



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

## BOARDING SCHOOL

### **Culford School**

**Culford  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP28 6TX**

*Lead Inspector*  
Cecilia McKillop

*Announced Inspection*  
8th December 2005      12:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Boarding Schools*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

# SCHOOL INFORMATION

<b>Name of school</b>	Culford School
<b>Address</b>	Culford Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP28 6TX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01284 728615
<b>Fax number</b>	01284 728631
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	<a href="http://www.culford.co.uk">www.culford.co.uk</a>
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	
<b>Name of Head</b>	J F Johnson-Munday
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	
<b>Age range of boarding pupils</b>	<b>8-18</b>
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	2002

**Brief Description of the School:**

Culford School traces its origins back to 1881 and has occupied its present site in the 488 acres of Culford Park since 1935, becoming co-education in 1972. The School is one of a group of independent schools founded by the Methodist Church and the local Governors are responsible to the Trustees of the Board of Management for Methodist Residential Schools, which owns the property.

The School aims to be a caring Christian family community worshipping and upholding Christian values and practices as well as theory, whilst welcoming members of other faiths.

The School currently caters for approximately 600 pupils incorporating a nursery and a pre-prep department, and preparatory and senior schools.

There are currently 200 boarders aged between 8 and 18.

The preparatory School caters for children aged 8 to 13 and is run independently from the Senior School with its own boarding facilities in Cadogan House which is co ed.

Boarders in the Senior School are accommodated in Edwards, Cornwallis and Jocelyn House.

# SUMMARY

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

This report follows a short focused inspection conducted by two inspectors on a midweek afternoon. Interviews were conducted with two boarding staff, the member of staff responsible for guardians, and one of the boarding house matrons. Group interviews were held with two groups of boarding pupils who were selected as random. A tour of the accommodation was undertaken in one of the boarding houses, and samples of records were examined. The inspection concluded with a feedback meeting to the Headmaster and Deputy Head.

## **What the school does well:**

The school has its own medical centre, which is staffed on a 24-hour basis and able to quickly respond to young people's medical needs.

Young people have areas in the boarding houses where they can study. There are small kitchens and young people are able to prepare drinks and snacks.

Boarding staff are experienced, and knowledgeable about the needs of young people living away from home. The boarding staff meet regularly with senior staff to discuss pastoral issues. The boarding staff are supported by prefects who take their role seriously, and although operate somewhat differently in each house, are well respected by pupils.

Young people have access to a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities after school and at the weekends. The school has extensive grounds and good recreational facilities.

Young people are supported to maintain meaningful contact with friends and family and are able to use a number of ways to maintain contact. The school has an independent listener in place for young people to contact, should they want to speak to some one outside the school and their immediate family.

The pupils who were interviewed were clear about discipline and said that bullying incidents were generally managed satisfactorily. While they were not always able to identify an adult within the school community that they could share a concern with, they did regard other boarders as being very supportive. Overall pupils were positive about their boarding experience.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The refurbishment of the boarding houses is well underway. One of the houses has been completed to a high standard, and the facilities on offer have been much improved.

There has been some reorganisation of the senior boarding houses and the school now has a more vertical house structure, rather than a separate sixth form house. Staff were positive about the changes and thought that it had allowed older pupils to assume much greater responsibility.

### **What they could do better:**

Some of the young people residing in the boarding houses which have not yet been refurbished, raised issues relating to their accommodation such as privacy when using the toilets, and the comfort of the beds. These issues should be considered alongside the priorities for the refurbishment and whether it is feasible to undertake some interim works.

Some gaps were found in the recruitment procedures followed when appointing ancillary staff. There was also no evidence of checks having been undertaken on the one educational guardian used by the school. The management team had become aware of some of these issues in the days preceding the inspection and had begun to take steps to address the shortfalls.

The school has started to develop more formal ways of consulting with pupils, but some of these forums are at an early stage and this was evident from some of the issues raised by young people when they were interviewed. At the feedback meeting the Headmaster agreed to follow up some of the specific issues raised around discipline and thefts in one of the boarding houses.

Progress in developing consultation forums will be followed up at the next inspection. Quality audits are also being introduced and again this is a positive development, which will be followed up at the next inspection.

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

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

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# Being Healthy

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders' health is promoted. (NMS 6)
- Safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records. (NMS 7)
- Boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary.(NMS 15)
- Boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill.(NMS 16)
- Boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal Problems.(NMS 17)
- Boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- Boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals.(NMS 25)
- Boarders are suitably accommodated when ill. (NMS 48)
- Boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered.(NMS 49)

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

### **6, 7,15, 24, 25**

The school has systems in place to monitor and promote the health of boarding pupils. Boarders have choice of well-cooked meals and good access to drinks.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The school has its own medical centre, which inspectors were informed is staffed on a 24 hour basis by trained medical staff. Pupils are accommodated at the medical centre if they are unwell. The Deputy Head confirmed that there are arrangements in place to ensure that key staff are aware of medical issues and where appropriate a welfare plan is drawn up to outline how concerns and issues will be managed.

The matrons within the boarding houses take responsibility for the dispensing of medication in the evening. Records are maintained and while the sample examined was generally satisfactory there some gaps in recording.

The meal served on the day of the inspection was well presented and nutritious. There was a choice available and a salad bar containing a good selection of items. The pupils who were interviewed reported that the food was generally good but some of the older pupils said that they would like larger portions, and the quality sometimes varied.

There are small kitchens in each of the boarding houses and pupils informed inspectors that they were able to make drinks and could store some foods in

the kitchen. Boarders are able to prepare snacks in the evenings and weekends.

Staff informed inspectors that there was a food committee but not all the young people were aware of its existence. One young person was very positive and said that he had made a suggestion and changes had been made to the menu as a consequence.

# Staying Safe

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are protected from bullying.(NMS 2)
- Boarders are protected from abuse.(NMS 3)
- Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate.(NMS 4)
- Boarders' complaints are appropriately responded to.(NMS 5)
- The operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- Boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school.(NMS 22)
- Boarders are protected from the risk of fire. (NMS 26)
- The welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school.(NMS 28)
- Boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities.(NMS 29)
- Boarders' personal privacy is respected.(NMS 37)
- There is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders.(NMS 38)
- Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises.(NMS 39)
- Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. (NMS 41)
- Boarders are protected from safety hazards.(NMS 47)

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

**2, 3, 5, 13, 22, 26, 38, 39, 41**

The school has a range of safeguards in place to protect pupils however there should be further scrutiny of the recruitment procedures.

### EVIDENCE:

The Headmaster is the nominated person for child protection and had recently undertaken training on this area with Suffolk ACPC. The inspectors were informed that staff receive regular yearly updates on child protection.

Boarders who were interviewed reported that while there was some bullying it was not of a serious nature and it was mainly teasing. Staff said that they try to have an open door policy and ensure that young people have a number of adults within the school that they can talk things over with.

Young people have access to telephones and can email friends and family. The inspectors were informed that helpline numbers are published in all of the boarding houses.

The younger boarders were able to identify an adult or a prefect that they could speak to about any concerns that they had. There was an acknowledgement that the adults try hard but pupils don't always want to tell. Friends were identified as a very important support and one young person described the boarding group as like a "family" who generally support one another.

The school has a formal complaints procedure, although some of the pupils expressed a reluctance to raise concerns directly with senior staff, as they thought things wouldn't change. However there were records, which indicated that some young people had used the procedure. The Deputy Head gave some examples in the pre inspection information where changes had been made as a result of matters being raised.

Boarders who were interviewed said that there were clear rules in place and the school discipline was generally fair. Some of the younger boarders referred to a group or whole dormitory punishments being used on occasions. It was agreed with Headmaster at the feedback meeting that this was something that he would discuss further with staff.

Prefects are used in different ways in the boarding houses. In one house they have a clear role in terms of discipline and in the other a much more inspirational role. The pupils who were interviewed were generally positive about the role of the prefects.

Privacy has been enhanced in the new boarding house, with separate bathroom and shower facilities. Boarders confirmed that they were able to speak to their families in private.

Parents generally take responsibility for organising and overseeing the guardianship arrangements in place with regard to their children. However the school arranges guardians for a small number of pupils and at the time of the inspection only one guardian was being used. The school confirmed that they had been using this guardian for some time. However unfortunately the records relating the checks and overseeing arrangements were not in place. The school had become aware of this in the days preceding the inspection and had taken steps to address the issues.

The inspectors examined a sample of recruitment files, which included teaching and ancillary staff. In some of the files examined there was evidence that only one reference had been obtained. Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks were in place, although it was not always clear as to the date they had been obtained. The school does not currently undertake Criminal Record Bureau

(CRB) checks on staff from abroad but obtains a statement of good conduct from the country of origin. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is currently seeking advice on this matter from DfES. However the school should check whether the member of staff has previously resided in this country and if so a CRB should be undertaken.

There are a number of public footpaths running through the school and the public also come onto the site to use the school facilities such as the Sports Centre. There are speed limits throughout the school site and visitors to the boarding houses during the working day are issued with a visitor's badge. The inspector was informed that additional CCTV cameras were installed following the last inspection.

Boarders and staff referred to regular fire drills taking place.

The school employs a company as Health and safety consultants and undertakes risk assessments although these were not examined at this inspection.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities.(NMS 11)
- Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination.(NMS 18)
- Boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands.(NMS 27)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision to study.(NMS 43)
- Boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas.(NMS 46)

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

**11, 18, 27, 43**

Pupils are assisted to access a wide range of activities

### EVIDENCE:

Boarders confirmed that they had good access to a wide range of stimulating activities. One of the changes since the last inspection is that young people are now expected to attend a number of activities depending on their age during the week. There was some debate among the groups of children, who were interviewed as to whether the school had got the balance right in terms of the amount of free time. Some pupils reported that the amount of activities was "just right" and said that "they would be bored if they had more free time " but others said that they would like more free time. The inspector's observations were the school was monitoring the issue and the demands on young people did not appear too onerous.

The school has pupils from a number of different cultures and inspectors were informed that some of the groupings were quite large which meant that there was sometimes a reluctance to integrate. There was evidence that where there was discrimination this was dealt with as a disciplinary measure. In the pre inspection information the school said that it organises induction and international evenings for pupils from overseas.

The boarding houses have a number of recreational areas for pupils to use to relax outside the school day, which include TV and DVDs. The school is set in extensive grounds and has its own sports complex. Trips out are arranged at weekends to London or local towns. Staff reported that this was an area that the school had recently developed and additional staff had been made available to assist. All the boarding houses have areas where pupils can study.

# Making a Positive Contribution

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school.(NMS 12)
- Boarders receive personal support from staff.(NMS 14)
- Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families.(NMS 19)
- New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in.(NMS 21)
- Boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school.(NMS 30)
- There are sound relationships between staff and boarders.(NMS 36)

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

**12, 14, 19, 21,**

The school has mechanisms in place to consult with boarding pupils, however these could be developed further. Boarders are able to speak with friends and family privately while at the school.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The boarders who were interviewed confirmed that there were a number of staff within the school that they could turn to for advice or guidance. The older pupils however, expressed some reluctance in confiding in adults and thought that it would not affect change.

The school has a number of mechanisms in place to consult with pupils including the school council, house committees and food committees. Some of these committees were more developed and organised than others and not all the pupils interviewed were aware of their role and existence.

The school has a independent listener who is a trained counsellor and whose contact details is provided as part of the schools complaints procedure. The independent listener has not had a separate CRB check although has undertaken this role for many years and is well known to the school.

Pupils informed inspectors that there was a number of ways that they were able to keep in contact with their families. They could use the house telephone or alternatively their mobiles or email.

Pupils reported that there was a tuck shop and they were able to purchase a variety of items, although the younger pupils said that they would prefer if it opened more frequently. Older pupils have the opportunity of going into the local town.

Staff informed the inspectors that the school has an induction programme for all new boarders and they are supported through a 'buddy system'.



# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders' possessions and money are protected.(NMS 20)
- Boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation.(NMS 40)
- Boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation.(NMS 42)
- Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities.(NMS 44)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day.(NMS 45)
- Boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school.(NMS 50)

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

### 20, 40, 42, 44

The boarding accommodation is being upgraded and the work, which has been undertaken, is of a high standard.

## EVIDENCE:

The boarding houses were being refurbished at the time of the inspection. One house, Jocelyn had been completed and work was underway in a second house. Pupils in Jocelyn are accommodated in grouping of between 1 and 4 and the rooms were comfortable and nicely furnished. There was lots of storage space. The bathing and showering facilities are now separate, providing young people with considerable privacy.

Some of the pupils who were interviewed were residing in some of the older accommodation and raised a number of issues relating to privacy and comfort. The younger boarders in Cadogan house said that there was only three toilet cubicles, which were often being used and they therefore had to use the urinals, which, did not allow a lot of privacy. Older boys raised the comfort of the beds as an issue and they said that they were very small with soft mattresses.

Boarders have secure storage for the safekeeping of personal possessions, however some of the younger boarders identified theft as an issue. They reported that this was an ongoing problem and they had items go missing. At the feedback meeting the Headmaster agreed to explore this issue further with young people and boarding staff.

# Management

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- A suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- There is clear leadership of boarding in the school.(NMS 8)
- Crises affecting boarders' welfare are effectively managed.(NMS 9)
- The school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare.(NMS 10)
- Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders' welfare.(NMS 23)
- Boarders are adequately supervised by staff.(NMS 31)
- Staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site.(NMS 32)
- Boarders are adequately supervised at night.(NMS 33)
- Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training.(NMS 34)
- Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice.(NMS 35)
- The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted.(NMS 51)
- The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

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

### **8, 10, 35**

There are clear management systems in place within the school.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The school has a governing body, which meets regularly. The Headmaster has been in post for just over a year and the Deputy Head had worked at the school for many years.

There has been some re-organisation of the boarding houses and routines since the last inspection but key members of staff remain in post. The pastoral staff meet regularly as a group and those interviewed were positive about the changes that had taken place and the developments planned.

There are some differences in the boarding accommodation but this is due to the refurbishment and should be addressed as this progresses.

House staff reported that there had been an increase in staffing at the evenings and weekends and more of the day staff were actively involved in the activities and the boarding life of the school.

Boarding staff and the boarding matrons reside in the boarding houses. Young people who were interviewed reported that there were sufficient numbers of staff around in the evenings and weekends.

The Deputy Head informed the inspectors that the school is in the process of introducing house audits to monitor the quality of the pastoral systems in place. Auditing is also undertaken through pupil questionnaires, house and pastoral committees.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>6</b>	3
<b>7</b>	N/A
<b>15</b>	3
<b>16</b>	N/A
<b>17</b>	N/A
<b>24</b>	3
<b>25</b>	3
<b>48</b>	N/A
<b>49</b>	N/A

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>2</b>	3
<b>3</b>	3
<b>4</b>	3
<b>5</b>	3
<b>13</b>	3
<b>22</b>	2
<b>26</b>	3
<b>28</b>	N/A
<b>29</b>	N/A
<b>37</b>	3
<b>38</b>	2
<b>39</b>	3
<b>41</b>	3
<b>47</b>	N/A

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>11</b>	4
<b>18</b>	3
<b>27</b>	3
<b>43</b>	3
<b>46</b>	N/A

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	3
<b>14</b>	3
<b>19</b>	3
<b>21</b>	3
<b>30</b>	N/A
<b>36</b>	N/A

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>20</b>	3
<b>40</b>	3
<b>42</b>	3
<b>44</b>	3
<b>45</b>	N/A
<b>50</b>	N/A

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

## Continued

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	N/A
<b>8</b>	3
<b>9</b>	N/A
<b>10</b>	3
<b>23</b>	N/A
<b>31</b>	3
<b>32</b>	N/A
<b>33</b>	N/A
<b>34</b>	N/A
<b>35</b>	N/A
<b>51</b>	N/A
<b>52</b>	N/A

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? NO

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	BS22	It is recommended that CRB and other recruitment checks are undertaken on guardians appointed by the school and other adults in the household.	28/02/06
2	BS38	It is recommended that a review is undertaken of staff recruitment files and where gaps are identified these are followed up.	28/02/06
3	BS24	It is recommended that the quantity of food served to the older pupils is reviewed.	20/02/06
4	BS15	Guidance to be provided to the staff administering medication of what actions they should take if there is a gap in recording on the medication sheets. Where a young person is off site this should be clearly recorded. It is recommended that regular medication audits are undertaken.	28/02/06

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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