

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Notton House School

**28 Notton
Lacock
Nr Chippenham
Wiltshire SN15 2NF**

Lead Inspector
Wendy
Anderson

Announced
20 September - 22 September 2005 at 9.00 am

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
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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 Notton House School

Address 28 Notton
Lacock
Nr Chippenham
Wiltshire SN15 2NF

Telephone number 01249 730407

Fax number

Email address

Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the Bristol City Council

Name of Head Mr Gerry Gamble

Name of Head of Care Paul Gilson

Age range of residential pupils 9 to 16

Date of last welfare inspection 25th, 26th, 27th May 2005

Brief Description of the School:

Notton House is a well established residential school for up to 55 boys aged 9 – 16 with emotional and behavioural difficulties. All pupils referred to the school have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The school occupies a rural situation in Wiltshire. It is, however, owned and operated by Bristol City Council. Notton House has responded positively to the demands of the National Minimum Standards and continues to develop its practice and provision.

SUMMARY

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

This announced took place on the 20th, 21st and 22nd September 2005. Two inspectors were at the school for 46 hours and a Pharmacy inspector joined them for 2 hours. One of the inspectors went to the school prior to the inspection to carry out pupil questionnaires. The inspectors spent time speaking to all of the boarders. Several of the children showed the inspectors around the school. Inspectors interviewed staff and inspected school and boarders records. Inspectors received 4 completed questionnaires from parents and 6 from staff.

What the school does well:

The school provides a caring environment for boarders and aims to involve them and their carers in decision making through partnership. The frequent bullying surveys and action taken demonstrate practical attention to caring. Staff feel well supported by a network of measures. There is a rolling programme for child protection and restraint training. The records of restraint are very detailed. This information is analysed and trends and concerns are identified and addressed.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Since the last inspection the school actioned all of the recommended and advisory action of the last report. The building of the new sports and classroom facility is well underway and will be a great asset to the school facilities. This build will enable the school to take seven more boarders. The school has implemented and continues to develop its independence programme. Those boys taking part in this programme said they were really enjoying it. The

school has also incorporated issues of sexuality within its personnel development programme.
The staff team at the school has increased since the last inspection.

What they could do better:

The school should develop individual risk assessment for young people where particular issues/needs/concerns have been identified. They also need to ensure that all restraint s are recorded in both the restraint log and the young persons individual files. The school child protection should be developed further. All staff files must contain at least two written references.

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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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 standard(s) 14, 15

Promotion of health is taken seriously. Young people's welfare is closely monitored and their health needs met.

EVIDENCE:

Young people said that their health care needs were met. The school keeps clear health records and inspectors found evidence of young peoples visits to doctors and dentists. Medication is either obtained locally or via parents or consultants. Controlled drugs are recorded and stocks in the houses restricted. Medication administration records are used and correctly completed for all children. All staff have received medication administration training and first aid trained staff are always available. To enhance this process the school should have two staff sign the medical records when dispensing medication home to parents. Non-prescription homely remedies are used within an agreed protocol and parental permission is obtained for this procedure.

Food is plentiful and prepared to a very good standard. The requirements of pupils on special diets or with religious needs are met. The preferences of children are surveyed periodically and taken into account when preparing the menu. Mealtimes were observed to be pleasant social occasions and the boys carry out assigned tasks of serving and clearing tables. The kitchen has had a satisfactory inspection by an environmental health officer. Boarders surveyed and interviewed were happy with the food provided by the school but would like more variety. Inspectors looked at the menus and found there was a good variety

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 standard(s) 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 26, 27

Complaint and behavioural management are handled well and ensure young people are listened to and feel safe. The school has an exceptional anti bullying programme.

EVIDENCE:

Young people said that staff respected their privacy. Sanitary and bathing facilities within the boarding provision permit privacy for the pupils. The school has installed 'stay on' lights in some of the bathrooms so as to minimise a potential area for bullying. Staff are clear about knocking before entering bedrooms and any issues regarding bedwetting are dealt with sensitively.

Pupils' personal files are kept in a locked filing cabinet in a secure room. Care plan files with current details are kept in the staff room. The Staff Handbook is clear that such files must remain confidential. The Handbook includes helpful guidance on information sharing and recording within the school.

Boarders all go home at weekends so are able to maintain contact with families. During the week, there is a telephone available in both the main house and the lower school. The school has recently built a new phone room in the Annex. Boarders are also able to use the school mobile phone in their bedrooms if they wish.

The school has a complaints procedure, which meets this standard. Information on raising concerns or complaints is included in the boarder handbook and the information provided for parents. The Staff Handbook contains details of how staff should respond to concerns raised by boarders. Briefing on this is included in the induction of new workers. The boarder who completed the questionnaire and those interviewed were clear on what to do if they had a complaint. They also told inspectors that anything they were unhappy with is sorted out quickly and that they felt staff really listen to them.

Information regarding child protection is included in the Staff Handbook, together with a procedure for staff who may need to respond to an allegation or disclosure. The current procedure refers to 'Avon Child Protection committee procedures' but as the school is situated in Wiltshire, Notton House also has the Wiltshire Child Protection procedures. The school procedure needs to be further developed. The school has developed a good working relationship with the local child protection service. Apart from an induction briefing, staff are engaged in inset training days on child protection approximately every two years

Notton House has an extremely well thought out pro-active approach to bullying, derived from the behaviour of its pupils. There is clear and helpful guidance for key workers and house parents. Counselling resources are used for bullies and bullied. Half termly, both pupils and staff are given questionnaires to complete regarding bullying hotspots and individuals. These are followed up with any necessary changes to procedures and with those who have been identified as bullies or being bullied. Boarders interviewed said that where bullying does happen staff quickly respond and resolve the issue. Young people told inspectors that they felt safe at the school.

The school has a procedure that has been agreed with the local police for informing them when a child is confirmed as having absconded. There are detailed 'Absconding procedures' in the Staff Handbook, which should be complied with on noticing the absence of a child. These details are also included in the 'Abscond' log including police contact numbers. A checklist is completed to confirm that the relevant people have been informed.

Notton House has clearly defined ranges of rewards and sanctions. The Staff Handbook states who is able to implement these. Sanctions are standardised and there is little scope and no authority for staff to use idiosyncratic punishments. Restraint training is provided for staff on a rolling training programme.

Separate logs are kept in the Lower and Upper School regarding the use of physical restraint. These contain detailed notes of incidents and the type of restraint used. Boarders are also asked to sign and contribute to these records. These records are regularly monitored. Information from these records are analysed and trends/concerns are identified and addressed. The inspectors did find gaps in the recording of restraints. Inspectors found that there was a significant drop in the number of restraints.

The school has a comprehensive risk assessments process. Risk assessments are done on activities undertaken by children, including those undertaken with appropriately qualified leaders. The school obtains consent forms for general activities, specific trips and motor biking.

The school has clear Health and Safety and COSHH information.

The inspectors found two first floor windows that did not have window restrictors.

The staff files contain all the required documentation.

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 standard(s) 12, 13, 22

Education is actively promoted and ensures that young people are supported to develop, achieve and prepare for independence.

EVIDENCE:

An attendance register is kept. This is monitored by an education welfare officer. Good liaison was evident between teaching and care staff. Both groups of workers are involved in contributing to the reviews of children. Behavioural issues are addressed consistently across a 24-hour curriculum.

Leisure activities are a strength of the school and enjoyed by the boys. They are able to choose from several options each evening, although there was some adverse comment about the sameness of the activities. The variety offered would be enhanced by the availability of a larger gymnasium and the adjacent field that the school has acquired. Pupils normally return home at weekends but a programme of weekend activities and outings is available for those who remain. The school also has activity weekends and offers activities during some of the holidays so as to offer support to the boarders and their families. The boarders have access to television, videos and video games. All videos and video games are checked so as to make sure they are age appropriate.

The inspectors heard that because of the Bristol links with this school, there are good links with resources for children where English is not their first language. Resources in Bristol have also been accessed for addressing particular issues in relation to racism.

The Connexions personal advisor is identified as the independent person for the children to contact directly about personal problems or concerns. The

inspectors heard that she provides a very individual service and in the inspectors opinion is child centred and approachable. At the time of inspection the young people in the lower school did not have access to an independent person.

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 standard(s) 2, 9, 11, 17, 20,

The school has comprehensive systems for consulting with young people and enabling them to express their views and be fully involved in plans being made for them. There is appropriate contact between young people and their families and friends.

EVIDENCE:

The inspectors noted that there is a thorough admissions process for boys. The Head exercised good gatekeeping for admissions, which takes into account both the new boys and the existing boys at the school. This includes pre-admission visits to the school and a home visit where possible. Prospective boarders and their families are shown around the school and the decision to offer a place is dependent upon the child's commitment. Young people are involved in planning for formal reviews and are expected to attend them. The keyworker system facilitates young people expressing their views. The transfer from the Lower School to one of the Upper School groups is carefully managed to reduce the possibility of rejection by the new group. The School reports that children's preferences are taken into account alongside staff views as to which group they will be joining and that work is undertaken with the pupil to prepare them for the move. Support is offered to the child during and after the move. Boarders are also able to influence the running of the school through participation in care group meetings (planning trips, equipment, menu

preferences etc.). A school council has been established and has been effective in having an impact on life within the school. The school has developed its bullying survey so that it included data which can lead to the identification of specific boarders who may bully and times of day where bullying is more likely to occur. These surveys involve the whole school, staff and all pupils. The inspectors saw evidence of the effectiveness of this system and would praise the school for this innovative approach.

The school is sensitive to the cultural and religious needs of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school is able to access the resources of the specialist support teams in Bristol for advice and also takes into account the views of relevant relatives.

Parents are involved in placement plans and Statements and the construction of residential packages.

Staff were seen to be acting in a professional manner with the pupils. In interviews with boarders they said that they saw the staff as a professional caring group who were like friends.

Reviews of looked after children and the reviews of Statements of Special Educational needs are described by the Head as a 'process', in which the involvement of the boy concerned is central. Pupils are also involved on a daily basis in choosing from the list of evening activities, which is available. The young people are able to make decisions in a range of contexts within suitable frameworks.

The inspectors heard about the services provided by the Connexions advisor and considered these to provide an excellent resource for the school. The inspectors heard how young people are supported up to and after leaving school in a very individual way. This work is, in the inspector's opinion, of an extremely high standard.

The inspectors read children's files and spoke to children about their plans. For children who are Looked After, the inspectors noted that there are Care Plans and placement plans in place and that these are reviewed with close involvement from the school. The inspectors saw evidence of work on independence but this was not recorded on the young persons plan. Boarders are encouraged to maintain contact with their homes during the week. Parental contact is only restricted when required by Court direction. This needs to be detailed in the young persons placement plan.

Children confirm that they have key workers and that they meet with them on a regular basis. The inspectors saw on children's files that these sessions were taking place on at least a monthly basis if not more frequently.

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 standard(s) 16, 21, 23, 24, 25

Young people at the school have their privacy respected. They are encouraged to be individuals, which is enhanced by the new independence programme. The school provides the young people with a high standard of accommodation.

EVIDENCE:

Boarders return to their own homes at weekly, or at the most, fortnightly intervals. Parents/carers are therefore able to keep them supplied with clothing. Pupils wear their own choice of clothes out of school hours. Uniforms are supplied by the school. The school will also in certain circumstances supply the boarder with casual clothing.

Care staff will lock valuables away at the request of boarders. Boys' pocket money goes into their own accounts in cash boxes, which are kept in the safe.

The school has just implemented an independence programme for the older boys. Boys taking part in this said that they were really enjoying it. Staff told inspectors that this programme was in its infancy and would be further developed.

There are no outstanding requirements from the fire, planning or environmental health authorities. The boarding accommodation is secured at night. The new build at the school of a sports and class room facility will improve the facilities for the young people. With some of the classrooms being moved into this building it will allow the school to offer seven more places.

Accommodation is divided between the modern, purpose built, Lower School and the Upper School, which is in the original manor house. The Lower School is well decorated, with comfortable furniture. Bedrooms are mainly double with some single provision. There is sufficient provision of leisure space and a dining area for breakfast and informal meals. The fire doors in the school's corridors are linked to the fire alarm system and are controlled by electro-magnetically operated release mechanisms. Residential accommodation in the Upper School is divided into four small units, each clustered around communal lounge and kitchen facilities. Bedrooms are usually occupied by two or four boarders, with some single provision. Although the older building presents maintenance challenges it is in good decorative order.

The number of bathrooms and lavatories is sufficient and residents do not report concerns about queuing. Privacy is safeguarded. The bathrooms are fitted and decorated to a high standard. The school has had slightly sloping floors fitted to the bathrooms which have a drain fitted under the baths to prevent flooding. All the taps in the sinks are push taps to also avoid flooding. Some of the toilets are fitted with auto lights so as to avoid dark spots where bullying may occur or where younger boarders may be frightened.

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 standard(s) 1, 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33

The school is well managed and provides the young people with a warm, safe stable environment.

EVIDENCE:

The school has a statement of purpose, which achieves this standard. This is reviewed on a regular basis by the whole staff team. The statement is contained in several related documents and is supported by further more detailed information. These documents are made available to pupils, parents and local education authorities. The school has specific parent and pupil information guides, which are user friendly.

The inspectors noted that children's files are stored securely. These records are archived securely in the school when children leave.

Children report that they have not seen their files. Young people also discuss the contents of their daily logs, PIR forms, and suspension information with their key workers. They are encouraged to make written submissions on a pupil Contribution form to their annual reviews. Young people in years 9/10/11 contribute to their reviews via Connexions reports.

The School maintains a register of pupils. There is a complete list of present and past staff, with reasons for leaving.

The staff rota adequately covers the school. There has been an increase in staff numbers since the last inspection.

Newly appointed care and teaching staff follow an induction programme which includes familiarity with the guidance in the Staff Handbook. Thirty hours a year are available for in-service education and training. All staff are expected to attend an introductory first aid course and there is a rolling programme of more substantial first aid training to enable a qualified first aider to be available on each shift. Child protection and restraint are on a rolling training programme. Staff confirmed that they receive good support, supervision and advice during their induction period. Training needs are identified in regular staff supervision sessions. The school has an appraisal system to identify overall developmental needs which then form a personnel development plan for individual staff.

There are clear lines of accountability with the School, with strong leadership from the Head teacher and senior management team.

The School has crisis management plans in place. Information on relevant procedures is shared with parents.

Notton House School is responsible for the management of a devolved budget of from Bristol City Council. This is fully audited at four yearly intervals. The School is able to carry any savings forward into the following financial year. The Governors sanction spending on projects.

Systems are in place to monitor records kept by the School as required.

An appointed Governor carries out monitoring visits on a termly basis. The majority of these visits are unannounced and a report is produced. The school also receives termly visits from the Sector Advisor. The Educational Welfare Officers visits on a regular basis. The school finances are monitored on a four yearly cycle. Bristol Property Services Department also monitor the maintenance of the school.

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	4
7	3
8	3
10	4
26	3
27	3

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

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	3
21	3
23	3
24	4
25	4

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

yes

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

These recommendations relate to National Minimum Standards and are seen as good practice for the Registered Provider/s to consider carrying out.

No.	Refer to Standard	Good Practice Recommendations
1.	5	The school should further develop its child protection procedure to incorporate all the points in Appendix 1 of NMS.
2.	14	The school should get two members of staff to sign for medication being dispensed to the young persons home
3.	22	The school needs to provide an independant visitor for the young people in the lower school.
4.	26	All first floor windows need to be fitted with window restrictors.
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

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