



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Chaigeley Educational Foundation

**Chaigeley School
Foundation Offices
Lymm Road
Thelwall, Warrington
Cheshire
WA4 2TE**

Lead Inspector
Jeff Banham

Announced Inspection
6th December 2005 08:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

Those outcomes are:

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

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

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

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school	Chaigeley Educational Foundation
Address	Chaigeley School Foundation Offices Lymm Road Thelwall, Warrington Cheshire WA4 2TE
Telephone number	01925 752357
Fax number	01925 757983
Email address	admin@chaigeley.org.uk
Provider Web address	www.chaigeleyschool.org
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Chaigeley Educational Foundation
Name of Head	Mr Griffith Gwyn Parry
Name of Head of Care	Mr. Tim Hancock
Age range of residential pupils	8-16
Date of last welfare inspection	6/12/04

Brief Description of the School:

Chaigeley School was founded by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) during the Second World War. It provided care and rehabilitation for traumatised children fleeing the Liverpool blitz. The school's nature and functions have changed dramatically over the years from that of a hostel to a school.

Chaigeley now provides education for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties and related needs between the ages of eight and sixteen years. It has places for up to seventy-five students with residential provision for twenty-four students. The school is itself part of the Chaigeley Education Foundation, a registered charity, and is managed by a body of Governors/Trustees in accordance with its Instrument of Governance. The Foundation runs the school and is a not-for-profit body; its income is used in meeting the needs of its pupils.

Chaigeley school is situated in its own grounds, in a rural area of Thelwall, in Warrington. Accommodation on the school campus is provided in the main school building and in a detached house. The campus includes classrooms, workshops, a garage and gym, as well as a games room. The school also has its own gardens and playing fields.

The school offers residential care from Monday mornings to Friday afternoons, each week of term for a maximum of twenty-four students. The residential accommodation is provided in three residential units within the main school. In addition the school has developed weekend provision. During term time the school provides accommodation for a maximum of four boys in the "Weekend Cottage".

Students are referred to the school from local Education Authorities across the country, though primarily from the North West, the Midlands and North Wales.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place over two days. The inspector examined records, policies, procedures and a sample of files of residential children and staff. Practice was observed during the day, including early morning and evening. The inspector was given a pupil-guided tour of the residential premises and had breakfast, two lunches and one tea with young people.

Most of the care staff were spoken with, and the inspector was able to talk freely with young people, both individually and in groups. Interviews were also conducted with the Chair of Governors, the Head of Personnel and Administration, the two Maintenance Officers, the Catering Officer and the Senior Administration Officer.

What the school does well:

The school demonstrated a significant commitment to the development of sound care practices. Staff were well trained and well managed, and were able to provide good and effective team working based on sound systems, policies and procedures that were regularly monitored and reviewed.

Relationships between staff and children were good, and the care and education elements of the school worked together to ensure consistent support for children.

The care staff were effectively supported by the administrative staff and systems, and there was an open and positive atmosphere found throughout the school.

The senior management team demonstrated a strong commitment to the continual development of all aspects of the welfare provision of the school, and had an open and positive approach to the inspection process.

The management team, supported by the Board of Governors, was considering the development of the services offered by the school. The inspection demonstrated that the school had a sound basis of strong and effective systems, policies and procedures from which it could move forward.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school had improved several aspects of the residential accommodation. Work on the development of care plans had been undertaken. In particular the use of a child's personal history as an aid to understanding their needs had been enthusiastically taken up.

The Health and Safety responsibilities of the school continued to be well monitored and work had been undertaken to ensure the premises were safe and well maintained.

The quality of food provided had improved and children were offered a good choice of nutritious meals, based on the promotion of healthy eating.

Care staff were well trained and supported when they were new to the school, and there was a strong commitment to the review of all aspects of practice. The school had started to look at ways in which it could develop its services in the future.

The Board of Governors supported the school through a range of activities; regular monitoring visits now took place, and all governors were CRB checked.

What they could do better:

The school was able to demonstrate high standards of care, and the systems on which it was based. The identification of areas for improvement in this report recognise that, for the most part, systems were sound and in need of only minor adjustment.

The school needs to ensure it obtains CRB clearance and written references on all staff before they start work.

The provision of meals on the residential units would benefit from further review.

Given the strain on staff of working with a high degree of challenging behaviour the effectiveness of formal systems of review of practice and support for staff could be strengthened.

The ways in which information is obtained on children before admission could be improved, and the information obtained could be held in personal records that were comprehensive, accurate and accessible to staff working directly with children.

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

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

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

14 and 15

The school's systems and procedures enabled staff to identify and support the health care needs of every child. Improvements had been made in the management and provision of nutrition for residential children, and the school continued to consider the extension of mealtimes on the residential units.

EVIDENCE:

The school used a number of sources to obtain information about the health care needs of children coming to live at the school. This included information from parents, health care professionals and social services where children are "looked after".

This information was used to contribute to the "health" section of the individual care plan written and placed on each child's file. Records of treatments, reactive and routine - for example dental and optical screening -were also kept on file. The school had a Health Care Co-ordinator who liaised with parents and health care professionals to identify and promote health care issues. Contacts were also established with Warrington Health Authority, and children were registered with a local GP where this was in accord with parents' wishes. Health care issues were discussed and recorded during both the review of the statement of special education needs and the statutory reviews for "looked after" children.

The school had recently obtained the services of a speech and language therapist. Drugs awareness support was also available, and other specialist services such as CAMHS, the School Health Nurse and the Looked After Children Nurse, were also used and records kept of their involvement with individual children.

A number of staff had been trained in first aid, and senior staff administered medication in accordance with the school's policy on the storage and handling of medication.

The school had recently started a "healthy eating" programme. This was based on a written identification of dietary needs and preferences, established through pre-admission information, consultation with children through individual discussion, "unit" meetings and meetings of the School Council. The Senior Catering Officer said he had been in the job for six months and had been invited to the School Council to discuss the food available within the school. The "tuck shop" had changed the nature of items stocked to offer primarily fruit, cereal bars and healthy option drinks. The dining room displayed the day's menu with a range of options that all included fresh fruit and vegetables. Children spoken with said the food was good, and this was borne out by the observation of them enjoying their food on both the residential units and the main dining room.

Breakfast for children resident at the school was served on their residential unit. There were three of these, for juniors, inters and seniors, and each was furnished and equipped to provide a warm, homely and comfortable domestic-style environment. Children appeared to enjoy the informality of the social occasion of breakfast. This was taken as a group, at the table with staff, in a relaxed manner. "*Fruit smoothies*" and "*Bob's special cheese toast*" were popular on the junior unit.

Lunch for the whole school was taken in the main dining room. Sessions were staggered in an attempt to manage the numbers involved and to offer some segregation for the various ages. Inevitably lunchtime was less of a social occasion and more functional in dealing with all the children at the school. The dining room itself was institutional in design and furnishing. The Principal said plans were in hand for redecoration and refurbishment of both kitchen and dining room.

Tea for children resident at the school was also taken in the dining room. It was available between 4.15 and 5.00. Given that the dining room was not conducive to a domestic-style occasion, and the fact that the mealtime was relatively early, it was less of a social occasion than breakfast.

Supper was taken on each unit; children were able to take up a box of food each evening. This could include items such as bread, fruit, milk, eggs and bacon. Children could then help themselves or be assisted by staff to eat during the evening before bedtime.

The issue of taking more meals was raised at the last inspection and the Head of Care said that extensive consideration had been given to extending the provision. Staff confirmed that the topic had been discussed fully with them.

The conclusion was that there were substantial difficulties identified, and as a result it had been decided that an extension of the provision was not possible.

However some staff told the inspector that, given the potential benefits for both staff and children, it would be worth revisiting the issue. It was believed changes could include a later teatime, more "restaurant" style provision in the dining room, children shopping for their own unit supplies, at least one meal a week organised and cooked on the unit or delivered from the main kitchen. The Senior Catering Officer said he and his staff would participate in any review of the provision of food to the residential units.

See recommendation 1

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

3,4,5,6,7,10,26 and 27.

The school had a range of policies and practices that enabled staff to work effectively to keep children safe. Health and safety responsibilities were carried out to a high standard. However, the school needed to improve its procedures for obtaining CRB checks and references for new staff. The school would benefit from a review of the ways in which staff were supported in the management of challenging behaviour to enable staff to deal with the high degree of stress that the responsibility produced.

EVIDENCE:

Chaigeley had a policy on confidentiality of information that was made available to staff at the start of their employment and reinforced through training and supervision. Staff said they continued to be aware of the need for the sensitive handling of all information about children and their families. Written information about children was stored in locked cabinets in either the main office or on the residential units.

Children were informed about the complaints procedure through speaking to staff and in the written "Welcome Pack" given to every child. Complaint reporting forms were available. When a child made a complaint they could complete a report form, by themselves or with assistance. This was recorded in the complaints log, and the form itself, with its outcome, held on the child's file. The school had introduced a system to differentiate between complaints made by children about other children from complaints made about the school and its staff, but carried on maintaining a record of the former in order to monitor the incidence of bullying. A member of the senior management team monitored the complaints log. Children said they were treated fairly by staff, and knew to whom they would make a complaint should the need arise.

The school had detailed child protection procedures. Training for the whole school in child protection had been delivered and all senior staff had completed a two-day course organised by Warrington Borough Council. Staff said they were aware of the child protection procedures and understood the need for vigilance in monitoring all aspects of children's safety.

Anti-bullying measures were in place, through the use of policies to inform staff of the need to prevent bullying, to react to any identified concerns, and to enable children to report incidents of bullying or abuse. In their inspection questionnaires children said they were "never", "hardly ever" or "sometimes" bullied. Those who said they were "sometimes" bullied were spoken with and said they were not really concerned about it, that it was not a problem, and that they felt confident that staff would help them should help be needed.

Given the needs of the children admitted to the school the issue of managing behaviour, and its impact on staff, was significant. The underpinning ethos of the school was the promotion and reward of positive behaviour through clear guidelines contained in the "Good Behaviour Policy". This described what was expected of children in their behaviour towards one another, staff and themselves and emphasised the importance of consistency of approach by staff towards children's behaviour. Staff were trained in "Team Teach" methods of intervention, and this training was regularly updated.

The sanctions log detailed actions taken where children had not behaved appropriately and in line with expectations, and the record of serious incidents described occasions where restraint had been used and demonstrated that children were given the opportunity to reflect on their actions at a later time.

The accident book recorded a number of incidents where staff had suffered injuries in the course of managing serious incidents. The Head of Personnel had produced figures demonstrating that the absence of care staff through sickness had increased significantly during the current term. The Head of Care said that care staff were allocated to a class during the day, and senior staff were now on duty during the day in a "pupil support" role. This would involve them in supporting education staff by dealing with difficult behaviour of children not known to them as well as children on the residential unit.

It was felt that these factors had increased the impact of the overall management of difficult behaviour on care staff. Review of incidents was largely an informal event, often provided by peers. Although senior staff monitored the records of serious incidents, particularly where restraint had been used, the systems for supporting staff and for reviewing and analysing serious incidents in a formal and systematic need to be reviewed and developed to provide the opportunity for an effective evaluation of practice in order to develop the ways in which children and staff were able to stay safe.

The further development of effective systems of managing and preventing serious incidents would become high priority as the school developed to provide placements for children with even more challenging behaviours.

See recommendation 2

The Senior Administrative Officer carried out specific responsibilities in relation to health and safety. Working with other staff she had developed comprehensive risk assessments for the premises, activities and individual children. She had recently undertaken a detailed audit of the premises and grounds, and had prioritised all work required. Significant concerns over safety had been identified as the highest priority. The serious incident sheets were reviewed in order to assist in the development of children's behavioural risk assessments. The school had a Health and Safety committee that met regularly, and a maintenance meeting every week monitored the state of the premises and identified remedial work that was required.

Fire protection systems were tested regularly and were documented in the fire log. PAT testing had been undertaken, and the gas and electrical installations had been tested by the appropriate agencies.

The inspector examined the files of care staff recently employed in the school. One member of staff had been at the school for two weeks, and was seen on the residential unit with young people. His file indicated that he had been employed without a CRB check having been confirmed, although it had been applied for, and without two written references having been obtained. The matter was raised with both the Head of Personnel and the Principal. The Principal confirmed that the school was committed to ensuring that all practices conformed to the highest possible standards and that systems would be put in place to obtain all the necessary checks on staff.

See recommendation 3

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

12,13 and 22

Children were well supported by both the residential staff and specialist services. Individual assistance was available to children as identified, and the key worker system meant that staff could become familiar with specific children and worked to provide services to assist the meeting of both educational and more general needs.

EVIDENCE:

There were a range of ways in which the care staff supported the education of each young person. Copies of statements of educational need were held on the child's personal file. "Education" was one of the elements identified in the individual care plan compiled by the residential key worker. Communication between school and care staff, in both written and verbal form, took place each day to ensure that significant information was passed on. Care staff produced written reports for the annual review of the statement of educational need, and were involved in the personal education plan (PEP), and each child's individual education plan (IEP).

Care staff were allocated as key workers to a class during the day; they said that it helped them become familiar with a wide range of pupils other than those on the residential unit. Senior staff were involved in "pupil support" during the day, and this may involve them in taking children out of class and offering individual support, or assisting education staff in managing children in the classroom. When there were staff shortages school support staff would work on the residential unit, thereby increasing their knowledge of the children. There was a "handover" meeting for all care staff each day at 3.15, as the school day was about to end. Both education staff and care staff said they felt communication and co-operation between them was positive, effective and worked for the benefit of children.

The school provided a range of activities, both formal and informal, for leisure and education purposes. Children were involved in discussing the activities for the evening at the end of the school day. During the inspection children were out on shopping trips, buying Christmas presents and personal items for their rooms.

Each residential unit held its own formal meeting, with an agenda and minutes, and these also considered longer term planning for the type of activities the boys might wish to access. Risk assessments were compiled for all out of school activities; assessments for swimming, travelling in the mini-bus, going to the supermarket, eating out, visits to the Warrington Peace Centre, Delamere Forest, museums and libraries and a number of other activities were available. Photographs on the unit showed children participating in a range of sporting activities, including rugby and football tournaments. One young person was anxious to show the inspector the photographs of him and his team. Children said they enjoyed their activities. During the inspection one young person said he was "*bored*", even though the inspector was aware he had been offered a number of options for activity including going out, or going to the gym. Children were also taken on holiday in the summer; letters asking for parental consent and financial contributions were on the administration files. Children were also encouraged to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

Each child was allocated a key worker and a link worker. These were their primary contacts during their time at the school. Key workers allocated specific time during the week for working with children on the development of care plans and other specific issues as they arose. Staff were also involved in assisting children to reflect on their involvement in issues of difficult behaviour, and these were recorded on the serious incident forms. Specialist support was also available. The school had recently employed a speech and language therapist who was to work with staff to support identified children. Drug awareness counselling was also available. There was also a specialist in anger management available to work with children and to offer particular support if children wanted it. He was in the school seeing children during the inspection, as he had been in the previous inspection.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

2,9,11,17 and 20

The quality of the work done by the care staff in respect of each child was high and increased the likelihood of successful outcomes for children whilst at the school. Relationships between staff and children were sound and based on personal commitment and effective practice. The assessment of needs and the provision of comprehensive care plans enabled the children to be supported in ways that enabled the staff team to meet their needs in a consistent and professional manner.

EVIDENCE:

Children were encouraged to participate in the management of their care and in their lives in the school in a variety of ways at both an organisational and individual level.

Review meetings of the statement of educational need and of “looked after” children involved children and their parents. The School Council met regularly, its discussions and decisions were minuted and, where appropriate, action taken. Each residential unit had meetings of staff and children, and more informal meetings took place each day to decide on activities for the evening.

The key worker system provided the opportunity for individual discussions between care worker and child. Staff were allocated time each week to engage in "care planning" activities with the children for whom they were key worker. Children were also able to contribute towards reflection on serious incidents, and to identify complaints or concerns through both formal written systems, and more informal discussions with staff.

Individual sessions were available from an independent counsellor; he was in the school during the inspection. The school had recently employed a speech and language therapist to promote the effectiveness in which children speak and express themselves.

Observation of the interaction between staff and children throughout the inspection, and discussions with staff, demonstrated that the relationships between them were based on respect, a clear identification of responsibilities and boundaries, and a strong commitment to developing a sound professional approach based on clear structures, procedures and policies. The commitment of the care staff, from the senior managers to all care workers, to promoting the interest of the child through sound systems and practice was constantly evident.

Children were dealt with in terms of their behaviour, not their personalities. Staff were able to describe the issues faced by children and used a variety of techniques to engage with children and provide effective and consistent support, sometimes in the face of difficult and challenging behaviour. The focus on developing the ways in which they worked with children, and the concern about reviewing and evaluating practice were a very positive feature of the staff team.

Staff believed that the admission process could be improved. The availability of full and accurate information, provided before admission, on which initial care plans could be constructed, remained an issue. The information was not always available, or sometimes not provided by referring authorities, despite the best efforts of the school. The school was considering the development of other ways in which pre-admission contact with children, families and referring authorities could be initiated and maintained in order for the school to ensure the admission to the school was as smooth as possible for each child. As part of the future development of the services provided by the school the possibility of extended support for children who had left was also being considered as something that may be useful for children who had developed strong links and received significant support during their time at Chaigeley.

The information provided for children from a variety of sources was used to construct the care plan. This was based on an assessment of needs, both educational and social, and was a written document that was held on the personal file of each child. The care plan identified needs and tasks over a range of areas for each child, and provided an effective tool for working with children. The school had clearly undertaken a review of its care planning systems since the last inspection, and staff were able to demonstrate their commitment to the process.

The Head of Care said that children were involved in the construction and reviewing of the care plans. The documents could allow for a written or verbal contribution from children to demonstrate their involvement, and key workers could undertake more explicit reviews of the progress made by each child, and the effectiveness of the care plan, by regular written summaries and evaluation that could also involve the child.

See recommendation 4

Parents and children were able to confirm that the school actively promoted contact between them when the child was living at Chaigeley. The care plans contained information about family relationships and significant contacts. Children were assisted in making phone calls, or going home if it became necessary. Parents said that contact from the school was good, and that they were always made to feel welcome when they visited the school.

The school should ensure that it has accurate information on who has parental responsibility for every child, and obtain information and documentary evidence about any restrictions of contact through matrimonial or care proceedings.

See recommendation 5

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

16, 21,23,24 and 25.

The senior management team recognised the importance of providing children with safe and homely accommodation, despite the constraints of the premises, and to enabling children to live as comfortably as possible and experience a good standard of living whilst at the school. Children lived in homely and well-maintained surroundings and were supported in non-institutional ways in all aspects of their care.

EVIDENCE:

The school deliberately promoted a “non-institutional” atmosphere both before and after school. The young people living in the small residential units were encouraged to wear their own clothes. Students had access to their own money upon request as this had to be held by staff for security purposes since there was no secure storage students’ for personal possessions. An inventory was made of items brought from home in order to safeguard children’s possessions.

The school had developed a range of supports for young people about to leave school. Training in the development of self-care skill was available through the AQA system of accreditation, there was an “independence flat” available in the main residential accommodation, and the school had developed close links with the local college and with the ConneXions service.

Some staff said that they felt the school was well placed to consider the development of after-school support systems that young people would be able to access when they had left.

A number of improvements had been made to the school premises and accommodation since the last inspection. Despite the fact that most of the buildings are old, and not what would be designed to fulfil the current purpose of the school, staff had created a pleasant environment that was appropriately decorated and furnished.

The residential accommodation consisted of homely and comfortable sitting rooms with well –equipped and furnished kitchen /dining rooms. Each child had a single room that had been personalised with posters and furnishings. The school had allocated each child a sum of money that they could spend on items to personalise their rooms. The inspector had a conversation about houseplant maintenance with one young person who had spent some of his money on two plants. Other children described how they were going to spend their money, and clearly appreciated the opportunity the school’s initiative had given them.

Most toilets and showers on the units had been upgraded and were now pleasant and modern in design, and offered comfort and privacy to young people.

Maintenance work was prioritised to take account of health and safety issues. Regular meetings took place between the maintenance staff, staff responsible for health and safety and the unit staff to identify and prioritise repair and renovation work. Care staff felt they were well supported by maintenance staff who they felt responded quickly to requests for work to be done.

New purpose built furniture had been provided for bedrooms, and new windows and doors had been installed in the weekend cottage. There were three bedrooms in the weekend cottage; none had lockable storage or locks on doors. A number of bedrooms in the main house did not have wardrobes, and the children kept their clothes in drawers or in their bags during the week when they were in residence.

See recommendation 6

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

1,18,19,28,29,30,31,32 and 33.

The school was well managed. The responsibilities of the senior management team were clear, and the response to issues identified at previous inspections was positive and effective. The school had systems in place to ensure that all aspects of its practice were subject to review and evaluation and that this activity was properly documented.

EVIDENCE:

The school had produced a statement of purpose that was available as a written document, on the school's web site, in Braille and on an audio CD. Copies were provided to parents and all placing authorities. Children were given a "Welcome Pack" that gave a shortened version of the prospectus. A "Welcome Pack" was also available for the weekend cottage. Newsletters were sent to parents, and they were invited to regular parents' evenings.

The school had produced a business plan that outlined its key future activities, and the inspector was involved in consideration of the range of future services that the school may wish to develop.

Each child had at least two files containing their personal information. There was the main administrative file held in the front office. There was also the working file used by staff on the residential units. Children who used the weekend cottage had an additional file that contained duplicate information. The fact that there were a number of files increased the possibility that different information could be held on different files, and this was evidenced during the inspection and discussed with care staff. In addition there were a number of examples of incomplete information being available. The Head of Care said every effort was made to obtain information on children before admission, or during the child's stay, but this it was often difficult to obtain. Information about the legal status of children – that is for those looked after by local authorities- was not always readily accessible, nor was the identification of who held parental responsibility in respect of every child. Evidence of the need to restrict contact was also not available.

The school would benefit from a review of the personal information held on a child using the residential facility. The school could consider ways in which staff were able to make contact direct with parents or local authorities, before and after admission, to ensure as much relevant information was provided as possible. The present file structure could be reviewed with a view to creating one "working file" that provided staff with the information about the child's circumstances, needs and progress in all aspects of their care. The purpose, structure and content of the working file could be explicitly stated, and contents regularly monitored.

See recommendation 7

Care staff had been diligent and positive about producing chronologies of each child's history. They had started to work on the collection of the child's background information in response to the issue being raised at the last inspection. Those involved remarked on how important it had been to give them a wider picture of the child's circumstances, and this helped them to understand the child's behaviour and needs. Staff said that they may benefit from some more advice and guidance on producing chronologies and they could develop the effectiveness of the process by being given support and training to assist them in providing comprehensive background information on every child.

See recommendation 8

The residential care staff were in general relatively long serving and familiar with the school and the children. They said they worked well together, were supported by the senior management team, and supported each other in what could be a sometimes challenging and arduous job. The inspector spoke with most of the care staff during the inspection, either in groups or individually.

Their enthusiasm and commitment was evident, and observation of their practice demonstrated their care and concern for the children and the professionalism of their approach.

Staff felt that they had been able to support each other during a recent period of significant absence through sickness and vacancies. By the use of overtime, a flexible approach to shifts, and the use of day education support staff the unit had remained fully staffed even when there were difficulties.

The deployment of staff in "pupil support" during the day was felt to have been beneficial in widening their knowledge of all children in the school, but had at the same time increased their exposure to the incidents of challenging behaviour.

The key worker system was effective in providing individual support to children, and the allocation of specific "care planning" time, when key workers could work with children on a one-to-one basis was a particularly positive development.

Staff were given training from the time they started at the school. Each new member of staff was subject to a formal and recorded induction process and allocated a "mentor" with whom they would work closely. Two new staff members confirmed that a high level of support was available for them. Performance management had been introduced for all staff, and regular supervision took place with records kept of each individual session.

The staff group as a whole was well trained, with virtually all having obtained NVQ to level 3 or 4. The Head of Care and one of the care team leaders were qualified social workers. Training continued to be available for all staff on a continuing basis, and included refreshing Team Teach training, child protection, first aid, food handling.

Supervision, appraisal and performance management was undertaken for every member of staff. Staff confirmed that supervision took place, said they felt that supervision helped them and that it was one of the ways in which they were supported by the school.

There were regular and recorded daily handover meetings, unit meetings, care staff meetings and whole school meetings and training through INSET days. In their completed inspection survey questionnaires parents said they were very satisfied with the information given to them by the school. One wrote "*They explain things to me by letter or phone me and tell me everything.*" Another wrote, "*I am very well informed in everything C. does whether it's good or bad.*"

The school had introduced a system for monitoring the range of records on which the activities of the school were based. Different members of the senior management team each had a responsibility for a selection of records and there were examples of how the evaluation of the records had contributed to the development of practice. Individual risk assessments of children exhibiting challenging behaviour had been produced as a result of the monitoring of the serious incident sheets.

The issue of monitoring the impact on staff of dealing with the challenging behaviour and serious incidents involving children has already been identified as something from which the school may benefit in improving the way in which staff are supported in a area of their work that had significant and ongoing implications. **(See recommendation 2).**

The school governors had introduced a system of monitoring visits. The Chair of Governors said these were largely unannounced. Written reports were produced and held on file, and that the governors' visits had resulted in a range of improvements to the premises in both the main building and the Weekend Cottage. The Chairman said that all governors had been subject to CRB checks. The Governing body also held a number of sub-committees and working groups in key areas such as finance, personnel, curriculum, buildings and health and safety.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

no

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS15	The Principal should consider the possibility of extending the provision of food in the school and on the residential units in order to offer children mealtimes that constituted a more domestic style social occasion.	31/03/06
2	RS10	The Principal should review the systems and resources available to promote the development of effective practices to support staff and manage challenging behaviour.	31/03/06
3	RS27	The Principal should ensure that all staff are subject to reference and CRB checks that are confirmed before they begin employment.	31/12/05
4	RS17	The Principal should introduce methods to demonstrate children's involvement in the construction and review of care plans.	31/03/06
5	RS20	The Principal should ensure that children's records show who has parental responsibility for them and describe and evidence any restrictions on contact.	31/03/06
6	RS24	The Principal should ensure that each child has storage for clothes and lockable or otherwise safe storage for possessions.	31/03/06
7	RS18	The Principal should review the structure and content of the personal records held on children and available as working documents to the care staff.	31/03/06

8	RS29	The Principal should provide care staff with guidance on the construction of chronologies detailing the personal history of each child.	31/03/06
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Commission for Social Care Inspection

Northwich Local Office

Unit D

Off Rudheath Way

Gadbrook Park

Northwich

CW9 7LT

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

Email: enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.csci.org.uk

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