



Champions for  
Social Care  
Improvement

# inspection report

Residential Special School (not registered as  
a Children's Home)

## **Coln House**

Horcott Road

Fairford

GL7 4DB

2nd February 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.

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

**Name of School**

Coln House

**Address**

Horcott Road, Fairford, GL7 4DB

**Tel No:**

01285 712308

**Fax No:**

**Email Address:**

**Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school**

Chris Clarke

**Name of Head**

Chris Clarke

**NCSC Classification**

Residential Special School

**Type of school**

**Residential**

**Date of last boarding welfare inspection:**

03/02/200  
3

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		2nd February 2004	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		11:00 am	
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Pauline Stow	093851
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):</b>			
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. 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>			

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## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

Inspections assess the extent to which the school is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, published by the Secretary of State under Section 87C of the Children Act 1989, and other relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 as amended. Residential Special Schools are not registered as children's homes unless they accommodate, or arrange accommodation for, one or more children for more than 295 days a year.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the NCSC in respect of Coln House. The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Recommended action by the school
- Advisory recommendations on boarding welfare
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the lay assessor (where relevant)
- The Head's response and proposed action plan to address findings

## INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections are undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children Act 1989 as amended, with additional visits as required.

The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

Coln House School is a maintained, residential special school run by Gloucester County Council, for pupils aged 9-16 who have a statement of special educational needs because of their severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some of the pupils have additional moderate learning difficulties. Pupils are drawn from across Gloucestershire. The school is housed in two 19<sup>th</sup> Century blocks separated by a narrow road situated in the village of Fairford.

## **PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE**

This well run school provides a very supportive, structured environment for its pupils in the boarding facilities making the best use of its current accommodation. The girls and the youngest boys live in a traditional environment within a three-story building with a garden. The older boys live on the top floors of the school and admin building. Pupils have a safe and secure environment in which to live. They are well cared for and live in a learning environment. Within the boarding houses they learn to live in a community developing new skills. Activities internally and externally are very many and varied and the children are actively encouraged to participate in them. The children's behaviour is well managed and they are supported and encouraged in their personal development.

The experienced senior management team provide excellent leadership for the school and are supported by an experienced stable work force. Many of the staff live locally and provide excellent links to the local community promoting the acceptance of the school. The care staff members have many years of experience and have become very skilled in looking after the children in the school. The school has a well-developed programme to assist pupils to develop skills for independent living.

Communication internally is good and communication with the parents via the family liaison officer is excellent. Record keeping within the houses is of a very high standard.

Overall the school provides high quality care for the residential children providing clear boundaries and individual goals that each child is supported in achieving.

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE**

The school needs to assess the management of the pupils behaviour by restraints ensuring that only agreed techniques are used and that the use of restraints are fully recorded. Formal supervision should be introduced for all staff.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE**

This well run school provides a supportive, structured environment for its pupils in the boarding facilities making the best use of its adequate accommodation. The girls and the youngest boys live in a traditional environment within a three-story building with a garden. The older boys live on the top floors of the school and admin building. Pupils have a safe and secure environment in which to live. They are well cared for and live in a learning environment. Within the boarding houses they learn to live in a community developing new skills. Activities internally and externally are many and varied and the children are actively encouraged to participate in them. The children's behaviour is well managed and they are supported and encouraged in their personal development.

The care staff have many years of experience and have become very skilled in looking after the children in the school.

Communication internally is good and communication with the parents via the family liaison officer is excellent. Record keeping within the houses is of a very high standard.

Overall the school provides high quality care for the residential children providing clear boundaries and individual goals that each child is supported in achieving.

Parents, teachers and children reported that the children are very well cared for. Parents used the words fantastic, excellent very good to describe the care and communication from the school. One pupil reported on their questionnaire that the school is BRILL.

## NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

NO

NO

NO

<b>The grounds for any Notification to be made are:</b>

### IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION

NO

No	Standard	Recommended actions	
1	RS33	The Governing body should arrange for a visit to the school to take place each half term and report in writing on their findings to the Governing Body.	



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

**Action Plan:** The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended action and any advisory recommendations are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

### RECOMMENDED ACTION

Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare.

No	Standard*	Recommended Action	
1	RS10	Ensure staff members are clear about appropriate methods of restraints and recording of restraints is in accordance with the standard.	1/05/04
2	RS33	The Governing body should arrange for a visit to the school to take place each half term and report in writing on their findings to the Governing Body.	1/05/04
3	RS30	Provide individual supervision for all staff once in each half-term.	1/09/04
4	RS24	Improvements to the premises must urgently include repairs or replacement to the rotting window frames.	1/04/04
		<b>The registered provider must provide a detailed action plan stating how and when requirement No's 1-4 will be met.</b>	

### ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

Identified below are advisory recommendations on welfare matters addressed in the main body of the report and based on the National Minimum Standards, made for consideration by the school.

No	Refer to Standard*	Recommendation
1	RS5	The ancillary staff would benefit from some child protection training.


Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. RS10 refers to standard 10.

**PART B****INSPECTION METHODS AND FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods were used in the production of this report

Direct Observation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Accommodation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas	YES

Checks with other Organisations

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	YES
• School Doctor	YES
• Independent Person	NO
• Chair of Governors	YES

Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	YES
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	YES
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	YES
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	03/02/04
Time of Inspection	9:00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	22
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	2

**Pre-inspection information and the Head's Self evaluation Form, provided by the school, have also been taken into account in preparing this report.**

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

**Age Range of Boarding Pupils**      **From**       **To**

## NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

**BOYS**

**GIRLS**

**TOTAL**

**Number of separate Boarding Houses**

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the NCSC assessment of the extent to which standards have been met. 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.

## STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

### Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

The school has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for those children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement can be made up of other documents, e.g., Letter of Approved Arrangements and school prospectus, which are required to include specific information.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
<p>The school has a School Prospectus, a comprehensive Statement of Purpose, a well written Children's guide and a separate nicely presented Parents guide. As each document was updated or produced it was presented to the governing body for approval. These documents are supported by a full range of written policies, procedures and guidelines. These are about to be updated. The inspector commends the school staff on the quality, range and contents of the documents which demonstrate a true understanding of the needs of the pupils who attend the school.</p>		

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way that the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.
- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.

### Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

Children's opinions, and those of their families or significant others, are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and their future. Feedback is given following consultations.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

4

Each pupil has a named key worker. The children confirmed to the inspector that they knew who their key worker was and that they were fully consulted about key decisions. The school has a very skilled Family Liaison Worker who provides an excellent interface between school and home. All the staff members seek both children's and parent's opinions on a regular basis. Group house meetings are held daily in each of the boarding areas and children are encouraged to join in discussions on a range of decisions that affect them personally and collectively.

The inspector witnessed several examples of the staff members consulting with individual children. Parents reported that the school has excellent communication links with them.

### Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.11)

The school and staff respect a child's wish for privacy and confidentiality so far as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

4

The staff follow the schools policy on privacy and confidentiality respecting the confidences of the children whenever possible. All the care staff members were able to describe the procedure to be followed if a child made a child protection disclosure.

The inspector witnessed the staff members demonstrating, their understanding of this policy. This was particularly evident during the morning getting up procedure in Claire house when staff dealt with matters of an intimate nature with care and consideration.

All children's records are stored safely in either locked cabinets or locked offices.

The children are encouraged to make telephone calls and maintain contact with their families. All the children go home every weekend.

**Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)**

**Children know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the school, and feel confident that any complaint is addressed seriously and without delay.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The school has a complaints procedure and all children and parents interviewed by the inspector were aware of its existence or had received a copy of it. Without exception the parents said that they had not needed to use the procedures as communication with the school through the family liaison officer are very good and situations did not escalate necessitating a formal complaint. All the pupils were well able to describe how they would make a complaint and assured the inspectors that they were confident that any such complaint would be acted upon.

**Number of complaints about care at the school recorded over last 12 months:**

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

**Number of complaints received by NCSC about the school over last 12 months:**

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

## CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.
- Children are protected from bullying by others.
- All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the school are notified by the Head of the school to the appropriate authorities.
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded positively to on return.

### Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

There are systems in place in the school which aim to prevent abuse of children and suspicions or allegations of abuse are properly responded to. These are known and understood by all staff (including junior, ancillary, volunteer and agency staff).

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The school has a Child Protection policy, which supports the ACPC guidelines. All the care staff interviewed during the inspection knew of the policy and demonstrated their understanding of child protection issues. There was evidence in the Social Services communication book, used for all communication with social services, of appropriate, timely, clear, communication with the local authority.

The care staff members have all received child protection training within the last year and senior staff members have attended level 2 training. All the care staff members receive child protection guidance during their induction period.

The ancillary staff would benefit from child protection training.

Number of recorded child protection enquiries initiated by the social services department during the past 12 months:

0



**Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)**

The school has, and follows, an anti-bullying policy, with which children and staff are familiar and which is effective in practice. Where possible children in the school contribute to the development of the policy.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

4

The school has clear policies and procedures for dealing with bullying. The pupils who spoke to the inspectors clearly understood how to report incidents of bullying using a form that the school has introduced or reporting directly to a member of staff. The pupils all reported that they felt confident with the system in place. The school staff are vigilant in identifying bullying and dealing with it in an appropriate way. The high staffing levels and the close supervision help to safeguard the children. The pupil and parent questionnaires did not highlight bullying as a major problem within the school. Of the 24 pupil questionnaires 13 said that they were sometimes bullied, 5 hardly ever, 2 most of the time and 4 never.

The subject of bullying is often discussed as part of the excellent PHSE programme that is run one evening a week for each of the boarding houses. There are posters giving information on how to report bullying in each of the house areas.

**Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied**

25 %

**Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)**

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.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

There was clear evidence in the communication book of referrals made to notify the appropriate authorities of child protection issues by the liaison worker. Both the Head Teacher and the Head of Care were very clear in their understanding of incidents that need notifying to the various authorities.

The parents reported that they were always notified promptly of untoward incidents.

**NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO NCSC DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:**

- conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children
- serious harm to a child
- serious illness or accident of a child
- serious incident requiring police to be called

0

0

0

1

<b>Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)</b> <b>The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
<p>The school has a written policy and guidance to identify action to be taken if a child is absent or absconding. The school has comprehensive systems in place for analysis all unto ward incidents looking at antecedents and outcomes.</p> <p>All the care staff and senior managers carry walkie-talkies and are able to summon help if a child does decide to abscond.</p>		
<b>Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:</b>		<b>0</b>

## CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour.

### Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

Relationships between staff and children are based on mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries which are effective for both the individuals and the group.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The care staff members have a comprehensive staff manual that gives written guidelines to keep both children and staff safe. The inspector witnessed the staff providing very good personal support and guidance and rewarding positive behaviour. Behaviour and clear professional boundaries were seen by the inspector to be well managed in the boarding houses. Staff members dealt with pupils calmly and made clear their expectations for behaviour without favouritism.		

**Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.26)**

**Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour, and where the behaviour of children is regarded as unacceptable by staff, it is responded to by constructive disciplinary measures which are approved by the Head of Care.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****2**

The inspector witnessed many very positive interactions between the staff and the children with reinforcement of good behaviour, correcting and de-escalating incidents of poor behaviour. Any sanctions that are imposed by the staff are recorded and discussed with both the child and the Head of Care. All the children who completed the questionnaires recorded that they felt that sanctions were fairly and correctly administered.

All staff members receive training in physical interventions; the principles are based on de-escalation and avoidance. The staff members and children reported that physical interventions were only used when there was a danger of injury to another child or to a member of staff. The pupils reported one incident of a physical intervention of a child trying to throttle another child when a member of staff restrained a child possibly using an unauthorised restraint. The tracking of this incident highlighted short falls in the recording system. Restraints are recorded in the incident book, which is a bound volume but does not contain all the information required in 10.14. The restraint is then written up in full and the child concerned signs the report to say they agree with its contents. The report is then filled on the child's record.

The use of all sanctions and restraints are reviewed by the Head of Care and the Deputy Head Teacher on a regular basis.

The schools disciplinary policy has clear guidance on the circumstances that result in exclusions from school. Discussion with the Head Teacher confirmed that exclusions are only used for serious offences and children are not sent home if this is likely to have an adverse effect on the child.

## QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.
- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within school and in the local community.
- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.
- Children 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.

### Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

Admission and leaving processes are planned and agreed with the child – and as appropriate, with parents and carers and placing authorities – as far as possible and handled with sensitivity and care by those concerned.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

4

All the pupils and parents reported that the admission process which is in place at the school worked well. The school currently has a waiting list and is looking at changing the use of its boarding houses to accommodate more male pupils. Prior to admission both formal and informal visits take place to the school and new boarders start on a Thursday with just one nights boarding in the first week to phase them in and ease their separation from home. Parents reported receiving comprehensive information about the school and appropriate procedures, which the inspectors found to be of a very high quality and sensitively written to accommodate the complex needs of the children.

The school has on file historical information relating to the child and current information including, contact numbers, health and personal care and comprehensive risk assessments. There was evidence that the information is regularly updated. Information of a private and confidential nature is stored in locked offices.

Before leaving the school young people move to a new independent self contained unit affectionately known within the school as the 'Indi'. Here they learn additional skills in home management.

**Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.7)**

Care staff and the school's residential provision and activities actively contribute to individual children's educational progress, and care staff actively support children's education, ensuring regular attendance, punctuality and a minimum of interruption during the school day.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

4

The care staff members were all seen to support the children's education in a very positive way. Regular meetings take place with the teaching staff who reported how much they appreciate the help given to the children with their literacy programmes and their formal homework. The activities that the children engage in are all designed to enhance their concentration, fine and gross motor skills and their cognitive development.

Each of the boarding houses has a very good range of reading material board games and hobby materials. The comprehensive PSHE programme which is very well presented assists all pupils in their preparation for independent living.

Staff members report and records confirm that they contribute to the annual review of the statement of purpose.

**Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9)**

Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

4

Children at the school are encouraged to take part in a very wide range of activities including, football, line dancing, swimming, army cadets, air cadets, the local youth club, trips to the cinema and other local events. Many of these activities take place in the local community. The school has recently acquired a quad bike to complement the power scooters that the children very much enjoy using. These are used under staff supervision at all times.

The activities are tailored to meet the preferences of the children through group and individual discussion.

The children rated the schools activities as 'excellent' and some pupils are asking to stay at school at weekends to continue these activities. Talking to the staff the inspector saw the level of commitment that staff put into the school for the benefit of the children. The school staff are commended for facilitating these and the many other activities

**Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)**

**The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets any intimate care needs.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****4**

The school actively supports children in all aspects of their health and welfare needs. There was evidence of this throughout the inspection particularly in the girl's boarding house. The Family Liaison Officer has taken charge of this aspect of the pupil's welfare and is making excellent progress in enhancing all the schools policies and procedures in line with the various courses she is undertaking. She is commended for the work that she is undertaking

The school has a comprehensive PHSE programme that is run weekly for each house group. In the last year the presentation has been enhanced by the use of an interactive computer system that is displayed on a very large inter active screen. The pupils are all encouraged to participate. It encourages pupils to understand the effects of smoking, alcohol and substance misuse, plus a large range of other topics. The inspector observed one such session and wishes to complement the staff member on the contents and presentation. The school doctor and nurse see the children regularly and the nurse holds a drop in session for the children each week.

**Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.15)**

**Children are provided with adequate quantities of suitably prepared wholesome and nutritious food, having regard to their needs and wishes, and have the opportunity to learn to prepare their own meals. Where appropriate special dietary needs due to health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background are met, including the choice of a vegetarian meal for children who wish it.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

Each boarding house has its own cook and the children are joined by the day pupils to share the mid-day meal. This enables smaller family groupings and integration with the staff. The meals are well balanced, very well prepared and appetising the food tasted by the inspectors was of a very high quality and the children enjoyed it. The children are encouraged to go back for second helpings and their likes and dislikes were well known to the care staff and the cooks. Having the meals in the boarding houses improved communication and encouraged good table manners. There was evidence of the plentiful supply of fresh fruit. Meal planning within the school takes place each half term and examination of previous menus demonstrated well-balanced, nutritious meals. The cooks are commended for their work and for their knowledge and understanding of the children they are seen as an important part of the care team.

**Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.7)**

Children are provided for adequately on an individual basis and encouraged to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing and personal requisites. Children who require assistance to choose what they wear and/or how they spend their money are provided with the assistance they need, in a way which maximises their choice.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The children at the school only board from Monday to Friday, shopping is usually carried out while the children are at home. All the children are encouraged to change out of school uniform in the evening. Each child has personal space in their bedroom to keep their personal requisites.



## CARE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT PLAN

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.
- 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.
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.
- Children receive individual support when they need it.

### Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

There is a written placement plan specifying how the school will care for each boarding pupil in accordance with his or her assessed needs, the school cares for that child in accordance with that plan, monitors progress in relation to that plan, and updates that plan as necessary.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

Each child has a clear and comprehensive, typed, pathway plan. This is reviewed and updated weekly with the child. It contains small weekly targets and longer-term goals. All the children made reference to this plan during the inspection and records examined showed that staff and children signed any changes that were agreed between them.

### Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.5)

Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress which can, in compliance with legal requirements for safeguards, be seen by the child.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The school has a procedure for written documentation about each child and who and how this can be accessed. The files are kept securely in the Head of Cares office. The files examined held all the information in Standard 18.2. All entries on the child's file were dated and signed. Children knew of the existence of these files and actively contributed to them. The school has a storage system in place for old records.

**Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.3)**

**The school maintains clear and accurate records on the staff and child groups of the school, and major events affecting the school and children resident there.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The inspector examined a random sample of the pupils' care and welfare records. They were up to date, well kept, clearly written and comprehensive in nature. The information included the date of admission, the placing authority, relevant name, address and telephone numbers. They included weekly targets that were agreed with the children, which were signed and dated, by both staff and children.

The school has a record of all the different activities undertaken by each child and a record of the members of staff present at each activity session.

The inspector examined the three newest members of staff personal files. All the files contained application forms, CRB checks, references and interview notes. There are details of all spouses and children living on the school premises.

The school keeps comprehensive records of the staff on duty each day and the activities that the children were undertaking with whom.

**Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.6)**

**Subject to their wishes, children are positively encouraged and enabled by the school to maintain contact with their parents and other family members (unless there are welfare concerns) while living at school.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****4**

The pupils at Coln House are weekly boarders and all go home to their parents at weekends. The school has an excellent family liaison worker who maintains close links with home. Children are encouraged to contact their families during the week and parents reported being very welcome at the school at any time. Both pupils and parents confirmed that communication between home and school are very good.

**Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.2)**

Where a pupil is in care and will be leaving care on leaving the school, the school agrees with the young person's responsible authority what contribution it should make to implement any Pathway or other plan for the pupil before the pupil leaves school. These arrangements are in line with that young person's needs, and the school implements its contribution where feasible from at least a year before the pupil is expected to leave care or move to independent living. The school works with any Personal Advisor for the child.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

Each of the pupils in the senior school has a leaving care plan and the school works closely with the placing authorities to facilitate a smooth transition from school to further education or employment. As part of this work the school has an excellent transitional care programme that promotes independent living. The pupils are supported in household management and work experience.

One of school staff provides excellent weekly PHSE sessions for each house. The inspector joined a session with the older pupils that covered a wide range of discussion stimulated through an inter active computer programme. The school assemblies also cover topics such as the judiciary.

All the pupils undertake a very varied work experience programme as part of their education.

**Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.13)**

All children are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes, and children identified as having particular support needs, or particular problems, receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

All the children at Coln school have well identified needs, staff actively support and encourage development both in small group activities and in individual sessions. Many of the pupils attend the local junior rugby club and meet up with other young people from the village. The PHSE programme encourages children to develop their knowledge and self-esteem. Each child has agreed weekly targets and all staff support the children to reach these targets. The high levels of staffing enable all children to receive personalised care. All the children reported that they felt confident to take any problems to any member of staff or to the Head of Care.

The school has a designated part time Educational Psychologist who provides an excellent service for the staff and children. The recent addition of a Child Action Worker to work with families who do not have a named Social Worker has enhanced the work carried out by the school.

The inspector witnessed the excellent support offered to one young pupil who was undergoing a family crisis. All the staff from the Head Teacher, Head of Care and the house staff took great care to appropriately support the young pupil.

## PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children live in well designed, pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.
- Children live in accommodation that is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.
- Children are able to carry out their ablutions in privacy and with dignity.
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.

### Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. It serves the needs of the children and provides the sort of environment most helpful to each child's development, and is sufficient for the number of children.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The school is located on the edge of the Cotswold village of Fairford in a 19<sup>th</sup> century building. Its location allows easy access to the towns of Cirencester and Lechlade. Pupils are easily able to access local community activities and facilities. Children, staff, parents and members of the community all reported positive links with the local community.

The location of the boarding houses on two sites sitting astride a road leading to a military base. All the children showed a good road sense and the staff directed the traffic when the children were crossing en mass.

All the school doors are either locked or have coded entry systems in place. These were used at all times throughout the inspection and the children reported that this was normal practice.

**Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.19)**

**The school provides adequate good quality and well-maintained accommodation for boarding pupils, which is consistent with their needs.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The interior of the school has had some very positive changes since the last inspection. The completion of the independent unit and the single bedrooms on the top floor of the boarding house are an excellent example of the standard that can be achieved even in this old building. There is still some way to go before all the accommodation reaches this high standard, but interior decoration is well underway in other house areas.

The roof has been repaired however the rotting window frames need urgent attention to prevent a serious accident.

The staff members have created a homely environment in the living areas. Some of the bedrooms require refurbishment, decoration and re carpeting. The pupils who showed the inspector round were justifiably proud of what had been achieved; their only complaint was of the beds. The Head Teacher and the Head of Care responded rapidly to this and plan to replace the beds on a rolling programme starting immediately. All the bedrooms are occupied by one or two children. Many of the rooms had been personalised by the children to reflect their tastes some included a television and all had a tape/CD player.

All the young people seen by the inspectors felt able to request a change of room or to request to share with a friend. They reported that they were able to make a private telephone call either with their mobile phone or on the house telephone.

The school provides washing machines for the pupils in the independent unit, else where in the school laundry is undertaken for the children and there are facilities to wash soiled bed linen at high temperatures.

The school was warm and comfortable throughout the inspection period and children reported that this was always the case.

There is a staff sleep-in room in each of the boarding houses the staff have their own bathrooms. The school employs a waking night staff member.

**Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.7)**

**The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets, all of good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children. The school has appropriate changing and washing facilities for incontinent children where necessary.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

Each of the boarding areas meets this standard. There are a variety of combinations of bathroom facilities all of which take account of the children's needs for privacy, dignity and safety and are accessible from the sleeping and recreational areas of the school. All the bathroom doors have suitable locks that are in good working order. The children reported that hot water was always available and that they found the facilities adequate. Staff have separate toilet and showering facilities adjacent to the sleep in rooms.

The school has an industrial washing machine for the sheets of children who have enuresis

**Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)**

**Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, in accordance with Health and Safety and Fire legislation and guidance.**

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The school has regular inspections from the fire safety officer and carries out regular fire drills. All the fire extinguishers seen by the inspector were in date and in the right places. School records confirmed these observations.

The only significant Health and Safety issue is some of the school windows which are rotten and may fall out when opened.

The addition to the Head of Cares support staff of a 'puppy' is seen as very positive by the inspector. (It is however unclear whether all the necessary CRB and references were undertaken for the puppy.) This puppy along with the other animals on site are all well looked after and do not present a significant risk to the children rather they enhance their knowledge of the care of animals.

## STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- 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
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.

### Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those employed on a contractual/sessional basis) and volunteers who work with the children in the school includes checks through the Criminal Records Bureau checking system (at Standard or Enhanced level as appropriate to their role in the school), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The school has a very experienced stable work force. None of the staff have left since the previous inspection. Three additional ancillary staff have been recruited and examination of their personnel file showed that there have been major improvements in the recruiting process some further improvements could be introduced to ensure there is adequate knowledge of gaps in employment history.

Total number of care staff:

15

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

0

**Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)**

The school is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the minimum level specified under standard 28.2. Records of staff actually working in the school demonstrate achievement of this staffing level.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The school was seen by the inspectors to be adequately staffed with a very experienced, mature, stable work force who are able to meet the needs of the children and to cover any emergencies that might arise. There is a sleeping in member of staff in each house supported by one waking staff member who covers the whole school. Examination of the staff rota's confirmed that these were the normal ratios of staff to children. There was demonstration of clear lines of communication and accountability with senior staff providing a back up 'on call' system. All staff members carry walkie-talkies and can summon instant assistance if a problem occurs.

**Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)**

Staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the school.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The school was seen by the inspectors to be adequately staffed to meet the needs of the children and to cover any emergencies that might arise. Rota's confirmed that this was always the case. There was demonstration of clear lines of communication and accountability with senior staff providing a back up 'on call' system. All staff carry walky talkies and can summon instant assistance if a problem occurs

**Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)**

All staff, including domestic staff and the Head of the school, are properly accountable and supported.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

2

The staff members interviewed by the inspector were able to clearly identify their lines of accountability. The Head of Care has an open door policy and is easily available this is greatly appreciated by all staff members. The Head of Care aims to offer individual supervision to all staff members each half term this is an onerous task and should be reviewed as it means in practice that not all staff receives regular supervision. All staff have an annual appraisal and there was written evidence of this provided for the inspector although these were not on all the staff members personnel files (30.6). All staff have access to the full range of policies and procedures.



## ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.
- Children enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.

### Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

The school is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible childcare.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

4

The Head of Care is experienced in her position and holds an NVQ equivalent i.e. a diploma in Health and Social Care. She is undertaking a management qualification to complement this professional qualification.

The senior care staff have gained considerable experience in working with children with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties over the many years that they have worked at the school. All staff are now undertaking NVQ training to complement their years of hands on experience.

The care staff rotas are worked in such a way as to allow adequate time for staff meetings and hand over sessions and allow time for high quality interaction with the children.

The school has excellent plans to accommodate a range of foreseeable crises such as complaints, staff shortages and serious allegations. The staff interviewed knew where to find the procedures and parents had access to this information.

Percentage of care staff with relevant NVQ or equivalent child care qualification:

10 %

**Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)**

The National Care Standards Commission is informed within 24 hours if a receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy becomes responsible for the school. Such persons on becoming responsible for the school have ensured that the school continues to be managed on a day to day basis by a Head who meets recruitment and qualification requirements for a Head under these Standards. Such a temporary Head must make sure that the operation of the school meets the requirements of these standards in relation to the day to day running of the school.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

As far as the Head Teacher and the governors are concerned the school is financially viable. The inspector noted a process for countersigning a variety of records identified in 32.2 is in place.

The school reports a good relationship with the local police.

**Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.7)**

The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body receive a written report on the conduct of the school from a person visiting the school on their behalf every half term.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

1

The governing body has yet to set up a system for half termly visits to the school as stated in 33.2 and 33.3. The Governing body relies on the Head teachers report. The Board of Governors is considering developing a Link Governor post and the inspectors would welcome such a move.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

**Lay Assessor**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

## PART D

## HEAD'S RESPONSE

### **D.1 Head'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 conducted on 27th February 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

**Action taken by the NCSC in response to Head's comments:**

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

Head's comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report

YES

Head's comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate

NO

**Note:**

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

**D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2004, which indicates how recommended actions and advisory 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 Head'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

NO

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

NO

Other: <enter details here>

NO

### D.3 HEAD’S AGREEMENT

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

**D.3.1 I Mr Chris Clarke of Coln House Residential Special School confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the recommended actions made and will seek to comply with these.**

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

### Designation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

**D.3.2 I Mr Chris Clarke of Coln House Residential Special 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 on the above date(s) for the following reasons:**

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Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

### Designation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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