

# inspection report

## Children's Services

### **Mill Hill School**

The Ridgeway

Mill Hill

London

NW7 1QS

27th September 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>TYPE OF ADDITIONAL INSPECTION VISIT</b>
--

<b>Statutory Unannounced Inspection</b>	
<b>Follow up of Previous Inspection</b>	YES
<b>Follow up of Enforcement Action</b>	
<b>Complaints Investigation</b>	
<b>Monitoring Visit</b>	
<b>Advisory Visit</b>	
<b>Other</b>	
<b>Specify:</b>	

<b>TYPE OF SERVICE INSPECTED</b>
----------------------------------

<b>Children's Home</b>	
<b>Boarding School (not registered as a children's home)</b>	YES
<b>Residential Special School (not registered as a children's home)</b>	
<b>Further Education College</b>	
<b>Residential Family Centre</b>	
<b>Independent Fostering Agency</b>	
<b>Local Authority Fostering Service</b>	
<b>Voluntary Adoption Agency</b>	
<b>Local Authority Adoption Service</b>	
<b>ID Code</b>	
<b>Lead Inspector</b>	<b>1</b> Mrs Angela Grier 079915
<b>Name of Further Inspector (if applicable)</b>	<b>2</b> Jane Ray
<b>Name of Further Inspector (if applicable)</b>	<b>3</b> Rebecca Bauers
<b>Name of Further Inspector (if applicable)</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Name of Lay Assessors (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. 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>	Mr William Winfield Mr Andrew Phillips

<b>Number of Inspector Days spent on site:</b>	6
--	---

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE VISIT

This additional visit concentrated on how the school was proceeding with the requirements and recommendations from the last full inspection conducted in September 2003. The school had provided an Action Plan following the last inspection and this was discussed with the Headmaster and a senior member of staff.

The timing of this visit provided a chance for the inspector to see how the school dealt with new pupils coming into the boarding school environment. The inspection concentrated on seeking the views of boarders and their support systems. Visits were made to all the houses to meet the Matrons and see the common parts of the buildings. With two colleagues the inspector returned to meet the boarders in the evening after school and to tour the building with boarders to see their rooms and to collect the completed questionnaires. Meetings were held with the Health and Safety department and checks were made on the fire and safety certificates and the CRB checks. The inspector met with the independent school counsellor the head of pastoral care the chaplain and individual housemasters/mistresses in the boarding houses. The inspector met the School Nurse who was leaving and two locum nurses. The inspector with the help of the senior housemaster set up a drop in session close to the school dining room at lunch time for pupils to see the inspector on a one to one basis. The Headmaster was advised that an Additional Visit report would be sent to the School.

### INSPECTION METHODS USED AT THE VISIT

**Inspection of relevant part(s) of premises**

**Interview with senior staff member in charge**

**Interview with other staff**

**Discussion with children**

**Individual interview with a child**

**Visit foster/adoptive home**

**Visit lodgings**

**Interview foster/adoptive parent**

**Inspection of relevant records**

**Inspection of relevant policy/practice documents**

**Children's survey**

**Parent survey**

**Placing authority survey**

**Foster / adoptive parent survey**

**Staff survey**

YES
YES
YES
YES
YES
NA
NA
NA
YES
NO
YES
YES
NA
NA
NA

**Date of Inspection**

27/9/04

**Time of Inspection**  
**Duration Of Inspection**

14.00
46

**FINDINGS ON KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED AT ALL UNANNOUNCED,  
MONITORING AND FOLLOW UP VISITS**

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.

<b>(I). Inspector's assessment of the extent to which the requirements for consultation with children are being met.</b>		
<b>Key findings/Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>The school employs an experienced Counsellor who will support staff in their work with pupils or see pupils who can refer themselves. The Chaplain is involved in teaching and pastoral care and sees new pupils in assemblies. First year pupils are provided with information regarding the Anti Bullying and Mentor Council and all new pupils have a Mentor, an older pupil to support them through the early days of settling into a new environment. Discussions with pupils indicated that these procedures were welcomed and were working. There are suggestion boxes in all four boarding houses. One of the Deputy Head teachers is now also Head of Pastoral Care, a new post which started in September 2004. The inspector was advised that a new 4<sup>th</sup> Formers Council has been set up and the first meeting took place during the course of the inspection.</p>		

<b>(II). Inspector's assessment of the extent to which the requirements for complaints procedures for children are being met.</b>		
<b>Key findings/Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>The boarders questionnaires distributed to all boarders during the course of the inspection indicated that boarders have a range of people to contact if they are unhappy. The Headmaster told the inspector that there had been no formal complaints from students or their families since the last inspection in September 2003. There is no formal whistle blowing policy in the school. The Headmaster and Senior teachers questioned by the inspector agreed that there were procedures in place to deal with sensitive issues but they were not formalised. The Headmaster agreed to include this information in the staff handbook.</p>		

<b>(III). Inspector's assessment of the extent of staff knowledge of the required response to allegations or suspicions of abuse of children (child protection and staff/carers reporting procedures).</b>		
<b>Key findings/Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>The headmaster provided in house training to all staff including the matrons of the boarding houses at the beginning of the September term. The inspector saw a copy of the training course which was in order. A new matron appointed to one of the Houses did not attend this course. The inspector suggested that the Headmaster should discuss this training with the new matron and the new School Nurse as soon as possible to ensure they are familiar with the procedures. This training should be provided to all new staff who are working with pupils in the school.</p> <p>The school takes the matter of bullying very seriously and has an Anti Bullying and Mentor Council with members easily identifiable. The questionnaires showed that there is some bullying happening in the school. The area identified from the questionnaires appears to be verbal bullying from peer groups and older pupils towards students from abroad. The Headmaster will ensure that staff are aware of this information and enable vulnerable pupils to be supported. From the questionnaires it would appear that these instances have not been reported. Discussions with individual pupils indicate that the notion of bullying is not fully understood by pupils from abroad. The chaplain told the inspector that in his work with new pupils he gives scenarios of behaviours to help pupils identify issues. No recommendations are made as the school has a good support network in place and all pupils are aware of this in the pupil handbook. Peer support and mentoring for new pupils was welcomed by those interviewed.</p>		

<b>(IV). Inspector's assessment of the adequacy of staffing at the time of the visit.</b>		
<b>Key findings/Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>2</b>
<p>At the time of the inspection there was a vacancy for a matron in one of the houses. The post is presently covered by a member of staff who is familiar with the school but only works part time and is non resident. The Headmaster told the inspector that an advertisement had been placed to fill this post. The school nurse who had been in the school for several years left at the half term holiday. Two locum nurses have been employed to cover this vacancy and at the time of the feedback session the Headmaster informed the inspector that this vacancy has now been filled. Concern was expressed by pupils and a parent regarding the non resident matrons in two of the Houses. They leave in the early afternoon before school has ended and if a pupil is ill during the course of the day, the handover to the housemaster/mistress or resident tutors may be delayed. The locum nurses were not clear about this handover process. The appointment of a permanent nurse should ensure that this is addressed.</p>		

<b>(V). Inspector's assessment of the extent to which any children and staff/carers seen are aware of individual children's plans (where applicable).</b>		
<b>Key findings/Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>0</b>
This standard was not assessed.		

## FINDINGS ON SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THIS VISIT

---



The inspector provided an oral feedback to the Headmaster and the Senior Housemaster on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2004. The feedback was in two sections, the action plan and the findings from the inspection. Where Recommended Actions from the last inspection are within timescale or have not been fully met these have been included in the Required Actions from the last inspection and a new date included if necessary. Recommendations from this inspection are included in the Good Practice Recommendations from this Inspection.

The inspector wishes to thank all the staff and boarders for their help and support during this visit.

#### The Action Plan:

This report has already included information regarding the training of the new matron in the child protection procedures. This training should also include the new Nurse and the new matron when appointed.

Boarders identified the problem of the availability of drinking water in the houses. If the kitchen is locked at night the boarders have to ensure that they have purchased a sufficient supply of bottled water and keep it in their rooms. Boarders have requested water machines be installed in the houses. The Foundation agreed in the Action Plan last year to consider installing a link to the main water supply but no decision has been taken at this time. The inspector requested the Foundation ensure that drinking water is available to boarders in the houses at all times.

The school has agreed to implement a process of appraisal for the matrons. It is not clear who will be contacted as part of this process. An appraisal protocol should be established and the matrons advised accordingly.

The inspector saw beds that were too small for the boarders. The questionnaires confirmed that some boarders were still in beds unsuitable for their size although the Action Plan stated that new beds had been ordered for older pupils. Boarders also identified the inadequacy of their bedroom furniture. The combined wardrobes and drawers were too small to store clothing, kit and personal effects.

The shower and toilet facilities continue to be a source of complaint from boarders and parents. The Action Plan noted that there was 'improvements by maintenance' but this did not appear to have made a difference to the inherent problems of thermostatic controls slippery floors and proper shower doors for privacy. Ridgeway House has a refurbishment programme to be completed by 2006. Attempts are being made to replace a boiler in Burton Bank which should provide better heating controls but the basic shower units and equipment is out of date and needs replacing urgently. According to pupils, broken locks on toilet doors have not been replaced. There needs to be a rolling programme of renovation in place for all the houses and a review of the risk assessments in shower areas where the floor is flooded and is dangerous.

#### **The findings from the inspection:**

Fire drills take place in all the houses and a report is sent to the head of pastoral care. However when staff were questioned by the inspector it would appear that not all staff are familiar with the actual alarm system panels. All staff whether resident or visiting the houses must know how the actual system works in each house. Boarders identified in their questionnaires their concerns over window restrictors both in terms of their safety in the event of a fire and the lack of ventilation. The inspector suggested that from a fire safety stance the boarders whose rooms have had window restrictors installed should be reassured

that appropriate steps have been taken by the location of fire fighting equipment and following advice from the fire safety officers to ensure their safety in the event of a fire occurring near their rooms. The inspector acknowledges that the boarders may wish for the removal of these restrictors for other reasons which may not be in their best interest.

Many boarders complained about the lack of locks on their bedroom doors and felt anxious about leaving their personal possessions in the house. Some houses had locks on the doors some did not and boarders felt this was unfair and inconsistent and that their concerns about the safety of their possessions was not acknowledged.

The physical state of Burton Bank is poor. The ground floor has been redecorated and the boiler is about to be replaced. The inspector toured the building with boarders and saw that many of the bedrooms needed urgent attention. Ceiling tiles in many bedrooms were missing or stained, many bedrooms had major cracks in the walls, curtains needed rehangng or replacing. Curtains were old and did not keep out light or retain heat. The fabric of the building, particularly the upper floor where the female boarders live, revealed window frames and a whole wall of flaking paintwork in need of attention.

Punishments were generally considered to be fair except for the new 'Red Card' punishment which provoked many adverse comments from boarders in the questionnaire. The inspector understands this is a new idea and it may be helpful for staff and pupils to review whether the use of this punishment is fair and appropriate.

Concerns were expressed by boarders and their families regarding pupils who become ill during the school day and where the matron is non resident. Liason between the residential staff in the house, the medical centre and visiting tutors is important to ensure that pupils receive care and food if they are confined to their room and unable to attend meals. It is important to ensure that this process of communication is understood especially as there is now new nursing staff in the medical centre.

The inspector ate several lunches, one brunch at the school. Two CSCI colleagues also joined pupils for two evening meals at the school. The inspector visited the new Café 6 for sixth formers. The questionnaires confirmed the inspector's view that lunchtimes were very crowded but the food was adequate. The evening meal was singled out by boarders for the most criticism – 'tasteless and repetitive'. Sunday brunch was thought to be good and the timing gave boarders a chance to sleep in on a Sunday. An interview with the catering manager indicated that every attempt is made to provide healthy balanced meals to a very demanding group.

## FOLLOW UP OF PREVIOUS REQUIRED ACTIONS FOR UNANNOUNCED, MONITORING AND FOLLOW UP VISITS

Requirements from last Inspection visit fully actioned?

NO

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

<b>REQUIRED ACTIONS</b> <b>Identified below are areas not yet addressed from the last inspection report which indicate a non-compliance with applicable Regulations or Standards under the Care Standards Act 2000.</b>				
No.	Regulation if applicable	Standard	Required actions	
1		BS3	The Headmaster must ensure that all newly appointed staff caring for boarders in the residential setting including matrons and nurses receive training in Child Protection.	31.12.04
2		BS10	A timetable for the refurbishment of Ridgeway House was requested. The updated Action Plan given to the Inspector indicated that work would begin in a phased manner and be completed in 2006.	1.9.06
3		BS25	The Foundation agreed in the Action Plan last year to consider installing a link to the main water supply but no decision has been taken at this time. The inspector requested the Foundation ensure that drinking water is available to boarders in the houses at all times.	31.1.05
4		BS40	It is recommended that older pupils who are currently sleeping in beds which are too small for them have their beds replaced as a matter of urgency.	1.12.04

5		BS44	It is recommended that the showers are reviewed across the boarding houses to address issues such as fluctuating water temperatures, water leaking across bathroom floors and the provision of proper shower curtains to ensure the privacy of users.	7.1.05
---	--	------	---	--------

**Action is being taken by the Commission for Social Care Inspection to monitor compliance with the above requirements.**

## Compliance with Conditions of Registration (if applicable)

### for Unannounced, Monitoring and Follow up Visits

**(Establishments Registered as Children's Homes or Residential Family Centres, Independent Fostering Agencies or Voluntary Adoption Agencies only)**

Providers and managers of registered services must comply with statutory conditions of their registration. The conditions applying to this registration are listed below, with the inspector's assessment of compliance from the evidence at the time of this Additional Inspection Visit.

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Condition	Compliance	
Comments		

Lead Inspector	Angela Grier	Signature	_____
Second Inspector	_____	Signature	_____
Regulation Manager	Mandy Jobling	Signature	_____
Date	18 November 2004		_____

## **FURTHER ISSUES RAISED OR DISCUSSED AT THIS VISIT**

**The following further issues, not already identified in this report, were raised with the inspector, identified by the inspector, or discussed at this visit, with the conclusions identified below.**

### **Issues raised by children:**

The interest and involvement of matrons in the day to day care of the boarders produced some adverse comments in the questionnaires and in the interviews with individual pupils. The inspector discussed the decision to provide a formal appraisal of each matron and it may be important for pupils to have a role in this appraisal process.

### **Issues raised by staff or carers:**

The boarding staff advised the inspectors that they have had to devise a plan to assist a young person who has joined the school but has been very disruptive in the house. Working closely with the school counsellor and the special needs teacher the school are attempting to work with the young person but they are aware of the disruption the pupil is causing to the boarders as a whole. The school are attempting to work with all parties to support this pupil but the situation must be monitored carefully to ensure that Mill Hill can offer all that this pupil may need to settle down and benefit from her stay in the school.

### **Issues raised by inspector:**

The inspector concentrated on obtaining the views of the boarders and staff on problems such as homesickness and illnesses such as anorexia and examination stresses. All staff were aware of these issues and would seek advice from the medical centre or the Counsellor to support pupils. In most cases boarders used their friendship networks as the first line of support for their problems and were aware that they had many choices of people to turn to within the school community.

## REQUIRED ACTIONS FOLLOWING THIS INSPECTION

### REQUIRED ACTIONS

Identified below are the actions required following this Additional Inspection Visit, either outstanding from the previous inspection or identified subsequently or at this visit. Action is required on these areas within the given timescales in order to meet the statutory requirements under the Care Standards Act 2000, Children Act 1989, or applicable Regulations and National Minimum Standards.

No.	Regulation if applicable	Standard *	Requirement	

### GOOD PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THIS INSPECTION

Identified below are any additional areas arising from this visit which relate to the National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice issues to be considered for implementation.

No.	Refer to Standard *	Recommendation Action
1	BS26	The inspector recommends that from a fire safety stance the boarders whose rooms have had window restrictors fitted should be reassured that appropriate steps have been taken by the location of fire fighting equipment and following advice from the Fire Safety Officers to ensure their safety in the event of a fire occurring near their rooms.
2	BS26	It is recommended that the head of pastoral care should ensure that all staff both resident and visiting are familiar with the controls of the fire alarm panels in each of the boarding houses.

3	BS20	It is recommended that each boarding house reviews the policy of providing locks for bedroom doors and that a consistent policy is adopted across all the houses.
4	BS44	It is recommended that the locks on toilet doors be replaced as a matter of urgency. It is recommended that the Health and Safety Officer review the number of sanitary bins in the female toilets in the houses. It is recommended that the toilets and washrooms in all the houses are supplied with liquid soap dispensers and electric hand dryers.
5	BS40	It is recommended that the physical environment in Burton Bank is reviewed and actions taken to ensure that the standard of decoration and furnishings meet basic standards. A plan for refurbishment should be supplied to the Commission.
6	BS4	It is recommended that staff review the new Red Card punishment to ensure it is working efficiently and fairly.
7	BS3	It is recommended that a formal procedure for Whistle Blowing be included in the Staff Handbook.

Note: Standard code is in respect of the relevant service; e.g.  
BS = Boarding School, CH = Children's Home, etc



## INSPECTOR'S DECLARATION

(where applicable)

**Lead Inspector**     Angela Grier     **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date**     18 November 2004

### Public reports

It should be noted that all CSCI inspection reports are public documents.

## PROVIDER'S RESPONSE

**Registered Person'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 of Mill Hill School conducted week commencing 27 September 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

COMMENTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE HEAD TEACHER AND ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE CSCI AREA OFFICE.

**Action taken by the CSCI in response to provider comments:**

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

YES

Provider comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report

Provider comments are available on file at the Area Office

YES

**Note:**

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

**Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 16 December 2004, which indicates how required or recommended actions and good practice 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 Provider'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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

**Public reports**

It should be noted that all CSCI inspection reports are public documents. Reports on children's homes are only obtainable on personal application to CSCI offices.

## PROVIDER'S AGREEMENT

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

**I Mr W R Winfield of Mill Hill School confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted week commencing 27 September 2004 and that I agree with the required/recommended actions made and will seek to comply with these.**

<b>Print Name</b>	<u>W R Winfield</u>
<b>Signature</b>	<u></u>
<b>Designation</b>	<u>Headmaster</u>
<b>Date</b>	<u>15 December 2004</u>

**Or**

**I Mr W R Winfield of Mill Hill School am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted week commencing 27 September 2004 for the following reasons:**

--

<b>Print Name</b>	<u></u>
<b>Signature</b>	<u></u>
<b>Designation</b>	<u></u>
<b>Date</b>	<u></u>

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

**Commission for Social Care Inspection**  
33 Greycoat Street  
London  
SW1P 2QF

Telephone: 020 7979 2000  
Fax: 020 7979 2111

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120  
[www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

S0000010557.V173050.R01

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



The paper used in this document is supplied from a sustainable source