

# inspection report

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

## **St Mary`s School**

Horam

Heathfield

East Sussex

TN21 0BT

17th and 18th November 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**

St Mary's School

**Address**

Horam, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 0BT

**Tel No:**

01435 812278

**Fax No:**

01435 813019

**Email Address:**

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

St Mary's School

**Name of Head**

Mr D F Bashford

**CSCI Classification**

Residential Special School

**Type of school**

**Date of last boarding welfare inspection:**

2&3 Feb  
2004

Date of Inspection Visit		17 and 18 November 2004		ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am		
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	Paul Taylor	098580	
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Camilla Woods		
Name of CSCI Inspector	3			
Name of CSCI Inspector	4			
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):				
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.				
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)				
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Paul Hargrave		

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## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) 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 CSCI in respect of St Mary's 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**

St. Mary's School is a residential special school run by East Sussex County Council Education Department. The school accepts pupils with learning difficulties and a large number of these pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The vast majority of the young people who board are from East Sussex. Pupils can board up to four nights a week and the school offers weekend boarding eight times a year in order for the pupils to partake in activities such as the Duke Of Edinburgh Award and sporting events. Boarding is spread out over three areas. There is a boys boarding house, a boarding house for girls and a 'hostel' for sixth form boys.

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

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

- There are positive relationships between the staff and pupils.
- The staff continue to show high levels of commitment to positive changes in improving the service provided by the school.
- There is an excellent range of activities.
- There is a thorough risk assessment process for activities.
- There is a strong management executive team providing good support, improving morale and motivation in the school.
- The Practice Manager provided consistent leadership through the period of instability and crisis experienced in the school.
- The new behaviour policy is re-enforcing positive behaviour and is reducing the need for sanctions and detentions.

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

- The information required by Standard 27.2 needs to be contained in the staff files.
- Some health and safety issues need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- The child protection policy and child protection training need to be updated.
- Food hygiene training and first aid training need to be updated for the catering staff.
- The security of the files kept in the care staff office needs to be addressed.

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

After a period of instability and uncertainty the new Acting Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher together with the established Practice Manager have collaborated to provide strong leadership and sense of purpose for the school. The staff morale has improved and pupils who met with the Inspectors were happy and well behaved. Care remains of a good standard and any recommendations made in this report pertain to administrative and maintenance tasks. The majority of the recommendations from the last inspection have been met and this is seen as evidence that the school is progressing and improving the service it delivers.

The future of the school is under review by the local education authority and this means that no long term plans can be made.

## NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

NO

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	RSS 27	That staff records contain the information required by Standard 27.2.	30/7/04



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

### RECOMMENDED ACTION

Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare.

No	Standard*	Recommended Action	
1	RSS 5	That the child protection policy is updated.	28/2/05
2	RSS 14	That the refurbishment of the sick bay/ dispensary is completed as soon as possible.	31/1/05
3	RSS 18	That the storage and security of files in the care office is strengthened.	Immediate.
4	RSS 24	That curtains/blinds are fitted at the rear of the ground floor to the ensure the girls privacy in the girls boarding area.	17/12/04
5	RSS 26	That the windows in the boys boarding area are fitted with restrictors.	Immediate.
6	RSS 26	That the cupboard in the sixth form boarding area is made safe.	Immediate.
7	RSS 27	That staff records contain the information required by Standard 27.2.	28/2/05
8	RSS 29	That child protection training is updated for the care staff, food hygiene training and first aid training is provided to the catering staff.	31/3/05

### 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	RSS 8	That a central record is kept of absconsions from the school.

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	YES
• 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	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	NO
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	YES
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	17/11/04
Time of Inspection	10.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	17.5
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	4

**Pre-inspection information and the Head's Self evaluation Form, provided by the school, have also been taken into account in preparing this report.**

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

**Age Range of Boarding Pupils**      **From**       **To**

## NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

**BOYS**

**GIRLS**

**TOTAL**

**Number of separate Boarding Houses**

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the CSCI assessment of the extent to which standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

"9" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not applicable.

"X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

## STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

### Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

The school has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for those children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement can be made up of other documents, e.g., Letter of Approved Arrangements and school prospectus, which are required to include specific information.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
The school's Statement of Purpose is largely contained in the school prospectus. The prospectus outlines the purpose of the school and contains the information outlined in Standard 1.3. The prospectus has been reviewed and updated in the last year.		

## 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?

3

Inspectors found the pupils to be very open and able to express their views to the staff. There are meetings in the boarding houses where issues can be discussed in a group as well as opportunities for pupils to discuss matters on an informal basis with staff members. The Inspectors saw evidence of written communication between the school and parents concerning decisions and issues involving their children and the Practice Manager reported to the Inspectors that he and other staff members have regular telephone contact with parents.

### Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.11)

The school and staff respect a child's wish for privacy and confidentiality so far as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The school has a policy regarding confidentiality. Pupils' privacy is protected and promoted with the staff being sensitive about this issue and ensuring that pupils are aware as well. Inspectors saw members of staff knocking on doors prior to entering bedrooms.

**Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)**

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

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

There is a complaints policy in place and pupils who met with the Inspectors were aware of who they could complain to and were confident that they would be listened to. The school has posters displayed in various areas giving the telephone numbers for Childline and Xpress Advocacy service. Inspectors saw a log of complaints from pupils. The complaints were all about the behaviour of other pupils and none were about the care and treatment they receive in the school. The complaints were all investigated and resolved often on the day were made.

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

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

**Number of complaints received by CSCI 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?

2

All staff who met with the Inspectors were aware of what processes to follow in the event of child protection concerns. There is a need to update the child protection policy in the school as this is out of date and needs to outline the role and responsibilities of the child protection co-ordinator who is in this case the Practice Manager.

There is child protection training planned for the ancillary staff in January 2005. There is a need for refresher training for care staff in child protection as the last recorded training for them in this area was 2000.

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

2



**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 an anti-bullying policy and procedure to be followed in the event of any incidents of bullying. Pupils who met with Inspectors reported that bullying was dealt with firmly by the staff. Bullying was not seen to be significant issue for pupils.

**Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied**

X %

**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 school has a system in place whereby all incidents outlined in Standard 7.2 are reported to the relevant agencies.

**NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO CSCI 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>
There are clear guidelines in place for the school to follow in the event a pupil goes missing. All staff carry two-way radios so that their whereabouts of pupils can be quickly ascertained and staff summoned to search the premises and locality if needed. There is no central record of absconsions, these are recorded in the students case files.		
<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?	3
<p>Pupils were unanimous in their feedback about the good relationships they have with staff. Some pupils reported that they preferred to stay at the school rather than going home. Inspectors observed warm and caring relationships between staff and pupils. The staff group is stable and some staff have been working at St. Mary's for a number of years, thus pupils are used to the staff and have the chance to build positive relationships over a period of time.</p> <p>There are clear behavioural boundaries in place and pupils are aware of them even though some found it difficult to maintain them at times.</p>		

### 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
<p>The school has a new behaviour policy in place. The emphasis is in celebrating achievements on a daily basis in a school assembly at the end of the day. There is far less use of detention and the school is re-enforcing and rewarding positive behaviour. Inspectors saw that behaviour displayed by pupils around the school was of a good standard.</p> <p>There is a system in place whereby pupils can earn extra outings, rewards and privileges by accruing credit in a 'privilege bank'.</p>		

## 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

The school has a clear admission process that includes the opportunity for pupils to visit the school with their parents and the school receives information such as the Statement of Special Education Needs. Pupils admitted in Year 7 are visited at home by staff, ideally prior to admission to start links with the school and to establish a relationship. Plans for the future of pupils when they complete Year 11 are considered at an early stage. Connexions are involved in the future plans of pupils when they leave and the school.

**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?****3**

Each pupil has an Individual Education Plan detailing the pupils' needs both educationally and socially. Additionally each boarder has an Individual Social Plan which is monitored by the key worker. Inspectors saw a sample of these plans and the goals complimented those set in the Individual Education Plans. The school is keen to develop a seamless 24 hour curriculum with both educational and care provision working together to increase the life opportunities of the pupils and to ensure consistency of approach.

**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**

This is a strength of the school. The school offers a wide range of activities both within the school and externally. Examples of activities that pupils have access to include board games, snooker and pool, football, basketball, swimming, canoeing and weight training. Additionally the school pursues the Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme and pupils regularly achieve the award. The staff are active in offering activities at weekends such as camping to help pupils achieve the award. The Inspectors commend the commitment of the staff to provide such a variety of activities to improve pupil's life experiences and achievements. There are risk assessments carried out on the activities to ensure pupils safety. The school has provided training for care staff to qualify as coaches in activities such as basketball, football and swimming. The school also offers an extended day to pupils. This means that non boarding pupils have the opportunity to stay on after the school day and partake in a range of activities offered by the staff.

**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**

Pupil's health needs are monitored by a member of staff who is also a qualified nurse. The school has a G.P. who attends the school on a weekly basis. Additionally the school has a dentist who visits to check on the teeth of the pupils and a school nurse who also visits to help monitor health needs and to provide advice to the staff. There is advice available from an Educational Psychologist when needed.

There is a system in place for the administration of medication and this is monitored on a daily basis by the member of staff responsible for this area. The sick bay/ dispensary was in the process of refurbishment at the time of the inspection, this needs to be completed as soon as possible.

**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?****3**

Boarders eat breakfast and supper in the boarding houses. All pupils eat lunch together in the school dining hall. Inspectors saw records of meals served. The majority of pupils who spoke to the Inspectors were positive about the food at the school. If pupils have particular likes or dislikes they can have their preference made clear to the catering staff via a letter from their parents or a member of staff. This will mean that they are given a choice on the day a particular food is due to be served and they have had their dislike recorded.

The Inspectors joined the pupils for lunch and supper and the mealtimes were lively and social events.

The amounts of food available to the pupils at supper time needs to be monitored. The Inspectors were aware that a member of staff supplemented the food available to the boarders at supper by buying chips from the local shop. Had this option not been available the quantities of food available to the boarders, who had been involved in physical activity, would have been limited.

**Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.7)**

Children are provided for adequately on an individual basis and encouraged to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing and personal requisites. Children who require assistance to choose what they wear and/or how they spend their money are provided with the assistance they need, in a way which maximises their choice.

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

Parents or carers are responsible for ensuring that their children are provided with clothing and pocket money. The staff store the pupils pocket money for them in a safe in the boarding houses. Pupils then sign for the amounts they withdraw.  
The school also keeps a spare stock of clean uniform available for pupils in the event of an emergency.

## 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

Each pupil has a Statement of Educational Needs and these are reviewed on an annual basis. The key worker attends the annual review as well as preparing a written report. The school holds all the information required in Standard 17.5.

There was evidence in place to suggest that there is good communication between the school and carers/parents.

There was also evidence in place that members of staff from the school attend statutory meetings held by other agencies i.e. LAC reviews etc.

### 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?

2

The files that were examined by the Inspectors were generally well organised. Records completed by key workers were inconsistent.

The cabinet containing the pupils' files in the care staff office needed to have the lock repaired as did the door to the office. Pupils should not be left unsupervised in the care staff office at any time.



**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?**

2

Records seen included pupils files and staff files. In some staff files there was no evidence of two references being received at the point of employment. There was not always a record of interview on the staff file.

Other records seen by Inspectors included the accident log, menus, duty rosters, and records of significant incidents.

**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

Children are able to contact their parents or carers by telephone and mobile phone. Pupils stay for a maximum of four nights at a time. The staff maintain good links with parents.

**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

This standard was not assessed on this occasion.

**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?**

3

The staff can seek guidance from specialist support such as Behavioural and Educational Psychologists and Psychiatrists. This enables the staff to meet the pupils' needs. The skills and experience within the staff team means that they are able to assess pupils' needs and behaviours and are able to identify when they feel they need guidance and advice.

## PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

### Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The school is situated in a rural location within walking distance of Horam. Heathfield is the nearest large town, it being five miles away.

The school is set in fourteen acres of grounds and has a hard play area, swimming pool, football pitches and a large indoor gymnasium.

Due to the large size of the school staff are equipped with two-way radios so that they can be contacted promptly if needed.

### Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.19)

The school provides adequate good quality and well-maintained accommodation for boarding pupils, which is consistent with their needs.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

2

There have been staffing shortages experienced by the maintenance and cleaning staff. This has meant that the current staff have to prioritise their workload and this can lead to some areas of cleaning and maintenance not being responded to as swiftly as the staff team would like.

The girls boarding area does not have curtains to the rear of the premises in the conservatory and downstairs lounge. This could compromise their privacy.

Pupils are able to personalise their bed spaces with pictures and posters.

**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

There are sufficient toilets, showers and bathrooms throughout the school and boarding houses.

**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?**

1

The member of staff who is responsible for the Health and Safety systems operate in the school is well organised and efficient. There was a record of fire drills and there was a thorough record of risk assessments especially concerning activities in which the pupils participate.

The boys boarding area has a number of windows that need to have restrictors put in place to ensure the safety of the pupils. This needs to be done as a matter of urgency.

There is a storage cupboard in the boys sixth form boarding area that contains cleaning equipment, cleaning chemicals and exposed electrical wiring. This cupboard needs tidying, the cleaning chemicals moved to a safe location and the wiring made safe.

## 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?

2

As mentioned in Standard 19, not all the staff records contain all the information required under Standard 27.2.

The school has actively pursued Criminal Records Bureau checks on all the staff.

Total number of care staff:

12

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

2

**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

Two members of the care staff team are on long term sick leave. The school has actively recruited staff to cover any gaps. Acceptable staffing levels are being maintained. There is now less pressure on care staff to support teaching staff in the day to manage difficult behaviour. The school has made significant progress in this area since the last inspection.

**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?**

2

The Acting Head Teacher is using his expertise to use INSET days as a means to expand the staff skills and training.

There is a need for the staff team to receive refresher training in child protection. Additionally there is a need for the catering staff to receive updated food hygiene training and first aid training.

There are five staff undergoing N.V.Q. level Three Training in Caring for Children and Young People. The Practice Manager is undertaking N.V.Q. level Four in management.

**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

There is a planned program of supervision in place. Staff who met with the Inspectors reported good levels of support on an informal and formal basis. The system of annual appraisals for care staff will be re-instigated in the next year.

There are clear lines of accountability with the Head Teacher being accountable to the School Governors and Local Education Authority.

## 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?

3

The Acting Head Teacher, the Deputy Head Teacher and the Practice Manager give strong leadership and guidance to the staff. Members of staff who met with the Inspectors were positive about the direction in which the school is going. The experience and expertise of the management now in place has given the school more stability than was being experienced at the last inspection.

As mentioned in standard 29 the Head of Care is undertaking training in N.V.Q. Level Four in management and five care staff are undertaking training in N.V.Q. Level Three in Caring for Children and Young people. Two members of staff have achieved N.V.Q. Level Three in Caring for Children and Young people.

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

8 %

### Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

The Commission for Social Care Inspection 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?

3

The school is maintained by the East Sussex Education Authority. Monitoring of records and the school's performance is maintained by the Senior management Team, Head Teacher and School Governors.

The future of the school is currently being reviewed by the local authority. This means that no long term plans can be made although the current managing executive has given the school fresh impetus and stability.

The executive team is keen to pursue and work with any plans for the school which the local education authority formulates.

**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

Governors regularly visit the school and reports are written following these visits. There are regular governors meetings and these are minuted. The Inspector met with a governor who was very complimentary about the staff in the school and the levels of commitment shown.



**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 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

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

**Note:**

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

**D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by , which indicates how recommended actions and advisory recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.**

**Status of the Head's Action Plan at time of publication of the final inspection report:**

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

### D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

**Head's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies.**

**D.3.1 I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_**  
**confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation**  
**of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that**  
**I agree with the recommended actions made and will seek to comply with**  
**these.**

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

**Signature**

### Designation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

**D.3.2 I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_**  
**am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:**

--	--

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

**Signature**

## Designation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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