



Champions for  
Social Care  
Improvement

# inspection report

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

## **Springfield House School**

Kenilworth Road

Knowle

Solihull

West Midlands

B93 0AJ

22nd & 23rd March 2004

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

### **The role of CSCI is to:**

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

## **Inspection Methods & Findings**

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

### **The 4-point scale ranges from:**

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

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

'X' is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

<b>SCHOOL INFORMATION</b>
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**Name of School**

Springfield House School

**Address**

Kenilworth Road, Knowle, Solihull, West Midlands, B93 0AJ

**Tel No:**

01564 772 772

**Fax No:**

01564 771 767

**Email Address:**

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

Birmingham City Council

**Name of Head**

Ms Janet Downs

**NCSC Classification**

Residential Special School

**Type of school**

Residential Special  
School

**Date of last boarding welfare inspection:**

15/01/03
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<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		22nd March 2004	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		15.00pm	
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	1	Warren Clarke	071608
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	2	Roy Grimwood	
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	3		
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	4		
<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.		A Lay Assessor did not accompany the inspector on this inspection visit.	
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>		Not applicable.	
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Mr Stuart Broadway	

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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 Springfield House School

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

Springfield House School (the school) is controlled by the City of Birmingham Education Department and has been established to provide special education for 50 primary aged children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some children (28 of the current 49 on roll) attend on a day basis and the others (21) spend some nights at the school depending upon their circumstances and needs.

The school occupies buildings and grounds on a former country estate in a quiet and secluded location.

The main building, which provides some of the boarding accommodation, administration and domestic facilities is understood to be of listed status thus limiting the extent to which it might be further adapted. Within its ample acreage bordered by a river, road and public footpath, there is a range of other buildings designated for use as classrooms/education resource rooms, further boarding accommodation, staff living accommodation and leisure facilities. Outdoors there are large open grassed areas, a small splash pool and a number of playgrounds (one new) equipped with a variety of apparatus. The children's boarding accommodation is confined to two buildings within which they are divided into three units, two for male and one for female residents. The units are designed to be reasonably self-contained with leisure and sleeping areas, and facilities for light snacks.

Located near a village and relatively isolated, whilst the school provides the space, freedom and safety that both the children and parents indicate that they value, it nevertheless presents some difficulty in access for those of the latter group who rely on public transport.

The Head Teacher, as referred to throughout the report, is in overall charge of the school and is used to mean the Head of School.

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

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

The overall impression is of a relaxed, ordered atmosphere where all people, both children and adults, share a respect for each other and the School in general. Relationships are built on a sound knowledge of each child, and the level of care demonstrated is very high. Children whose behaviour can often be difficult and challenging are managed skilfully and with understanding. Expectations are both clear and realistic. Its ambitions to develop excellent care are also evident, and the use of external monitoring and recommendations is positive; the last inspection under these Standards was the first they had experienced, and efforts have been made to use it to improve the service provided. Integrating objectives within the Statement of Special Educational Needs for each child is progressing positively.

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

The work developing care plans needs to be continued. The level of involvement of the children in constructing the care plan differs between house units, and all could be developed to the same level as the best. Giving the residential care of the children a higher profile by arranging reviews so that key workers can attend would assist in strengthening the 24-hour curriculum. The School is not always reflecting the level of care provided in its recording, although progress is being made in this area.

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

This is a school providing very high standards of care for its boarding pupils. It is working to meet all the Standards, and has made significant progress in so doing. The environment is both safe and enriching, providing many opportunities for personal growth and development. There is a sense of purpose, together with an ambition to make the best possible provision for the children in all parts of the School. Some Recommended Actions from the last inspection have not been fully implemented. Where this has happened it is either due to time and resources becoming available, or the School gaining greater understanding of these relatively new measures being applied to it.





6	RS10	An exclusive log (or possibly logs in each area) of the description specified in quality indicator 10.14 in relation to physical restraint.	
9	RS27	Ensure that all the elements of RS27.2 are incorporated into the staff selection procedure.	

**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.**

<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION</b>			
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	RS3	Continued development on the provision of greater privacy within the shared bedrooms, which is acceptable to the children. There are some good ideas around, and these need to be pursued.	30/06/04
2	RS4	Undertake further work to develop a step-by-step guide to the complaints procedure with clear guidance to children, parents and staff on how the system works. Specific timescales should be included at all stages.	30/06/04
3	RS5	Incorporate in the Child Protection procedures clear guidance as to which ACPC specific referrals need to be made.	30/06/04
4	RS10	An exclusive restraints log of the description specified in quality indicator 10.14 in relation to physical restraint is required. The restraints log and sanctions log must be located within each house units.	31/05/04
5	RS27	There is still a need to address the elements within Standard 27 – Staff Recruitment, in particular the quality indicators 27.2. 27.2.vi retrospectively on existing staff and 27.2 iv, vii and viii remain unmet.	30/06/04
6	RS33	It is recommended that a <i>pro forma</i> be produced for the Regulation 33 visits, which acts as a prompt to ensure that all the required checks listed in 33.3 are routinely covered, and indicates that staff and children are seen and spoken to.	30/06/04

## 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	RS12	It is recommended that action be taken to improve the liaison between care staff and education staff on a day-to-day basis.
2	RS17	It is recommended that the school works towards a process of developing the placement plan that starts with discussions with the child followed by a discussion with staff, and then the key worker and child draw up the plan together; the child in this case was more aware of the content and purpose of his plan.
3	RS17	As the School does not provide 52-week accommodation, it should consider including a requirement that children must have a secure home base from which to attend school in its criteria for admission. Where this situation already exists (or develops in the future), discussions should be initiated and sustained with the relevant social services department until a satisfactory arrangement is achieved.
4	RS24	A long-term development plan to improve the building where practicable is recommended to try to minimise the impact of out-of-date fittings that would be hugely expensive to replace.

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

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	NO
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	YES
Parent Survey	NO
Placing authority survey	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	NO
Inspection of records	NO
Individual interview with pupil(s)	YES
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	22/03/04
Time of Inspection	15.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	24
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?	0
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Whilst this was not fully reviewed during this inspection, it was noted that the School has produced an accessible 'Children's Guide' that outlines key information about the School and House Units. Whilst it describes who can help the children with their problems, it does not make a direct reference to a 'Complaints Procedure'. Such a reference, or even inclusion of the procedure in this booklet would be helpful. There is a leaflet for parents contain a brief outline of relevant information about the school.

# 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?	3
<p>The School Council is continuing to meet as part of the process of incorporating the views of children in the development of the School. There was also evidence of agendas and minutes of house meetings at which the residents could contribute specifically to the house unit in which they boarded.</p> <p>Children spoken to felt that, in general, they were able to influence what was done in certain situations. The development of children's involvement in Placement Plans differed between the house units, with one example of commendable practice (see findings under Standard 17).</p>		

**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?****2**

The School has made a lot of progress in improving privacy in the accommodation since the last inspection. The Governor carrying out visits under RS33 has kept this aspect under review. There has been considerable investment in the bathrooms, which have produced improvements. As another Inspector carried out the previous inspection, it was not possible to clearly understand the degree of improvement. The institutional nature of urinals in the house units has been noted during an RS33 visit, but in general it appears that efforts have been made to create a more domestic style provision in this area. The age and style of the building inevitably limits what can be achieved in this area. The children spoken to about it were positive about the changes that had been made, and spoke less favourably about the previous provisions.

Where bedrooms are shared, the number sharing any room has been reduced. This is possibly due to a drop in numbers boarding, and may need to change again in the future. The children who shared, expressed a preference for sharing when asked; they enjoyed the company. Staff seemed aware of relationships among the resident pupils, and would be able to review arrangements where sharing became unacceptable for anyone. Attempts to arrange furniture to increase privacy have been resisted by the children who do not wish the backs of furniture to be on show, and when asked said they liked to be able to see their room-mates when in bed. One consideration has been to invite students of interior design from a local college to see whether they can create a new look to the rooms. This seems positive, but given the strong views of the children, it is essential they are actively involved and approve of the changes. The impression is given that flexibility under the control of the residents at any particular time might be preferred to rigid rules on either single or multiple occupancy; especially given the high regard some have for sharing a room. It is likely that privacy may become a greater issue for those who experience the onset of puberty prior to leaving the school.

Telephones for use by children are located in each house unit in a way that seems to effectively compromise between the requirement for accessibility and that for privacy. Whilst free phone numbers can be accessed without adult intervention, there is a need to ask for cash to use the payphone.



**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?****2**

A leaflet has been produced outlining the 'Pupil Complaints Procedure'. This does not include timescales, nor does it explain exactly what will happen when the complaint is lodged (although it promises that people will deal with their problems "as quickly as they can and fairly"). Some further work could make the process clearer. The complaints procedure in the School Prospectus identifies three stages – Internal problem solving, internal formal complaint, and external review of complaint; a brief explanation of what each of these means in practice would be helpful. This could then be included in appropriate language within the pupils' procedure. There is also a 'Children's Grievance Procedure' in the Child Protection Policy and Practice, which appears to overlap with the complaints procedure; this has a better step-by-step guide within it. It would make sense to consolidate this procedure into the complaints procedure, and provide guidance to staff as to when a complaint also needs to be pursued through the child protection process.

Nevertheless, all of the children spoken to knew what they would do if they were unhappy, and were confident action would be taken by whoever they told about it. The Children's Guide has a section 'Who is there to help?', which could be linked more directly with the complaints procedure. Whilst children knew what they would do if they had a complaint, there was comment that they did not know as much as they should about the procedure that was being followed. Improvements to the leaflet, and consolidation of the various documents into a coherent entity should address this.

Changes have been made to promote the recording of complaints through the provision of a book in the front office entitled, 'Compliments, concerns and complaints book'. However, when the care staff were questioned about complaints they said they knew the book was there, but not very certain what should go in it. Given the central location of the book, it is unlikely that informal complaints will be entered into it, and it might be more productive to have a record book in each house unit; this would allow staff to immediately enter all the concerns and grumbles they receive in day-to-day contact with the children.

Two complaints had been received and were both treated seriously and with respect. In one, the child concerned was advised he could contact a school governor about his concerns. The governor asked for written details from staff, and replied by letter to the complainant. The second records in writing the differing views of staff and child of a situation, which is used as the basis for discussion and subsequent resolution of the problem.

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

2

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

1

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

0

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

0

## 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?	2
<p>There was evidence that progress had been made since the last inspection. There are policies in place, and there are now logs recording child protection issues. Risk assessments and records of action taken were seen, and the internal monitoring appeared to be working well. A 'Central Log for Child Protection Concerns' had been operating from September 2003. Whilst it is cross-referenced to other documents such as reports and letters, it did not specify the location of these.</p> <p>In the last inspection, reference was made to the need for identifying to which ACPC specific referrals should be made; none of the documentation presented indicated to which ACPC referrals should be directed in specific circumstances. The Head Teacher took the lead in child protection, and was personally aware of the requirements. However, there was no evidence that this was clearly available in written form to other senior staff members who may have to act on issues in an emergency, although all Senior Management Team members have reportedly received training for the designated senior teacher role.</p> <p>Whilst the procedures clearly state that all concerns should be passed to the School Co-ordinator of Protection, there is no guidance on what should be done if the concerns are about the person in this role, or where appropriate action does not appear to have been taken. A stronger emphasis on the personal responsibilities of staff having suspicions or evidence of abuse should be included in the procedures.</p> <p>Procedures for managing potential child-on-child abuse are present and appear to be thorough, with all staff being aware of agreed strategies.</p> <p>Given the ages and special needs of the children, the early involvement of Police (after 15 minutes) when anyone goes missing has been agreed.</p>		

<b>Number of recorded child protection enquiries initiated by the social services department during the past 12 months:</b>	2
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<b>Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)</b> 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.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	3
<p>Anti-bullying policies and procedures are well developed within the school. There is a blend of staff awareness and child involvement through circle time, risk management, unit children's meetings, the school curriculum and other strategies. This is something that pervades the school, both for day pupils and boarders. Where action is taken to manage the risk an individual poses, this is incorporated in the care plan, and the child concerned is aware of the action being taken and why. The use of temporary door alarms has been used to manage problems that occur at night. This is kept under review.</p> <p>Children indicated that they feel safe, and are able to get support from staff if they are worried about anything. In general, the attitude of the children to each other was very positive, and the promotion of cooperation was evident.</p>		
<b>Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied</b>	X	%

<b>Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)</b> 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.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	3
<p>There is evidence that events are now being notified to the National Care Standards Commission, although the one letter covered four events over a period of four weeks. Tightening the implementation of the procedure to ensure that all authorities that require notification receive it promptly is desirable.</p>		
<b>NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO NCSC DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:</b>		
• <b>conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children</b>	0	
• <b>serious harm to a child</b>	0	
• <b>serious illness or accident of a child</b>	3	
• <b>serious incident requiring police to be called</b>	1	

<b>Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)</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>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
As stated above, due to the ages and specific vulnerabilities of the children in this school, the policy is to inform the Police if a child is missing for 15 minutes. A logbook has been introduced in line with the Minimum Standards, but there have been no instances of a child being absent without consent since its inception. Two instances, involving three children, have been reported to the National Care Standards Commission since the last visit. These are recorded in correspondence, but not in the dedicated record that post-dated them.		
<b>Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:</b>		<b>2</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.

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>4</b>
During the visit, relationships observed between staff and children were invariably good; children approached staff freely and confidently, and were treated by staff with respect. Where there might be conflict over expectations, there are many mechanisms in place to discuss and deal with them, whether the School Council, Children's House meetings or quietly with key workers or other staff. The school clearly has the welfare of the children central to its operations. Children feel safe, and that they are in a position to influence the way the school operates. The overall impression was of a happy community where expectations have been clearly negotiated and respect for other people is valued.		

**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**

Children felt safe, and control and order were maintained through clear expectations and appropriate challenges to unacceptable behaviour. Boundaries seemed clear to both staff and children, and were accepted. Staff appeared skilled at anticipating potential problems and being proactive in preventing the unnecessary escalation of situations.

A 'Care and Control Working Party' had been formed to review the current policies. A logbook meeting the requirements of quality indicator 10.9 is in existence, although there is some suggestion that this was not always used. Its use had not been incorporated into the written school policy on behaviour. There is no evidence of progress on developing the log of restraints in a dedicated bound numbered book in line with quality indicator 10.14. There is a record of incidents that involve physical restraint on both 'Incident Report Forms' and the 'School Incident Log'. However, these do not contain the required information to meet quality indicator 10.14, neither are they exclusively used for this purpose. Staff members have received the Intermediate training from Team Teach, which is accredited by BILD; policy dictates that physical restraint is only used as a last resort. Over-use of physical restraint was not evident from the conversations held during the visit, but the lack of dedicated records makes it difficult to check. Consideration could be given to having dedicated log books located in each of the house units to ensure that those giving sanctions or applying restraint out of school hours have them on hand to make the record, with a centrally-held log book to cover those events during the school day.

There is no evidence that inappropriate sanctions are used, or that sanctions and restraints are used excessively. However, it is difficult to have confidence that a full and accurate picture of what happens can be gathered from the records currently kept. As this is an area to be reviewed under Standard 33, and should be easily accessible to inspection.

## 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?	3
<p>Since the last inspection, the School has reviewed its Admissions Policy to incorporate the impact of admissions on the existing or potential group. This describes a two-way inclusive process that addresses the needs of the School, parents and child, allowing for both Parental Enquiry visits (providing the opportunity for parents and children to find out more about the school), and Pre-Admission visits once a place has been offered and accepted. These both assist all concerned to make informed decisions.</p>		
<p>The children seem well prepared for moving on to secondary school. The positive aspects of moving on are examined alongside the fears and concerns this will inevitably bring to many pupils. Leavers produce a school assembly in which they can express how they feel about the move, and in the last academic year a new venture was tried in the Summer term using an outside agency; a musical and dramatic production was the culmination of this. Visits to prospective schools, together with return visits from ex-pupils and staff from the new school to allow questioning and discussion are arranged. Those children spoken to who would be moving up after the Summer holiday were knowledgeable about where they would be going or likely to go, and could provide evidence of knowledge of the schools that are generally used, although it was too early for those who will be leaving in the Summer to have visited their new school yet.</p>		

**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?**

3

The school adopts the concept of the 24-hour curriculum, and there is evidence that care staff teams support education: Placement planning has been more directly aligned to each child's Statement of SEN; activities that assist social and physical development are provided; house units each had a range of appropriate equipment to support children's intellectual and social development.

Liaison between care staff and education staff on a day-to-day basis is reported to be difficult; however, this always happens when there is a crisis or a situation needs resolution. Relying on critical incidents to ensure effective liaison is not necessarily the best method, and it might be valuable for the School to consider ways of improving the formal internal "home"/school links.

An orderly morning routine, which assured a timely arrival for morning lessons, was witnessed.

**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?**

3

There is a wide range of activity available to the children out of school hours. There has been some change since the last inspection in that a member of staff qualified to provide some of the activities is no longer available. Neither the Head Teacher nor the care staff team members see this as necessarily a bad thing; it is better to be able to have special activities focussed on the preferences of children rather than the qualifications of staff. Use of external activities is available, but has been restricted due to staffing numbers, which are now reported to be back up to strength.

Access to gymnastics and horse riding outside the school can be arranged. The gymnastics can lead to badge awards, and the children have to commit to six weeks when they take up the activity. A teacher runs a nature club on Wednesday evenings. Facilities for recreation on the site are excellent, and an additional play area has recently been developed. There was unfortunately a smell of sewerage near to one play area, which the children said occurred occasionally. One child identified that his desire to take up skiing at a local centre was being pursued.

The only negative comment about activities coming from one of the house groups was that they do not always know in advance what activities will be available each day, but generally the range of, and access to activities is appreciated. However, this appears to be a very positive aspect of the School.



**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?****3**

The system for administering, storing and recording medicines appears to be thorough; consent forms are required and medicines must have a pharmacy label. Where parents wish to have their children take non-prescribed medication, for example herbal or homeopathic treatments, these are not allowed. This restriction relates to a Local Education Authority ruling, which may not be appropriate for schools providing boarding accommodation. The School hopes this ruling may be eased. One parent who would wish their child to take alternative medicine has been accepting of the ruling, but the School is concerned that it could provide a barrier to working cooperatively with parents. This is important, as the children only board on a part-time basis, and the health care of the children is clearly a shared responsibility with parents, who should clearly have the main say in this area.

The School has well-established access to the medical services of a GP (who is its medical officer), a nurse providing a part-time service is employed by a Primary Care Trust, and other visiting professionals including a music therapist, speech therapist, educational psychologist, and psychiatrist. The children spoken to were confident that all their health care needs are met, and they had no concerns about raising health issues with staff.

**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**

The quality of the food provided during the visit was good. Individual choice and preference is taken into account to a degree, in that menus are created based on the foods that the children as a whole say they like.

Breakfast offers a wide range of cereals and spreads for toast. A cooked course is often available. The other meals have a set menu without choice, although at each meal a vegetarian alternative is provided. This is only available to those children who are registered for this option; there is no provision for choice on a daily basis at lunchtime and in the evening. However, the children reported satisfaction with the meals, and that they were not forced to eat anything they disliked. Staff said that where a child is known to have a strong dislike of a particular food, meals containing it are normally avoided. Foods from a range of cultures are provided regularly.

Meal times are relaxed and well managed. At least one staff member sits at each table with the children and oversees the meal in a positive way. Intervention, where necessary, is unobtrusive and sympathetic.

**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

Most of the children's clothing is what they bring from home, and generally the School is not involved with the purchase and provision of clothing. There is a basic school uniform for use during formal education, but the children are able to choose what they wear at other times. Where guidance is needed, staff members are on hand to do this. The School provides toiletries, although if children provide their own from home, they can use these.

Learning to make choices and involvement in decisions are given an appropriate emphasis, and although preparation for independent living is not an immediate issue given the age of these children, the promotion of autonomy and independent thought seems to be valued within the staff team.

## 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

There have been recent developments in that placement plans are being more closely aligned to the needs specified in each child's Statement of SEN. The process involves specific targets being identified and achievable steps decided upon against which progress can be monitored. The precise method of drawing up the plan varies between house units. Placement plans were discussed with two children and their key workers; in both cases the children understood the plan, but at differing levels. There was a greater awareness and ownership of the plan in one case, which appeared to be due to the process of drawing up and monitoring the plan than the ability of the children concerned. The practice in one house unit is for adults to draw up the plan and then spend time with the child concerned to discuss the contents. In the other house unit there is an initial discussion with the child, followed by a discussion with staff, and then the key worker and child draw up the plan together; the child in this case was more aware of the content and purpose of his plan. This second approach is commendable, and the School should work towards this being developed as the common method for drawing up care plans for all children.

In one case the child does not live with his family, and when finishing school on Friday, does not always know where he was going for the weekend. There is evidence that the School does advocate to some degree on his behalf, but this seems to be an area where the School needs to take a stronger line. As the School does not provide 52-week accommodation, it should consider including a requirement that children must have a secure home base from which to attend school in its criteria for admission. Where this situation already exists (or develops in the future), discussions should be initiated and sustained with the relevant social services department until a satisfactory arrangement is achieved. It is unlikely that two institutions, or an institution and non-permanent foster care can adequately meet the developmental and emotional needs of a child in this age group.

Plans are updated at reviews, although it was reported that meetings are not always arranged to facilitate the attendance of the key worker.

It should be noted that a proportion of each staff member's working week consists of flexi, which can be used to support attendance at meetings taking place outside core rota hours.

**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?**

0

This Standard was not inspected.

**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

Recommended Action 8 from the last report was that accurate records are maintained concerning all people involved with the School, whether paid or voluntary. These are now available and kept on computer. All computer records are backed up daily by the administrative staff and are password protected.

This standard was not inspected beyond this issue.

**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?**

3

The children were able to confirm that they were both encouraged and enabled to maintain parental contact; the telephones in the house units are used mainly for this purpose.

Contact between the School and parents appears to be good, with one member of care staff specifically allocated the responsibility for family liaison. The School reports a number of ways in which parents are involved, and clearly sees them as central to the decisions concerning their child.

This standard was not inspected beyond this.

**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?**

9

This standard does not apply to the school, as it only accommodates children of primary school age.

**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

Both care staff and children confirm that children are provided with individual support. Policies to counter bullying and discrimination are present and actively pursued. There is an absence within the house units of any regimentation or inflexible procedures, and all care staff showed an awareness of the personalities and needs of the children as individual young people.

## 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?	0
This Standard was not inspected.		

### 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
<p>Recommended Action 11 from the last inspection involved ensuring that the heating system was better regulated. In the Autumn term, the Building Services Supervisor inspected and reported on the heating system in Main House. Because the same boiler runs both the building's hot water and it's heating, there is a balance to be struck between need for hot water of a suitable temperature for use by resident children and staff with the requirements for heating. The age and design of the hot water pipes mean that encasing them would not appear to be practical. There have been several visits by workmen in connection with this issue during the spring term, but full resolution seems unlikely.</p> <p>The School has made efforts to improve the building where practicable, and there is a desire to continue this. The main building does not easily lend itself to the development of homely living accommodation for children; however, efforts have been made to make it feel warm and welcoming. The School only accommodates boarders for a maximum of four days a week in term-time; if 52-week care was offered there would be greater concern for the inevitable institutional feel of aspects of the accommodation. However, a longer-term development plan would be advisable to try to minimise the impact of out-of-date fittings that would be hugely expensive to replace.</p>		

**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?**

2

As previously mentioned, there has been significant investment in the bathrooms.

**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

This Standard was only inspected in relation to Recommended Action 12 in the previous report. Risk assessments as required are all in place. These are located in the Deputy Head teacher's office.

## 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?

2

This Standard was only inspected to check progress on Recommended Action 9 from the last report. There has only been one member of staff recruited since the last inspection. There is still a need to address all the elements of this quality indicator, especially all aspects of 27.2. 27.2.vi has been done retrospectively on existing staff. 27.2 iv, vii and viii have not been met.

Total number of care staff:

X

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

X

### 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?

0

This Standard was not inspected.



**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.

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>0</b>
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This Standard was not inspected.

**Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)**  
All staff, including domestic staff and the Head of the school, are properly accountable and supported.

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>0</b>
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This Standard was not inspected.

## 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?	0
This Standard was not inspected.		
Percentage of care staff with relevant NVQ or equivalent child care qualification:	X	%

### 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?	0
This Standard was not inspected.		

**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?**

2

Since the last inspection a member of the Governing Body has been nominated to make visits to meet this quality indicator. The reports produced are thorough and contain useful feedback to the Head Teacher and staff. The person taking on this role has made a specific objective the following up of inspection report recommendations. It is pleasing to see that this has been taken on as a serious and important role, allowing the governing body to have an increased active interest in the School's development. Some of the visits are unannounced, whilst others are not.

Whilst the reports are very useful and informative, they are not made within a specific format; the visitor provides subheadings. It is recommended that a *pro forma* be produced, which acts as a prompt to ensure that all the required checks listed in 33.3 are routinely covered, and indicates that staff and children are seen and spoken to. However, the provision of space for targeting other aspects of care, including progress on the recommendations of inspections, should not be overlooked in so doing. Particular attention to the development of accuracy and appropriate structure of logs of sanctions and physical restraint in relation to Standard 10 should be an immediate focus.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

Empty box for Lay Assessor's Summary.

**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 22 & 23 March 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

**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 11 May 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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

**D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT**

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

**D.3.1 I P Jacques of Springfield House 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 P Jacques of Springfield House 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:**

**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.**