



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

**St Bernard`s School**

**Wood Lane  
Louth  
Lincolnshire  
LN11 8RS**

*Lead Inspector*  
Mick Walklin

*Announced Inspection*  
23/24 November 2005      09:30

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

| <b>Reader Information</b> |   |
|---------------------------|---|
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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>   | St Bernard`s School                            |
| <b>Address</b>  | Wood Lane<br>Louth<br>Lincolnshire<br>LN11 8RS |
| <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01507 603776                                   |
| <b>Fax number</b>   | 01507 603914                                   |
| <b>Email address</b>  |  |
| <b>Provider Web address</b>   |  |
| <b>Name of Governing body,<br/>Person or Authority<br/>responsible for the<br/>school</b> | Lincolnshire County Council                    |
| <b>Name of Head</b>   | Mr Michael Allen Warren                        |
| <b>Name of Head of Care</b>   | Mrs Felicity Thompson                          |
| <b>Age range of residential<br/>pupils</b>  |  |
| <b>Date of last welfare<br/>inspection</b>  | First Inspection                               |

### **Brief Description of the School:**

St Bernard's is a day and residential school for pupils with severe learning disabilities. Children and young people attending the school are aged between 2 – 19 years of age. There are 6 residential places.

The school previously accommodated four young people on a full time basis, and an application for registration as a Children's Home was being processed. However, these young people moved out earlier in the year, so the registration was discontinued.

The school aims to provide an environment and curriculum that is stimulating, secure, varied in order to develop skills in different learning situations including the home, residential situation and the community.

The residential facilities provide a single bedroom for each young person, lounges, dining areas and a kitchen area. Resources such as the swimming pool and other educational facilities are available beyond the school day and provide varied opportunities for recreational pursuits.

St Bernard's is located in Louth with access to local shops, medical agencies and community facilities. The school provides appropriate transport to access these facilities and the wider resources in the surrounding areas of Lincolnshire.

# SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place over two days, lasting 15 hours. The main method of inspection used was called 'case tracking' which involved tracking the care that three young people receive through the checking of their records, interaction with the young people and care staff, and observation of care practices. A tour of the premises was conducted, and documents relating to the home were inspected. A pre-inspection questionnaire and self-assessment was completed by the Head. Six parents questionnaires, and four staff questionnaires were returned to the Commission.

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

There are good standards of welfare at this school for young people staying there. Parents said that the staff are "friendly and approachable", and "do a good job". Other comments included, "we don't think there's anything to criticise in terms of the school and the care it provides", and "the staff have a very difficult job caring for our son and we think they do very well". Staff have a clear commitment to providing high standard of care, and ensuring that the young people have an enjoyable and stimulating stay. They are well motivated, and have a good knowledge of the needs of the young people, including their communication needs. There are good arrangements for looking after young people's health needs. Young people's care plans are of a good standard, ensuring that their support needs are fully identified.

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

This is the first inspection as a Residential Special School.

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

Better records should be kept of health and safety checks, to ensure that young people are safe. There is a good staff training programme, but staff need food hygiene training, and child protection updates. Some documentation needs updating to meet National Minimum Standards. There need to be more evidence of monitoring on a half-termly basis by the governing body.

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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Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

# 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 the following standard(s):

### 14 & 15.

There are good arrangements to ensure that young people's health needs are met, with excellent liaison with local healthcare providers. Medication administration records should be clearer to prevent the possibility of errors.

## EVIDENCE:

The school participates in the 'Healthy Schools Initiative', which encourages a healthy lifestyle via menu planning, snack provision, fluid intake and provision of exercise. Young people are registered with their own GP's, but emergency cover is available through a Louth surgery. A School Nurse is employed, and regular dental, optical and health checks are conducted through the school. There are excellent arrangements with the School Health Advisor for Children with Disabilities, who liaises regularly with the School Nurse, and was visiting the school at the time of the inspection. He delivers staff training on a range of issues relating to the special healthcare needs of young people, and staff receive annual updates. The programme for next year has already been planned. Staff can also contact him directly if they wish to discuss specific issues relating to young people.

Procedures for receipt and administration of medication are satisfactory, but there are gaps in the medication administration record, for example, when young people receive medication in the main school building. This was addressed at the time of the inspection.

One young person said that he enjoyed the food served, and that his choices are catered for. The cook is currently off sick, but carers are currently providing cover. Young people eat their main meal at school, with light teas and snacks being provided at the hostel. Menus are varied and nutritious. Young people's dietary needs are documented, including special needs, and likes and dislikes. Although most young people using the hostel are non-verbal, staff use a variety of techniques, such as objects of reference and



pictures/symbols to help them express their choices. Staff have not received food hygiene training.

# 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)

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

**3, 4, 5, 10, 26 & 27.**

The school has good procedures for the protection of young people, but some documentation needs to be more robust.

## EVIDENCE:

The school has a confidentiality policy, which covers restrictions to access for documents, and the subject is also covered in the staff handbook. The complaints procedure and child protection procedure are outlined in the school brochure, which is sent out to all parents, and this contains the contact details for the Commission. Staff were aware of their responsibilities in maintaining confidentiality and how to deal with complaints and child protection concerns.

Staff receive child protection training as part of induction and NVQ training, but do not receive periodic updates.

The school has a policy on positive behaviour management, and detailed behaviour management plans and risk assessments were seen on young people's files. Staff are trained in the Team-Teach approach for behaviour management and physical interventions. Detailed incident analysis sheets are completed for each incident, but these do not specifically detail the method of physical intervention used. It is recommended that any instances of physical interventions are recorded in a separate, dedicated, bound and numbered book, which details the information outlined in Standard 10.14.

Staff files demonstrated that recruitment and selection procedures are generally satisfactory. However, the guidelines on Criminal Records Bureau Disclosures has recently changed, so that the practice of recruiting staff with a previous CRB check is only now acceptable if the check has been completed within a 3-month timescale. Interview notes are not kept, and it is recommended that these be kept.

Some health and safety records were incomplete. There were no recent records of fire alarm and emergency lighting checks, but these had been commenced at the time of the feedback visit. Portable Appliance Testing was overdue, and copies of the gas safety certificate and fixed electrical wiring certificate could not be found. Hot water temperatures in the Hostel should be tested periodically to ensure that the thermostatic mixer valves are functioning correctly.

# 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 the following standard(s):

### 12 & 13.

There is a good working relationship between the school and the hostel. There is a varied activity timetable to ensure that young people have a stimulating and enjoyable stay.

## EVIDENCE:

The school policy is that young people can only access the residential provision if there is a clear educational need. Both teachers and hostel staff said that there is a good working relationship between the two areas. Staff work in four teams, two of which are allocated to the school, and two to the hostel at any one time, which aids joint working.

There are a good range of activities available for young people to participate in. the hostel staff have use of two mini-buses. Riding and swimming are timetabled every week, and school facilities are accessible. During the two days of the inspection, young people participated in walks, baking and decorating biscuits, artwork, videos, music and general play. When asked what the best thing about staying at the hostel was, one young person said, "I really enjoy dressing up and doing shows and discos" (for the other young people). He led a sing-a-long which other young people and staff joined in.

# **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 the following standard(s):**

### **2, 17 & 20.**

Staff are skilled at using a range of communication methods, and know the needs of the young people well. Care plans contain a wide range of information to enable staff to meet the needs of the young people.

## **EVIDENCE:**

All young people have a severe learning disability, and communication difficulties. However, staff are skilled at using a range of communication methods, and know the needs of the young people well. Staff were observed using Makaton signing, Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), and objects of reference to communicate with young people. Staff explained the importance of being able to recognise subtle signs, such as expressions, or other non-verbal communication in order to meet the young person's needs.

Care plans contain a wide range of information to enable staff to meet the needs of the young people. These are usually reviewed annually, and updated every term, but one had not been updated to reflect the fact that he no longer lived at the school. All parent questionnaires returned stated that the school had consulted them about how their child should be cared for, and that their opinion was sought before decisions are made. Parents also said that they are

encouraged and welcome to visit the school, and that staff are friendly and communication is good.

# 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):

### 24.

The physical environment has improved, providing a comfortable and homely place for young people to stay.

### EVIDENCE:

There have been improvements to the environment, which gives it a more homely feel. The ceiling has been replaced downstairs, and areas have been re-decoration and re-carpeting. Four bedrooms are situated downstairs, and a further two are upstairs. One young person, whose bedroom is upstairs, said that he is happy with his room. However, this part is not integrated with the rest of the hostel, and staff complained about their sleep-in accommodation and shower facilities. Staff also said that there had been problems with one of the boilers that had left them without hot water for some time. These have hopefully been resolved.

# 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 the following standard(s):

**1, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 & 33.**

Staffing levels are good, and reflect the support needs of the young people. Some documentation needs updating to meet National Minimum Standards.

## EVIDENCE:

The school's statement of purpose provides useful information for young people, staff, parents and placing authorities. The school has the necessary information relating to staff and young people, but this information is dispersed, and is not in the form of a register.

Staffing levels are good, and reflect the support needs of the young people. Staff are arranged in four teams, two of which work in the hostel at any given time. The other two teams work in the school, but assist hostel staff in the mornings. Only staff who have attained NVQ level 3 are offered permanent



contracts. Staff receive 5 days training per year at inset days, where a good range of subjects are covered. As previously mentioned, there are excellent links with the School Health Advisor for Children with Disabilities, who presents regular training updates. However, it is recommended that staff receive food hygiene training, child protection updates, and that a record of in-house moving and handling training is kept.

The Head of Care is also the Deputy Head of the school. She holds a Cert Ed, and a BSc Hons in Social Studies. Formal supervision for Educational Care Officers has only recently been introduced, but the Head of Care meets with staff every Monday and Friday, when she is available for informal supervision. The Head and Head of Care both participate in an on-call rota for out of hours cover. There are no senior Educational Care Officers or Team/shift Leaders. Staff commented that they are either supported "quite well" or "OK but need more support". Several commented that the hostel needs a 'co-ordinator' who should be hostel based, and in charge of the day-to-day management. Some staff felt that they are left to cope on their own during weekends and school holidays. They also commented that there is good communication and teamwork within their team, with excellent support from colleagues. However, there could be better communication between the four teams, and also the school.

An annual report is prepared for parents and the governors, and the Head also does a termly report. Records and documents are monitored by the Head and Head of Care, but there is no formal record of this. A half-termly report by a person nominated by the governing body, who conducts unannounced visits is not produced, and it is recommended that this be done. Policies and procedures are kept in the Head of Care's office in the main school building, and are not accessible to staff out of hours. Staff should have access to these in the hostel.

# 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? N/A

### 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.  | RS10     | The school should have a bound and numbered book to record physical interventions, which records the information outlined in this standard.                | 31/03/06   |
| 2.  | RS17     | Care plans should accurately reflect the current needs of young people.  | 31/03/06   |
| 3.  | RS26     | Health and safety checks should be conducted at regular intervals.   | 31/03/06   |
| 4.  | RS27     | Written records of staff recruitment interviews and outcomes should be kept.   | 31/03/06   |
| 5.  | RS29     | Staff should receive food hygiene training and child protection updates.   | 31/03/06   |
| 6.  | RS33     | The governing body must arrange for a representative to visit the school once every half term, and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. | 31/03/06   |

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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