



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

**Oak Lodge School**

**101 Nightingale Lane  
London  
SW12 8NA**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Emma Dove**

*Announced Inspection*  
**11th December 2006      11:20**

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](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.

# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of school</b>	Oak Lodge School
<b>Address</b>	101 Nightingale Lane London SW12 8NA
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8673 3453
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8673 9397
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	London Borough Of Wandsworth
<b>Name of Head</b>	Mr Peter Merrifield
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Lesley Russell
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	12-16
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2006

**Brief Description of the School:**

Oak Lodge School is owned and managed by Wandsworth Education Authority. It is a specialist resource which provides education to eighty-five deaf pupils aged 11-19 years of age, with residential places for twenty-four pupils. Pupils can reside at the school for up to four nights a week, Monday to Friday during term time only.

Thirteen pupils were using the boarding facilities at the time of the inspection.

The Hostel provides boarding accommodation within the school and has some shared communal spaces, however bedroom accommodation is not used for any other purpose and is not accessed during the school day. Communal spaces for pupils include: a lounge; games room; quiet room; boys television room; kitchen; an indoor play area; outdoor floodlit football/tennis court; twenty single bedrooms and two three bedded rooms.

The Hostel has four full time members of staff with two staff on duty in the morning and three members of staff available in the evening. Additional waking staff are currently provided every night.

# **SUMMARY**

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

This announced inspection was carried out over six hours on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 2006 by two inspectors and three hours on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2006 by one inspector. An interpreter was available for three hours on the afternoon of the 11<sup>th</sup> December to enable the inspectors to speak with pupils. The inspection included speaking with pupils, Hostel staff, the Head of Care, the Head Teacher, the Business Manager and site staff. The inspector spoke individually with five pupils and four Hostel staff.

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

Clear information is provided about the purpose of the Hostel and the aims of the service, which are to provide independence training, communication and social and emotional development for pupils.

Good health is promoted and pupils receive healthy meals.

Health and safety systems protect pupils and staff from harm.

There are good links and communication between Hostel and teaching staff.

Pupils have access to a wide range of activities and outings.

A good induction process is in place for new pupils and Hostel staff support pupils to make decisions regarding their future and the transition to independent living.

Pupils are involved in decision-making regarding the activities and meals provided at the Hostel. The systems to communicate between the Hostel and pupils families/carers are good.

Pupil's comments included: 'I like everything', 'plenty to do' and 'I wouldn't change anything' indicate how good the services provided are.

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

The pages in the sanctions book are now numbered. Hot water outlets which pupil's access have been fitted with thermostatic controls and radiator covers have been fitted. Staff files now contain information required. These were recommendations at the last inspection.

Some bedrooms and communal areas have been redecorated.

Communication with parents/carers and Hostel staff has improved.

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

The health agreement should include all 'homely' remedies which may be used at the Hostel. Any changes to records should be scored out and re-written rather than covered over with Tippex. A copy of the Hostel agreement should be in all pupils files. Further work should be done to get individual support for some pupils.

The environment, bedrooms, toilets, bathrooms, shower rooms and communal areas continue to be inappropriate to meet pupils needs and are not in line with the high standard of services provided a the school.  
A permanent Head of Care should be recruited to work at the Hostel.

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. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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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)

## **The Commission considers Standard 14 the key standard to be inspected.**

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

### **14 & 15**

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Good health is promoted throughout the school. Pupil's health needs are well recorded and met by staff. Pupils are offered healthy foods with any religious and medical dietary requirements catered for.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The school policies, procedures and practices promote good health for pupils. Hostel staff are aware of and discuss how to be healthy with pupils at Hostel meetings and in key work sessions. All pupils confirmed that they have someone they can talk to if necessary.

Pupils were all aware of what to do if they were unwell while at the Hostel at night. Hostel staff were seen to support pupils to attend appointments when necessary.

The medication policies and practices were revised following recommendations made at the last inspection. A new First Aid Policy was put in place in December 2006. Parents or carers continue to send medication to the Hostel with the pupil and keep Hostel staff updated with any changes. Medication is appropriately stored with up to date records maintained. Authorisation for 'homely remedies' was not in place in all pupil files seen. The authorisation form which parents or carers complete is for paracetamol and cough linctus.

Medication records indicate that other 'homely remedies' may be administered by Hostel staff, the authorisation form should be updated to reflect this.

Pupils were aware of healthy eating and pupil's comments confirmed that they mainly receive healthy foods.

Pupils have breakfast, lunch and tea at the school with a snack provided after school and in the evening. The menu includes a vegetarian alternative at lunch and tea. Halal meat is provided and arrangements are made to support pupils observing Ramadan. Other religious, cultural and medical needs of pupils are met.

Pupils comments about the food included: 'I have enough food'; 'we get to choose some of the meals'; 'the food is ok'; 'we get enough food'; 'sometimes the food isn't so good, I like to eat healthy and food is, although I don't always like it' and 'we have enough food'.

# Staying Safe

## **The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

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

**The Commission considers Standards 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

**3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 26 & 27**

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The schools policies, procedures and practices ensure that pupils health, safety and welfare are protected. The school provides a safe environment for pupils with appropriate health and safety systems in place with the exception of the weekly fire alarm test.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Appropriate policies regarding privacy, complaints, child protection, bullying, missing and behaviour management are in place and remain as at the last inspection.

No complaints were raised at the visit, although all pupils were aware who to speak to if they had a problem. The complaints record indicated one complaint had been made about people walking through the dining room during teatime. Staff reported that this was raised at a staff meeting with no further issues. Staff were seen to direct people around the dining room during the visit.

The policies, procedures, practices and recording around child protection remain very good. Hostel staff have completed training and are aware of their responsibilities. An allegation was being investigated during the course of the inspection, with appropriate actions taken and records kept. Five pupils said that they 'feel safe here'.

Two pupils said that there had been a problem with bullying, one pupil confirmed that they had spoken with a teacher with no further issues, the other pupil wasn't able to confirm that they had spoken with staff and that the issue had been dealt with. The Head of Care confirmed that these two incidents of bullying had been addressed at the time, pupils felt to their satisfaction. Bullying and what pupils should do if they are being bullied is a regular topic at Hostel meetings and in key work sessions.

There continues to be no issues with pupils leaving the school without permission, policies are in place with clear directions for staff to follow.

Pupils are made aware of what is expected of them with regard to behaviour, the rewards for good behaviour and the actions Hostel staff will take for inappropriate behaviour. Pupils comments about the rules included, 'lots of rules, but they're ok', 'some rules, not bad though' and 'lots of rules'. All pupils were aware of the reason for the rules. Certificates are given out weekly to pupils for achievements and good behaviour during the week with a similar ceremony with prizes at the end of every term. This giving of Certificates continues to give pupils incentives to behave appropriately and to achieve in their education.

Health and safety policies and recording remain in good order with the exception of the weekly fire alarm test which has not been recorded weekly in September, October, November and December 2006. The Head Teacher reported that the fire drill is tested every week and is aware that the records did not confirm this. Two fire drills took place in March 2006. The gas safety, electrical supply and portable electrical appliances have been checked at the

required intervals. Thermostatic controls have been fitted to hot water outlets used by pupils in the Hostel and radiator covers have been fitted where required. Hostel staff also complete monthly health and safety checks of the building with records maintained.

Staff recruitment practices remain as at the last inspection with application forms completed, interviews held, references taken and Criminal Record Bureau checks being completed. No new staff have been employed at the Hostel since the last inspection. Staff files contain the required information.

# 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)

## **The Commission considers Standards 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

#### **12, 13 & 22**

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Staff at the Hostel support pupils with their education and pupils benefit from good communication links between teaching and Hostel staff. Pupils have access to a variety of activities at the Hostel and planned outings in the local community. Pupils receive good support from Hostel staff and get individualised support to meet their needs.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Pupils reported that Hostel staff are available to help with homework. Hostel staff said that pupils meet in the lounge after school and go through homework they have to complete every afternoon. An English and Maths club is held one afternoon a week, to offer pupils support in these subjects. The Head of Care liaises with teachers to ensure information is at the correct level for individual pupils.

Hostel staff work across the school and have informal links with teaching staff most days in addition to the formal links at the weekly meeting. Hostel staff also attend annual education reviews and home school diaries are in place for

some pupils. The Head of Care reported that she is working on further developing the links between Hostel and teaching staff.

Pupils have access to a wide range of activities outside of school hours including football, art, computers, the school library, table tennis and television, music and DVD's. In addition a number of outings are arranged on a regular basis, including Judo, swimming, signed cinema and D-Zone deaf club. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, a number of different parties and meals had been planned with the annual party for older people in the neighbouring home. The pupils continue with their recycling scheme at the school, which has become a part of their daily life.

The Head of Care reported that pupils are involved in planning activities at weekly meetings. Pupils comments about the activities included 'there's lots to do', 'it's good here, there's plenty to do', 'I'm looking forward to the party tonight', 'it's just boring here, there's not much to do' and more MacDonalds would make it better'.

The Hostel operates a key work system and pupils confirmed that they see their key worker regularly to plan goals, discuss progress and raise any issues or concerns. Hostel staff are all good signers and can communicate with pupils to offer the support they need. Evidence was available in case files confirming that Hostel staff provide support to pupils who are experiencing difficulties elsewhere in their life. The Head Teacher reported that he is trying to increase the individual support for some pupils.

# **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)

**The Commission considers Standards 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

**2, 11, 17 & 20**

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Pupils needs are recorded and they are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives. Pupils receive information about the Hostel prior to attending and Hostel staff are involved in the transition process and preparing pupils to leave the school. Pupils are supported to maintain contact with family members and friends while at the Hostel, if appropriate.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The schools council continue to meet on a regular basis where pupils can raise issues and make suggestions about the school. The school continues to have prefects whose role includes setting a good example to younger pupils and helping them around the school. Prefects were aware of their responsibility and when to report issues to a teacher to deal with.



Hostel meetings are held regularly and pupils are involved in planning activities and outings.

Every pupil has an annual education review and statutory Looking After Children reviews are held for some pupils, both of these offers pupils the opportunity to plan for their future.

Every pupil has a care plan, which addresses medication, communication (including English language and sign language), cultural and religious needs, leisure and activities. Educational needs and targets and any behavioural issues are also recorded. Guidelines for managing challenging behaviour are recorded on pupils files where necessary.

Pupils files demonstrated that individuals are involved in setting goals and assessing progress towards them. Pupils files contained a 'Home/Hostel' agreement, which summarises the rights and expectations of both parties, although one pupils file did not contain and copy. The Head of Care reported that this will have been completed prior to admission to the Hostel.

The Hostel operates a key work system and pupils confirmed that they see their key worker regularly, that they set goals to achieve for the year which are reviewed and that they receive support to meet their chosen goals. There is a clear induction process for pupils new to the Hostel. New pupils are allocated a 'buddy' who will help pupils find their way around, go through the rules and provide other information as required.

Pupils are able to contact family and friend whilst at the Hostel through the minicom and email. Hostel staff are aware of any restrictions regarding contact for individual pupils and this information is included in pupils case files. The school has developed initiatives to encourage parents to attend the school for communication courses, so they can communicate with their children in their British Sign Language.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

### 21, 23, 24 & 25

Quality in this outcome area is adequate.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Pupils are prepared for the transition into independent living. The Hostel was purpose built many years ago and no longer provides appropriate accommodation for pupils, however the school makes the best use of the facilities, which are redecorated and maintained properly.

## EVIDENCE:

The Hostel has a commitment to develop pupils life skills. Outings are used to develop skills such as independent travelling and budgeting. The Hostel also aims to develop pupils cooking skills and care plans demonstrated that pupils have individual programmes designed to achieve skills in this area. Hostel staff had recently attended assessments with a pupil for a potential placement at a residential college.

The Hostel was purpose built in the 1970's and no longer provides suitable residential accommodation for pupils. The Head Teacher and Head of Care are very aware of the inadequacies of the Hostel building and have repeatedly

requested financial support from the education authority to redevelop the Hostel.

The Hostel provides pupils with a lounge, quiet room, a games room, table tennis area and a small kitchen to prepare drinks and snacks and can be used as a teaching kitchen for one or two pupils. There continues to be offices on the ground floor of the Hostel which are used during the school day.

Bedrooms are on the first floor, with boys accommodation apart from the girls. Both bedroom areas have two bathrooms and toilets available. This number is sufficient for the current number of pupils, but if the numbers rise, the number of bathrooms will not be in line with the number suggested in the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The Head Teacher is aware of this and the plans for redeveloping the Hostel take pupil numbers and bathroom facilities into account. Hostel staff and visitors have separate toilet and bathroom facilities to pupils.

Pupils comments about the Hostel do not reflect the inspectors findings about the accommodation, pupils focussed on the activities, support and safety issues, rather than the environment. Two pupils said 'I like sharing a room' and one pupil said 'I like my room'.

# 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)

**The Commission considers Standards 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

**1, 28, 29, 30, 31 & 32**

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The School Prospectus contains information about the school and the Hostel and is supplied to prospective parents/carers. Staffing levels were seen to be sufficient to meet pupils needs. Staff have access to training and receive support to carry out their role. The management structure provides support required to staff and pupils.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The Prospectus contains information about the school, staff, resources available, the school curriculum, the communication policy, the Hostel, leaving school, culture, parents involvement and how to complain. The Head Teacher reported that a letter which is translated into the four most common languages used by families, is sent out each year containing important information for families.

Hostel staff have been in post for some time and know pupils and their needs well. All Hostel staff are strong 'signers' and are able to communicate effectively with pupils. One pupil reported that staff are deaf aware, which is very important.

Hostel staff complete relevant training, including sign language and child protection and have a Personal Development Plan which identifies training needs for the coming year. Hostel staff confirmed that they have access to training. Hostel staff receive regular supervision and have had an appraisal recently.

Good systems are in place to evaluate the school and the Hostel. A new independent visitor has been appointed.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

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

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	3
<b>15</b>	4

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

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

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>16</b>	X
<b>21</b>	4
<b>23</b>	1
<b>24</b>	2
<b>25</b>	3

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? YES

### **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.	RS14	It is recommended that the health agreement includes details of all homely remedies used at the Hostel.	
2.	RS2	It is recommended that a copy of the Hostel agreement is in all pupils individual file.	
3.	RS22	It is recommended that additional individual support is provided for some pupils when required.	
4.	RS24	It is recommended that the feasibility study and any future plans ensure separation of the residential facilities from the teaching provision.	

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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