



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Rowdeford School

Rowde

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2QQ

Lead Inspector

Wendy

Anderson

Announced

12 April 2005 at 09.00am

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

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

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

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

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

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

SERVICE INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of service | Rowdeford School |
| Address | Rowde Devizes Wiltshire SN10 2QQ |
| Telephone number | 01380 850309 |
| Fax number | |
| Email address | |
| Name of registered provider(s)/company (if applicable) | Wiltshire County Council |
| Name of registered manager (if applicable) | Mrs Ingrid Lancaster-Gaye |
| Type of registration | Residential Special School |
| No. of places registered (if applicable) | 23 |
| Category(ies) of registration, with number of places | |

SERVICE INFORMATION

Conditions of registration:

Date of last inspection 5 July 2004

Brief Description of the Service:

Rowdeford School is situated in a Grade II listed Georgian house, set in twenty acres of parkland on the outskirts of Rowde, near the town of Devizes. It is a secondary, co-educational, special school for pupils with a range of needs, whose overall abilities will enable them to benefit from the curriculum it offers. This generally includes pupils whose measured ability and attainment places them on either the moderate learning difficulties spectrum, or at the top end of the severe learning difficulties spectrum. Many pupils also have associated medical conditions and/or syndromes. The school caters for twenty-four boarders. Within the school is the Prospect Centre. This is a specialist centre for selected pupils with autistic spectrum disorders at year seven to nine.

SUMMARY

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

This announced took place on the 12th & 13th April 2005. Two inspectors were at the school for 35 hours and a Pharmacy inspector joined them for 2 hours. One of the inspectors returned to the school on 19th April 2005 to meet with boarders who at the time of inspection were away on a French trip. The inspectors spent time speaking to all of the boarders. Several of the children showed the inspectors around the school. Inspectors interviewed staff and inspected school and boarders records.

What the service does well:

The school provides a high standard of care for the children placed. Staff have worked hard to provide a very comfortable home for the children. This has meant the staff being involved in decorating the children's rooms. The children take part in local community activities and this helps combat any possible isolation. The Head, Head of Care and Staff team are open to new ideas and approaches to improve boarding at Rowdeford. They take a proactive approach to the National Minimum Standards. There is a high level of communication and consultation with the children and their families concerning work with individual children and the school as a whole.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has actioned all but one of the requirements and recommendations from the last report. This includes an increase in staff. The school has also carried out a consultation exercise to obtain views from parents' and carers' on how they saw the school. The Acting Head has been appointed to the position on a permanent basis and the school are in the process of advertising for a Deputy Head. This will provide the school with a senior full management team and will enable the senior management team to move forward on further ideas they have for improving the school. The school has also expanded the size of the playground and it is planned to develop the external space available for quite time for the children.

What they could do better:

The school need to ensure that staff receive regular planned formal supervision as required by the National Minimum Standards. They should also ensure that fire doors are not propped, wedged or hooked open.

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

The full report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 14 & 15

The promotion of health is taken seriously. Good use of records, planning and other management systems ensure that health care needs are met.

EVIDENCE:

The children remain registered with their home GP. The school doctor sees all the children at age 14 and others as requested, particularly the new intake. The school has good links with the school nurse and other healthcare professionals; records were seen of referrals to opticians, audiologists and dieticians.

Children with particular healthcare needs have health plans and this information is made available to all staff who may need to know. Information is also passed from teaching to care staff by written notes.

Medication is all stored in locked medical cupboards and the administration of medicines is recorded accurately. Written parental permission is gained before the administration of any prescription or non-prescription medication. Medicines are recorded when brought into school. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid and first aid boxes are available in many locations around the school. The school has no sick bay, but if children are ill in their beds they told inspector they are easily able to summon assistance from the care staff. The school nurse is involved in some PHSE teaching and includes the head and deputy head of care in some training in subjects such as pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Some children have input from a dietician and the school is pursuing a Healthy Schools initiative.

The Head Teacher reports that changes to the school's menu is being slowly introduced to ensure a more balanced diet for the children. The current menu is on a six-week rolling programme and each lunch time a vegetarian option, salad and one other course is offered. Deserts include fresh fruit and yoghurt. If a child has food intolerances, allergies or specific dietary requirements, this information is reported to the cook. The cook reports periodic visits from the Environmental Health Officer.

Those in residential units are provided with appropriate supplies of food that can be replenished from a central stock. Breakfasts are taken in the residential units and are a relaxed start to the day. A small but separate dining room (with room for approximately 12 children) is available for those who dislike the bustle of the main dining room.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 3,4,5,6,7,8,10,26,27.

Implementation of a robust set of relevant policies and procedures affords good levels of protection. This is compromised to some extent by the continued tendency to prop or wedge open fire doors.

EVIDENCE:

The Inspector observed staff supervising children in a sensitive manner in which personal care for the children was managed. The reported increase in care staff, which allows 2 staff per residential unit permits additional time to be

given to personal assistance. The children spoken to reported that bathrooms and showers were private.

The children spoken to were clear about whom they should speak to if they had concerns or wished to make a complaint – which included care staff and the two Independent Listeners. Neither of the Independent Listeners report ever being contacted by a child at the school.

Training on child protection issues continues to be seen as important by the school. Care staff report receiving a two-day training course. Teachers as well as Ancillary staff also report being included in child protection training. The Head and Head of Care report a lack of information from the Departments of Children, Families and Education after a child protection investigation had taken place involving a child from the school.

Both staff and children report that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and are clear about actions they would take in the event of any incident. The school clearly feels that a high standard of behaviour is important. The behaviour expected by the school is explained to the child at the time of their admission, and the use of a reward system by which points can secure an end of term prize is seen as encouraging and rewarding positive behaviour.

The school has a policy on physical intervention and it is clear to staff that restraint should only be used by those who have received appropriate training. Staff reported that the management of disruptive behaviour passes through a series of stages, with physical restraint used only in the rarest of circumstances. Any use of physical restraint is clearly documented. The children spoken to report the school's use of rules and punishments, including the use of the above reward system, to be fair.

There is a minimal staff turnover amongst the care staff. The Head of Care retains a list of bank staff, negating the need for agency care staff. The personnel files reviewed by the Inspector revealed some omissions. All staff files need to contain the information as detailed in Standard 27.2. Some long serving staff only have the old Police check. This needs to be updated to an appropriate level CRB check. All visitors to the school must sign in and out, using the Visitors Book and are provided with a visitors pass.

The school need to ensure when decorating that the fire brushes on the fire doors do not get painted as this diminished their effectiveness. Although during the inspection the inspector did not see any of the fire doors being propped/wedged open there was evidence of wedges and door props by the fire door.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 12,13,22

The education and care aspects of the school work very closely to provide a holistic approach to the children's care. The children have a wide choice of age and ability appropriate activities including opportunities to participate and integrate in the local community.

EVIDENCE:

Inspectors heard of the daily verbal and written handovers instigated by the school to ensure that residential provision contributes to educational progress. Where necessary, but at least once every half term, teaching staff report that they meet with key workers to address any particular concerns regarding an individual child. Teachers also report that they contribute to the annual review of the child's progress.

Care staff and Independent Listeners report that they actively support the work of the teaching staff, listening for example in an evening to children reading.

The school offers the children an opportunity to engage in a range of activities, from Judo, swimming and trampolining to participation in local community activities and youth clubs. Photographs on the walls of residential units providing evidence of this. The children spoken to report that participation in activities and outings is voluntary.

The children spoken to report being able to bring videos from home, but that they had to be age appropriate.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 2,9,11,17,20.

Good staff / children relationships help to ensure that children are afforded good opportunities to participate in the running of the school, to maintain existing links outside the school and participate in the community.

EVIDENCE:

The school operates a school council which the inspectors were able to evidence had been able to contribute to school life and been able to change things. There are also house meetings held regularly. The format used in the Avebury unit has a section for children's suggestion though this is not the case in the other units. The school recently carried out a survey to ascertain parents' and carers' views on the school.

The school retains good lines of communication between it and the parents of the children, through continued use of a book, which passes between the school and the child's home. The book allows parents, care staff and occasionally teachers to provide feedback to others on aspects relevant to the well being of the child. Children told inspectors encouraged to maintain contact with their family and friends during the week. The children have access to pay 'phones sited in the residential units, although it was observed that these are and not particularly private allowing conversations to be overheard by those passing by.

The staff's relationship with children is one of the school strengths.

The Inspectors observed that some of the children have communication problems, but are aware that the school has access to the services of a speech therapist. The school also has various computer programmes to facilitate communication this includes a 'widget' picture system. The school's unit for autistic children (the Prospect Centre), also continues to provide specialist support where needed. The school has access to the Local Education Authority Behaviour Support Team, together with its current policy of managing disruptive behaviour in the classroom this facilitates and promotes communication with the children.

Staff use positive care and control with the children. The allocation of key workers is dictated by care staff workload, the children spoken to, indicated that they could request to change their key worker if they felt the current arrangement was not working. With the national educational policy currently promoting inclusion rather than exclusion of disruptive behaviour, both staff and teachers report that the school is increasingly asked to support children exhibiting challenging and complex behavioural/social problems. Inspectors recognise the evolving nature of this responsibility and the continued need of the school to set and maintain safe, consistent boundaries for all its children.

The school does not use agency care staff to cover staff absence/sick leave, but draws upon a small bank of staff. This arrangement promotes the continuity of care that the school feels is essential for this group of children.

The Avebury unit, which currently provides residential accommodation for 7 children between the ages of 14 and 16 years, actively promotes appropriate life skills and encourages independent living, preparing children for life in further education colleges/other organisations. The school's policy of encouraging the participation of the children in various local clubs e.g. youth clubs, judo is seen as providing further evidence of the school's support for independent living, post Rowdeford.

The school has a clear policy and procedure for the admission of children. This policy details the criteria for admission to the school and acknowledges the limited number of placements available. Those children's files inspected evidenced this information including reports made by designated keyworkers of home visits prior to admission. The buddy system operated by the school is positively referred to by the children and staff spoken to, as it is felt to enable new boarders to quickly feel part of the school. The use of buddy benches offers all children the opportunity to seek friendship/support from those of his/her peers designated as buddies. Each child is also provided with an admission pack. This contains written, pictorial and audio taped information on the school.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.(NMS 16)
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.(NMS 21)
- Children live in well designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- Children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.(NMS 24)
- Children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity.(NMS 25)

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 16,21,23,24,25

The school is well decorated and maintained throughout. Children are helped towards a good standard of material wellbeing and have opportunities to maximise their potential through leaving care processes, education and preparation for independence.

EVIDENCE:

During the school day the children wear school uniform. They do bring their own clothing for the evenings. The children bring pocket money from home. Each house had a record of this money for each child.

Most children leaving the school move to other colleges or provision however the school has developed a policy on children leaving the school. The school supports them in this process.

The school is situated in a listed building set in its own grounds on the outskirts of the village of Rowde. This could lead to the school being isolated but the staff are very conscious of this. The staff at the school have worked hard and imaginatively to provide the children with a comfortable, pleasant environment. The building is in keeping with the school's statement of purpose. On the ground floor there is wheelchair access for visitors. At the time of inspection there were no outstanding requirements or recommendations from any of the bodies listed in standard 23.3. The boarding provision is well decorated and very 'homely'. Each child's room is individually decorated and the children can have input into the decoration. Children are encouraged to personalise their rooms. The children's rooms were of an adequate size and in good repair. Some of the children did share a room but this was with their agreement. Within the children's bedrooms was space for private study and adequate storage space. The communal areas were very pleasant, comfortably furnished and provide space for activities and hobbies. The children also have access to other areas of the school for activities. There were sufficient toilets and bathrooms for the children. These were nicely decorated. The toilet in the boys unit is going to install dry hand wash facilities, as there is insufficient room for hand washbasins. The children said there was always lots of hot water and they did not have to queue for baths or for showers. There were also adequate facilities throughout the rest of the school.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for standard(s) 18,19,28,29,30,31,32,33

The school is well managed and run effectively to provide a safe environment for the children. Regular formal supervision of care staff will help to ensure continuation of the good quality of care already afforded to the young people. Where possible a better gender balance should be sought as it ensures appropriate role modelling for children.

EVIDENCE:

The school has now appointed a permanent Head Teacher and there is the expected appointment of a new deputy Head later in the year. This will create a middle management structure instead of the Acting Head and Head of Care taking on all management tasks. Inspectors were informed that the appointment of the new Head Teacher has generated a change in leadership style for the school, with a new behaviour policy for the children being an example of this. Staff were very positive about the new appointment.

The Head of Care has completed the NVQ Assessor Award in April 2005. She also holds a coaching and assessing award. However she has found that there has not been the time available to complete the work based assessment of her colleagues. The Head of Care felt the training provided by Wiltshire County Council for NVQ assessors did not adequately prepare her for this task. However the Head of Care remains committed to ensuring that those undertaking the NVQ training/qualifications did so and other care staff will be given NVQ opportunities in the future.

Not all members of staff currently have the opportunity to undertake the NVQ qualification – due in part to inadequate staff cover occasioned by long-term sickness. The current gender imbalance among care staff is noted by Inspectors, and has similarly been reported by members of staff. Staff interviewed by Inspectors report that supervision takes place but tends to be every 2 months. Despite this staff reported that they felt well supported by the senior management of the school, finding them approachable and keen to ensure an “open door” policy to addressing concerns. Ancillary staff report that they (cleaners and kitchen staff), meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues but did not receive supervision as such. However they felt able to address any specific concerns with the senior management team. The school is developing a lone working policy using the risk assessment it had recently completed.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools have been met and uses the following scale. Where there is no score against a standard it has not been looked at during this inspection.

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

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion
 “N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

| BEING HEALTHY | |
|----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i> | <i>Score</i> |
| 14 | 3 |
| 15 | 3 |

| STAYING SAFE | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i> | <i>Score</i> |
| 3 | 4 |
| 4 | 3 |
| 5 | 3 |
| 6 | 3 |
| 7 | 3 |
| 8 | 3 |
| 10 | 3 |
| 26 | 2 |
| 27 | 3 |

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

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

| ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i> | <i>Score</i> |
| 16 | 3 |
| 21 | 4 |
| 23 | 3 |
| 24 | 3 |
| 25 | |

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

No

Are there any outstanding requirements from the last inspection?

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Care Homes Regulations 2001 and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

| No. | Standard | Regulation | Requirement | Timescale for action |
|-----|----------|------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. | 26 | | Fire doors must not be propped/wedged or hooked open | 1 st September 2005 |
| 2. | 30 | | Staff must supervision as required under Standard 30.2 | 1st September 2005 |
| 3. | | | | |

RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

| No. | Refer to Standard | Good Practice Recommendations |
|-----|-------------------|---|
| 1. | 5 | The Local Authority should provided appropriate feedback to the school on child proteciton investigations |
| 2. | 27.2 | CRB checks should be carried out on existing staff who have the old Police check. |

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