



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

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

Horton Lodge

Rudyard

Leek

Staffs

ST13 8RB

3 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.

| |
|---------------------------|
| SCHOOL INFORMATION |
|---------------------------|

Name of School

Horton Lodge

Address

Rudyard, Leek, Staffs, ST13 8RB

Tel No:

01538 306214

Fax No:

Email Address:

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

Staffordshire County Council

Name of Head

Ms R Zimmerman

NCSC Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Children with physical disabilities

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

| |
|----------|
| 21.01.03 |
|----------|

| | | | |
|---|----------|------------------|----------------|
| Date of Inspection Visit | | 3rd March 2004 | ID Code |
| Time of Inspection Visit | | 09:30 am | |
| Name of NCSC Inspector | 1 | Elizabeth Taylor | 075779 |
| Name of NCSC Inspector | 2 | Chris. Garrett | 105812 |
| Name of NCSC Inspector | 3 | | |
| Name of NCSC Inspector | 4 | | |
| Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable): | | | |
| Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable) | | | |
| Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection | | | |

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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 Horton Lodge

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
- 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

Horton Lodge School is part of the Education provision maintained by Staffordshire County Council Education Service. The School is situated in Staffordshire Moorlands, approximately three miles outside the market town of Leek and ten miles from Stoke on Trent. The buildings are a mix of old and new, dating from 1890 to the present day and are set within ten acres of ground. The school's education system is called 'Conductive Education' which addresses all areas of a child's development. The school has qualified Conductor/Teachers and works closely with the International Peto Institute in Budapest. The school also provide a 'learning centre' for parents, on site, and support children in a range of different educational settings.

The School offers education for boys and girls, aged between 2 – 11 years with physical disabilities. The majority of the children are day pupils though there is provision for fifteen residential places each weekday. Flexible boarding arrangements are promoted and many of the boarding pupils are resident only one or two nights per week. Many of the children have additional learning difficulties and some have additional visual, hearing and/or speech and language difficulties.

The residential provision is sited on the ground floor, in a separate wing with an interconnecting corridor to a number of classrooms. The residential area is comprised of a sitting room, staff office, bedrooms, bathrooms and toilets. The bedrooms vary in size between single occupancy to a maximum of four.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

The School was seen to be well organised and managed. The Headteacher provided clear leadership, was easily accessible to staff and pupils and communicated effectively at all levels. There was written evidence to show proactive management in respect of monitoring the quality of the residential service offered to pupils and effecting improvements in line with minimum standards and good practice.

There was an enthusiastic staff team who demonstrated a commitment to continuing professional development and offering a high quality service to pupils.

The School operates an 'open door' policy which was commented on favourably by parents. There was evidence of a culture in the school which valued the seeking of pupil's views and opinions, not only in respect of their personal issues but in relation to the service offered in the school.

Good attention was being given to promoting the protection and welfare of all pupils.

The boarding provision offered a nurturing environment. Staff were observed to treat pupils with respect and this was reciprocated. Observations suggested that the pupils felt safe in the residential provision as they were seen to be relaxed when staff were ministering to their personal care needs. Boarding pupils were seen to readily approach staff for their company and to seek appropriate physical contact.

Inspectors observed that the concept of 'an active learning environment' was transferred from the classroom to the residential unit and visa versa, though in a less structured environment in the residential unit. Staff were observed to encourage pupils to participate in activities which were enjoyable but also instructive. However, pupils were also offered the choice to relax and watch television, listen to music or spend quiet time in their bedroom if they wished.

The residential provision was decorated and furnished in a manner consistent with good quality, domestic style living. Bedrooms had also been decorated and were clean and comfortable although there was a need to review arrangements for privacy for individual pupils. Bathing and showering facilities had been upgraded and specialist equipment was in place to aid pupils and staff.

An examination of the weekly menus plus observation of two meals showed boarding pupils were being offered a commendable choice of meals.

The Inspectors considered the school had implemented a good system for care planning which could be further built upon to be truly effective in guiding care and enabling pupil's development in a systematic way.

The school promoted a holistic approach to the care and education of pupils and offers them the opportunity to benefit from a twenty-hour Conductive Education programme. This enables the children to extend/reinforce what they have learned during the day.

Flexible boarding arrangements were in place offering provision for a maximum of fifteen boarders between Monday to Friday during term times. Staffing levels were sufficient to be able to give individual attention to pupils at times.

Various systems were operating within the school to secure the views and opinions of children in the operation of the school. There was evidence to show pupil's views were influencing decision making.

Clear admission and transition arrangements for pupils moving on were identified and implemented. Records showed staff were proactive in enabling pupils to visit their next placement and prepare for change prior to their discharge from school.

Health and safety matters throughout the school were receiving good attention.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

Many of the recommendations and advisory recommendations identified in the main report refer to improvements which could be effected to various school policy documents to provide comprehensive information.

The two main areas for review related to the need to review privacy for individual pupils in multi-occupancy bedrooms and the dining arrangements for boarding pupils and the organisation and distribution of meals.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

The school was seen to be well organised and managed. All staff spoken with demonstrated a commitment to offering a high quality service to pupils. There were good communication systems within the school and positive working relationships between teaching, care and ancillary staff.

The safety and well-being of the pupils was the primary focus for all staff. There was evidence of good care practice and a sensitive approach to assessing and addressing the whole needs of each pupil. The concept of 'an active learning environment' was observed to be seamlessly transferred from the classroom to the residential unit and visa versa, though in a less structured environment in the residential unit. Care staff were observed to encourage pupils to participate in leisure activities which were enjoyable but also instructive. However, pupils were also offered the choice to relax and watch television, listen to music or spend quiet time in their bedroom if they wished.

Eight parents completed a questionnaire for the Care Standards Commission. Their comments illustrated the high quality service being provided by the school and recognised staffs achievements and dedication. Their comments included 'everything about the school is the best', 'I think the school provides a lovely, homely environment', 'excellent provision', 'individual approach to (children's) needs' and 'doing an absolutely brilliant job'.

The only suggestions for improvement were minor such as the possibility of the School Nurse working during weekday evenings and some adjustments to the breakfast menu.

The Inspectors concluded the boarding provision supported the educational development of pupils. The schools' approach to working with children with physical disabilities, which ensured all aspects of their development were considered, was seen to provide pupils with the skills and confidence to work towards greater independence; in accordance with the schools' mission statement.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

| RECOMMENDED ACTION | | | |
|---|-----------|---|-----------------------|
| Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare. | | | |
| No | Standard* | Recommended Action | |
| 1 | RS3 | The issue of privacy in multi-occupancy bedrooms is reviewed. | 01.10.04 |
| 2 | RS5 | The child protection policy should include information that failure by staff to report actual or suspected child protection concerns could result in disciplinary action being taken against them. Also, the procedure to be followed in the case of an allegation being made against senior staff. | 01.10.04 |
| 3 | RS5 | Whole school training in child protection is extended to all staff, including ancillary staff. The Independent Person and members of the governing body should also be included. | 30.12.04 |
| 4 | RS10 | The use of 'time out' should be recorded as a form of physical intervention. | With immediate effect |
| 5 | RS13 | Risk assessments are undertaken for all activities. | 01.10.04 |
| 6 | RS13 | Comprehensive, individual risk assessments are undertaken on all pupils in respect of activities they engage in. | 01.10.04 |
| 7 | RS15 | The dining arrangement for boarding pupils and the organisation and distribution of meals is reviewed. | 27.09.04 |
| 9 | RS24 | A risk assessment is undertaken in respect of the full length mirrors fitted in bedrooms. | 01.10.04 |

| | | | |
|----|------|--|----------|
| 10 | RS24 | A risk assessment is undertaken to determine whether an emergency call system in pupil's bedrooms is deemed to be low or high priority. | 01.10.04 |
| 10 | RS25 | The exposed hot water pipes and uncovered radiators in some bathrooms and toilets are covered. Also, heating is provided in all toilets. | 30.12.04 |
| 11 | RS26 | The Fire Officer is asked to advise about the effectiveness of the bedroom doors and the frequency of emergency lighting tests. | 30.12.04 |
| 12 | RS26 | Adequate external lighting is fitted over the car parking space. | 30.10.04 |

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 | RS1 | The Prospectus contain clearer details about the complaints procedure, in respect of care/welfare issues relating to boarding pupils. Contact details for the Care Standards Commission should be included in the Parent's Guide as well as a statement that they can raise concerns direct with the Commission. |
| 2 | RS1 | The Children's Pack is reviewed to provide clearer information about a complaints procedure for boarding pupils. Also, consideration is given to providing additional information about the boarding routine and activities plus photographs of staff involved in caring for boarding pupils. |
| 2 | RS3 | More appropriate aids be gained for monitoring nocturnal seizures. |
| 3 | RS3 | Written agreement be sought from pupil's parents for the use of monitoring equipment. |
| 4 | RS5 | A member of the governing body taking a more active role in child protection to provide another point of contact for staff or parents. |
| 5 | RS5 | Information about the school's child protection policy is included in its' Prospectus and Parent's Guide. |
| 6 | RS5 | A system is implemented to indicate on a child's main file any information held on a secondary file. |

| | | |
|----|------|--|
| 7 | RS5 | Written guidance is available for staff regarding the use of body charts. |
| 8 | RS10 | Recording in respect of measures of control, positive and negative, administered to boarding pupils is developed. |
| 9 | RS15 | The outstanding matter from the Environmental Health visit is addressed. |
| 10 | RS15 | All staff involved in the preparation of food gain a Food Hygiene certificate. |
| 11 | RS26 | all staff complete approved Fire Awareness training. |
| 12 | RS26 | The fire procedure notices are produced in various formats which can more easily be understood by the pupils. |
| 13 | RS26 | A review is undertaken of vehicular and pedestrian access to the school grounds. |
| 14 | | Proof of identity of staff and copies of relevant qualification certificates are gained. |
| 15 | | Consideration be given to developing a Foundation training programme for staff involved in caring for boarding pupils, |
| 16 | | Ancillary staff receive supervision from a senior member of staff each half-term. |

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 | NO |
| Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas | YES |

Checks with other Organisations

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| • Social Services | YES |
| • Fire Service | YES |
| • Environmental Health | YES |
| • DfES | YES |
| • School Doctor | YES |
| • Independent Person | YES |
| • Chair of Governors | YES |

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

| | |
|--|---------|
| Date of Inspection | 3/03/04 |
| Time of Inspection | 9.30 |
| Duration Of Inspection (hrs.) | 46 |
| 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 | <input type="text" value="9"/> |
| GIRLS | <input type="text" value="7"/> |
| TOTAL | <input type="text" value="16"/> |

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? | 3 |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|
|---------------------------|---------------|---|

The finding is based upon examination of school documentation and discussion with the Headteacher.

There was a school Prospectus which set out the service offered by the school. A separate Parent's Guide had been developed to complement the Statement and had recently been revised. Other documentation was also available to parents and other significant people, to further inform them about the operation of the school.

It was considered there was a need to provide clearer details about the complaints procedure, in respect of care/welfare issues relating to boarding pupils. Contact details for the Care Standards Commission also needed to be included in the Parent's Guide as well as a statement that they could raise any concerns directly with the Commission. It is recommended these two points are actioned. It was also considered the Guide would benefit from additional information in respect of the school's policies on child protection, room searches and use of phone by pupils. It is advised additional information be included in the Guide.

There was a Children's Pack to inform the young people about the residential provision. The Pack was available in written form, supplemented by signs and symbols. Information in the Pack was presented in a child-friendly format. Whilst there was reference to various persons within the school who children can seek further advice from, there was no specific statement about how boarding pupils could make a complaint or the process for responding to concerns raised. It was considered the Pack could include basic details about activities, bedtime and morning routines and so on. Staff photographs could also be an aid.

It is advised the Children's Pack is reviewed to provide clearer information about a complaints procedure for boarding pupils. Also, that consideration is given to providing additional information about the boarding routine and activities plus photographs of staff involved in caring for boarding pupils.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

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

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 4 |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|
|---------------------------|---------------|---|

The finding is based upon inspection of care records, discussions with pupils and staff and the Inspectors observations.

There was evidence the whole staff team were continuing to promote communication for all boarding pupils, regardless of their disability. Various approaches and types of equipment were being used to enable individual children to express their views and opinions, both in respect of their daily lives and their future.

There was written evidence that each child's likes and dislikes and preferred daily routine had been gained prior to their becoming a boarding pupil. Information in pupil 'profiles' had been updated to demonstrate developmental progress or changes in need.

Pupils attended their annual Review meeting, either for all or part of the meeting. There was a children's Advocate who visited the boarding pupils on a regular basis to gain their views about a range of matters relating to the running of the school.

Staff were observed to seek the views of boarding pupils in all aspects of their daily lives, or to act in accordance with the known/supposed preferences of each child as detailed in their Admission notes.

The School operates an 'open door' policy for parents. The Headteacher was seen to be easily accessible to both pupils and parents, throughout the day and evening.

It was considered staff demonstrated a clear commitment to enabling pupils to express their opinions and contribute to decision making in the school.

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?****3**

The finding is based upon the school's policy document, discussion with staff and observations of staff practice.

There were clear guidelines for staff in respect of promoting the dignity and privacy of individual boarding pupils. Staff were observed to respond sensitively and quickly to the personal care needs of the boarding pupils and to uphold confidentiality at all times.

Pupils were able to spend time in their bedroom without staff constantly checking them. However, the layout of some larger rooms, with four beds, did not always promote privacy for individual children. The majority of boarding pupils only stay for a period of one or two nights each week. Many indicated they enjoyed the opportunity to have a sleepover at school so they could share a room with their friend/s. However, the Inspectors were concerned that there was no opportunity for a young person to have privacy in the bedroom, if they wished. Due to fixtures in the bedrooms, each bed was placed opposite another. Thus, a child in bed on one side looked straight across at another child in their bed. Pupil's accessing beds at the far end of the rooms had to walk through other pupil's bed-space.

It is recommended the school review the issue of privacy in multi-occupancy bedrooms. Consideration should be given to a form of screening or alternative measure in larger bedrooms, which will offer some degree of privacy for individual children.

Baby monitors were being used to help supervise pupils suffering from nocturnal epileptic seizures. More appropriate aids should be gained for the purpose of monitoring nocturnal seizures. It is advised this is actioned.

Written agreement should be sought from pupil's parents for the use of monitoring equipment. It is advised this is actioned.

Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The finding is based on an examination of the school's complaint policy, discussion with staff and some pupils.

Information about the complaints procedure was available to pupils, parents, staff and other significant people in the pupils lives. There were various systems operating in the school for gaining the views of boarding pupils. Pupils spoken with indicated they felt able to raise their concerns with various people in the school. Some pupils were able to give instances which they had been unhappy about. There was evidence these matters had been addressed. However, recording in this respect was limited. It is advised staff are encouraged to record informal complaints and the action taken to rectify the matter.

There was an Independent Visitor for boarding pupils who visited on a regular, unannounced basis. She provided another avenue for pupils to raise concerns with.

It was considered the school demonstrated a willingness to both listen and address concerns raised by boarding pupils.

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

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

The finding is based upon inspection of the school's policy and procedure, staff files and discussion with the Headteacher and staff.

There was a child protection policy and procedure. The policy accurately reflected good practice and complied with guidelines specified in appendix 1 of the National Minimum standards for Residential Special Schools. This included notification to the National Care Standards Commission of any child protection concerns.

However, the Inspectors considered the policy required some additional information to cover staff related matters. These included the need to inform staff that failure to report actual or suspected child protection concerns could result in disciplinary action being taken against them. Also, to inform staff of the procedure to be followed in the case of an allegation being made against senior staff. It is recommended this additional information is included in the policy.

An examination of staff files showed a number of the Personal Support Workers and Residential Social Workers had received child protection training, provided by an external agency. The Headteacher said child protection training had been included in a recent Inset training day which all teaching and care staff had attended. The training had then been cascaded down to ancillary staff. The Head also advised the Inspectors that staff are reminded of their child protection responsibilities and the school's procedure at the beginning of each half-term. Child Protection guidelines were also included as part of staff's Induction training. The Independent Person though had not undertaken recent child protection training.

The Inspectors interviewed a number of staff, all of whom demonstrated an awareness of the procedures and the action they would need to take to report any concerns.

Nevertheless, it is recommended whole school training in child protection is extended to all staff, including ancillary staff. The training should be extended to the Independent Person and members of the governing body, who could have unsupervised access to any of the pupils as part of their role in the school. The Inspectors considered the, already, robust child protection procedure could be further enhanced by a member of the governing body taking a more active role in child protection and being a point of contact for staff or parents, should they feel the need to do so. It is advised this be given consideration.

A document titled 'Kipling's – Welcome to Parents' provided clear information about the residential provision but did not include guidance for parents about the reporting system for raising any child protection concerns. The Headteacher said parents had received a letter from the school advising them about child protection matters.

It is advised information about the school's child protection policy is included in its' Prospectus and Parent's Guide.

The Deputy Headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection in the

school. She demonstrated a clear understanding of procedures and had had experience in initiating child protection referrals. The Inspectors were advised of one external matter which had recently been referred to Social Services. As a result of communication difficulties regarding the referral – the fault would seem to have laid with the local social services office - the school were considering implementing a written referral form. We would support this development.

The designated person kept separate child protection files in a lockable cabinet in a lockable room. Whilst this preserved confidentiality, there was no indicator in a pupil's main file to show whether there had been any child protection concerns. Consequently, the reader would be unaware of a secondary file.

It is advised the school develop a system to indicate on a child's main file any information held on a secondary file.

Injuries sustained by the pupils, both by known and unknown sources, were being recorded on a body chart. The Inspectors were satisfied that there was no evidence of staffs behaviour being inappropriate or insensitive in checking pupils for any injuries. However, it is advised there is written guidance for staff regarding the use of body charts.

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of recorded child protection enquiries initiated by the social services department during the past 12 months: | 0 |
|---|---|

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)

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

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 4 |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---|

The finding was based upon inspection of the school's policy and procedure, care records and discussion with boarding pupils and staff.

There was an anti-bullying policy. The policy was referred to in the Parent's and Children's Guides.

The Inspector met with a number of the boarding pupils; none raised any concerns about being bullied. They were aware of what constituted bullying as this had been a topic which they had recently discussed as part of the school curriculum. There was no evidence of bullying throughout the two days spent on site.

Staff were seen to be sensitive to the friendships, or otherwise, of different boarding pupils and care was being taken to ensure compatibility between boarders sharing a bedroom.

| | | |
|--|-----|---|
| Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied | 100 | % |
|--|-----|---|

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The finding was based upon examination of school records such as accident and incident logs, pupil's files and discussion with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher was aware of her responsibilities to notify appropriate persons and authorities of significant events affecting the safety and well-being of the pupils. This was demonstrated by her action taken in response to the malfunction of the fire alarm system in the school and notification to both the Fire Services and Care Standards Commission as well as her support of notification of a possible child protection concern to the local social services office.

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

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

0

0

0

0

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)

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.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The finding is based upon an inspection of the school's policy documents and discussion with the Headteacher.

The Inspectors acknowledge that the majority of the pupils are unlikely to abscond from the school due to their limited mobility. Nevertheless, the school are to be commended for having an appropriate policy in place. The guidance provided clear information about what steps staff should take in the event of a child either absconding or going missing from school. The guidance advises prompt and early referral to the Police and advice on notification to parents and the Care Standards Commission.

Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:

0

CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | |
|---------------------------|---------------|--|
|---------------------------|---------------|--|

The above finding is based upon direct and indirect observation of staff/children interaction, inspection of care plans and discussions with some pupils and parents.

Relationships between care staff and boarding pupils were observed to be relaxed and positive. There was good use of humour between both parties. The boarding provision offered a nurturing environment. Staff were observed to treat pupils with respect and this was reciprocated. Observations suggested that the pupils felt safe in the residential provision as they were seen to be relaxed when staff were ministering to their personal care needs. Boarding pupils were seen to readily approach staff for their company and to seek appropriate physical contact. Staff were observed to be sensitive to the individual needs of the pupils.

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?

3

The finding was based upon inspection of the school's policy and procedure, care records, measures of control log, discussion with staff and observation of staff practice.

There was a behaviour management policy which promoted the use of positive measures to manage unacceptable behaviours displayed by some pupils. The positive measures included verbal praise, star charts and certificates. Very few negative measures were recorded; most related to the use of 'time out' in pupil's bedrooms.

Records were being maintained of positive and negative measures administered to boarding pupils. However, it was considered recording could be developed in this area and it is advised this is actioned.

The Inspectors discussed the issue of 'time out' with the Headteacher and reached a consensus of opinion that these incidents should be recorded as a form of physical intervention. This was particularly pertinent when a pupil needed to be guided or taken, albeit in a wheelchair, to their room. It is recommended this matter be actioned.

The Inspectors were satisfied that the process of 'time out' included staff supervising the pupil at all times, just outside the room. None of the boarding pupils expressed any concerns about the use of 'time out'.

QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

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

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 4 |
|--|---------------|---|
| <p>The above finding is based upon inspection of school documentation, discussion with some pupils, parents and members of the management team.</p> | | |
| <p>A policy and procedure was in place regarding admissions to, and discharge from, the school. There was evidence of good collaboration between the school, the child's parents and other agencies involved prior to and immediately following a child's admission. Some boarding pupils were able to express they were happy that they had been included/involved in the arrangements for their admission. The admissions process for flexi-boarding was graduated, included the pupil being invited to tea, then stopping for activities before having an overnight stay.</p> | | |
| <p>Clear transition arrangements for pupils moving on were identified, whenever possible, well in advance of their final school year. Records showed staff were active in enabling pupils to visit their next placement and preparing them for change prior to their discharge from school.</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?

4

The finding is based upon discussions with some boarding pupils and staff and direct observation.

The care staff group is comprised of Personal Support Workers and Residential Social Workers. The former work both in the classroom situation and residential provision. They provide an effective link between teaching and care staff and are able to ensure consistency in staff's approach and practice with pupils in both settings.

The school's philosophy of addressing all aspects of a child's development, throughout their waking day, was demonstrated by a joint education and care plan which was in place for each boarding pupil. The Inspectors observed that the concept of 'an active learning environment' was transferred from the classroom to the residential unit and visa versa, though in a less structured environment in the residential unit.

Boarding pupils were being offered a range of recreational and leisure activities each evening, both on site and off site. These included gardening, cooking, art and crafts, music club and so on. Some pupils indicated they enjoyed staying overnight at school as they could spend time with their friends and play games. It was evident staff were continuing to promote learning through the activities and that these contributed to each pupil's educational progress.

The Inspectors considered a good balance was being maintained between the expectation of pupils to engage in active learning tasks and their need to 'chill out' in out-of-school time.

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?

2

The finding is based upon discussions with some boarding pupils and staff and direct observation.

Staff were observed to encourage pupils to participate in activities which were enjoyable but also instructive such as letter writing, playing ball games, playing computer games and so on. However, pupils were also offered the choice to relax and watch television, listen to music or spend quiet time in their bedroom if they wished.

An examination of the risk assessment file showed the school had completed risk assessments on some of the on-site and off-site activities undertaken by the pupils, but not all activities organised by care staff. The Headteacher said they were in the process of revising the risk assessment procedure and documentation.

It is recommended risk assessments are undertaken for all activities.

There was evidence in pupil's main files that individual, generic risk assessments had been completed by the occupational therapist. These covered a range of physical activities but did not encompass medical or behavioural issues.

It is recommended comprehensive, individual risk assessments are undertaken on all pupils in respect of activities they engage in.

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 finding is based on inspection of care records, the accident log, arrangements for the storage and administration of pupil's medication and discussion with the Headteacher.

Individual pupil's health care needs were identified in their education and care plan. Parents retained responsibility for their child's general health care needs although the school were able to offer pupils annual sight and dental checks.

There was individual guidance in each child's Plan in respect of their intimate care needs. Various health professionals contributed to the care of the pupils including physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists.

All Professional Support Workers held a qualification in First Aid and Residential Social Workers held a 'First Aid in the Workplace' certificate. The former had also received training in the administration of medication.

Medication held within the residential provision was kept in a lockable cabinet in the staff office. The cabinet was kept in good order. Arrangements for the storage and recording of administration of medication were satisfactory.

An accident log was being maintained for both staff and pupils. Recording in this respect was satisfactory.

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?

2

The findings are based upon an examination of the school's menus, discussion with the Catering Manager and sharing of some meals with boarding pupils during the two day inspection visit.

Copies of the school's menus were being maintained. The menus are set on a six week rolling cycle. An examination of the weekly menus plus observation of two meals showed boarding pupils were being offered a commendable choice of meals. The Catering Manager said she sought the views of the pupils regularly about the choice of meals and as a result of a recent discussion had added Oatcakes to the supper menu.

Lunchtime meals consisted of choice between two hot dishes, a salad or cold dish, followed by a choice of two hot desserts, fruit or yogurt. The evening meal consisted of a hot dish or salad followed by one hot dessert, fruit or yoghurt. The Catering Manager said a vegetarian option was also made available and special diets or cultural dishes catered for. Hot and cold drinks accompanied meals.

Supper was prepared by care staff. Pupils had a choice of a hot or cold drink and snack such as toast or crumpets. An examination of staff files showed not all staff involved in food preparation had completed Basic Food Hygiene training.

It is advised all staff involved in the preparation of food gain a Food Hygiene certificate.

The main kitchen, sited in the original house, was looked at by one of the Inspectors and was seen to be spacious, well-equipped, clean and hygienic. The Environmental Health Officer had visited the school in October, 2003. Overall, the findings were satisfactory other than a few minor items requiring attention. These had all been actioned bar one item which was awaiting the attention of the Site Manager who had been absent due to illness.

It is advised the outstanding matter is addressed.

The Catering Manager said staff had access to all the facilities in the evening and could prepare an additional meal/snack if necessary. Arrangements were also in place to be able to offer a full range of meals even in the event of the school being cut off due to adverse weather.

The Inspectors joined the boarding pupils for some meals over the two day period. It was evident mealtimes were an important part of the conductive programme, with an expectation that the children all sit together at the same time to share a meal. Arranging for all the pupils to take their places at the dining tables was seen to take some time. Whilst it was pleasing to see pupils were allowed time to make their way to the table, the consequence was that some pupils were sat waiting some time for the meal to start. Also, the serving arrangements prolonged the process considerably for pupils. Although it was pleasing to note each pupil was asked to tell or indicate their preferred choice of each food item, this

took some time and the food was rapidly cooling in the containers. There were a number of pupils who required assistance with feeding. It was noted that there was some delay in staff sitting down to help them as they were busy giving out drinks, serving the meal and gaining the correct cutlery and crockery. In the meantime, pupils waiting for staff assistance had a plated meal set before them which was also cooling but which they were unable to start eating.

The dining arrangement for boarding pupils is to have their meals in a classroom, situated close to the residential unit. A number of the pupils indicated they did not like the classroom as a dining area. The tables were arranged in a large circle which meant all the pupils could observe each other as they ate. The Inspectors felt the current arrangements and organisation of meals did not promote mealtimes as a relaxed, enjoyable occasion for boarding pupils.

It is recommended the school review the dining arrangement for boarding pupils and the organisation and distribution of meals.

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 |
|---|----------------------|----------|
| <p>The finding is based upon discussion with the Headteacher and observations by the Inspectors.</p> <p>All pupils were expected to wear school uniform during the school day. However, boarding pupils were able to change into their own leisure clothes, which were brought from home, in out-of-school hours.</p> <p>Boarding pupils were expected to bring their own toiletries for their overnight stays although a small supply of provisions were kept by staff for boarders use, if necessary.</p> | | |

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 |
|---|---------------|---|
| <p>The finding is based upon discussion with the Headteacher and an examination of pupil's placement plans.</p> <p>Placement plans for boarding pupils had only recently been implemented. The plans were seen to be based on a detailed assessment of each child's current needs and skills level. Individual goals had been identified in most areas of development and timescales for review were recorded. It was pleasing to note different timescales were recorded against each goal, denoting levels of priority.</p> <p>There was evidence goals in the Plan were linked to pupils educational plan and behaviour management plans, where applicable. A key-working system had recently been implemented. Care staff demonstrated they understood the tasks associated with the role and were beginning to develop their work in this area. They were seen to demonstrate a child-centred approach to care planning and to continually seek the views and opinions of boarding pupils to inform changes in the Plan.</p> <p>The Inspectors considered the school had implemented a good system for care planning which could be further built upon to be truly effective in guiding care and enabling pupil's development in a systematic way.</p> | | |

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The finding is based upon examination of a number of children's files, picked at random.

Each boarding pupil had an individual file which was seen to be maintained in good order. The files were kept securely in the main staff office. They were in modular form which enabled important information to be gained quickly and easily.

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

This finding is based upon examination of a number of the school's records kept in respect of both staff and pupils.

Clear records were being maintained in respect of staff working in the school, day pupils attending school and pupils boarding each weekday evening. All required record keeping was being maintained to a good standard.

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

This finding is based upon discussions with some pupils, staff, a parent visiting the school and the Inspectors observations.

Boarding pupils had easy access to a phone during out of school hours. The phone was sited in a corner in the interconnecting hallway between classrooms and the residential unit.

Boarding pupils indicated they could use the phone when they wished and could make and receive calls, in private, during the evening up to bedtime. Whilst some pupils required assistance to get to the phone, the Inspectors observed staff were not intrusive whilst calls were being taken. No concerns were raised regarding access to a telephone either during the day or evening. Staff were also observed to help pupils with letter writing.

Parents were said to be welcome to visit their child whilst boarding. This was confirmed in discussion with a parent visiting during the inspection. There was facility for parents to be private with their child during their visits.

Parents spoke positively about staff facilitating contact between pupils, their parents and other family members. It was considered good practice was evidenced in this area of care.

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?**

0

The finding is based upon discussion with the Headteacher.

Although none of the boarding pupils were of an age where they were due to finish school, arrangements for the transfer of pupils to senior schools were looked at. Discussion with the Headteacher showed good attention was being given to supporting pupils during the transitional period and beyond.

Whenever possible, placements in senior schools were identified at an early stage for each pupil. A programme of visits to the new school, increasing in time, were planned and pupils transported and accompanied, initially, by staff. Arrangements were also made to offer on-going support to pupils in their new school.

It was considered good practice was demonstrated in this area of care.

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?

4

The finding is based on examination of individual plans for pupils, discussion with staff and observation of staff practices.

Plans for each pupil were based on an assessment of their individual needs and circumstances. Areas of need requiring specialist support were clearly documented. There was written evidence to show the multi-disciplinary team within the school were working together to ensure all aspects of the pupil's development were considered. Comprehensive assessments had been carried out to identify specialist equipment which would enable pupils to communicate and facilitate greater independence.

The Inspectors met with the Independent Visitor whose role is to regularly visit the boarding provision and talk to the pupils. The pupils were advised of her visits by a poster displayed within the unit. The poster also explained her role, to seek their views and opinions and ensure any of their concerns were addressed, and gave details of how she could be contacted at other times. The Independent Visitor had previous, extensive, experience as a speech therapist. Thus, she had the skills to facilitate communication with the pupils.

Discussion with the Independent Visitor elicited that she makes eight unannounced visits per term. The visits were undertaken at different times on different days of the week to ensure she was likely to meet with all boarding pupils. The Independent Visitor spoke highly about the care being provided to the pupils and said that she had not received any complaints from them since starting her role.

The Independent Visitor said she had received a copy of the school's child protection policy but had not undertaken recent training in this area. A recommendation that she be included in future training is made earlier in the report. She had completed a Criminal Records Bureau application form.

The Inspectors considered all staff demonstrated a commitment to offering a quality service to pupils based upon meeting their individual needs.

PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The above finding is based upon information in the school's Statement of Purpose and inspection of the premises and play areas.

The school is located in a rural area just outside Leek. Horton Lodge is a large, two storey, late Victorian private residence set in grounds of approximately ten acres. Over the years an extensive range of single storey buildings have been added to provide additional classrooms, a new covered play area with rubber safe surface, a swimming pool, sensory room and residential unit.

All the facilities used by the pupils are on ground floor level and have been designed to allow wheelchair access. There are two access points to the residential provision, one via an internal corridor which led off some classrooms, the other via an external door sited off the corridor. There was sufficient storage space for a range of aids and equipment to ensure access routes are kept clear. Outside ramps were in place to assist egress and access to an enclosed, hard surface area at the back of the residential unit. Boarding pupils were also able to take advantage of a covered, internal play area in out of school hours.

Provision had been made on site for a 'Parent's school' – an early intervention, support programme for parents and their child/ren. There was also a small but well equipped gymnasium for staff use.

The grounds were well maintained, the majority of which were accessible to pupils. There was an outdoor Adventure Garden fitted with specialist aids and sensory equipment. The range of fittings meant all pupils were able to benefit from the play equipment, regardless of their disability.

The School had several different vehicles for transporting the young people.

It was considered the overall location, size and design of the school was suitable to meet the special needs of the pupils. It was evident that thought had been given to ensuring pupils were able to easily access most areas in the school and grounds as well as ensuring they maintained access to community facilities.

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?

2

The above finding is based upon an inspection of the residential provision.

The residential unit was separate from educational areas. The single storey unit is called Kipling's and each bedroom is named after a character from The Jungle Book, in recognition of Rudyard Kipling's association with the area.

Kipling's provides accommodation for a total of fifteen boarding pupils. There is an entrance hallway which is of sufficient size to store wheelchairs and walking aids, a private area for the telephone for use by boarding pupils and a letter writing and computer area. The main unit is comprised of a series of rooms off a main corridor, with a large sitting room, three four-bedded bedrooms and a twin bedroom plus a staff sleeping-in room, medical room, two bathrooms and separate toilets and a small staff office.

The standard of decoration throughout the unit was very good; bright colours, homely touches and age appropriate borders combined to give a warm, child-centred appearance. The décor was complemented by domestic style furnishings. Wherever possible, domestic style furniture was also used although this had to be balanced with the specialist equipment needed by some of the pupils. The standard of cleanliness throughout the unit was very good. Dining arrangements were separate with meals being taken in a classroom situated next to the unit.

Pupils bedrooms were looked at. Three rooms were fully carpeted and well furnished with wardrobe and storage facilities. Bedside lighting was available by each bed. Most pupil's bed space had been personalised with photographs, pictures and posters and their own duvet cover. There was adequate storage space for clothing and other personal belongings however, there was no lockable facility for boarding pupils.

The Headteacher should check whether boarding pupils would like this facility.

Full-length mirrors had been fitted in some bedrooms. These were securely fixed to the wall close from floor height upwards. It was not clear whether the mirrors were made of safety glass and the Inspectors were concerned about the potential health and safety risk they may pose.

It is recommended a risk assessment is undertaken in respect of the full length mirrors fitted in bedrooms.

Currently, none of the pupil's bedrooms are equipped with an emergency call system although some 'baby monitors' are used for a number of pupils who suffer from nocturnal epileptic seizures. Many of the pupils are dependent on the waking night person doing regular checks throughout the night to gain her attention.

It is recommended a risk assessment is undertaken to determine whether an emergency call system in pupil's bedrooms is deemed to be a low or high priority.

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

The finding is based upon examination of the residential provision and discussions with some pupils.

There were a sufficient number of suitably equipped bathrooms, shower and, separate, toilets sited opposite pupil's bedrooms to meet their needs. These rooms were also attractively decorated. Specialist equipment was in place to assist young people and was seen to be maintained in good order. All the toilets and bathrooms were clean and free from offensive odours.

One young person expressed strong views that she did not like one of the bathrooms. Staff were aware of her views and she only used the bathroom of her choice. Some of the pupils indicated they particularly enjoyed a Jacuzzi which was fitted in one bathroom.

It was noted that in one bathroom there were exposed hot water pipes and an uncovered radiator. There was also an uncovered radiator in a toilet.

It is recommended the exposed hot water pipes and uncovered radiators are covered.

It was also noted that three of the toilets in the residential unit did not have any source of heating in them. It is recommended heating is provided in all toilets.

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?

2

This finding is based upon examination of the school's policy and procedures, development plan, risk assessments, inspection of the premises and discussion with the Headteacher.

Two initiatives had been implemented since the last inspection to address health and safety issues in the school. A Health and Safety audit had been carried out and a Self Evaluation form developed as a monitoring tool. These initiatives had resulted in a whole school Health and Safety policy, additional training for staff undertaking routine tests of water in the swimming pool, the implementation of a crisis policy and the introduction of risk assessments.

The Headteacher said the school had adopted a system which requires staff, whenever possible, to provide notification of any proposed trip, a written risk assessment and minibus seating plan two weeks prior to the visit. There was written evidence to show the risk assessments in place were being regularly reviewed. However, as noted earlier in the report, there remained a need to ensure risk assessments were undertaken in respect of trips arranged by care staff, including individual risk assessments for each boarding pupil. Nevertheless, there was evidence of good awareness within the school of the importance of risk assessment.

The school had recently experienced some malfunction in its' fire alarm system, necessitating extensive repairs. Action taken by the Headteacher to address the difficulty had been measured and appropriate. For example, a risk assessment had resulted in additional waking night staff being put on duty, involvement of the local Fire Officer to review interim arrangements and notification to the Care Standards Commission. The fire safety system was in good, working order at the time of the inspection visit.

Records showed fire alarm tests had been routinely carried out on a weekly basis leading up to the malfunction and subsequently. There was evidence to show the emergency lighting system was regularly tested on a six monthly cycle although the recommendation by Staffordshire Fire Service is for tests to be undertaken on a monthly basis. It was reported fire alarms were taking place though they were not recorded. Fire drills including full evacuations had taken place and all fire equipment has been routinely serviced. It is advised fire alarm tests are recorded.

An Inspector noted that vents had been installed in all bedroom doors in the residential provision; doors which were supposed to be fire resistant. It was considered the vents compromised the fire retention and smoke sealing functions of the doors.

It is recommended the Fire Officer is asked to advise about the effectiveness of the bedroom doors and the frequency of emergency lighting tests.

Discussion with some staff elicited that fire safety procedures were covered in the Induction process. This was an informal process. It is advised all staff complete approved Fire Awareness training.

Notices of the school's fire procedures are clearly displayed around the unit, in written form. It is advised the fire procedure notices are produced in various formats which can more easily be understood by the pupils.

Testing of electrical equipment throughout the school had been completed in 2003 and was due again later this year.

Currently, none of the pupil's bedrooms are equipped with an emergency call system although some 'baby monitors' are used for a number of pupils who suffer from nocturnal epileptic seizures. Many of the pupils are dependent on the waking night person doing regular checks throughout the night to gain her attention.

It is recommended a risk assessment is undertaken to determine whether an emergency call system in pupil's bedrooms is deemed to be a low or high priority. Also, it is recommended more appropriate aids designed for monitoring nocturnal epileptic seizures are gained.

As part of the school's commitment to promoting links with the community, it allows some outside agencies to hold meetings in its rooms. The Inspectors were advised of various systems which ensured visitors did not have access to the educational or residential areas. All visitors had to sign in. It was pleasing that during the two day the Inspectors spent on site, they were asked several times for proof of identity.

Other security measures were in place; keypads were fitted to doors giving access to all parts of the school and the Inspectors were advised the codes were changed on a regular basis. Areas adjacent to the school are covered by close-circuit television. There are separate houses at the entrance to the school which were said to be privately owned and a separate building at the rear of the school is now leased and used as a Nursery.

An examination of the grounds showed there had been some graffiti left by trespassers to the Adventure playground. The Headteacher said staff had been aware of unknown cars coming on to the site late at night.

It is recommended a review is undertaken of vehicular and pedestrian access to the school grounds.

The immediate area around the school buildings is well lit at night but the area around the car parking space is poorly lit.

It is recommended adequate external lighting is fitted by the car parking area.

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?

4

The above finding was based on inspection of staff files and discussion with the Headteacher and staff involved with boarding pupils.

There was an established recruitment and selection process for all staff. The process was thorough and in accordance with good practice.

There was a standard application form for all staff and all had been formally interviewed against clear person specification criteria. There was evidence to show references and other checks, including Criminal Records Bureau check, were completed prior to individuals taking up their posts. Job descriptions were in place for all posts.

It was noted that not all files contained evidence of a check of identity and some files did not contain a copy of relevant qualifications gained by staff.

It is advised that proof of identity of staff and copies of relevant qualification certificates are gained.

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?

3

The finding is based upon inspection of the weekly staff rota and discussion with the Headteacher and some staff.

There had been a review of staffing arrangements since the last inspection visit, resulting in an increase in staffing levels in the residential provision. The roster showed 6 staff were on duty Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoon/evenings with a maximum of 15 boarding pupils. 5 staff were rostered to work on Wednesday afternoon/evening. Staffing levels on the morning shift were supplemented by the waking night staff person who stayed on duty till 8am.

Professional Support Workers (who work in the classroom and residential environment) were responsible for 'leading' each shift and providing a hand-over briefing each afternoon. Residential Social Workers worked solely in the residential provision and worked split shifts from 7.00 – 9.00am on two mornings and 3.00-8.30pm Monday to Thursday inclusive.

Night time cover was provided by a waking person plus two sleeping-in persons, one of the latter based in a room in the residential provision whilst the other was based in the main house.

Observations of care staff duties throughout the two day inspection period showed there were sufficient staff on duty to meet the individual needs of the young people. Whilst it was considered meal time arrangements could be improved for pupils, the issues were not connected with actual staffing numbers but with the process.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)

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

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

The finding is based upon inspection of staff records, discussion with the Headteacher and some staff.

Records showed all staff responsible for caring for boarding pupils were involved in on-going training. There was a culture within the school which promoted individual professional development.

Staff said they had received Induction and spoke favourably about the content and process. A mentoring system was also in place for newly appointed staff. Whilst staff spoke about covering 'core' areas such as Fire Safety, Child Protection and First Aid training during the Induction period, it was considered there was a need to define other training courses which all care staff should receive as part of Foundation training in the first six months of employment. For example, Moving and Handling, Basic Food Hygiene, HIV Awareness, and so on. Professional Support Workers and Residential Social Workers were undertaking NVQ level III training in child care.

It is advised consideration be given to developing a Foundation training programme for staff involved in caring for boarding pupils, to supplement the Induction process and in support of NVQ training.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)

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

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

The finding is based upon inspection of staff files and discussion with the Headteacher and a number of staff.

All staff had a job description. Staff spoken with were aware of lines of accountability and the roles and responsibilities of members of the management team. Communication systems were effective between the whole staff group. Records showed weekly staff meetings were taking place and all staff were subject to an annual performance management review.

Arrangements were in place for staff responsible for boarding pupils to receive formal supervision. However, ancillary staff were not receiving supervision.

It is advised ancillary staff receive supervision from a senior member of staff each half-term.

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

The finding is based upon discussion with the Headteacher, staff and an examination of the schools' records.

The school was seen to be well organised and managed. The Headteacher provides clear leadership, is easily accessible to staff and pupils and communicates effectively at all levels. There is written evidence to show proactive management in respect of monitoring the quality of the residential service offered to pupils and effecting improvements in line with minimum standards and good practice.

The school promotes a holistic approach to the care and education of pupils. Recognition is given to meeting the whole needs of each child and to making them feel safe and cherished, to support their educational development. The Inspector observed many instances of this positive, sensitive approach with individual pupils throughout the inspection visit.

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

60 %

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 assessed.

The school is funded by the Local Education Authority. There was evidence the School Governors and Headteacher were proactive in seeking additional funding from various sources to support developments in the school. There was no evidence of any monetary constraint affecting the care and welfare of the pupils. Conversely, there was evidence of an on-going programme to maintain the residential accommodation to a high standard.

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?**

3

This finding is based upon examination of reports submitted to the Commission.

There is a Departmental system whereby a representative of the Local Education Authority and Heads of Care from other local authority residential special schools routinely visit on a rotational basis each half-term to review the residential provision and produce a report of their findings. Copies of the reports are forwarded to the Care Standards Commission. There was evidence action was being taken in response to matters raised during the visits.

Copies of the reports were however, not shared with the Board of Governors. The Inspectors suggested that one of the Governors could be identified to take special interest in the care provision and report back to the Board on matters relating to the care provision. It is recommended Standard 33 reports are made available to the Board of Governors. It is advised a member of the governing body identify a member to take special interest in the care provision.

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 3 March 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

A copy of the Providers comments and action plan are available at the Area Office, where these have been submitted.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

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 1 October 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 _____ of _____ 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 _____ of _____ 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.

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