



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Farleigh College

**Farleigh College
Newbury Manor
Newbury
Mells, Frome
Somerset
BA11 2AB**

Lead Inspector
Richard Horrobin

Announced Inspection
16th January 2006 09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

Those outcomes are:

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

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

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

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school	Farleigh College
Address	Farleigh College Newbury Manor Newbury Mells, Frome Somerset BA11 2AB
Telephone number	01373 814980
Fax number	01373 814984
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Farleigh Education Group
Name of Head	Tony Mulcahy
Name of Head of Care	Simon Coles
Age range of residential pupils	11 - 17
Date of last welfare inspection	7/2/05

Brief Description of the School:

Farleigh College is a co-educational, residential and day school providing education for young people who have been diagnosed as having Asperger Syndrome. Pupils are also considered who may have associated and non-associated conditions.

The school accommodates young people from the ages 11 – 17. At the time of the inspection there were 23 boys and 6 girls as boarders and 8 day boys.

The boarding accommodation is on the same site as the education provision.

Boarding is managed in 4 units, one of which is for girls.

SUMMARY

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

This inspection was carried out by 2 inspectors over 3 days. Individual interviews took place with 15 young people (some others were met informally), a range of staff, a student guided tour was undertaken and a range of records were examined. The inspectors were aware of the importance of not being unnecessarily intrusive and were grateful to the Principal and Head of Care for facilitating the inspection with this in mind while maintaining total transparency.

Questionnaires were received from parents, placing authorities and staff.

What the school does well:

This was a very positive inspection. All of the staff and the young people were very open and welcoming.

Young people were well behaved. Staff demonstrated considerable skill in the management of challenging behaviour. There was very close working between education and care staff. There was excellent provision of individual counselling. There was a strong ethos of consultation and numerous channels for achieving this. Young people were very positive about staff and relationships were characterised by considerable respect and positive regard.

What has improved since the last inspection?

All of the recommendations arising from the previous inspection had been acted upon. Advice had been sought from the CSCI Pharmacist and the systems for medication administration were of a high standard. Considerable effort had been put into reviewing Health and Safety.

What they could do better:

There were no formal recommendations arising from this inspection. Senior staff were clearly committed to a process of continuous improvement and were keen to use the inspection to support them in this.

The school's major problem is a lack of space. Forthcoming improvements in the education buildings will ease the problems to some extent. Senior staff aspire to achieve more options to provide single bedrooms and offices for care staff. CSCI would support the tentative thinking of the senior staff but recognise that it is not possible to set a timescale for these developments.

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

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

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

14&15

Good attention was paid to healthcare needs. There was a very well monitored system in operation regarding medication.

Food was seen as an important contribution to good health. Healthy eating was promoted but there was a willingness to compromise when necessary.

Mealtimes were treated as important social occasions and staff and young people ate together.

EVIDENCE:

The senior member staff with lead responsibility for health issues kindly made herself available. There was good practice of obtaining medical histories from families and keeping this up to date. Most students were registered with a local doctor with whom the school had a specific contract. Health Care Plans were drawn up and where needed there had been good liaison with Health Care professionals.

The majority of staff had done First Aid training. Parental consents to First Aid were not in place but these were being sought.

Parental consents to specific homely remedies were in place. There was a robust system of recording homely remedies and prescribed medication.

Medication was stored securely but the otherwise excellent medication disposal system needed a more secure storage facility.

Inspectors talked with young people about food. Many were struggling with notions of healthy eating. Past records of school surveys were examined and these showed a 60 % level of satisfaction with meals. Inspectors partook of several meals with young people and staff. There was a wide choice. There was always a salad option. The Catering Manager demonstrated considerable awareness of those young people who had specific problems about food and worked with care staff to develop strategies to respond.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

3,4,5,6,7,8,10,26 & 27

Staff were seen to promote privacy and confidentiality within a difficult space context.

There was a professional approach to complaints and their resolution. The forthcoming update needs to describe the role of CSCI in complaints.

The child protection policy was in the process of being reviewed. Staff had received regular training and this was apparent from the discussions with them. There had not been any recent incidents but in the past issues had been appropriately identified and dealt with. There was a strong safeguarding culture.

There was no evidence of serious bullying but staff had made good use of anti-bullying strategies to help young people resolve peer differences.

Good attention was paid to prompt reporting and maintaining good communication with CSCI, placing authorities and parents.

Staff demonstrated clear expectations of behaviour but were also willing to provide explanations to underpin this. Staff were prepared to take on issues but in a non-confrontational manner. The management of behaviour and the behaviour seen during the inspection were impressive. There had been good monitoring of incidents by the Principal and Head of Care. Consideration was being given to a more explicit description of de-briefing of young people and staff in the recording.

Considerable progress on Health and Safety issues had been made.

The school had operated a robust, safeguarding approach to recruitment.

There were 3 minor areas for improvement. When taking up references from past employers it is important to seek this from the most senior manager or Personnel manager rather than any other contact in the organisation. Full c.v.'s should be sought including an explanation for any gap. (It might be useful to amend the application form to ask for this.) All previous care settings should be approached to confirm the reason for leaving.

EVIDENCE:

None of the young people complained about a lack of privacy despite the considerable constraints arising from a lack of space. There was no suitable place to site a private telephone booth but each residential unit had a cordless telephone to promote privacy. The lack of staff offices within residential units posed similar challenges for staff in maintaining confidentiality.

The policy was examined and child protection was discussed with staff.

The complaints policy was in the process of being reviewed. There had been no serious complaints but there was evidence that young people had been encouraged to use the process to help resolve day to day issues.

A number of the young people had had difficulties in their relationships with peers. Some of these had been perceived by the young people as bullying.

The school had been diligent in reporting relevant events to CSCI, Placing Education authorities and parents. Parents particularly commented on the good communication. A post with specific responsibility for coordinating and supporting external links had recently been created and staff had found this to be a valuable additional resource.

The school had a clear policy and procedure in the event of absconding arising. In practice there had been no absconding.

Young people described staff as being fair. Records of sanctions and restraints were examined. More use was made of rewards than sanctions. There was a strong emphasis on talking. Rewards used were vouchers in response to a merit scheme. Each young person had a behaviour care plan which led to individual targets. There were general merits as well as those given in response to individual targets. Sanctions used were time out (in bedrooms) reparation (notional) and withdrawal of activities. A few parents thought that discipline was too soft.

All staff received training on de-escalation and restraint. Incidents of restraint were infrequent and had reduced from the previous year.

Time was spent with the Health and Safety Officer contracted to underpin practice. Policies and risk assessments were examined.

The Fire risk assessment and drills and testing records were examined. All Fire Officer recommendations had been carried out.

The recruitment process was examined and sampled across some recent appointments.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

12,13 & 22

There was very close working between education and teaching staff. There was an impressive range of activities available. There was scope for increasing the opportunities to manage unsupervised time for older students. Individual support through counselling and arising directly from staff awareness was impressive.

EVIDENCE:

The school had lengthened the formal school day so as to remove the need for homework. The work of the care staff was regarded as part of a 24 hour curriculum.

There were activities arranged each evening and at weekends. These included motorbikes, horse riding, swimming, rock climbing, dog training, walking, gym, library, shopping and trampolining. All activities were risk assessed. There was provision for the older students to have up to 1 hour unsupervised time.

The school employed an occupational therapist, a speech therapist and a counsellor. An inspector met with the counsellor. Some 17 young people were receiving varying degrees of support. The counsellor had set up professional supervision arrangements. A senior member of staff with long experience of working with Aspergers Syndrome supported staff and also provided some direct support to young people.

Young people confirmed that they felt able to approach a wide range of people. Parents recognised the high level of expertise of staff over issues arising from Aspergers Syndrome.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

2,9,11,17 & 20

There was a strong ethos of consultation as evidenced by the range of structured ways of achieving this.

Relationships between staff and young people were characterised by high levels of respect and the display of positive regard. There was good practice of negotiation around individual/group needs.

Good attention was paid to the admission arrangements for young people.

Admission decisions took account of the needs of existing young people.

Considerable thought was being given to the care planning process. The planned changes seem very sensible.

The school promoted strong contact with families.

EVIDENCE:

There were weekly unit meetings for young people, weekly tutorial meetings, a monthly school council (representatives were chosen by students) and a termly food committee. The school council met during the inspection. Representatives were observed to be remarkably able in presenting the views of other students. Regular questionnaires were undertaken to further inform staff of students views.

Inspectors talked with young people as to how they felt about staff. Interaction between staff and young people was observed at mealtimes and after school.

The process of admission was discussed with staff and young people. Admission was preceded by obtaining full information, a placement planning meeting and completion of a pupil profile. Pre-admission visits were encouraged. Careful thought was given to sharing or single room. A sample of placement plans were reviewed. Plans comprised Behaviour plans, care plans, pre-placement plans/profiles, health care plans and individual education plans. Consideration was being given to combining all of these elements into one plan in the future. Young people were not very familiar with their care plans. They were more aware of their specific targets and they felt comfortable about attending reviews. All young people had a key-worker or tutor. Parents questionnaires suggested that they felt very positive about the way young people were encouraged to maintain contact. Most young people did this by telephone. A small number used e-mail. None of the young people had any contact restrictions. Staff made weekly contact with parents.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

16,21,23,24 & 25

Young people looked smart and well cared for.

Considerable thought was given to preparing young people for leaving school. There was scope for developing and implementing more systematic assessment and preparation tools for independence.

Despite the space considerations the premises provided pleasant homely accommodation. Every effort was made to encourage young people to personalise their living areas. Baths, showers and w.c.s were maintained to a high standard of cleanliness. There were separate facilities for staff.

EVIDENCE:

There was a school uniform . Year 11 students were explicitly exempt. Other young people were encouraged to wear uniform in lessons but this was not over zealously enforced. Support was provided in safeguarding young people's money and in getting personal requisites.

Some of the young people went on to a sixth form college run by the same group. There were good links with the college and some of the young people were in the process of introductions.

The school is not purpose built and Listing status does place constrictions.

There were areas where space limitations were a consideration.

There was a mixture of single and shared bedrooms. Staff would prefer to be able to offer more single rooms. The accommodation was maintained to a high

standard. Young people took a pride in the buildings and there were no signs of damage. The kitchenette facilities in each unit had been updated. There were lots of flowers around the buildings.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

1,18,19,28,29,30,31,32 & 33

The statement of purpose had recently been reviewed. Staff were familiar with it.

Young people's files were comprehensive and kept secure. The school maintained all of the required records.

High levels of staffing were maintained. There was good continuity of staffing because of the low turnover.

Staff received good induction. There was a rolling programme of training for all staff. There was good emphasis on child protection and aspects of Asperger syndrome. All staff received First Aid training and de-escalation and restraint. Staff felt supported. There was a strong ethos of valuing supervision. Supervision was regular and there were frequent staff meetings.

The school were making good progress with NVQ training and staff felt supported in this. This contributed to the professionalism demonstrated by staff.

There was a strong Quality Assurance culture which underpinned the school's drive for continuous improvement.

EVIDENCE:

Staff were asked about the statement of purpose.

A sample of young people's records and school records were checked.

Staffing levels were checked. As a minimum there was 1 care staff to each unit during the school day and at weekends and after school there were 3-4 per unit, at night there were 3 waking staff for the whole school. Senior staff were over and above these numbers.

The provision of training was discussed with a range of staff. 1 new member of staff shared his induction folder.

Supervision and support was discussed with staff.

The Head of Care and Deputy Head of Care had both completed NVQ4. The majority of staff were undertaking assessment at NVQ3 level or had recently achieved this.

Records demonstrated that the Principal actively monitored records. In addition to the regular half termly external monitoring checks Priory had commissioned an external care audit. The school also undertook periodic surveys.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

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

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

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	4
13	3
22	4

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	4
9	4
11	3
17	3
20	3

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

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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