



Champions for  
Social Care  
Improvement

# inspection report

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

## **Woodeaton Manor School**

Woodeaton

Oxford

Oxfordshire

OX3 9TS

9th 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**

Woodeaton Manor School

**Address**

Woodeaton, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX3 9TS

**Tel No:**

01865 558722

**Fax No:**

01865 311561

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

Oxfordshire County Council, Department of Education

**Name of Head****NCSC Classification**

Residential Special School

**Type of school****Date of last boarding welfare inspection:**

14/1/2003

<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>		9th March 2004	<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>		11:30 am	
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>1</b>	Merryl Wahogo	093888
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>3</b>		
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):</b>			
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>			
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>		Ann Pearce	

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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 Woodeaton Manor School

The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

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

## INSPECTION VISITS

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

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

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

Woodeaton currently provides education for 25 children with learning difficulties and complex needs, although their official designation has remained as MLD. These, then, are children who have additional problems, both socially and psychologically, so that many exhibit extreme behaviours. Woodeaton also provides residential places, for a maximum of four nights a week, for a proportion of the children, currently numbering nine.

Since the number of girls boarding was reduced to two, they have stayed in one of the cottages in the grounds.

This report must be read in the context of the school having been informed that it will be closed in its current form at the end of the summer term. Neither staff nor pupils have any certainty yet about what the future holds for them.

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

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

In the light of the distress caused by projected closure and all the uncertainties accompanying this, the entire staff are highly commended for the quality of service delivery. Their commitment, and ability to minimise insecurity for the children in their care, have been outstanding. This was evidenced in the smiles and laughter throughout the days. The most vulnerable children were inevitably showing signs of stress and this was always seen to be handled calmly, firmly and kindly by both teachers and care staff.

Children and parents alike responded to all questions about the school in the most positive fashion, and it was clear that staff found the work as rewarding as it is demanding. All staff had particular praise for the acting head, who was seen to have an extremely positive leadership style, and to be dedicated to staff welfare as well as that of the children.

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

- Placement plans should be rewritten to have more child specific detail in, so that it is easier to ensure that care plan goals fit in with the aims of the placement.
- The head of care should devise a way of having useful, formal supervisions (given that there is ongoing supervision on a daily basis) which are then recorded.
- Whilst child protection training has been good, ancillary staff should have access to this training as well.
- Finally, whilst the inspector has no reason to believe that children have had, or will have, any difficulty in having complaints resolved by the school, the school should have the 'phone number of the National Care Standards Commission (Commission for Social Care Inspection after April 2004) pinned on bedroom walls.

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

Staff provide an exceptionally high quality of care, through an absolute commitment shared by care staff and teachers alike, to maintaining children's wellbeing at the highest possible level.



## NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

NO

**Local Education Authority  
Secretary of State**

NO

NO

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

### IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION

NO

No	Standard	Recommended actions	
1	RS25	That the boys' toilets should be redecorated and refurbished.	

## 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	
		None	

### 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	RS4	That the phone number for the Commission for Social Care Inspection should be provided in each bedroom.
2	RS5	That ancillary staff should attend child protection training.
3	RS17	That the placement plans should be rewritten to include more individual details, especially re communication needs where appropriate.
4	RS30	That supervision should be formal and recorded.

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

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

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

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

Checks with other Organisations

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

Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	NO
Staff Survey	NO
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	9/3/04
Time of Inspection	9.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	27.5
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	3.8

**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**

12
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**To**

16
----

## NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

**BOYS**

7
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**GIRLS**

2
---

**TOTAL**

9
---

**Number of separate Boarding Houses**

2
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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
Since the last inspection the school has added detail about the boarding facilities. Also the outstanding policies have been drawn up. Whilst there were still a couple of sections that needed adding or improving, this standard is considered to be met.		

## 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

At the time of the inspection, the girls were particularly thrilled with the way that their shower and toilet area had been decorated. They explained how they had chosen the colours and showed the inspector the beautiful paintings that had also been put up. Boys and girls alike had plenty of examples of being consulted and having their choices honoured. These ranged from evening activities through to duvet covers.

It is unfortunate that they already know that their strong wish for the school to stay open, and indeed expand, is not to be. This wish was expressed forcibly and frequently to the inspector.

Parents reported a high level of contact with the school and satisfaction with the way they were consulted.

### 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

Both boys and girls confirmed that they had sufficient privacy in their shower and toilet areas. The policies about supervision have not been changed and offer both privacy and security.

Staff were never heard to discuss confidential affairs other than in the right settings and on a need to know basis.

**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?****4**

As during the previous inspection, the inspector was left in no doubt that pupils not only knew they could go to any member of staff they wished, with concerns, but also felt very confident in taking complaints directly to the head of care or the headteacher. The inspector did not have to enquire as to whether these were taken seriously, as the children assured her spontaneously that if they complained the matter was dealt with.

The inspector did suggest that the National Care Standards Commission phone number should be placed in childrens' rooms, but given that there was such confidence in the system working within the school, the inspector does not feel that this omission merits any lowering of the score given. As the Commission is about to change its name, this recommendation appears with the new name, the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

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

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

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

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

## CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

### Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The inspector encountered a continuing commitment to ensuring the safety of the children. This was demonstrated in many ways. All staff reported having had child protection training within the last year, and were able to demonstrate a sound understanding of their responsibilities. The head had appointed a new teacher to be the named teacher for child protection and this member of staff spoke about not only the training she has received since, but also the support she has received from the head whilst she is 'finding her feet'. The head, working closely with the school's educational psychologist, had made a child protection referral in June 2003. When it was not acted upon by the social work team concerned, the matter was referred directly to the police.

Whilst all residential social workers and teaching staff have received child protection training, it is recommended that future courses are also offered to ancillary staff.

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?**

3

The school has a good anti-bullying policy and bullying was not bad within the school, according to the children, and never happened within the boarding section. Children explained to the inspector that if someone starts to bully another, the head asks them if they had ever been bullied and what it felt like. She then reportedly asks them if they really want anyone else to feel like that.

**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 inspector has been informed of referrals and clearly other authorities have as well. The inspector has also been informed at the point that a child has been placed on the Child Protection Register.

**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

<b>Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)</b> <b>The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.</b>		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
Staff reported that they were pleased with a new procedure whereby the register is taken as the children come through the front door in the morning. This prevents any delay in notifying parents when children do not attend and allows the problems to be addressed more speedily and efficiently.		
<b>Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:</b>		<b>0</b>

## CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

### Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
The inspector was struck by the balance achieved by the staff in their relationships with the children. Whilst there was clearly a great deal of affection felt on both sides, this was demonstrated without the need for physical contact. Residential social workers were called by their first names (or nicknames) by both staff and children alike, whilst teachers were called by their surnames. This seemed appropriate to their different roles.		

**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?****4**

The inspector heard many examples of praise for the children's behaviour and achievements. Humour was also used very effectively, but not as a method of control. When children have achieved something either behaviourally or in terms of their educational goals, a yellow form is filled out, referred to as golds. The children explained that each time they had a 'gold', they were given a raffle ticket which went into a box. This was drawn at the end of each week, half-term and term and the winners were given vouchers. Also, children and staff decided at the end of each week who had achieved the most and this child gained the accolade of 'top banana'.

All the children told the inspector that sanctions were reasonable and fairly administered. The most common sanction is the filling in of a pink form, referred to as pinks. These are graded for severity from 1 (lowest level) to 4, with an additional level of 4R showing that the child had had to be restrained. This is now given to the child's class teacher, who collates the information. Serious incidents, or a large number of pinks within a period, trigger a phone call to the child's home. More importantly, the inspector was impressed by the use to which information gained was put. The nominated teacher for child protection collated the information at the end of each month. It showed the date, the name of the child, the teacher who wrote the pink, the level of severity of the 'offence' and so on, and this was all analysed. Thus the school is able to identify a number of different patterns, to assist them in dealing most effectively with problems.

Other sanctions were missing trips and removal to the bedroom to calm down. Importantly, both residential social workers and teaching staff reported enthusiastically that there had been a new policy of no exclusions and that this was working well. The inspector considers this a great achievement in a school that has a high proportion of children with extreme behaviours.

When the inspector asked the children what was good about the school - one said "You get lots of chances to make up for what you've done".

## QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

### Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

Very few new referrals had been made to the school, and the head had decided not to take any new admissions after February this year, because of the uncertainties about the future. Nevertheless, one new child had been admitted as a boarder and there was evidence of this being handled with great sensitivity.

Some boarders are due to leave at the end of the summer term and the inspector was told of the efforts being made to ensure the best outcome for them. This included staff assisting parents to locate the appropriate establishment and staff accompanying children on visits to the prospective colleges. Only one of these children appeared still to be uncertain as to where they would be going and the others seemed positive about the planned moves.

Staff did regret that the low number of referrals has meant that it was not possible to retain the function of the cottages as independent living training units.

**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

Communication and co-operation between care and teaching staff was already good. However, the inspector was told that instead of all residential social workers attending a debriefing at the end of the school day, just one now goes, and then passes necessary information on to his/her colleagues. This has allowed other residential social workers to go into classrooms with their keywork children for the last 15 minutes of the school day. Residential social workers reported that this has meant they are more aware of both the child's achievements and any difficulties they may have had and it also allows them to accompany the children back to the boarding areas.

All the children reported that their residential social workers helped them with any homework or preparation for exams that they might need.

**Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9)**

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

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

4

The children were most enthusiastic about the opportunities to go swimming, to football matches, ice skating and so on. They also liked the opportunity to go shopping at the end of the evening, whether directly from the boarding area or after another activity. On one evening during the inspection, some children had chosen to go swimming and had then gone to the shops, whilst others stayed behind also by choice. The inspector played pool, watched the use of computer games and activities (eg the dance mat) and joined in relaxed conversations. One child chose to go shopping from the school, towards the end of the evening.

A recent innovation reported enthusiastically to the inspector was the introduction of an activity night, one night a week, for all pupils. Thus day pupils were invited to join in an evening's activity run by staff, and even sleep over afterwards if they wished. Staff reported that they felt this boosted the cohesion of the day and boarding pupils.

**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**

None of the children currently boarding require intimate care. Where necessary, staff prompt children in self-care tasks. Also the health care needs of the children are not great, but any identified needs were dealt with appropriately.

Since the last inspection, an already tight system of security for medicines has been tightened further, so that the inspector is now completely confident that it would be impossible for any child to access the medicine cupboards. Records are kept meticulously and the medicine cupboard was seen to be in good order in every way.

One boarder told the inspector that they do feel cared about if they are not feeling well, but are not so sick that they need to be sent home.

**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?****4**

Every single child reported that the food was very good and the inspector is able to endorse that view. All the staff mentioned that it had improved since the cook was given the freedom to order food from whichever supplier she thought was offering the best choices at the time. In particular, staff reported that fruit and vegetables are fresher and the menu is more varied. The cook also reported being much happier with this system and, surprisingly perhaps, she and the acting head told the inspector that this had also resulted in huge savings on the food budget.

The inspector enjoyed cooked breakfasts, curry, sweet and sour chicken, quiche (there is always a vegetarian option), hot vegetables and salads. For puddings there was always a prepared sweet or fruit and some children had both. Staff came round at the end of every meal offering second helpings.

The menus for the last year were seen and were varied and nutritious.

**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?**

9

This is not applicable as children come from home, with whatever requisites they might need.



## 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

The inspector saw examples of placement plans. These contained all the information required. The inspector found, however, that rather too much of this information was of a general nature and suggested that any future plans would need to be written with more individual detail. The inspector mentioned in particular that, where appropriate, there should be information about communication needs.

The inspector noted regular reviews.

Residential social workers discuss with the children what short-term goals they need to achieve, on a termly basis. Each child has three goals, which are typed up and usually pinned on the wall near the child's bed. Residential social workers told the inspector that, when necessary, children might return to old goals.

**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

Examples of the children's files were seen by the inspector. They are kept locked in a secure cabinet, but parents/guardians have access to them and so do the children, in theory. However, both the head and the head of care told the inspector that no child has ever yet asked to see their file.

Two files were seen and contained all required information.

**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

Records were seen by the inspector and contained all information required under the standards. The duty rosters are worked out on an annual basis and are published in the staff handbooks given out at the beginning of each academic year.

The visitors' book and events diary were seen and were up-to-date.

**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 is largely not applicable since all children spend more time at home than at the school. Nevertheless, one of the recent developments that staff and children alike were excited about was that children are now able to bring their mobile phones in with them. This allows them greater opportunities to keep in touch with friends as well as family. Staff reported that although some children initially had difficulty handing them over at the end of the evening, for safe-keeping until the next day (they are only allowed to be used after school hours), it has worked well, and feel it is more normal for teenagers than having to queue for the phone.

**Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.2)**

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

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

9

There is no child currently within in the school who is looked after and about to leave.

**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

Children at this school have a very wide variety of needs and it is a great strength of the school that these needs are met in equally individualised ways, without ever seeming to make any one child stand out as different. There are children with differing academic abilities, some with specific learning difficulties, some with specific language disorders and so on. There are also several with great social and emotional problems.

The head emphasised to the inspector the excellent support she has from the school's educational psychologist, both in relation to educational programmes and in relation to dealing with extreme behaviour. She also reported that, until last Christmas, some children had had support from Connexions workers.

Staff learn what triggers unsocial behaviour in each different child and try both to avoid these triggers and to help the child learn how to change their behaviour. One boy, for example, told the inspector proudly that he had behaved much more calmly in the last few weeks (which records showed to be true).

Staff were observed to note each child's strengths and to ensure they had opportunities to shine in these areas. As a result, the inspector was delighted to observe that the children (including some of the most disturbed) were spontaneously encouraging and supportive of each other. For example, one girl had a turn on the dance mat, and everyone agreed that she was brilliant at it. When a boy then had a go, and was struggling to get to grips with it, this girl was foremost in helping and praising him.

## 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?	4
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This school is set in beautiful and peaceful grounds, which is reportedly a great help when children need calming. There is the main school building, an annexe (which houses the boys' bedrooms, the family room and the indoor leisure facilities) and two cottages. The inspector was made aware of a new section of the garden, by the annexe, which is called the Bereavement Garden. The acting head told the inspector that she thought this would be helpful, not only for when the children have lost relatives, but also when their pets have died. There is also a sensory garden, a 'land studies' area, an area where they can have barbecues in the summer (with wooden garden furniture), two large greenhouses, a copse and a field. When the girls were showing the inspector their room, they said how much they loved the view.

The acting head showed the inspector a large area where all the children had helped reclaim the land from nettles. One of these areas was on the verge outside the school and the inspector was told that the villagers had also joined in this effort. The inspector learnt that the children who had helped were allowed to plant daffodil bulbs in the pattern of the initial of their first names.

There is also a pond, which is covered with netting. The head explained that two trees that had been growing at the edges of the pond had been destroying the concrete surround and these had therefore been cut down. This has at least delayed the need for repairs.

The only significant change since the last inspection was that a classroom opposite the main entrance has been altered to become the school office. There was tremendous excitement amongst staff and pupils alike about this, as the most beautiful fireplace and two very old false bookcases on doors at the side of the room had been discovered during the refurbishment.

**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?****4**

The inspector was shown round the boys' bedrooms by two of the boarders. They seemed proud, not only of their own rooms, but also of their friends' rooms. There are no more than two boys to a room at present. One child told the inspector that he wouldn't want to be in a room by himself. The inspector was shown the colour co-ordinated sofas and cushions in each room, and also told that the boys had chosen their own duvet covers.

The girls were thrilled to be staying in the cottage, which was very homely. One said simply "We love it here".

**Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.7)**

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

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

Since the numbers of pupils in the school have been so reduced, there are more toilets, showers and baths than are necessary. Most of these areas have recently been redecorated. The inspector was told that redecoration of one of the boys' toilet areas had been requested after the last inspection, but that the contractors had failed to deliver. As a result, the head has drawn up new plans and given a contract to a different firm to restructure and redecorate the area. The inspector understands that this work has begun at the time of writing.

**Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)**

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

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

The kitchen had had a deep clean, as recommended in the last report, and the cook had learnt that environmental health officers were now advising that kitchen windows should be closed. Accordingly the kitchen is now ventilated only by fans.

The children were aware of where the fire exits were and of what they should do in the event of the fire alarm going off. The acting head stated that she had been told by the local authority contractor that the external fire escape was about to be replaced. This has been outstanding since a report from the fire officer in December 2001, but the inspector understands that the delay relates to the fact that it is a Grade 2 listed building and therefore has unusual specifications. The inspector saw evidence of frequent fire drills. The caretaker told the inspector that there had been lots of false alarms and therefore a record of more evacuations than necessary, and that no-one can work out what caused these. The fire log also showed that all equipment and maintenance checks were recorded and were up-to-date.

The inspector also saw records of the maintenance and servicing (including MOTs) of the school vehicles. The caretaker reported having been on four courses in the last year: first aid, health and safety, electrical training and fire training. The cook had also been on the first aid training course and had done another in food hygiene.

As in many old buildings, regulating water temperatures is difficult. Since the last inspection one residential social worker has taken on the responsibility of monitoring water temperatures on a weekly basis and adjusting the boiler temperature as necessary. The inspector saw these records and commends the school and this particular residential social worker for their efforts. This residential social worker explained to the inspector that in order for the cottages to receive hot water, the taps within the main boarding area have to be kept above 43 degrees. In order to ensure the children's safety, staff check that water temperatures are acceptable before children use the baths and showers, and remind them regularly that it might be a little hot.

## STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- There are careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.

### Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

It has not been appropriate to recruit new care staff in the current situation. There was one temporary new member of staff, who had been seconded from another school, and one gap student from a neighbouring school, who told the inspector he was just there for a few months. He reported that it was a very good experience and that he had learnt a great deal.

Both these members of staff had had satisfactory CRB checks completed.

Total number of care staff:

5

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

0

**Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)**

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

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

Staff to child ratios have been higher than normal, because the pupil numbers have been reduced. This was seen to be a great help in allowing staff the leeway to work effectively with those children most distressed by the uncertainties about their futures.

The inspector was told that there is one member of staff to four children on a regular daytime basis, and one residential social worker sleeps in for every four boys who are sleeping. One female residential social worker sleeps in in the cottages with the girls.

**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?****4**

Probably the most consistent report from the staff was how pleased they were at the training opportunities the acting head had given them since September. All staff told the inspector that the acting head was excellent at identifying and using their strengths, so that they felt they were making the maximum contribution possible to the running of the school. On the other hand, she was reported to also help them identify their weaknesses and then encourage them to go on courses to remedy these. An example given was IT. Examples of other courses residential social workers had been on were reported to be autism; domestic violence, food hygiene, first aid, NVQ3 in Care, restraint and child protection.



**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 head of care confirmed to the inspector what residential social workers had stated - that supervision was ongoing and thorough. She said that, as a result, the team had tried out a few sessions of peer supervision. Whilst this was reported to have been useful, she thought it would be best to return to formal supervision, and the inspector endorsed this and suggested these should be recorded. The inspector saw examples of annual appraisals.

As well as the residential social workers, the domestic staff reported being happy that the acting head had made them feel equal members of the team, and that she really listened to any problems they had and supported them in dealing with these. The teachers also reported feeling empowered.

The acting head, in turn, reported being very well supported by both the chair of governors and the school's educational psychologist, who has had a long association with Woodeaton. The acting head praised the chair of governors for his commitment, stating that the proposed closure had doubled their work, as they had to continue the day-to-day running of the school, but also make preparations for the changes to come.

## 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 inspector could not fault the way that the acting head had taken over the reins of management, especially given the context of closure. She emphasised that she had taken the decision to make every effort to improve on existing standards, rather than give up, and this was evident in the high morale of staff, despite their concerns. Given how distressing the acting head found the proposed changes, this attitude is highly commended.

All her staff, without exception, whether from the care, teaching or domestic side, emphasised to the inspector how democratic she was, and how valued she made them feel. They reported that rotas had been altered to allow staff to have more training.

The inspector spoke to the office manager, who also reported enormous job satisfaction. She said that she had never known such a supportive staff team. She told the inspector that her staff very much liked now being together in one big office, rather than dotted about the building in separate offices. This allowed them to work more effectively together and also allowed them to see every visitor as they enter the building, because this office is sited opposite the main entrance, with obvious consequences for improved security. She reported that another benefit of being together was that it freed up one member of the team to attend weekly staff meetings. The inspector was told that, as well as a good working relationship with the acting head, the bursar from a company called Capita came in to help with reconciliation on salaries, and to give advice.

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

0 %

**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?**

9

This standard is not applicable.

**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

The inspector saw copies of the chair of governor's visit reports. These were regular and thorough and addressed not only his observations of how children were faring, but also his checking of records such as restraints.

He made clear to the inspector his great commitment to the school and his admiration for the acting head, in particular, and all the staff. As difficult as he obviously found it to accept the proposed changes, he had demonstrated his decision to give his role the maximum effort and, again, this is commended by the inspector.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

**Lay Assessor**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

## PART D

## HEAD'S RESPONSE

### **D.1 Head's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.**

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

A very accurate report which reflects in detail our provision.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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

**Note:**

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

**D.2 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:

### 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:**

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

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

### Designation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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