all aware of how to complain and identified people they would speak to. This would usually be their key worker and the staff spoken to were very clear about the channels to follow if complaints were reported. Consideration should be given to producing a simplified document for children setting out how to complain. This could also include other relevant information and could be in written, pictorial or audio formats. **See recommendation.**

There have been no complaints received by the school in the last year. The Commission has not received any complaints about the school since the previous inspection took place in January 2005.

One of the deputy heads of care is responsible for leading on child protection matters and attends Area Child protection Committee courses as they arise, the last one being in July 2005. Examples of other training she has undertaken include safe guarding children with disabilities, domestic violence and a conference on changes in legislation. All new staff, (including ancillary staff), are given induction training on child protection issues by this member of staff. This includes a two page document which outlines steps to be taken if potential abuse is identified and gives pictorial guidance on what may constitute abuse.

Each child has a 'child protection file' and all incidents involving the children, (e.g. the use of restraint), are recorded with reference to the place of occurrence, staff involved and the child involved to allow a detailed analysis. Bar charts are produced to record this information. The school has been using some computer software with the children as part of their 'Protect Me' programme to help them gain a better understanding of abuse, for example, what may constitute inappropriate touching and this software programme was on display for parents to view and try out during the parent open evening. The aim is to equip children with the necessary level of confidence, information and skills to protect themselves from hazardous situations, such as, road safety, danger from strangers and sexual safety. It includes staff and pupil training.

All school staff will be undertaking child protection training on 18th April 2006 including catering and domestic staff. A child protection update is given on all staff training days.

The school are clear about their responsibility to refer allegations of abuse to appropriate agencies including Social Services and the Family Protection Unit within the police force. It was reported that the child protection policy has been submitted to the Area Child Protection Committee for comment.

There was a strong sense from talking to children that they were clear about the policy on bullying and that this would not be tolerated. One child, for example, said *"don't get bullied... would tell staff and they would deal with it"*. Another said *"would tell miss and she will sort it out"*. It was also reflected in the relaxed ambience within the school which was observed in interaction between individual children and between children and staff. There were observations of children helping other children, e.g. at lunch times and children were noted to be generally respectful and polite. Telephone numbers such as childline are displayed by telephones.

In the previous inspection report there was reference to some of the problems caused by the admission of a group of children from another school with challenging needs. This obviously had a significant effect at that time. However, there was no reference to similar issues expressed by children during this inspection and the school appears to have worked through some of the difficulties posed by that process, though the school still awaits firm guidance on its future catchment group following a review by the Local Authority.

Anti bullying posters are displayed prominently around the school including in the dormitory areas and a policy is in place. Parents can request to see this and other policies as stated in the school brochure.

When appropriate the school has notified the relevant authorities of unusual or serious incidents including the Commission in line with the expectations of standard 7 of the National Minimum Standards.

The Head of Care reported that the actual incidents where children leave the school premises without permission are few and most children will usually stay on the premises or school grounds before coming back in. Incidents are recorded and copies placed on individual files. The school's written policy regarding absence without authority is contained in the Whole School Policy document. Since the previous inspection only one incident of absconding has occurred. This lasted for just a matter of minutes before the child return to the school.

The previous inspection report commented on changes to the staff group that resulted in positive outcomes for the children. During this inspection the staff were observed supporting children and reinforcing acceptable behaviour to a continuing high standard. Staff were observed promoting good behaviour during the school day, during the children's social time and particularly at meal times. This reinforcement of positive behaviour was consistently applied by all staff and it was especially noted that the staff carried this out in a calm and patient fashion. Throughout the two days at the school the children were observed to be polite and used appropriate titles. Positive reinforcement is given to children for good behaviour and achievements. Examples include 'boarder of the week' and the large lounge area used by boarders has an area where 'post it' stickers are placed with examples of positive and helpful behaviour displayed by individual children.

Children are supported so that they may remain in class and sometimes children are supported for short periods outside class and some children attend the Pupil Support Unit, a small equipped room where children can receive one to one support for periods of time. This facility has been developed over the last two years and enables other children and teaching staff to concentrate on lessons and provides individual children with the support they need to access lessons.

The Pupil Support Unit is staffed by the care staff team and its aim is to provide programmes that will help children experiencing difficulties to access a modified curriculum, eventually returning to the normal school day. Teaching staff set the work to be completed by children who are supported on a one to one basis in the unit by the care staff. A written policy sets out the aims of this unit.

Boarding children have a range of programme targets designed to help them gain personal care skills. These targets are both identified in written records and signed off when achieved. Examples of targets included using the telephone, (for example making emergency calls), bathing and showering regularly, health and safety skills, (such as fire procedures), money management and basic first aid skills. In some instances programme targets had been discussed with parents to achieve a consistent approach at home and at school.

The school is generally secure and outside of school teaching hours the main entrance has a security device so unauthorised access cannot be made. Staff undertake security checks as part of their evening programme. The playground area where children would gather in the event of a fire was noted to be unlit in the evening and it was very difficult to see. Also, some staff park their cars on the edge of this area and must feel vulnerable accessing this area in the dark. Improving the lighting in this area should be considered. **See recommendations.**

Staff are trained in the use of the Team Teach system used at the school. The role includes monitoring of any sanctions or physical handling employed by any member of school staff, informing the appropriate people for example, Senior staff, parents, or the designated Child Protection officer, keeping records and staff training. The staff receive regular training and updating and some of the staff are tutors and abler to deliver this training to other staff.

The use of sanctions are recorded and refer to more detailed records on individual files and are mostly minor. The frequency of any restraint appears to be relatively low and there is a good level of collaboration between teaching staff and care staff to work jointly with children and this obviously contributes positively to the way in which children behave.

A tour was undertaken of all the dormitory areas and the student flat area. The hot water in these areas, (e.g. sinks, baths and radiators), is very hot. The baths, in particular, may present a risk from scalding and consideration should be given to regulating the water temperature in these areas at the point of delivery, (which will maintain the appropriate temperature in the system against legionella). **See recommendations.**

A fire risk assessment of the premises was carried out by an outside contractor in November 2005, though the report had not, for some reason, been copied to the school. This is now being rectified. A weekly inspection of the alarm system is carried out by the Catering Manager who deals with these aspects. However, a weekly test of fire call points, particularly in the residential areas, needs to be undertaken and recorded. A separate point should be tested each week in rotation. **See recommendations.**

The fire equipment, such as extinguishers and the alarm system, are serviced on a regular basis. The children spoken to were very clear about what to do if there was a fire. One of the new boarders who had only been boarding for a few days demonstrated which exit he would use to leave the dormitory in the event of a fire. Fire notices are displayed appropriately around the building.

The accident record was looked at. There are two records. One covers accidents to non school employees. The level of detail in this record needs to be improved. **See recommendation.**

Several files of staff appointed since the previous inspection were looked at. These contain all the required documents and evidence of a robust recruitment process which includes evidence of Criminal Records Bureau checks, two written references, (which are confirmed by telephone), an application form, a check of qualifications and previous employment. Volunteers and students also have checks undertaken prior to being allowed to work unsupervised with children.

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

The care staff collaborate with teaching staff to provide a seamless transition between teaching and non teaching periods of the day.

The children have a varied and interesting range of activities to participate in within a risk assessed framework.

EVIDENCE:

There was good evidence of continuity between the children's school day and boarding time and the degree of communication between all staff has very much helped this to become a seamless process. Staff members spoken to during the inspection outlined a good process of communication between teaching and care staff commencing with a morning meeting before the start of school lessons. There is a post school day meeting where issues are fed back that have arisen during the course of the teaching day. Some children have residential and day diaries which aids the communication process. One member of staff stated that he felt there was a more consistent approach now to the school day/evening divide with better outcomes for the children.

Children have desk space in their dormitories to undertake any additional written work left over from the school day and each dormitory has a computer that the children can use, (including for play activities). One of the games areas had a supply of books, though the children have access to books from the school library as well. One of the children was observed being supported by a member of care staff to complete some written work outside of formal lesson time.

There is a flat area where some of the older children can experience a greater degree of independence. This area has single bedrooms and a kitchen and

simple meals can be prepared. However, the flat can only be occupied by one gender at a time. One of the parents reported in the questionnaire that one of the best things she liked about the school was that her daughter was "*learning to be independent*".

The children have a wide range of activities to participate in, both within school and outside of school grounds. Examples of evening activities during the inspection included a group of children going to watch Norwich City reserves play at Carrow Road. Another group participated in a cycling safety class which was part of a programme to prepare the children for their cycling proficiency. There is usually a choice of activities on offer with appropriate staffing levels to ensure a safe environment for the children. Other regular activities include swimming, bowling, fishing, crafts, pool, visits to High Lodge activity centre in Thetford forest and football in the community. These examples are not exhaustive and there are games and computer games equipment in the dormitory areas which children can use for agreed periods of time with the staff. Planned activities usually take place after tea, the period before tea being a free programme time or where children catch up with some of their school work. After the evening activities there may be further free time and some of the children were observed doing karaoke in one of the halls.

As well as individual risk assessments on children, (and staff), all activities, both off site and on site, are risk assessed. When a particular off site visit is made the written risk assessment is taken along by the staff. Some of the children go cycling with staff on local country roads. 'Hot spots' are risk assessed so the map of the journey clearly shows areas where extra caution is required. When an activity becomes too risky it is discontinued. The risk assessments reflected a good level of detail.

The support children receive from both teaching and care staff appears to be very individualised and properly documented in their files. There were written and verbal examples of support strategies for managing particular children and attempting to provide an environment most conducive to the child. In some cases the sharing arrangements in the dormitory areas have been structured to provide the best mix of personalities. In one example this has meant that only two children are sharing one particular dormitory, though this does have repercussions about the availability of beds.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

2, 9, 11, 17 & 20

The children are listened to and have good relationships with the staff.

The support required by each child is properly documented and understood by the staff.

The children are supported on leaving school.

EVIDENCE:

Children spend time with their Key workers to discuss and agree targets, (and children have signed their individual programmes), which range from independence skills to specific social skills. The agreed targets are recorded in the child's house file which the children have access to at any time. Children and their families are encouraged to be fully involved in individual care planning and reviews as was evidenced by the responses of parents in their questionnaires.

Children reported that they are consulted regarding their care. Each dormitory conducts regular, recorded residents' meetings and the children have elected House Captains. The School has a School Council and the house captains represent boarders on this council. The boarders also have their own representative on the School Council. Council meetings are minuted. Staff

reported that emphasis is placed on listening to children and respecting children's views. The school council provides a further opportunity for children to be heard and empowered. A parent commented in the questionnaire that *"staff encourage my child to do his best and they listen to him"*. The majority of parents reported they were encouraged to visit the school and there were several comments about the *"positive atmosphere"* and the *"very warm welcome"*.

The children clearly feel relaxed with the staff and several of the children said they really liked boarding, although they did miss their home. The children said staff are very nice and two talked with concern about members of staff who had been off sick. Written records and observations of interaction between staff and children reflected a respectful and positive attitude towards children by the staff.

Some of the information about the admissions process is set out in the school's brochure. One of the children stated that he had had a preliminary stay overnight to see if he liked boarding. One care file demonstrated that the transition to boarding status was planned and involved several evening visits. One of the staff reported that they monitor prospective boarders to make sure they can cope with the routine. Where children have had difficulty settling into the full 24 hour boarding process the school has been very flexible and, (in one instance), have arranged a system that includes joining in the evening's activities and events, but still allows the child to go home to sleep.

Most boarders will be children who already attend the school on a day basis and will be familiar with care staff. One of the deputy heads of care reported that boarding was now looked at in a more proactive way, being seen as a period of time with the focus on reintegrating children back into their home situation rather than something that just continues over a child's school lifetime.

There are good relationships with agencies such as Connexions, (who assist school leavers), and the Connexions advisor visits the school on a weekly basis. There are links with youth and community services and with further education opportunities at places such as Norwich City College.

The school also maintains good links with the local community police and have a designated officer who visits the school. There is also contact with a project that offers support to children where the staff feel intervention may help children avoid becoming involved in offending and criminal behaviour.

Placement plans for each child are in place which include family details, leisure and recreation notes and the purpose of the placement. Health, medication, cultural and religious issues are also included where appropriate. Contact with families appears to be promoted via telephone calls. Children usually only board for periods of between one and four nights each week so all children

spend the weekend at home. Parents reported in their questionnaire responses that the staff keep them informed about what is happening with their child. The school has several methods of contacting, informing and consulting families e.g. via telephone, letters, school/home diaries, newsletters, parents evenings, open days, home visits and reviews.

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 & 25

The Children are supported and encouraged to improve their independence skills.

The premises do not promote privacy and the facilities such as bathrooms need to be more domestic in style and design.

EVIDENCE:

Outside of formal school lesson times children can be more flexible about the clothes they wear and each child has a small wardrobe in their sleeping area. As noted already, children are encouraged to gain independence skills in all aspects of their lives including choice and money management which is included within individual programme plans.

As already referred to in this report the accommodation leaves something to be desired. Sleeping areas in the dormitories are not private and do not offer a lot of personal space. Bathroom facilities are located outside the main dormitories and require, as a minimum, redecoration and better personalisation by the introduction of, for example, better colour schemes. Sinks are banked in rows and add to the institutional feel. However, many of these issues will be tackled by an improvement scheme which aims to improve

privacy and provide additional shower and toilet facilities for the children. General redecoration, especially of window frames is needed in some areas. Windows have been fitted with guard rails so they only open part way to remove the risk of a child climbing out and falling. This was undertaken after consultation with the Fire Officer.

The school have added a brief section to their brochure stating that the residential areas are not able to cater for children who have disabilities and may require, for example, wheelchair access. They have discussed the need for adaptations with the Occupational Therapist who has stated their willingness to carry out assessments of children's access needs on an individual basis if required.

There are five dormitories and a self contained flat. Each dormitory is currently partitioned to provide up to five sleeping areas and one to two communal areas. There is a sitting room and kitchen available to boys and girls, which is adjacent to the girls' dormitory. Each dormitory does have a small lounge area, though the children tend to use the large communal lounge. The dormitory areas do not offer much in the way of opportunity to play music or watch television without impinging on the privacy and comfort of other children.

Stairwells leading to the dormitory areas could also benefit from more colour painting schemes to help remove the institutional feel of these areas.

Ideally the Head Teacher would like to offer new purpose designed boarding provision to children, but this would require a funding commitment on behalf of the Local Authority. The improvements that are intended should, however, be viewed as a minimum improvement in provision and the focus on improving the privacy of children within the boarding surroundings should be maintained.

See recommendations.

Despite the limitations imposed by the physical environment, the staff work hard to minimise the effects on the children and boarding children have access to several areas of the school out of teaching hours where they can indulge in recreational pastimes without causing disturbances to other children.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

1, 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 & 33

The School's own brochure provides easy to understand information, but the children require their own version which gives them relevant information about both the school and the boarding experience.

The staff attend relevant training including child protection matters, are properly supervised and have regular meetings to discuss care issues.

Arrangements have been made for half termly visits, though the first one has yet to take place.

EVIDENCE:

The school has produced several documents which contain the information required. The documents include The Whole School Policy document, the

School Brochure, the Residential Provision Statement of Purpose and a Staff Guidance document. The School Prospectus and The Residential Statement of Purpose are given to Parents or Persons with Parental responsibility and placing Social Workers. More detailed information is available to them from the other documents on request. The school set up its own website in 2004 so that this information is available to a wider audience.

The children do not yet have their own document. This needs to be developed. Consideration should be given to producing such information in different formats. For example, an audio version could prove useful to some children. Some development work has been undertaken on this project and it is hoped the finished document will be in place for the September 2006 intake. **See recommendations.**

The planning and progress of each child is documented and comment was made in the feedback to the Head teacher that these appeared very individualised. The delivery of a good service and continuity to the children is promoted by the stability of the staff group which has shown very little turnover. The main files contain colour coded Detailed Record Sheets which enable staff to readily identify different types of events e.g. Achievement, Physical intervention and Child Protection issues.

The staff group have undertaken a variety of training since the previous inspection took place. All staff have received refresher training in Team Teach, (including tutor training for some staff), and the administration of medicines. Other courses include first aid, child protection-new legislation, an arts & crafts textiles course, fire equipment training and safeguarding disabled children. As already noted all staff will be undertaking child protection training in April 2006. A number of staff have also embarked upon NVQ training at level 3 or above in Health and Social Care of Children and two staff are due to commence this course in September 2006. Two staff have completed their NVQ 3 and one of the deputy heads of care is undertaking NVQ 4 training. There is an induction programme for new staff which is formally documented.

The Head of Care is a registered Social Worker, as is one of the deputy head's of care. The Head of Care has experience of senior work with children since 1986 and has been in his current role since 1999. In addition to the Diploma in Social Work he holds the Certificate in Health and Social care (OU), Certificate HE (Care and Education in the Community) and Dip. HE Social Work (OU). He has undertaken ACPC Foundation Training Child Protection and LA /ACPC Designated Teacher Training and is a Team Teach Intermediate tutor.

Staff reported that supervision was in place on a half termly basis, though this would occur more frequently for new members of staff. Each member of staff has a choice of either deputy head of care who are in turn supervised by the Head of Care. Supervision sessions are recorded and any action plan is noted and progress reviewed at the next supervision session. In addition to formal

supervision sessions there are frequent opportunities to share information. Apart from the daily briefings to all staff there is a weekly staff meeting attended by the full complement of care staff. The Head Teacher has an identified mentor outside of the school.

The care staff team and teaching staff ensure that the school is adequately staffed at all times and that activities are adequately supervised both on and off site.

Arrangements have now been put in place for visits to be made to the school half termly and provide a report to the governing body and Head Teacher in line with the guidance in standard 33 of the National Minimum Standards, though the first of these visits has yet to take place. However, as this is due to occur it is not made a recommendation in this report.

The previous inspection report commented that *"There remains a lack of clarity of the designation of the school. The Head Teacher reported that a review of all Special School provision is currently being undertaken by the Local Authority. This review is welcomed by the school, but, the current lack of clear designation, the contradictory information received by the school regarding this review and anxiety regarding the possible implications of the review have made it impossible for the school to plan for the future in any meaningful way"*. In many respects this lack of clarity still exists and the review continues. The appointment of a new Head Teacher in January 2006 the school will hopefully now be able to build upon the good work already established by a mature and stable staff group. However, as the new Head acknowledges the school needs clarity of purpose from the Local Authority to allow for *"longer term planning for staffing as well as direction for future needs"*.

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	2
5	4
6	3
7	3
8	3
10	4
26	2
27	3

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	4
13	4
22	3

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	3
21	3
23	2
24	1
25	2

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

Yes

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

<p style="text-align: center;">RECOMMENDED ACTIONS</p> <p>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.</p>			
No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS23	The dormitories used by boarders require major improvements. In the short term they require changes that will improve privacy and some of the bathroom facilities. The Head Teacher has some clear plans for these improvements.	
2	RS26	The hot water in bathrooms should be regulated at the point of delivery to avoid the risk of scalding and radiators posing a burning threat should be covered.	01/09/06
3	RS26	Fire points should be tested weekly in rotation and recorded.	01/04/06
4	RS26	The lighting in the playground area should be improved as it is very dark in the evenings.	
5	RS1	Children should have their own version of the Statement of Purpose including information about how to complain or seek help.	
6	RS26	The accident record for non school employees should allow for more detailed comments about incidents.	
7	RS1	That the LA informs the school of its designation of criteria for admission as soon as possible and	

		ensures that the necessary resources are in place to safely admit children under that designation. This is a repeat recommendation.	
8	RS24	That, following the school's request to the LA in 2003 for funding for adequate boarding accommodation, the LA informs the school and the Commission for Social Care Inspection of its plans for the provision of up to date, non-institutional, domestic style accommodation which offers children adequate privacy and meets all the standards of NMS 24. This is a repeat recommendation.	

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Norfolk Area Office

3rd Floor

Cavell House

St. Crispins Road

Norwich

NR3 1YF

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

Email: enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.csci.org.uk

© This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI.