



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Rowdeford School

**Rowdeford School
Rowde
Devizes
Wiltshire
SN10 2QQ**

Lead Inspector
Wendy Anderson

Announced Inspection
6th June 2006 09:00

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

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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	Rowdeford School
Address	Rowdeford School Rowde Devizes Wiltshire SN10 2QQ
Telephone number	01380 850309
Fax number	01380 859708
Email address	admin@rowdeford.wilts.sch.uk
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Wiltshire County Council
Name of Head	Mrs Ingrid Lancaster-Gaye
Name of Head of Care	Ms Tina Cole
Age range of residential pupils	11 to 16
Date of last welfare inspection	12 th April 2005

Brief Description of the School:

Rowdeford School is situated in a Grade II listed Georgian house, set in twenty acres of parkland on the outskirts of Rowde, near the town of Devizes. It is a secondary, co-educational, special school for pupils with a range of needs, whose overall abilities will enable them to benefit from the curriculum it offers. This generally includes pupils whose measured ability and attainment places them on either the moderate learning difficulties spectrum, or at the top end of the severe learning difficulties spectrum. Many pupils also have associated medical conditions and/or syndromes. The school caters for twenty-four boarders. Within the school is the Prospect Centre. This is a specialist centre for selected pupils with autistic spectrum disorders at year seven to nine.

SUMMARY

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

This announced took place on the 6th & 7th June 2006. Two inspectors were at the school for 38 hours. The inspectors spent time speaking to boarders and staff. Several of the children showed the inspectors around the school. Inspectors examined school and boarders records.

The judgements contained in this report have been made from evidence gathered during the inspection, which included a visit to the service and takes into account the views and experiences of the people using the service.

What the school does well:

The school provides a high standard of care for the children placed. Staff have worked hard to provide a very comfortable home for the children. This has meant the staff being involved in decorating the children's rooms. The children take part in local community activities and this helps combat any possible isolation. The Head, Head of Care and staff team are open to new ideas and approaches to improve boarding at Rowdeford. They take a proactive approach to the National Minimum Standards. There is a high level of communication and consultation with the children and their families concerning work with individual children and the school as a whole.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has actioned all of the requirements and recommendations from the last report. The Deputy Head has been appointed. This will provide the school with a senior full management team and will enable the senior management team to move forward on further ideas they have for improving the school. The school has developed a CD which provides prospective new pupils with a pictorial as well as written information about the school. This is all set to music. The inspectors felt that this was excellent. The school continues to review and develop its policies and procedures.

What they could do better:

There were no recommendations made at this inspection

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 the following standard(s):

14, 15.

The promotion of health is taken seriously. Good use of records, planning and other management systems ensure that health care needs are met. The school provides children with a well balanced varied diet.

Quality rating on this outcome is good. This judgement has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to the service.

EVIDENCE:

The children remain registered with their home GP. The school doctor sees all the children at age 14 and others as requested, particularly the new intake. The school has good links with the school nurse and other healthcare professionals; records were seen of referrals to opticians, audiologists and dieticians.

Children with particular healthcare needs have detailed individual health plans and this information is made available to all staff who may need to know. Information is also passed from teaching to care staff by written notes.

Medication is all stored in locked medical cupboards and the administration of medicines is recorded accurately. Written parental permission is gained before the administration of any prescription or non-prescription medication. Medicines are recorded when brought into school. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid and first aid boxes are available in many locations around the school. The school has no sick bay, but if children are ill in their beds they told inspector they are easily able to summon assistance from the care staff. The school nurse is involved in some PHSE teaching and includes the head and deputy head of care in some training in subjects such as pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.

Some children have input from a dietician and the school is pursuing a Healthy Schools initiative.

Children receive a balanced diet. The current menu is on a six-week rolling programme and each lunch time a vegetarian option, salad and one other course is offered. Deserts include fresh fruit and yoghurt. If a child has food intolerances, allergies or specific dietary requirements, this information is reported to the cook. The school achieved the Health Schools Award in July 2005.

Those in residential units are provided with appropriate supplies of food that can be replenished from a central stock. Breakfasts are taken in the residential units and are a relaxed start to the day. A small but separate dining room (with room for approximately 12 children) is available for those who dislike the bustle of the main dining room. The main dining room now has two sittings. The head and Head of Care said that this has made meal times a more social and relaxed occasion. At the time of inspection the school had brought a new dishwasher and food steamer. They have also increased the hours for two members of the catering team to cover tea time. The school was also awarded a Target School Meals grant of £8,000. The Head teacher informed inspectors that although the school is now growing more of its own vegetables this is more enough to make them self sufficient.

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, 8, 10, 26, 27.

Implementation of a robust set of relevant policies and procedures affords good levels of protection for the children.

Quality rating on this outcome is excellent. This judgement has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to the service.

EVIDENCE:

The Inspector observed staff supervising children in a sensitive manner. Staff spoken to were very aware that personal care for the children was also managed with care, respect and consideration. The staffing levels, which allows 2 staff per residential unit permits additional time to be given to personal assistance.

The children spoken to reported that bathrooms and showers were private.

The children spoken to were clear about whom they should speak to if they had concerns or wished to make a complaint – which included care staff and the two Independent Listeners.

Training on child protection issues continues to be seen as important by the school. Care staff report receiving regular refresher Child Protection training. Teachers as well as Ancillary staff also report being included in child protection training. The Head and Head of Care report a improvement in information sharing between the Departments of Children, Families and Education in general and after a child protection investigation had taken place involving a child from the school.

Both staff and children report that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and are clear about actions they would take in the event of any incident. The school clearly feels that a high standard of behaviour is important. The behaviour expected by the school is explained to the child at the time of their admission, and the use of a reward system by which points can secure an end of term prize is seen as encouraging and rewarding positive behaviour. Information on the school anti bullying policy, and all other relevant information, is evident on the notice boards throughout the school in a pictorial form (Wigdet).

The school has a clear policy and procedure on children being absent without authority. This is not a major issue within the school but all staff are regularly reminded of the procedure so that in the event of it being needed they are confident with what needs to happen.

The school has a policy on physical intervention and it is clear to staff that restraint should only be used by those who have received appropriate training. Staff reported that the management of disruptive behaviour passes through a series of stages, with physical restraint used only in the rarest of circumstances. This was born out by the school restraints records where any use of physical restraint is clearly documented. The children spoken to report the school's use of rules and punishments, including the use of the above reward system, to be fair. Children particularly like the reward system and are proud of their achievements in this area.

There is a minimal staff turnover amongst the care staff. The Head of Care retains a list of bank staff, negating the need for agency care staff. The four personnel files reviewed by the inspectors contain all the information as required by the Commission. All visitors to the school must sign in and out, using the Visitors Book and are provided with a visitors pass. Where contractors come to the school these are supervised and the school tries where possible to use the same contractors so that they build up an understanding of the school and its pupils.

The school has comprehensive fire record, which evidenced that drills were taking place at the required intervals. The school had recently had an independent Consultant who carried out a full audit of fire safety. There has also been an inspection by the local Fire Brigade Officer. At the time of inspection over 80% of the work identified at that inspection had been undertaken with the remaining work having been booked in.

The school has comprehensive water records which detail temperature and regular check for Legionella, of which there has been no sign.

The school has detailed risk assessments on all of the areas required by the Commission, including individual risk assessment on individual children where a potential risk or concern has been identified.. These are regularly reviewed and updated.

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.

The education and care aspects of the school work very closely to provide a holistic approach to the children's care. The children have a wide choice of age and ability appropriate activities including opportunities to participate and integrate in the local community.

Quality rating on this outcome is excellent. This judgement has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to the service.

EVIDENCE:

Inspectors heard of the daily verbal and written handovers between the teaching and residential provision to ensure a cohesive approach with the children and that the residential provision can contribute and participate to educational progress. Where necessary, but at least once every half term, teaching staff report that they meet with key workers to address any particular concerns regarding an individual child. Teachers also report that they contribute to the annual review of the child's progress.

Care staff report that they actively support the work of the teaching staff, listening for example in an evening to children reading.

The school offers the children an opportunity to engage in a range of activities, from Judo, swimming and trampolining to participation in local community activities and youth clubs. Photographs on the walls of residential units providing evidence of this. The children spoken to report that participation in activities and outings is voluntary. They also told inspectors that they are able to put forward ideas for activities and trip and where possible staff will arrange these for them.

The children spoken to report being able to bring videos from home, but that they had to be age appropriate as well as toys and games. Support to individual children as well as the entire school community is one of the strengths of the school. Inspectors saw evidence of this individual support in the children's files inspected and were told by the children themselves.

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.

Good staff / children relationships help to ensure that children are afforded good opportunities to participate in the running of the school, to maintain existing links outside the school develop their independent living skills and participate in the community.

Quality rating on this outcome is excellent. This judgement has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to the service.

EVIDENCE:

The school operates a school council which the inspectors were able to evidence had been able to contribute to school life and been able to change things. There are also house meetings held regularly. The school regularly carries out surveys to ascertain children's, parents' and carers' views on the school. The school retains good lines of communication between it and the parents of the children, through continued use of a book, which passes between the school and the child's home. The book allows parents, care staff and occasionally teachers to provide feedback to others on aspects relevant to the well being of the child. Children are encouraged and enabled to maintain contact with their family and friends during the week. The children have access to pay phones sited in the residential units, although it was observed that some of these are and not particularly private allowing conversations to be

overheard by those passing by. The school has done what it can within the constraints of the buildings listing.

The staff's relationship with children is one of the school strengths. There is an ethos of mutual respect between the staff and the children. Children told inspectors that staff were kind, fun, took time to listen to them, approachable and were very caring.

The Inspectors observed that some of the children have communication problems, but are aware that the school has access to the services of a speech therapist. The school also has various computer programmes to facilitate communication this includes a 'widget' picture system. This has been used to provide children with important information on the school policies such as anti bullying, child protection, school routines and many more. The school's unit for autistic children (the Prospect Centre), also continues to provide specialist support where needed. The school has access to the Local Education Authority Behaviour Support Team, together with its current policy of managing disruptive behaviour in the classroom this facilitates and promotes communication with the children.

Staff use positive care and control with the children. The allocation of key workers is dictated by care staff workload, the children spoken to, indicated that they could request to change their key worker if they felt the current arrangement was not working. With the national educational policy currently promoting inclusion rather than exclusion of disruptive behaviour, there was a concern from both staff and teachers that the school is increasingly asked to support children exhibiting challenging and complex behavioural/social problems. Due to the persistence of the Head and the Senior Management Team this situation has not happened. The inspectors recognise the evolving nature of the school but also recognised the fragility of a significant number of the children placed at Rowdeford where they are provided with a safe environment with consistent boundaries for all its children.

The school does not use agency care staff to cover staff absence/sick leave, but draws upon a small bank of staff. This arrangement promotes the continuity of care that the school feels is essential for this group of children.

The Avebury unit, which currently provides residential accommodation for 7 children between the ages of 14 and 16 years, actively promotes appropriate life skills and encourages independent living, preparing children for life in further education colleges/other organisations. The school's policy of encouraging the participation of the children in various local clubs e.g. youth clubs, judo is seen as providing further evidence of the school's support for independent living, post Rowdeford.

The school has a clear policy and procedure for the admission of children. This policy details the criteria for admission to the school and acknowledges the

limited number of placements available. Those children's files inspected evidenced this information including reports made by designated keyworkers of home visits prior to admission. The buddy system operated by the school is positively referred to by the children and staff spoken to, as it is felt to enable new boarders to quickly feel part of the school. The use of buddy benches offers all children the opportunity to seek friendship/support from those of his/her peers designated as buddies. Each child is also provided with an admission pack. This contains written, pictorial and audio taped information on the school. At the time of inspection the school has just finished a CD, which provides both pictures and written information, set to music, showing life at the school. Inspectors felt that the development of this CD is exceptional.

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.

The school is well decorated and maintained throughout. Children are helped towards a good standard of material wellbeing and have opportunities to maximise their potential through leaving care processes, education and preparation for independence.

Quality rating on this outcome is good. This judgement has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to the service.

EVIDENCE:

During the school day the children wear school uniform. They do bring their own clothing for the evenings. The children bring pocket money from home. Each house had a record of this money for each child.

Most children leaving the school move to other colleges or provision however the school has developed a policy on children leaving the school. The school supports them in this process.

The school is situated in a listed building set in its own grounds on the outskirts of the village of Rowde. This could lead to the school being isolated but the staff are very conscious of this. The staff at the school have worked hard and imaginatively to provide the children with a comfortable, pleasant environment. The building is in keeping with the school's statement of purpose. On the ground floor there is wheelchair access for visitors. At the time of inspection there were no outstanding requirements or recommendations from any of the bodies. The boarding provision is well decorated and very 'homely'. Each child's room is individually decorated and the children can have input into the decoration. Children are encouraged to personalise their rooms. The children's rooms were of an adequate size and in good repair. Although the number of children who flexi board has increased each child has their own bed space which they do not have to share when they are staying at home during the week. The school should be commended for this approach. Some of the children did share a room but this was with their agreement. Within the children's bedrooms was space for private study and adequate storage space. The communal areas were very pleasant, comfortably furnished and provide space for activities and hobbies. The children also have access to other areas of the school for activities.

There were sufficient toilets and bathrooms for the children. These were nicely decorated. The children said there was always lots of hot water and they did not have to queue for baths or for showers. There were also adequate facilities throughout the rest of the school.

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):

28, 29, 30, 31.

The school is well managed and run effectively to provide a safe environment for the children. Regular formal supervision of care staff will help to ensure continuation of the good quality of care already afforded to the young people.

Quality rating on this outcome is good. This judgement has been made from evidence gathered both during and before the visit to the service.

EVIDENCE:

The school has now appointed a new Deputy Head. This means that the school now has a full Senior Management Team for the first time in several years. This will create a middle management structure instead of the Head and Head of Care taking on all management tasks. Staff were very positive about the appointment the Deputy Head.

The Head of Care has completed the NVQ Assessor Award in April 2005. She also holds a coaching and assessing award and remains committed to ensuring that those undertaking the NVQ training/qualifications do so and other care staff will be given NVQ opportunities in the future. Staff interviewed said that they felt well supported by the Senior Management Team. They said that they are encouraged and enabled to undertake statutory training and that identified through appraisal but also pursue training in areas of particular interest to them.

The gender imbalance among care staff team is again noted by inspectors. However they also note that the school was able to evidence the work they have undertaken to address this issue.

Staff interviewed by Inspectors report that supervision takes place but tends to be every 2 months. Despite this staff reported that they felt well supported by the senior management of the school, finding them approachable and keen to ensure an "open door" policy to addressing concerns. Each member of staff receives an annual appraisal. This is a two way process between staff and those carrying out the appraisal. Staff said that they had found this useful in helping them both review their work and set targets and goals for the coming year, this becomes their personnel development plan. All staff have a training portfolio.

Ancillary staff reported that they (cleaners and kitchen staff), meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues but did not receive supervision as such. However they felt able to address any specific concerns with the senior management team.

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	4
4	4
5	4
6	4
7	x
8	3
10	3
26	3
27	3

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

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

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

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? Yes

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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