



Champions for  
Social Care  
Improvement

# inspection report

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

## **Skilts School**

Gorcott Hill

Redditch

Worcestershire

B98 9ET

10th February 2004

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

### **The role of CSCI is to:**

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

## **Inspection Methods & Findings**

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

### **The 4-point scale ranges from:**

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

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

'X' is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

<b>SCHOOL INFORMATION</b>
---------------------------

**Name of School**

Skilts School

**Address**

Gorcott Hill, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 9ET

**Tel No:**

01527 853851

**Fax No:**

01527 857949

**Email Address:**

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

Birmingham City Council Education Department

**Name of Head**

Mr Charles Herriotts

**NCSC Classification**

Residential Special School

**Type of school**

**Date of last boarding welfare inspection:**

11/2/03
---------

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		10th February 2004	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		7.45am	
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Christy Wannop	073698
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>	Jo Johnson	
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):</b>			
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>			
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Charles Herriotts	

## CONTENTS

### **Introduction to Report and Inspection**

#### **Inspection visits**

#### **Brief Description of the school and Residential Provision**

### **Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings**

#### **What the school does well in Boarding Welfare**

#### **What the school should do better in Boarding Welfare**

#### **Conclusions and overview of findings on Boarding Welfare**

#### **Notifications to Local Education Authority or Secretary of State**

#### **Implementation of Recommended Actions from last inspection**

#### **Recommended Actions from this inspection**

#### **Advisory Recommendations from this inspection**

### **Part B: Inspection Methods Used & Findings**

#### **Inspection Methods Used**

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

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

### **Part D: Head's Response**

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

## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

Inspections assess the extent to which the school is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, published by the Secretary of State under Section 87C of the Children Act 1989, and other relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 as amended. Residential Special Schools are not registered as children's homes unless they accommodate, or arrange accommodation for, one or more children for more than 295 days a year.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the NCSC in respect of Skilts School. The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Recommended action by the school
- Advisory recommendations on boarding welfare
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the lay assessor (where relevant)
- The Head's response and proposed action plan to address findings

## INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections are undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children Act 1989 as amended, with additional visits as required.

The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

Skilts is a residential special school operated by Birmingham Education Authority. All children are boys aged between 5 and 11 years. The majority of the boys are in years 5 and 6, the last 2 years of their primary education. There are currently 32 residential pupils and 9 day pupils. Children stay between 2 and 4 nights a week. This is an increase in numbers since last year, when only 22 boys used the residential service.

The school can accommodate 52 children with behavioural and emotional difficulties. All children have been placed by Birmingham with a "Statement of Special Educational Needs". There are 2 detached residential "houses" with 2 separately staffed and self-contained units each.

The school closes on Friday evening until Monday morning. Staff live on site.

## PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

The school is now making a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

#### **Children's Rights**

The school encourages children and provides forums for them to make decisions about their lives and the way the school is run. A school council is imminent. Some staff are developing some group work. Further training may be required.

Inspectors would like to see the use of Circle time extended and some in-house workshops on group work skills and tools to run groups with children.

The school is beginning to open up issues like complaints to children. Privacy and confidentiality are respected.

Complaints are handled well.

The school gives good quality of information to parents.

#### **Child Protection**

The school has good recording and tracking systems so that information is clear.

There is in-house and external training on child protection and sexually inappropriate behaviour. The school has raised the profile of bullying and taken action to reduce it. The school has improved the missing person information and gives clear advice to staff.

Staff are watchful and very aware of children's movements in a subtle way.

Arrangements for safeguarding children who leave without permission are sound in practice.

#### **Care and Control**

There are sound and positive relationships between children and staff.

There is a straightforward "grown up" approach by staff to children.

There are imaginative and energetic approaches to the rewarding of positive behaviour being developed by the new deputy.

The school gives clear messages about encouraging positive behaviour. There are constructive staff responses to unacceptable behaviour.

There is a cohesive whole school approach to behaviour.

#### **Quality of Care**

Children are admitted to, and move on from, the school in a sensitively planned manner.

Educational progress is promoted and Individual Education Plans direct basic care planning.

There are good leisure activities, both indoor and outdoor, at the school and in the community.

There is excellent involvement of children in the "Playground Group".

Children love the food.

Children are encouraged to be independent and take care of personal needs.

Good medication systems are in place with training in the new policy planned.

**Planning for Care**

The school has improved general record keeping.

Staff have a real sense of each child as an individual with strengths.

Children can maintain safe and agreed contact and are helped to prepare for transition to adulthood. The school is keen to see a smooth transition to secondary provision.

Children receive individual support as needed from residential staff. Staff view children as individuals rather than problems of a collection of behaviour.

The school follows up referrals and “chases” support needed for individual children.

There is an excellent health team .

**Premises**

The school has improved, distinct and personalised décor in units and bedrooms.

The accommodation is pleasant and well designed with sufficient space and facilities.

There are positive images of children in wall displays.

There are identified staff to co-ordinate health and safety in the houses.

**Staffing**

There is a well designed though as yet untested induction programme.

There are committed staff who would like to do more for the children with specialist support.

The new head of care has worked hard to put much needed training in place.

There is established meaningful staff supervision.

Staff understand the children’s needs and do their utmost to meet them.

Staff are supported and guided to safeguard and promote the children’s welfare.

**Organisation and Management**

The school is developing a strong management team as evidenced by the huge amount that has been achieved from the action plan drawn up after last year’s inspection.

There are good monitoring systems now in place.

Children receive care from competent staff and there is a supportive Local Education Authority link (Judith Jones) who visits on a termly basis.

There are motivated staff who have effected real change.



---

## WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

### **Children's Rights**

The school should look at privacy/self image/protection issues for children: children raised issues of personal privacy in questionnaires. Improve curtaining, locking arrangements and privacy in children's bathrooms.

### **Child Protection**

The school should extend good child protection procedure to include co-working between the nominated person with child protection responsibilities, Tony Pridding, and the Headteacher, Charles Herriotts, and specific guidance when allegations are made against members of staff. Improve internal management links over child protection. Consult and notify child protection matters to Warwickshire Social Services Department and the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

### **Quality of Care**

Improve health information available to residential staff.  
Improve identification of residential care needs and documented planning around needs, including promoting independence and "safe care". Many children raised not feeling safe as an issue in questionnaires. Include food as a school council issue.

### **Planning for Care**

Develop a practical, individual child-centred care planning system based on residence rather than education. (Start with the "All About Me" document).  
Ensure that the LEA computer database can maintain staff and children "registered" as required. Make sure that each unit has a private, easy to access children's phone.  
Improve psychology support for school and staff. Improve behavioural support for school and staff.

### **Premises**

Put up more mirrors for children.  
Improve locking and privacy arrangements for bathrooms.  
Use consultation to involve children in discussions about keeping possessions and themselves "safe".  
Renew thin quilts and pillows.  
Include rationale for use of monitoring devices in the statement of purpose and individual care plans.  
Continue risk assessment work in relation to the house, COSHH, water temperature.  
Ensure newly identified risks are added to existing risk assessments.

### **Staffing**

Make sure that all staff having direct access to children have been subject to a safe recruitment procedure and that the school can evidence that.  
Plan for NVQ achievement.

## CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

This is the second inspection under the Care Standards Act 2000. The school has appointed some new key staff, a deputy and a head of care. The inspector commends the management team and the staff for managing to take action on many of the recommendations made at last year's inspection. The following are areas where further work is needed.

### **Child Protection**

The headteacher and the head of care still have work to do to ensure that appropriate responses are made to abuse in accordance with Warwickshire's Area Child Protection Committee guidelines.

Better systems need to be in place to make notifications to the Commission, Warwickshire Social Services Department and other appropriate authorities. DfES has offered support to look at this area with the school as part of their responsibilities. Warwickshire Social Services Department is also to coordinate a meeting.

### **Planning for Care**

The school must develop an effective care planning system that is based on their residential experience and needs. Staff are frustrated by their own accepted limitations with many of the children who they think require a specialist input, particularly psychology and behaviour management.

### **Staffing**

The school has to work around the practicalities of employment, which can demonstrably safeguard and protect children. That so many staff are long serving speaks well of the stability and satisfaction of working in this environment. Gaps between recruitment and employment practices of the past and today need to be closed.

### **Organisation and Management**

The enthusiastic management team has worked to motivate staff and effect change. They need to ensure that momentum is maintained by pacing their efforts and reinforcing management team aims such as consultation, group work and planning.

The views of associated professionals, parents and placing authorities were solicited as part of the inspection. Staff completed questionnaires and children also completed a questionnaire. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors and took place over three days covering morning, afternoon and evening.

Staff were interviewed individually and in groups. Children were offered the opportunity to speak individually to inspectors. Groups of young people were spoken to in each of the four houses. It is a positive reflection on the approach of staff that young people were so well informed about the purpose of the inspection and felt able to participate in such a mature fashion.

Positive comments from parents and carers include the enviable freedom to play at the school, the patience and dedication of the staff, good communication by staff, and the welcome extended to them.

One reported the great improvements they saw in trust, self-esteem, self-control, feeling

valued that had resulted from their child being given consistency and stability of values at the school. "Huge strides" in his development were reported.

Parents appreciated the very good job staff did in a very difficult situation, the one-to-one and small group work. One parent awarded the school 110% for performance! Another commented on the attitude of one of the receptionists. Two parents raised issues around safety of children and bullying in taxis. One commented that the heating was always breaking down. This did happen during the inspection!

Several parents commented on the difficulty caused by the distance from home, both for them and the children after a long day.

Placing officers thought the school staff should be "applauded" for their work with children. Staff questionnaires reported the frustration of poor funding by the LEA and the need for specialist therapeutic experts for the most damaged children. Staff also made suggestions about increasing staffing by one member in each house.

Children also completed a National Care Standards Commission questionnaire - 36 were returned. As there are fewer boys than this staying in residence, the questionnaires may comment on the school rather than the residential experience.

Children make positive comments.

#### **Children liked**

BMX bikes, making friends, fun activities, going on walks, the playground, gym, nice teachers, good work, skateboards, "golden staff".

#### **Children didn't like**

Sin bin, people breaking things and a very few children didn't like the food.

#### **Children wanted**

Girls at school

#### **Bullying**

1 child reported bullying

#### **Feeling unsafe**

2 pupils mentioned the sin bin

9 felt unsafe

#### **Lack of privacy**

10

2 not happy

**NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE**

**Is Notification of any failure to safeguard and promote welfare to be made by the National Care Standards Commission to the Local Education Authority or Department for Education and Skills under section 87(4) of the Children Act 1989 arising from this inspection?**

NO

**Notification to be made to:**

**Local Education Authority  
Secretary of State**

NO

NO

**The grounds for any Notification to be made are:**

--

<b>IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION</b>
---

Recommended Actions from the last Inspection visit fully implemented?

NO
----

**If No, the findings of this inspection on any Recommended Actions not implemented are listed below:**

No	Standard	Recommended actions	
1	RS14	Where relevant, specialist therapists or clinicians must be commissioned to work directly with children to address special needs or to guide staff in this regard.	31/3/04
2	RS25	Improve bath and toilet facilities.	31/3/04
3	RS25	Regulate water temperature to safe levels.	31/3/04
4	RS26	Complete full risk assessments to cover all areas set down within standard 26.	31/3/04
5	RS30	Provide external specialist guidance for staff working with emotionally damaged and behaviourally challenging children.	31/3/04
6	RS12	Greater emphasis must be given to the school's care component supporting the children's education and those aspects of the statement of educational needs that makes specific reference to the children's emotional and social development. This should feature in the individual or placement plan and relate to specific and measurable inputs rather than being left to chance.	31/3/04

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION**

**Action Plan: The Headteacher is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended action and any advisory recommendations are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.**

<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION</b>			
Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare.			
No	Standard*	Recommended Action	
1	RS14	Where relevant, specialist therapists or clinicians must be commissioned to work directly with children to address special needs or to guide staff in this regard.	1/10/04
2	RS25	<p>Improve bath and toilet facilities.</p> <p>Inform the Commission of action taken to ensure children are not at risk of scalding at hot water outlets.</p> <p>Make bathrooms and showers more private.</p> <p>Fit appropriate locks that meet the need for privacy and safety.</p>	1/10/04
3	RS26	<p>Complete full risk assessments to cover all areas set down within standard 26.</p> <p>Risk assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Premises and grounds, windows, safe parking</li> <li>• COSHH</li> <li>• Transport arrangements</li> <li>• Children’s known and likely activities (permitted and elicited), including high-risk adventure activities.</li> <li>• Risks from children not appreciating hazards</li> <li>• Potential risks from public access to children at school or whilst on outings</li> <li>• Impact of emergency admissions for the admitted child and the rest of the existing group</li> </ul>	1/7/04

4	RS30	Provide external specialist guidance for staff working with emotionally damaged and behaviourally challenging children.	1/10/04
5	RS1	The headteacher should commission and provide increased specific psychological and behavioural support to the residential service.	1/9/04
6	RS3	Ensure that each unit has a phone that can be used by children in private.	1/10/04
7	RS4	Supply National Care Standards Commission with information about complaints and the outcomes made to the school.	1/7/04
8	RS5	The headteacher or head of care must make coordinated notifications as required to Warwickshire Social Services Department and Commission upon receipt of a serious complaint or allegation of abuse at the school or against staff working at the school.	Immediately
9	RS5	Provide written guidance, information and support for staff that are subject to an allegation. Enlist Local Education Authority input in this area.	1/9/04
10	RS7	Notifications must be made to the appropriate authorities by senior staff. All staff must be aware of their responsibilities to take effective action upon events detailed in standard 7.	Immediately
11	RS13	Ensure there are recorded risk assessments to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-risk activities (qualification of supervisor)</li> <li>• Equipment needed</li> </ul>	1/7/04
12	RS14	Create an essential health information component within the care plan for use by residential staff. Consult with the school nurse and use the elements named in this standard to ensure a practical and useful level of information is available to those with the day-to-day care of the child.	1/7/04

13	RS17	<p>Put in place a placement plan/care plan containing information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health needs and health promotion</li> <li>• Methods of communication</li> <li>• Cultural, religious, language and racial needs and how they will be met</li> <li>• Leisure needs</li> <li>• Contact arrangements with family, friends and significant others</li> <li>• Managing and working with behavioural difficulties or identified risks</li> <li>• Active child protection plans for children with specific needs in the area of sexually inappropriate behaviour.</li> <li>• Intimate personal care needs</li> </ul>	1/7/04
14	RS18	Ensure that essential “hand-over” information is transferred to the child’s file and that shared records are not maintained in breach of confidentiality.	1/10/04
15	RS19	<p>Maintain a register of children and staff with detail required by National Minimum Standard 19.</p> <p>Maintain a “master” duty rota showing who actually worked using full names.</p> <p>Keep a diary of events in each residential area that can show events and visitors.</p> <p>Maintain a personnel file for all people who work at the school that contains the information required. Fill information gaps for existing staff in order to ensure complete records.</p>	1/7/04
16	RS22	Ensure that identified need for specialist input can be provided either at the school or by visiting specialists before a child is admitted to the school.	Immediately
17	RS27	Ensure that all staff have a full CV, and sufficient information contained within their recruitment file to fulfil safe recruitment for working with children practice.	1/7/04
18	RS28	The staffing policy should detail the responsibilities and expectations, legal and moral, of staff living on site.	1/7/04
19	RS28	Put in place an agreement that details the terms of accommodation used by staff and their relatives on the school site.	1/7/04



20	RS30	Ensure all staff working in residence receive supervision as detailed in National Minimum Standard 30.	1/7/04
21	RS31	Put in place documented and planned responses to a range of unforeseeable crises including, fire, illness, serious allegations, accidents, and staff shortages.	1/10/04
22	RS31	The head of care must enrol on, and complete, a course leading to a professional qualification relevant to working with children.	1/7/04
23	RS31	Establish an NVQ 3 programme for residential staff that will enable the school to have 80% staff qualified by 2005.	1/7/04
24	*RQN	Conduct a safe care/protective behaviours analysis of the school, incorporating children's own perceptions of personal safety, physical environment, staff training and skills and care planning.	1/7/04
25	RS23	Detail the rationale and use of baby monitors in the Statement of Purpose and make specific reference to the children for whom they are used in care plans.	1/7/04

## ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

Identified below are advisory recommendations on welfare matters addressed in the main body of the report and based on the National Minimum Standards, made for consideration by the school.

No	Refer to Standard*	Recommendation
1	RS2	Consider a workshop focussing on group work skills and tools so that staff may further continue their success with consultation. Contact Birmingham Children's Rights for guidance and ideas on this.
2	RS3	Make care plans that detail specific "safe care" guidelines for staff where risk has been identified.
3	RS14	Residential staff should actively support the relationship/emotional elements of the school sex education programme, through group and individual work with children. Training may be needed for this role.
4	RS15	Consult with children over menus and choice of food.
5	RS17	Review need for key worker arrangements for children.
6	RS27	Ensure that the system of recruiting staff and the checklist for new applications are used.
7	RS30	Consult with Local Education Authority for staff support service for employees in times of crisis.
8	RS33	Consider how the Standard 33 visits can focus on quality or current issues relevant to boarding and can become part of a QA process linked to an internal audit against the National Minimum Standards.
9	RS24	It is suggested that the children are consulted about how they wish to keep their precious things safe as part of a wider discussion about safe care.
	RS3	Consider how children can change in and out of school uniform with privacy and dignity.

Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. RS10 refers to standard 10.

**PART B****INSPECTION METHODS AND FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods were used in the production of this report

Direct Observation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Accommodation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas	NO

Checks with other Organisations

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES/LEA	YES
• School Doctor	YES
• Independent Person	YES
• Chair of Governors	YES

Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	YES
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	YES
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	YES
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	10/2/04
Time of Inspection	7.45
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	29
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	3

**Pre-inspection information and the Head's Self-evaluation Form, provided by the school, have also been taken into account in preparing this report.**

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

**Age Range of Boarding Pupils**      **From**       **To**

### NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

**BOYS**     

**GIRLS**     

**TOTAL**     

**Number of separate Boarding Houses**     

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the NCSC assessment of the extent to which standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

"9" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not applicable.

"X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

## STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

### Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

The school has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for those children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement can be made up of other documents, e.g., Letter of Approved Arrangements and school prospectus, which are required to include specific information.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
---------------------------	---------------	---

The Statement of Purpose describes:

- Theoretical or therapeutic model underpinning practice of the school
- Ethos and philosophy
- Provision for disabled children
- The name of staff member designated with responsibility for child protection and other professional qualifications of staff.
- Range of pupils' needs for which the school caters
- Admission criteria
- Approved number of day and residential pupils, age range and gender
- Special religious or cultural aspects
- Special features

The statement is clear for parents, children and professionals alike. There is a children's leaflet, created by children at the school with support from a residential staff member. There is a parents' guide "Welcome Booklet" with essential information. All these documents are accessible for their target audience as recommended by last year's inspection. All documents are well displayed within the school and residential areas. Children pointed them out to inspectors.

The school provides residential and day provision for children who have educational and behavioural difficulties and who cannot have their needs met in mainstream primary schools. All have a "Statement of Educational Need". The Statement of Purpose makes it clear that besides skilled teachers and experienced staff, there is minimal input from external professionals in the field of EBD. There are no full-time therapeutic staff attached to the establishment.

The inspection team considers that an increase in specialist psychology and behavioural support to the residential resource is essential for the range of needs described in Statement to be met in practice. It is for this reason that the school does not fully meet this standard.

An education psychologist visits for 6 hours each half-term. A psychiatrist offers a service for 2 hours a fortnight for up to 9 children who fall within his geographical boundaries. The Birmingham LEA initiates admission. The headteacher reviews requests for admission.

The statement accurately reflects the teaching and residential aspects of the school as experienced by children. Teaching and care, residential and day spheres combine to deliver a holistic service to children. Staff described the teamwork between both areas of the school.

The statement has been re-written and approved by the senior management team and Governors.

The statement accurately reflects current boarding and care practice at school.

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

### Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
<p>Last year's inspection recommendations have been exceeded. Inspectors are pleased to note the effort and impact that improved consultation has had across the school. All staff have implemented changes in the way they consult with children and they are to be commended for this. The head of care should consider some input for staff in acquiring group work skills or tools.</p> <p>There is policy, guidance and training on consulting with children, their families and significant others. The head of care and a team leader attended training on consulting with children provided by the health education unit.</p> <p>Staff take into account the religious, racial, cultural, communication methods and linguistic backgrounds of children and their families.</p> <p>The school enables children to make their wishes and feelings known. Each of the four units has a house meeting. One unit has piloted "Circle Time" for their children; this is a reflective and positive meeting.</p> <p>The school has been involved in the Healthy Schools Initiative, (this had begun at the time of the last inspection). Three aims were identified across the school and specific focus groups have met, for example the playground group has led to a revamp of the playground equipment and landscape. Pupils wanted, and now have, an enclosed "chill out" area in a hut on the playground.</p> <p>Elections have recently taken place for student representatives for the yet to be inaugurated school council. Children were fully aware of, and keen to talk about, the purpose and role of representatives and this meeting.</p> <p>Birmingham "Identification Unit", a government sponsored project focusing on inclusion and group work in schools has a time limited weekly meeting with boys from Seal House. It is hoped that staff could continue the issues and style of meeting.</p> <p>In promoting consultation so strongly the school is enabling opportunities for participation, independence and making everyday choices. It is hoped that issues raised by this year's inspection could be raised with children in some of the democratic forums now available to them.</p>		

No current children actively practice an alternative religion to Christianity.



**Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.11)**

The school and staff respect a child's wish for privacy and confidentiality so far as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

There is procedural guidance to cover:

- Access to case records by staff and others
- Passing on child protection information
- Practical details on how to enter children's rooms and bathrooms
- Showering, bathing and toilet arrangements
- Washing clothes
- Intimate personal care for disabled children
- Administering medication

Children's records are securely kept.

Staff are told of confidentiality expectations in policy and the excellent booklet called "Who, what, where, when, why", written by the new head of care.

Children can make and receive phone calls. Different arrangements are in place in each of the four units. Each house has a payphone for use by children. This is not private. It is situated on the staircase. One unit has adapted the small office at the entrance into a phone room and each child is enabled to use this in a planned and supported way. Other children reported that they could use the unit phone, but this is kept in the lounge of each unit, and again is not private. A recommendation has been made.

A wide range of well presented help-line information is displayed in a suitable format and children pointed this out to inspectors.

No additional communication aids are available or needed at the moment.

If a child is at risk through communications, staff reported they would be made aware by placing social workers. Close supervision is made.

Children can use the flat attached to Owl House as a private meeting place with parents and others.

There is written guidance for staff about practice specific to gender and "safe touch" issues. Staff are informed that their supervision of children must not embarrass or intrude inappropriately. Children reported that they were unhappy about lack of privacy but it is not known if this is about staff or other children. Children spoken to were clear that staff must not see them in the bathrooms or without clothes on.

Staff have written guidance in a policy file about providing intimate personal care. This covers choice by child, gender issues and consent. No child has a need for personal care at the moment.

There is policy and advice on when it may be necessary to search children's possessions. Both staff and children said searches were not necessary.

It is an outstanding recommendation to develop active child protection care plans and risk assessments to guide staff in their day to day work with children with specific needs in the area of sexually inappropriate behaviour. This is dealt with by an advisory recommendation under National Minimum Standard 17. Though no child currently has this identified as a risk on their SEN, the head of care intends to develop new care planning systems that would be tied to the individual risk assessments already in place. Inspectors' observations and staff comments suggested there were a number of children with sexualised behaviour.

Contact with parents and friends should be part of the care plan where this is wanted and appropriate.

Children arriving at school in the morning change into school sweatshirt in the lounge area of each unit. Uniform is kept at the school. Inspectors would like to see somewhere more private for children to change. Inspectors were told that children chose the quickest and easiest place to change and did not mind. This practice should be reconsidered.

**Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)**

**Children know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the school, and feel confident that any complaint is addressed seriously and without delay.**

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**2**

Children, parents, significant others and independent visitors are given information about how to complain and how to access an independent advocate.

There is an updated written policy and procedure on considering and responding to representations and complaints. This was a recommendation of the last inspection.

The school complaints procedure:

- Enables all with a legitimate interest to make minor and major complaints
- Precludes anyone who is the subject of a complaint from investigating that complaint
- Forbids reprisals against complainant
- Allows for negotiation, arbitration and mediation at informal stages and for complaints to progress to formal stage if not satisfied
- Provides for complaints against the head
- Requires a written record of person, date, nature, action, outcome
- Allows for referral to Social Services Department
- Is accessible to disabled children in suitable format
- Allows for an independent person to judge fairness of process
- Enables people to make complaints on behalf of child if child consents
- Details how external complaints will be dealt with, ie neighbours

Staff have been trained in complaints by the head of care. Notes of staff meetings showed that there was continuing discussion about what merited a major or minor complaint.

The DfES Investigation and Referral Support Coordinator for Birmingham has been asked by Stratford Social Services Department to make contact with the school. This is to assist in development of internal procedures to ensure good practice and prompt notifications to the local education authority, the Commission and Warwickshire Social Services Department when serious complaints are made against the school or staff and where this crosses into child protection. A recommendation has been made under Child Protection: National Minimum Standard 5.

Children and parents are told that they may complain to the Commission. The school says they will pass on contact names and numbers. Children were very clear about complaints and how and who they would tell. There was much evidence in posters and pictures of staff work in this area to publicise and enable children to understand their rights. This is a significant development by staff.

The head of care has established contact with NCH Children's Rights and Advocacy Service in Coventry as a source of advice and training for the school's Independent Visitor.

No records of complaint were presented or seen during the inspection. The headteacher keeps records. Much has been done to raise the issue of speaking up, and matters that have been raised by children or parents or from any relevant source should be documented.

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

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

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

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

## CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.
- Children are protected from bullying by others.
- All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the school are notified by the Headteacher of the school to the appropriate authorities.
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded positively to on return.

### Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

There are systems in place in the school which aim to prevent abuse of children and suspicions or allegations of abuse are properly responded to. These are known and understood by all staff (including junior, ancillary, volunteer and agency staff).

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

2

Last year's inspection recommended that specialist training be carried out with staff in managing unsafe and sexually inappropriate behaviour and for risk assessments to be created where needed to encompass risk reduction strategies. The head of care reports that training is planned with a Birmingham clinical psychologist for 26th March 2004 and that risk assessment and working strategies will be developed following that.

Area Child Protection Committee procedures are kept by the headteacher and head of care. Tony Pridding, head of care and Ann Hewitt, team leader Owl and Woodpecker Units are the designated people for child protection. They receive training from Birmingham LEA, but should adhere to Warwickshire Area Child Protection Committee procedures for incidents and allegations involving the school. There continues to be a lack of clarity about how referrals are passed to Warwickshire Social Services Department and the National Care Standards Commission where allegations involve staff at the school. A recommendation has been made.

The school's child protection procedures have been submitted to Warwickshire Area Child Protection Committee. The procedures are to be used as a model by Birmingham LEA. Birmingham LEA child protection representative appeared unaware of responsibilities by the school to Warwickshire Area Child Protection Committee and the National Care Standards Commission. Warwickshire Social Services Department has made a proposal to link the school with DfES advisors in child protection to ensure consistency and prompt action by the school. The school awaits Social Services Department contact to further this.

The procedure meets all elements of Appendix 1 (with the exception of the internal coordination required when an allegation involves a member of staff) and has been well put together by the head of care.

School information to staff makes it clear that failure to report a suspicion of child abuse is a disciplinary offence.

There is no written guidance for staff that are subject to allegations, nor is there access to information and support by the LEA. Staff must rely on union support. A recommendation has been made.

The LEA trains all staff in prevention and recognition of abuse and school procedures for child protection. All staff have had supplementary training by the head of care.

The school has received a copy of a report, made two years ago by Birmingham and Warwickshire Social Services Departments following serious concerns around protection of children at the school. Recommendations made then were echoed in last year's inspection report. Stratford Social Services Department's team manager has made a visit to discuss child protection matters in general with the head of school and head of care. The school reports satisfactory working together with placing authorities. Experience from Warwickshire recently has highlighted shortfalls in communication. Three referrals of the four referrals detailed below were allegations of abuse taking place elsewhere. One did involve the school and was not notified to Warwickshire Social Services Department or the National Care Standards Commission. The Head Teacher reports that he took advice from Kidderminster Social Services Department in relation to his responsibilities. Children's questionnaires showed that a number of children reported that they did not feel safe or have enough privacy at the school. It is recommended that the school considers these issues seriously as part of a wider consultation. The headteacher should take professional advice on improving the safety of staff and children at the school.

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

4

**Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

4

There is a new revised and simplified anti-bullying policy.

This includes

- Definition
- Measures to prevent bullying
- Training for staff in effective strategies

The head of care reported that the DfES anti-bullying pack has been acquired and will be used to train staff on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2004.

The policy is available and known to staff and children. Excellent work has been done by staff in making this issue "live" in the daily routine of the school. There has been whole school group work on bullying to produce anti-bullying posters for a national competition. There has been a school Inset day focusing on bullying. Children who are bullied are supported. This can be detailed in their individual risk assessment. A Birmingham initiative, the Pupil Identification Unit is carrying out group-work looking, with boys, at practical self-esteem issues. Children who bully are also given guidance.

There are risk assessments of times, places and circumstances where bullying is likely to take place. These are individual. Physical alterations have been made to the outside play area to improve supervision of pupils.

It has not been possible to give a true percentage figure. Staff were aware and actively working to reduce bullying at the school. Two parents reported bullying in taxis and one child specifically referred to it.

**Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied**

X %

**Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)**

**All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.**

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**2**

There is now a system to notify the Commission, Social Services Department, DfES and appropriate placing authority of

- Death of a child
- Inappropriate conduct by staff member
- Serious harm to a child, including allegation of abuse
- Serious illness or accident
- Outbreak of infectious disease

Two notifications have been made.

The school has not made any notifications to POCA though the previous head of care has liaised with DfES when necessary.

A mental health assessment has been requested under the Mental Health Act 1983 for one child because of serious concerns for his emotional and mental health.

The Commission has been notified when police were called to a serious incident at the school.

Staff inform parents and the placing authority of serious incidents involving their child, including an offence. The head of care has increased clear written guidance to staff on keeping parents and carers in close communication where incidents have happened at school.

The headteacher, on two occasions did not make appropriate notifications to the National Care Standards Commission or Warwickshire Social Services Department in relation to a child protection matter. The school is advised to establish informal consultation with the Commission and Warwickshire Social Services Department and ensure that the reporting mechanism includes a coordinated action by the headteacher and head of care. A recommendation has been made under National Minimum Standard 5 that is linked with this standard.

**NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO NCSC DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:**

- **conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children**
- **serious harm to a child**
- **serious illness or accident of a child (not pupil at school)**
- **serious incident requiring police to be called**

1
0
1
1

<b>Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)</b>		
The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>There are procedures to inform staff in the event of a child being absent without authority. Procedures cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search</li> <li>• Reporting after 3 hours</li> <li>• Action to ensure safety of the child</li> <li>• Collection and return of missing children when found</li> <li>• Action to be taken on return</li> </ul> <p>Children are seen by someone charged with pastoral care, to consider reasons for absence. There is a written record of absence without authority, including reason for running. Staff have written guidance and are aware of what they may do to prevent a child from leaving.</p> <p>There is not a high level or pattern of serious absconding, though regular and frequent attempts are made by boys each day to avoid class. This can involve running around and leaving the school's boundary. Staff were seen to balance the need for supervision with the need to de-escalate the situation by encouraging boys back within adult care.</p> <p>The headteacher and head of care carry out monitoring and risk assessments are applied in writing.</p>		
<b>Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:</b>		<b>1</b>



## CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

### Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
---------------------------	---------------	---

Staff were observed to set safe, consistent and understandable boundaries.

Expectations for staff and children are clearly understood and negotiated by those living and working at the school. A new reward system is planned by the deputy headteacher and fits into the existing "Star of the week" award. The whole school behavioural approach is evident and well described in written guidance for children, parents and staff.

Inspectors observed the balanced approach involving appropriate control, behaviour, welfare and protection.

It was evident from day to day practice that there is balance between

- Individual child's wishes
- Needs of individual children
- Needs of group
- Protection of themselves, other staff, children and the public from harm.

Staff have had training in positive care and control including using praise by head of care. Improved written guidance for staff also makes this clear. Behavioural psychologists employed by Birmingham should provide additional input. A recommendation has been made in this respect under National Minimum Standard 10.

Communication appeared much improved between staff and also in the many clear, positive, visual messages from adults to children around the school. The importance given to the group meetings between adults and child is a significant factor in this.

Staff deployment maximises consistency over children's choice of which staff provide their personal care. There is a mix of male and female staff in each unit.

The school GP gave a positive view on the staff/children relationships, noting their sensitivity, thoughtfulness and insight into the significance of the children's changing anxieties.

Inspectors were surprised to see children in pyjamas and downstairs at 7pm. Whilst inspectors acknowledge the calming down period and preparation for bedtime this may afford, it should be reviewed in the light of children's understanding of safe care and situations of abuse some may have experienced. Inspectors support Warwickshire Social Services Department's previous recommendation that a "protective behaviours" analysis and approach is needed at the school.



**Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.26)**

**Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour, and where the behaviour of children is regarded as unacceptable by staff, it is responded to by constructive disciplinary measures which are approved by the Head of Care.**

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

There is a policy on the control, disciplinary and physical intervention measures that may be used at the school. The headteacher produced this. This allows for positive reinforcement of acceptable behaviour as detailed in the previous standard.

Practice in different boarding houses is broadly consistent with whole school policy, though there are different approaches used in each house. Staff work consistently in one unit and there is not movement of ideas or staff to achieve a more consistent approach. Units “belong” to the staff group. Staff cited the positives in this approach. The head of care should ensure that good practice is evenly shared and established and house-styles work for the positive good of the children. Inspectors noted that each unit was much less an isolated “country” as was the impression last year.

Measures of control and sanctions were reported by children to be fair and consistent. Observations and written records bore this out.

Specific measures of control or physical intervention are selected, avoided or adapted as necessary to take the child’s needs, characteristics, disability and SEN into account. Written advice to staff by the head of care makes it clear that responses to unacceptable behaviour must acknowledge that challenging behaviour may be the result of illness, bullying, and autism or communication difficulties.

No unreasonable, idiosyncratic or excessive sanctions were reported by parents, staff or children, nor pain, humiliation, anxiety, observed.

Sanctions are not used against a group as a means of exerting pressure on one child.

Children do not have authority over other children to use sanctions or physical intervention.

There is a record of all sanctions used in each unit which includes information about:

- Name
- Date and location
- Details of inappropriate behaviour
- Sanction
- Name of other staff present
- Effectiveness
- Signature

Children do not sign to confirm records.

All staff have been trained, and received refresher courses from, in-house trainers in “Team Teach”. This is a form of intervention based on defence and diffusion and supported by Warwickshire and Birmingham LEAs. Physical intervention is only used to prevent likely injury to child or others, or serious damage to property.

Physical intervention records showed that this is not used as a punishment, to enforce compliance with instructions or in response to challenging behaviour, other than as set out in S.550(a) of the Education Act 1996.

The school’s policy on physical intervention meets current governmental guidance.

Recording allows for staff debriefing, though this section was not always completed. Records coordinate physical intervention used across the whole school and are monitored by the headteacher, head of care and also by the Standard 33 visitor.

Records are kept in a bound and numbered book. This refers to a numbered and sequential duplicated copy, which is sent to the placing authority and placed on the child’s file.

Recording is adequate, timely and in sufficient detail. Systems are now in place to ensure

that the head of care will review records at least twice a term.

The school makes clear to children their rights and responsibilities in information given on first placement, in unit meetings, and this will be reinforced when the school adopts the new "star" reward system.

Staff meet each week on a Friday morning to discuss and agree plans for managing behaviour in the light of children's histories and care plans.

Standards of behaviour at the school are satisfactory. Children have extremely challenging behaviour and emotional disturbance. Staff continue to invest heavily of their own personal resources. In-house training has increased and they receive added support from the very clear and resourceful head of care. It remains for Birmingham

LEA to provide the child psychology and behavioural and emotional specialist intervention that is so needed at this stage in these very young children's lives.

Disciplinary policy describes how children may be excluded. Specifically, the school has not used independent advocates, though Birmingham City has an established advocacy and children's rights service.

## QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.
- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within school and in the local community.
- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.
- Children wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.

### Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

Admission and Leaving processes are planned and agreed with the child – and as appropriate, with parents and carers and placing authorities – as far as possible and handled with sensitivity and care by those concerned.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

Admission procedures cover:

- Introductions to staff, children, daily routine, school and child expectations
- Information in accessible format
- Personal guidance and support following admission
- Review and action to help child settle

Information obtained prior to admission includes:

- Legal status and contact name for placing authority
- Current care plan
- Name and contacts for parents or guardians
- Current health, educational or personal care needs
- Particular areas of vulnerability or dangers
- Method of communication

Emergency admissions are subject to monitoring and conscious management. Children leave the school and move to secondary education. Staff reported that no child had returned to mainstream education and one had moved after four days to a secure unit. The Head reports that two children are currently involved in a reintegration programme into mainstream primary schools. Staff spoke of the concern they had about some of the placements that followed Skilts. They thought that some children continued to need a more therapeutic residential setting. Staff spoke of the support they offer to children in transition or children for whom residence at the Skilts had been the one consistent factor in otherwise chaotic lives.

**Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.7)**

Care staff and the school's residential provision and activities actively contribute to individual children's educational progress, and care staff actively support children's education, ensuring regular attendance, punctuality and a minimum of interruption during the school day.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

Care staff appeared knowledgeable about educational needs and progress of children in their care. Aims and targets for education were mirrored in basic "care plans" but without practical detail for what that meant on a day-to-day basis in residence rather than the class setting.

Staff contribute to annual review of statement and implement Individual Education Plans (IEP).

There are facilities in residence for homework and private study. There are books and educational aids for use outside class time. Each unit has a small "library".

One of the major advances made at Skilts has been in the introduction of many elements of Personal and Social Education (PSE) in group work in each unit. Specifically, one house, Owl, has introduced Circle Time, and this is to be commended. Other units have not yet begun this integration of teaching and residential elements in promoting PSE. Some staff have had training in group-work skills. Other staff may need an input from the head of care or educational staff in running groups.

An unmet recommendation relevant under this standard is dealt with under care planning and Standard 17.

**Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9)**

Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

2

There is a range of activities, indoor and outdoor, for children to access outside class time. There are two minibuses available. Each unit makes a weekly trip out. During the week of the inspection trips were made to the cinema and local swimming pool. The deputy headteacher runs a popular gym club in the evening. Children obviously relished the freedom of being safely out of doors with adults around. At playtimes and after school, adults were outside with children, playing cricket with them. Staff and children spoke of the fun they had outside during long summer evenings. The "evening activities" budget, previously held by the Head of care has been suspended due to a budgetary shortfall. There is a balance between free time and organised activities.

There is no formal schedule of activities. Two teachers are employed to carry out extra curricular duties. There were no recorded risk assessments seen to cover:

- High-risk activities, whether the supervisor needs a qualification
- Equipment needed

This shortfall reflects the low score given in this standard, though it is recognised that the activities experienced are enriching.

Children have access to a range of books, magazines, newspapers, toys, music and games. Staff and children were observed discussing the clearly understood rules about age-appropriate computer games. The internet has a firewall safeguard. Each unit has "play stations" and uses them to different degrees.

**Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

Physical, mental and emotional health needs are identified and promoted in the day-to-day care of children. Staff consult with the school nurse about health and personal care issues. The nurse spends two days a week at Skilts and is supported by a school nurse assistant. Children have specific needs such as: bedwetting, sickle cell anaemia, sexually inappropriate behaviour and asthma. The nurse wants to carry out training in relation to asthma for staff and thinks that a clinic is needed in the school. The newly appointed school doctor visits each month and has a particular interest and expertise in enuresis. There is an active policy on health promotion. The school has been part of the national government led "Healthy Schools" initiative and hopes to receive the Healthy Schools standard. The nurse was one of two key school staff who promoted group work and consultation with children. This has led to a focus group with year 6 children discussing sexual health. It is important for the residential staff to take control of the emotional/relationship elements of what is hoped will be a rolling programme of sex education. Bullying and abuse have also been a whole school focus for group discussions. Residential staff requested a cessation of smoking strategy from the Birmingham Health Education Unit and this has begun.

The school has satisfactory arrangements for each child to receive medical, optical and dental treatment whilst at school.

The nurse maintains a written health plan to cover:

- Medical history
- Preventive measures
- Allergies
- Dental needs
- Hearing
- Optical needs
- Developmental check record
- Treatment therapies or remedial programmes for body, mind or heart
- Health monitoring by staff
- Intimate care and bodily functions requiring staff help
- Parental involvement in health issues

This information is shared with residential staff if they ask or if the nurse thinks it necessary. It is a discrete health record. New reporting systems initiated by the new school doctor will ensure that basic information required for the SEN and review is passed to parents and eventually to care staff. A pro-forma health care plan for use in residence would enable essential need to know information to be effectively passed on. Staff and nurse contact parents if a medical or health issue arises. The school doctor copies consulting letters to residential social work staff.

There is at least one staff member on duty each shift and in each building where children sleep who has a first aid qualification. First aid training has taken place to ensure that enough residential staff are now appropriately qualified and full coverage is maintained. Psychiatric services are provided through one psychiatrist who potentially offers a service to 9 children from one particular geographical area of Birmingham. This service is not available

to all children. Psychological services are secured through the education setting and whilst psychologists do talk with residential staff, the input is not focused on their out of school issues. Whilst the inspector recognises in this standard that the primary health care needs of the children are adequately met, there is an outstanding recommendation from last year in relation to the availability of specialist therapists or clinicians who are needed to work with children.

The doctor contributed written views to the inspection and supported the nurse's expressed view that there was a need for increased support from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Team Services team (CAMHs).

A recommendation has been made elsewhere about the pressing need for an increase in therapeutic input with children and to support the work done by staff. CAMHS is conducting a citywide review of the service to children and Skilts was visited by Young Minds, a charity working with young people and mental health as part of that review. There is written parental consent to administration, first aid and non-prescription medication or for dental, optical or medical treatment when required. This is kept on the medication file in each unit.

The nurse holds a current registration with NMC. She has professional supervision through the Primary Care Trust and has strong professional interests in her field.

The female doctor holds a monthly clinic. She has direct support from a consultant and the nurse was confident of the quality of the service Skilts would now receive from this team. Speech and Language therapists have a planned meeting in March with the headteacher to discuss the needs of the children.

Prescription medication is given only to the child for whom it was prescribed. There is no medication for general or stock use. Storage of medication arrangements are satisfactory. There is a new policy on administration and storage of medication. This is to be introduced to the staff by the nurse through formal training. There is a nurse protocol on the provision of non-prescription, household medicines to children. Some children self-medicate, ie inhalers. The nurse assesses competence. A written record is kept of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children. This is signed by a responsible member of staff and is regularly monitored by the headteacher or senior member of staff. Routine medication used tends to be of the Ritalin type. Ten children throughout the school are on prescription medication. Medication is kept in each unit and dispensed by care staff. Care staff are reminded to ensure that medication packets are immediately returned to safe storage after administration.

There is a written record of all significant illnesses, accidents or injuries to children. This is kept in the first aid book. Individual daily reports list whether an accident has taken place. Staff do not carry out complex health tasks with children.

If children are ill, they could summon staff help by leaving the room, as a buzzer would sound. Two baby monitors are used to alert staff in two units to other sounds in the night.



**Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.15)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

Meals are well set up, orderly and social occasions.

Children do not have a choice of main course at each meal. Some staff and children were seen eating alternative food choices.

Children are not consulted over meal planning, but this is something the catering manager hopes will happen through the School Council. Menus are based on her knowledge of likes and dislikes and boys can ask for particular items. Specialist wheat-free, dairy-free and vegetarian diets are provided for. A record of meals as served for the last year is maintained. Menus are presented pictorially and displayed in each unit.

Children spoke highly of the food at the school and in questionnaires a majority said the food was good. A recommendation has been made to consult with children over menus and choice.

Birmingham Environmental Health Department inspected on 30.April 2003 on behalf of Stratford, although Stratford Environmental Health Department was unaware of this and informed the National Care Standards Commission that the Health and Safety Executive was the appropriate body.

There is no outstanding action required.

Dining furnishings are suitable. There is one dining room for each of the four units. Standards of cleanliness were satisfactory. No special eating equipment is required. No speech therapy advice on special feeding programmes or dietary requirements has been sought, though the service has a planned meeting with the headteacher later in the Spring.

Children were observed to help prepare snacks in Seal House. They joined in with cooking on special children's mini ovens. One boy was reported to make the best hot chocolate and did so for all the boys that evening. Some residential staff have food hygiene certificates and all catering staff do.

The school provides meals and drinks at set times. Children were seen to have access to food from staff at other reasonable times.

Drinking water is readily available.

**Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.7)**

Children are provided for adequately on an individual basis and encouraged to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing and personal requisites. Children who require assistance to choose what they wear and/or how they spend their money are provided with the assistance they need, in a way which maximises their choice.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

Children bring their own clothes to school, but the school keeps and launders school uniform and school sports shoes. Children change into their own clothes after the school day. Unless their own clothes are heavily soiled, they are returned home for washing at the end of the week. There is no shop nearby where they can buy personal items, but the head reported that children are taken to nearby Redditch to shop . The school provides all toiletries, though many children bring their own.

Staff do keep pocket money and mobile phones for children. New pocket money/valuables forms have just been issued. It was reported that records had previously been haphazardly maintained. Children do not have their own lockable space within bedrooms for keeping precious items safe.

The school should consider how it could best keep items and money safe and accountable on children's behalf.

## CARE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT PLAN

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.
- In accordance with their wishes, children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.
- Children receive individual support when they need it.

### Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

There is a written placement plan specifying how the school will care for each boarding pupil in accordance with his or her assessed needs, the school cares for that child in accordance with that plan, monitors progress in relation to that plan, and updates that plan as necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
---------------------------	---------------	---

The school has basic information in SEN and Social Services information to serve as a baseline assessment of the child's needs before they arrive at Skilts. No LAC documentation was seen in any of the five children's files sampled. None of this information relates to Skilts or the care needed outside of education. Health information is one line in some cases. An IEP is drawn up for use in residence but this does not contain the detail needed. The head of care reports that there will be a revision of care planning strategy and that there is improved attendance by parents at annual educational reviews. The new daily report format was noted to identify essential information to link the IEP, risk assessment and other key information relating to each child's individual needs. It remains for a useable care plan to be created that relates specifically to the day-to-day work with each child during the residential part of the day.

Only educational plans are agreed with parents, child and any placing authority for the child. There is no key worker system in place. Staff reported that all staff coordinate efforts to update information and contribute to decision-making. In the absence of any care plans, this may suffice. The head of care should monitor the viability of this situation once care planning is introduced. The staff make contributions to educational reviews. Staff report children have limited input through choice.

**Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.5)**

Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress which can, in compliance with legal requirements for safeguards, be seen by the child.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**2**

Children's files contain information about:

- Name, gender, DOB
- Religion
- Racial origin, cultural and linguistic background
- Home address
- Emergency telephone number for person with parental responsibility
- Contact details of the local authority responsible for placement
- Legal status
- Details of any absences
- Details of any restraint, measure of control or discipline
- Visits to child whilst at the school
- SEN information
- Dietary, health and dental needs
- Contact arrangements or restrictions
- Current or past placement plans
- GP and dental practitioner
- Accidents, injuries and illnesses
- Immunisations, allergies, medical, health or developmental tests carried out whilst accommodated (quality dependent upon information supplied)
- Record of administration of medication
- Deposit and withdrawal of money or valuables for safekeeping

All entries on files are signed and dated and legible.

Much important information is contained within the "message book" on each unit. This contains confidential personal information about children. The head of care reported that such information should be recorded on the daily report sheet for each child. A recommendation has been made.

Children know that they can read their files.

The school keeps only essential archived information in the attic at school. Files are passed on to the next school but it is not known if a receipt is obtained.

**Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.3)**

The school maintains clear and accurate records on the staff and child groups of the school, and major events affecting the school and children resident there.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

2

The school does not maintain records in the form or with the detail required. The headteacher reported that information would be available in the attic archive and in DfES "returns" made annually. This does not constitute a register. The DfES was not able to supply this information to the National Care Standards Commission when requested prior to the inspection.

A daily attendance register is maintained but without the required information.

A children's register is required showing:

- Date of admission and departure
- Who was responsible for placement
- Address prior to arrival at school
- Address on departure
- Placing authority and legal status

Similarly there is not an employees register showing:

- Name, gender, address and dob
- Qualifications and experience for working with children
- Full-time or part-time
- Resident/non-resident

Some of this information is available on computerised school systems.

There is not a personnel file for each member of staff containing a minimum of:

- Letter of application and forms
- CV and employment history
- Evidence of appropriate checks
- Contract of employment
- Evidence of qualifications
- References obtained
- Interview notes
- Disciplinary action

This information is more likely to be in place for newly appointed members of staff. Personnel files are maintained at the school. The head of care is the most recently appointed member of staff. There is a new recruitment matrix created by the head of care, but this has not been used to ensure the above information is maintained in a personnel file.

The school can supply details of other people living on the school's premises currently, but not retrospectively. There is a separate accident log for children, staff and visitors. Records of Menus are kept. The school does not maintain a duty roster recording who actually worked, though the head of care said that this information was available in other records. There is not a diary of events, including visitors, that relates to the residential provision. All these records are to be kept for 5 years from date of last entry.

**Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.6)**

Subject to their wishes, children are positively encouraged and enabled by the school to maintain contact with their parents and other family members (unless there are welfare concerns) while living at school.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

Staff contact parents about any welfare concerns, and parents, in their questionnaires, supported this. Staff may make home visits if necessary and there is a school policy and additional guidance for staff about this.

The school has information in the SEN and Social Services Department information about contact restrictions with family or others imposed by the court, Social Services Department or parent.

Restriction and monitoring of phone calls is difficult to arrange. Telephones are on stairwells or in separate rooms. Only if a child asked to use the phone in the living room could the call be monitored.

Children can meet parents or other visitors in comfort and in private in the staff meeting rooms on the ground floor adjacent to Woodpecker House. No child is resident at the school for long periods. All children return each week to parents or carers or children's homes.

**Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.2)**

Where a pupil is in care and will be leaving care on leaving the school, the school agrees with the young person's responsible authority what contribution it should make to implement any Pathway or other plan for the pupil before the pupil leaves school. These arrangements are in line with that young person's needs, and the school implements its contribution where feasible from at least a year before the pupil is expected to leave care or move to independent living. The school works with any Personal Advisor for the child.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

9

This standard does not apply as all children are of primary school age and transition is not to independence and leaving care, but to secondary school. There is written guidance for staff about encouraging light domestic duties and rewarding boys for initiative in this area.

**Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.13)**

**All children are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes, and children identified as having particular support needs, or particular problems, receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested.**

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**2**

The Statement of Purpose for the school makes it clear that inclusion is promoted and the school has begun involving and consulting children. The behaviour and needs of the children are extremely challenging. Many find it difficult to be part of a group. They have all, at an early age, been excluded from mainstream education and the setting of the school is isolated and remote. Notwithstanding that, children were positive in their comments about the school and the school promotes an ethos of “belonging”.

No language support is currently needed or provided for children for whom English is a second language. No child uses alternative methods of communication. The headteacher has made contact with speech and language therapy services to look at the needs of the children.

Staff report that children can contact any member of staff with personal or welfare concerns. Children confirmed this in discussions with inspectors.

Children experiencing homesickness, divorce, and illness of parent are helped by care staff. This was evident from discussions with staff and children’s documentation.

The school has identified a person, not employed by the school or placing authority, whom children can contact directly with concerns. This person is able to be in direct contact with children and visits the residential area regularly. He has been CRB checked and is required to follow child protection procedures. Links have been made with NCH Coventry Children’s Rights and Advocacy Service to provide training and support so that he can act as a skilled “independent person”. This person was interviewed during the inspection. He reported his commitment to the emotional well-being of the boys.

The school cares for children for a portion of the week. All have parents or carers or a local authority responsible for ensuring the whole needs of the child are met. Thirty one children are deemed to require something more than daytime special education and have “residential needs”. There is minimal input by the local authority into this aspect of the service. Educational psychologists advise on educational behavioural matters. There is no psychotherapy routinely available to children. Inspectors noted that referrals for specialist psychology intervention were often not successful as the CAMHS service is reported to be massively overstretched. Inspectors were told that seven children have moved on to even more specialised services as the school cannot cater for their needs. The head reported this figure to be four who had gone on to alternative placements. There is a dire need for psychology, psychotherapy, and behavioural and counselling support, both individually with boys, and as a resource to staff.

The school has integrated the DfES/DoH Healthy Schools Standard with the Personal Health Social and Sex Education Programme. Excellent work has been progressed by the school nurse and the PSE teacher. Further work is needed to fully integrate and maximise the skills of the residential staff into this programme. A recommendation has previously been made. Inspectors were very impressed by the movement and motivation and enthusiasm generated by this work in both children and staff. Momentum must not be lost.

There is no on-site specialist support provided to help children develop individual identity in relation to gender, sexuality, racial, cultural or religious background, or disability. Teachers and experienced care staff are the source of support at the school. No specific therapeutic techniques are used. There was no evidence or knowledge of the work carried out with four boys by the psychiatrist.



## PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

### Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
---------------------------	---------------	---

The school does not accommodate any children with disabilities. Suitable aids and adaptations would need to be provided. The building is not currently accessible to people with a physical disability.

There are no outstanding requirements from:

- Planning authority
- Building control authority
- Fire service
- Environmental Health Department

There are listening devices, baby monitors, used inside both houses.

There was no evidence that the use was mentioned in placement plan, approved by placing authority or parent or required by a court.

They are not mentioned in the Statement of Purpose. Children were aware of their use. Staff described that they were used to listen to children as they settled down to sleep at night whilst staff were downstairs in the units. A recommendation is made to detail the use of these devices in the Statement of Purpose and in care plans. There are no physical restrictions within the units. (High handles, stair gates, baffle locks).

The school is isolated in the countryside. There are neighbours far away at the bottom of the drive. There will be close neighbours next year when an architect's practice starts up next door. The head teacher reports that he has met with neighbours to discuss security and risks to children and that the side gate to the school is now kept locked.

**Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.19)**

The school provides adequate good quality and well-maintained accommodation for boarding pupils, which is consistent with their needs.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

Residential accommodation is appropriately decorated and furnished to an acceptable standard. This is pleasant, homely and appropriate to age, culture and ethnic background. The interior and exterior is maintained in a reasonable state of structural and decorative repair. The adjacent derelict residential house is horrible and an eyesore. The school building looks shabby. It has been painted at the front but not the back where the children see it. There is an ongoing programme of redecoration.

The grounds play equipment and play areas are well maintained and safe. Children expressed disappointment that the tree house and tyre swing have been dismantled on safety grounds. The playground group has identified an area that is being converted into a "chill out" area for them.

During term time, residential accommodation is not reserved for the exclusive use of residential pupils who live there. Twelve day pupils use the facilities from morning until after school. Day-boys change in the lounge. Pupils from other units visit with the permission of staff. All children sleep in rooms by themselves, though other boys may use the extra bed on other nights. No rooms are shared at the same time.

Requests to change room are considered and agreed if feasible.

Bedrooms have:

- Sufficient and suitable beds, however the quilts are thin and need replacing
- Carpets
- Windows that provide natural light by day
- Curtains
- Lighting sufficient to read by
- A central heating radiator

One of the recently partitioned bedrooms does not have a radiator, however, there is sufficient heat from the central heating pipes to heat the room.

Only a few rooms have any seating.

Each child has a chest of drawers for storing clothes.

Children do not have lockable space or otherwise safe storage for precious things.

There are very few mirrors in the houses and none were seen in children's bedrooms.

Children can personalise their bedrooms. Children showed the inspectors their bedrooms with their pictures and posters in.

Children did not say that rooms are too crowded or small.

There is a payphone in each of the houses but not in each unit. These two payphones are located in the stairwell of a unit. They are not private and require money to operate them. In one of the units a small storeroom has been adapted for the unit's telephone. Children accommodated in this unit can use the telephone in private and without charge.

A recommendation has been made under National Minimum Standard 3.

Children are not expected to study outside of class times.

There are facilities for the laundering of clothes and bedding. The laundry is sited away from the residential accommodation. The laundry does not have any domestic washing machines that are suitable for use by the children. The school provides pupils with polo shirts and sweatshirts that the school launders. Children bring in their own out of school clothes.

The bedding seen was clean.

The school can safely manage soiled laundry. Any soiled laundry is left in the bedrooms and taken to the laundry by staff after the school day has started.

Lighting, heating and ventilation are satisfactory.

There are no rooms in the houses where children can meet privately with visitors.

Two of the units have an additional area to the lounge that can be used for private activities, play and recreation. In one unit the room has computers in it and in the other a pool table.

There is a designated sleep-in room in each unit. They are located close to the children's bedrooms. There are alarms that can be activated on the bedroom doors if required. Staff living accommodation opens directly onto children's sleeping corridors.

There is no emergency call system. Children knew how to alert staff in an emergency.

The head of care reports that a risk assessment package has been purchased and outside play equipment risk assessments are complete.

Bedroom facilities in Owl and Woodpecker Houses have been upgraded, but lockable storage facilities have not yet been provided. A recommendation has been made that the headteacher considers consulting with children for acceptable ways of keeping precious things safe. This could be part of a wider debate about feeling safe.

**Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.7)**

The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets, all of good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children. The school has appropriate changing and washing facilities for incontinent children where necessary.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

2

There is one toilet per four children. All of the toilets or urinals for children's use are located on the first floor. They all have adjacent hand washing and drying facilities.

In each unit there is at least one bath and two showers. Not all of the showers have curtains. The children said there is enough hot water. The bath in Owl House does not have a cold tap and cold water has to be added from the sink by use of a plastic tub. The water did not feel excessively hot. The local authority contractors maintain the hot water systems.

The bathrooms do not offer total privacy and have not been specifically designed with children in mind.

Doors can be opened in an emergency, by leaning a hand over the top of the door.

Appropriate door locks are not used and inspectors considered that some children would not be tall enough to lock the door in the first place.

Showers are in cubicles, which are see-through or behind curtains in open bathrooms. All showers need to be made more private. Children reported that staff did not watch them bathe. Children commented in questionnaires that bathrooms were not private. Not all bathroom doors have locks.

No child requires intimate personal care or washing. There are intimate personal care guidelines for staff. Care plans do not give any information about this area.

Staff have separate toilet and bathing facilities in the main staff sleeping area flat at the end of Woodpecker and Seal Houses.

The head of care reports that staff have undertaken a general accommodation survey and that appropriate changes will be made where funding allows. He reports that contractors have reviewed water systems with the caretaker.

An existing recommendation is outstanding.

**Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)**

Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, in accordance with Headteacher and Fire legislation and guidance.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

2

The local authority contractors service and maintain the heating, electrical systems and boilers.

- The heating system is oil fired.
- Electrical installations and equipment 1:3 years.
- Boilers are serviced annually

There are no risk assessments recorded in writing for any aspect of the physical environment, apart from playground equipment. An existing recommendation is outstanding. The headteacher reports that health and safety responsibilities have had a "revamp". There is a half-termly meeting of the school general management team to consider health and safety issues. The head of care reports that safety aspects are only informally considered at present. He cited action taken to reduce risk as a direct result of this informal but active approach - a new reception area, construction of a fence near the gym and the addition of security doors.

Fire safety is the identified responsibility of one member of residential staff. Staff and children know the emergency evacuation procedures, including those at night. Fire drills are held once a term in the school. Local authority contractors carry out emergency lighting tests quarterly. Fire alarms are tested weekly.

Fire fighting equipment tests are made annually by local authority contractors.

The Fire Service made an inspection on 17 July 2003. There are no outstanding requirements. Smoke detectors are required in two newly adapted bedrooms. A fire safety risk assessment should be carried out before these rooms are used.

Staff informed inspectors that water is regulated at taps to a safe temperature. However, there was no evidence presented of this nor are there written risk assessments to cover this. An earlier recommendation deals with this.

Stratford Environmental Health Department has advised that the Health and Safety Executive regulates all local authority provision.

## STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- There are careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.

### Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those employed on a contractual/sessional basis) and volunteers who work with the children in the school includes checks through the Criminal Records Bureau checking system (at Standard or Enhanced level as appropriate to their role in the school), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

2

There is a system for recruiting staff, which meets requirements. The head of care has devised a checklist for applications, which meets this standard. It has yet to be used with a newly appointed member of staff.

Files of five staff were sampled. Appointments made in recent years meet the standard. There are staff, employed in the 80's and earlier, about whom there is only nominal information, though full-time staff all have CRB checks now. One part-time member of residential staff does not have a current CRB check and similarly has no adequate personnel file. A recommendation has been made to support the one already made under National Minimum Standard 19. Efforts should be made to obtain information as required on an application form/CV, proof of qualifications etc.

For all adults who, after April 2002, began to live on the premises, there is a CRB check made at standard level. Offers of employment are made subject to full information being received. Staff members would not begin work before all information is received. The school does not use agency staff. Teaching staff make up shortfalls in residential staffing. Taxi drivers are booked by the placing authority to drive children. Escorts are used.

**Total number of care staff:**

14

**Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:**

1

**Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)**

The school is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the minimum level specified under standard 28.2. Records of staff actually working in the school demonstrate achievement of this staffing level.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**2**

There is a staffing policy. This ensures that staffing levels can fulfil the Statement of Purpose.

The policy states:

- Minimum of two care staff on duty by day and evening when children are present.
- By night, each unit has one sleeping staff member. Senior staff of Otter and Woodpecker units have personal flats opening onto the respective unit. (There is no tenancy agreement). Other staff use a sleeping-in room on the boarding corridor of the unit.
- Each house has a team leader covering both units. Management of the staff group by day and night is made clear on the rota.
- Arrangements for calling for senior staff support are identified on the rota. The head of care and headteacher both stay on-site during the week and share this duty.

Staffing levels by day and night are sufficient and meet the needs of children. No external agency staff are used.

Observations during the inspection showed that there were times, due to unavoidable crisis, when children were unsupervised and teaching staff had to be pulled in to cover lunchtimes. There is a minimum of 2 staff on duty for every 15 children by day (7am-11pm). This covers the rise in numbers with day-boys using the units at early morning, lunch and early evening. Staff ratios are 1:8 at night with staff sleeping-in. Risks from 1:1 working are detailed in individual risk assessments and written guidance given to staff.

There is one adult in charge of each group of children in school or on trips. Staff have mobile phones to call for back up. Children reported that they knew how to contact staff day or night.

Transport arrangements (supervision, escort, behaviour) are risk managed through individual risk assessments.

The staff group includes both genders and a range of ages.

There is a written record/register of which children and adults are sleeping in the school at night.

Several Skilts' staff live on-site. There are no legal tenancy agreements or undertakings of conduct whilst in residence. This shortfall is linked to the school's potential ability to protect children. A recommendation has been made.

**Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)**

**Staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the school.**

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

The head of care has created an excellent formal induction programme. This includes guidance on child protection. There has been no opportunity to use it.

Tony Pridding himself was the most recently appointed staff member and was largely responsible for his own induction in conjunction with the headteacher .

Staff are clear about accountability and reporting lines.

Staff are informed of child protection, health and safety, emergency, notification of incidents and procedures in writing in the "Who, what, when, where, why " guidebook to Skills. This is another new document created by the head of care. This book contains all relevant procedures and is kept in the staff area of each unit for easy access. Staff were noted to actively refer to this information.

There are opportunities for staff to access external training and the head of care, who has undertaken much training "in-house", promotes training in childcare. He is currently investigating NVQ 3 possibilities for staff. Five staff have been identified to undertake NVQ 3 and three staff to do NVQ 4.

There is evidence of training in autism awareness, consulting with children, report writing, healthy school, first aid, supervision, team-teach, behaviour management, complaints and child protection. Each staff member has a personal training record. The deputy coordinates whole school training records.

Further training and advice is needed for staff from appropriately qualified professionals specific to the needs of children with educational and behavioural difficulties. A psychologist plans training to work with sexually inappropriate behaviour for March. Staff are confident in their approach, but aware of their limitations and the need for people with appropriate skills to work with, talk to and help some of the children with their pressing need for psychological support. Recommendations have been made elsewhere.



**Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)**

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

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

There is a management structure plan showing lines of reporting and accountability. There are, newly appointed, a deputy headteacher and a head of care who contribute to the existing senior management team.

Staff get supervision lasting 90 minutes, is one to one and occurs every half-term.

Residential staff employed for extra curricular duties do not receive supervision. A recommendation has been made.

There are written records which show that supervision addresses:

- Staff role
- Key worker issues for children
- Fulfilment of placement plans
- Personal feelings/stress
- Staff development and training
- National Minimum Standards
- Performance and task related matters

The headteacher receives professional supervision, beyond peer support, through advisors to the LEA.

Annual appraisal is not established.

The new head of care has given staff up to date guidance on policy and procedure in the excellent “who, what, where, when, why” guide to Skilts. Staff expressed confidence and appreciation of the quality of information he has provided.

The headteacher is accountable to the board of governors and a schedule of reports and agenda items is set each year.

All staff know to whom they are accountable.

Job descriptions and person specifications are due for overhaul. Some have been rewritten.

The headteacher and head of care are aware of the need to improve the quality of these documents.

There is a rota that shows planned staffing arrangements and working times. This must specify surnames of staff. A recommendation has been made elsewhere in relation to the need to maintain a rota that records who ACTUALLY worked.

The school has well established formal and informal communication channels and meetings.

All staff groups meet regularly and have professional discussion about their role, children and operations within the school. Full staff meetings are held and there have been whole school Inset days on child protection and bullying. Staff of all sectors reported the ease of mutually supportive working relationships.

The Statement of Purpose does not detail external specialist guidance and support for staff, but inspectors have made recommendations about the need for professional advice to inform practice. There is an outstanding requirement from last year. Birmingham LEA does have a responsive staff support unit.

Staff do not smoke or drink in front of children.

**ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT**

**The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:**

- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.
- Children enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.

**Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)**

The school is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible childcare.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**2**

The head of care has 7 years' experience at a senior level but needs a professional qualification relevant to working with children (NVQ 4 or DIPSW/CQSW).

Leaders of care shifts have substantial experience and many years' service at the school. The school has not begun an NVQ programme. The head of care is aware and has begun to negotiate appropriate packages.

From January 2004 new staff must have this qualification on appointment or begin working towards this within 3 months.

Staff rotas have time scheduled to allow for the following without compromising care of children:

- Staff supervision
- Staff meetings
- Hand-over sessions
- Completing records
- Planning and carrying out care programmes
- Being with individual children
- Annual review of statements
- IEP reviews
- Transition reviews

Birmingham and Skilts have a complex "banked hours" issue whereby staff owe the LEA hours due to the long holidays they take. This is not yet resolved. Children do not have responsibility over other children in the school.

In the event of an allegation of abuse against staff, the decision whether or not to send home the member of staff, pending investigation lies with the headteacher. Experience has been that the headteacher has done this following advice at a child protection strategy meeting rather than taking immediate steps. He should consult with Warwickshire Social Services Department and the National Care Standards Commission to assist him in his role of protecting children. Child protection information should be shared with the head of care as the nominated individual with responsibility for child protection. Procedures should take into account a strategy should the headteacher or head of care be the subject of an allegation. A recommendation has been made under National Minimum Standards 5 and the DfES and Warwickshire Social Services Department will advise.

The school's child protection procedure does include neutral suspension in the event of an allegation against a member of staff, however, this has not been practised previously.

The school has not planned responses to a range of unforeseeable crises ie, illness, fire, serious allegations, accidents, staff shortages. The school dealt satisfactorily with a

contained outbreak of meningitis in a child of a member of staff on-site. The school provides information to parents about child protection, anti-bullying, disciplinary, complaints, health and pastoral policies. Contact numbers for Stratford Social Services Department (for child protection) and the Commission (for other issues) are referred to but not supplied to parents.

The school must address the issue of staff living on site and the school's ability to protect children in the event of a member of staff being suspended or dismissed following Child Protection investigation. Recommendations have been made earlier.

<b>Percentage of care staff with relevant NVQ or equivalent child care qualification:</b>	20 %
---	------

**Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)**

The National Care Standards Commission is informed within 24 hours if a receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy becomes responsible for the school. Such persons on becoming responsible for the school have ensured that the school continues to be managed on a day to day basis by a Headteacher who meets recruitment and qualification requirements for a Headteacher under these Standards. Such a temporary Headteacher must make sure that the operation of the school meets the requirements of these standards in relation to the day to day running of the school.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The headteacher or head of care monitor and sign records, identify patterns or action required and ensure follow up. This is a newly established practice and not fully operational. The inspector was assured that systems were logical and enabled a clear route to ensure action needed would be identified.

The following matters are monitored half-termly

- Placement plans
- Duty rosters as actually worked (to be created)
- Menus
- Accidents and injuries (within the first aid record)
- Medication, treatment and first aid
- Allegations or suspicions of abuse and their outcome
- Complaints and outcomes (headteacher)
- Visitors to school and children
- Notification of incidents to the Commission
- Absence without authority
- Sanctions applied
- Use of physical intervention
- Monitoring of racial incidents is also to be undertaken for LEA purposes

Termly:

- Staff recruitment record and conduct of checks required for new staff
- Risk assessments and subsequent action
- Deposit and issue of money and valuables for safekeeping
- Fire drills, alarm tests, emergency lighting and fire equipment
- Minutes of staff meetings

Staff appraisals and performance management are not undertaken for non-educational staff.

Action has been taken in relation to concentrations, trends or patterns and there is evidence of feedback to staff and also from the Standard 33 visitor.

The headteacher will carry out an annual review of the operation and resourcing of the welfare provision in relation to the Statement of Purpose, staffing policy, placement plans, internal assessment of compliance with National Minimum Standards. This report will be submitted to governors for their June meeting. It is linked to the school development plan but exists as a separate document. A mini-Ofsted has been suggested for the summer term. The headteacher reports the school is not failing but is vulnerable.

There is not a high incidence of police involvement.  
 Records of complaint were not available for inspection. A recommendation has been made under National Minimum Standard 4.

**Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.7)**

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

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
----------------------------------	----------------------	----------

The governing body has arranged for one of their number to visit once every half term and he has conducted his first visit and completed a written report on the conduct of the school. This visitor is the headteacher of another school who sits on the board of governors. The headteacher at Skilts plans a reciprocal arrangement. The visit took place during school time and included inspections of the classrooms. No mention was made specifically of the residential accommodation or practice though records in the head of care's office were seen. This visit was announced.

The report included:

Checks on attendance, complaints, sanctions, and use of physical interventions, assessment of physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school. It is not clear how opportunities for children and staff to meet the visitor in private were made or would be arranged.

Reports are made available to inspectors at school. Action taken is recorded. Commission inspection reports are made available at the school to staff, children, and parents and to placing authorities.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

Empty box for Lay Assessor's Summary.

**Lay Assessor** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**PART D**

**HEAD'S RESPONSE**

**D.1 Head's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.**

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on <enter date(s) of inspection here> and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

Head's comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate

NO

**Note:**

In instances where there is a major difference of view between the Inspector and the Headteacher both views will be made available on request to the Area Office.

**D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by , which indicates how recommended actions and advisory recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.**

**Status of the Head's Action Plan at time of publication of the final inspection report:**

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

YES

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

YES

Other: <enter details here>

NO



**D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT**

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

**D.3.1 I Charles Herriots of Skilts School confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the recommended actions made and will seek to comply with these.**

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Designation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

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

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Designation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Headteacher both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.**