



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Doucecroft School

**Abbotts Lane
Eight Ash Green
Colchester
Essex
CO6 3QL**

Lead Inspector
Kay Mehrtens

Announced Key Inspection
15th – 17th January 2007 10:00

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	Doucecroft School
Address	Abbotts Lane Eight Ash Green Colchester Essex CO6 3QL
Telephone number	01206 771234
Fax number	01206 571964
Email address	kc@essexautistic.org.uk
Provider Web address	ib@essexautistic.org.uk
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	The Essex Autistic Society
Name of Head	Ms Kathy Cranmer
Name of Head of Care	Andrea Carter
Age range of residential pupils	8 - 19
Date of last welfare inspection	6 th March 2006

Brief Description of the School:

Doucecroft School is an independent special school, owned and operated by the Essex Autistic Society, catering for children and young people affected by autism spectrum disorder.

At the time of the inspection the school was able to provide places for up to 34 boarding pupils aged between 8 and 19 years.

The main school moved to a purpose built site on the outskirts of Colchester in 2005. The new site has separate teaching, office and boarding areas. Boarding is divided into four units, all pupils have their own bedroom and each unit has a lounge and kitchen area. All of the accommodation and recreational areas are of a high standard.

The school's Further Education department has remained in Kelvedon, about 8 miles from the main school. Accommodation here is provided in single rooms. There is a large garden at the rear of the building with vegetable patches and fruit trees. The FE department continues to access nearby community facilities, in addition to social events in nearby towns.

SUMMARY

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

This was an announced visit that took place over 3 days from the 15th to the 17th January 2007, this included feedback to the Head and the senior staff team.

Due to the nature of the children's special needs, questionnaires were not completed with children, however opportunities were taken to observe children at school, and talk with those who were able to communicate verbally.

The young people and staff were helpful and accommodating throughout the inspection, and the inspector would like to thank everybody for contributing to the inspection process.

The visit to the school, including the FE site, lasted 28 hours and additional time was taken to read the information requested from the school.

The Commission received 20 survey responses from parents, 1 from a member of staff and 3 from placing officers. Their comments will be incorporated into the report.

This was the statutory key inspection of the school. All the 20 key standards, identified by the Commission, were inspected as part of this inspection. Additional standards were also inspected and outcomes will be included in this report.

The following sections of the summary have been written using language suitable for children and young people and will be produced as a separate document for the young people boarding at the school.

- The inspector, Kay Mehrtens, visited the school on the 9th January to prepare for the inspection visit. She met with the Head and planned the inspection visit.
- The inspector started the inspection on the 15th January. She stayed until bedtime joining the young people for the evening meal and some activities. She then returned at 7am on the 16th January, joining some young people for breakfast.
- The inspector went to the further education site at Kelvedon on the 16th and met with the manager and had tea with the staff and young people.
- The inspector was on the premises for all three days of the inspection, leaving on the 17th January at 2 o'clock after giving feedback to the Head and senior staff.

- The inspector had the opportunity to meet with the young people, tour the buildings and grounds, watch activities, join in mealtimes, talk to boarding staff and catering staff, as well as the Head of Care and Head Teacher, during the inspection.
- The inspector would like to thank the Head, staff and young people for making her feel so welcome throughout the inspection.

What the school does well:

- The staff are very caring and good at working with and supporting the young people.
- The young people have lots of activities to do after school with staff help.
- The school staff and boarding house staff work well together to make sure that the young people's needs are met throughout the day.
- Some parents said, "My child loves it there!" and "it is a warm, happy place." They also said, "Fantastic staff who know my child really well" and "Caring staff".

What has improved since the last inspection?

- Staff checks when they start working at the school have got better.
- Staff get more support from their managers.
- The staff have got better at writing notes about things that happen in the boarding houses.

What they could do better:

- Some staff need more training on topics such as cooking different foods for young people on special diets, healthy eating and different health needs of some young people.
- Care plans and reviews need to be written in ways that help young people better understand them.
- The school needs to provide an independent person for the young people to talk to.
- Some parts of the school need better lighting.

- The young people need to be more involved in their life at the school such as choosing the menus and sharing their ideas.
- The school uses too many staff that do not always know the school and young people very well. They are called agency staff.

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. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

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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)

The Commission considers Standard 14 the key standard to be inspected.

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

Standards 14 and 15

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The school environment is healthy, and the health and intimate care needs of pupils were well met.

The school caters well for each pupil's specific dietary requirements.

EVIDENCE:

The inspector observed the Head of Care and staff follow the procedures regarding receiving medication from young people when arriving at the school on Monday morning. The Head of Care organised the receipt of medication into the school. The system was observed to be well organised and ensured that the correct medication was taken to each individual young person's house and recorded as received.

The Head of Care informed the inspector that only senior staff administer the medication following training in the administration of medication from a local pharmacist. The Head of Care and senior staff had undertaken additional training with regard to specialist medication. However, the inspection did highlight the need for staff to receive training with regard to the use and side effects of some of the medication taken by the young people.

Some young people take controlled medication. The inspector discussed some areas of good practice with the Head of Care with regard to the administering and recording of controlled drugs.

There was good evidence in place with regard to the procedures, protocols and staff training for use of invasive medication. The Head of Care had worked closely with the parents, doctors and community health staff to ensure that clear risk assessments, training and information were collated before the medication was accepted for administration.

Staff observed to give out medication to young people in a discreet and calm manner. They were aware of recent changes in some young people's medication and of the need to follow written protocols and procedures.

The care and placement plans that were inspected contained information about the young people's health needs and actions that staff needed to take.

The young people receive information, advice and guidance with regard to personal health and social care as part of their education timetable. Additional support is also provided from educational physiologists attached to the Autistic Society.

The teaching and boarding house staff sit and have lunch with the young people. The staff are provided with clear information about the individual catering needs of the young people. The meal is served in dishes and the young people are supported in helping themselves. Behaviour targets are monitored throughout the day, including mealtimes, as part of the individual expectations of behaviour for each young person. The staff were observed to record information about the behaviour and diet for each young person. The inspector joined the young people for different meals throughout the inspection. The young people enjoyed the dinners, snacks and treats provided. Fresh fruit was available at each meal alongside a choice of yogurt or cake for dessert.

The young people were encouraged and supported by staff to assist with clearing tables and taking their empty plates to the trolleys.

The inspector shared with the Head of Care the differences in mealtime experiences for the young people in the school boarding houses and at the Kelvedon Further Education (FE) site. The Kelvedon site had more young people involvement in choosing their menus as well as helping to prepare and cook with a staff support, though the inspector noted that this was also happening, to some degree, in the Beech unit on the main school site. Each of the boarding houses were different in their approaches to developing young people's involvement and input into mealtimes.

The inspector discussed the lack of alternatives and choice at the lunchtime meal for the young people. Alternatives were only provided for vegetarians or to meet identified dislikes of some individual young people. The inspector was impressed by the response from the Head of Care and the cook to this discussion. They had decided to send a photograph of the cook, to each house, with a request for ideas from the young people about different food including their favourites for the lunchtime menu. The Head of Care and cook hoped that this would encourage the development of more choice and young people's input. The Head also informed the inspector that she was busy taking photographs of different meals in order to give the young people a better understanding of what was available at lunchtimes.

The inspector enjoyed the evening meal at the FE site. Helping young people to prepare and clean up after tea. The meal was relaxed and had a lovely family feel. The young people interacted well with the staff, chatting and passing food to each other. It was a pleasant social occasion.

The inspector joined some young people for tea in one of the houses on the main site. There was evidence of lots of fruit and yogurts in each house. However, the menus did lack variety in some of the boarding houses. There were several instances of pizza, nuggets, toast or sandwiches on the teatime menus. The evening meals are prepared in each of the houses. The staff generally choose and set the menus, with differing input from young people dependent on the individual houses. The required food is ordered and delivered to each house, via the cook. The school needs to continue developing the input of young people into menu planning.

The staff were aware of the individual dietary needs of some of the young people and their food was well presented and kept separate for them. The inspection highlighted the need for the cook to receive training in order to meet the needs of young people with specialist dietary requirements.

The Commission received a satisfactory report from the environmental health officer following their recent visit to the school.

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)

The Commission considers Standards 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.

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

Standards 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The privacy of children and young people is respected.

Staff were consistent and positive with children and young people when promoting acceptable standards of behaviour.

The physical environment at the school and further education department were safe and secure for the numbers of children and young people in residence. The vetting of staff was satisfactory.

EVIDENCE:

Records relating to young people were held securely. The young people had access to a payphone, which they could use privately.

Discussions with staff and observations made during the inspection indicated that staff respected young people's privacy and dealt appropriately with confidential information.

There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Some of the young people told the inspector that they could talk to staff if they were unhappy about anything.

The inspector recommended that complaints information should be produced in formats that would give the young people a better understanding of how to complain. The Statement of Purpose should also contain information for parents regarding the complaints procedure and the name of the school's designated child protection person.

The school had made no child protection referrals since the last inspection. The inspection highlighted the need for additional staff training, with regard to child protection procedures, in order to update staff on the changes to the local authority child protection processes. This training is especially relevant for recently recruited care staff, as established staff had attended child protection awareness training in April 2006.

In the surveys returned to the Commission, one parent stated, "Tight controls and procedures in place to protect vulnerable young people". Another stated, "Our child is in a safe, secure environment where they can reach their full potential".

There had been no recorded incidents of absconding since the last inspection. The care files contained good information about the young people should any absence occur.

The staff were observed to work with the young people in a caring and constructive manner that supported and enabled the young people to develop appropriate ways of behaving and interacting with their peers and adults.

There were few incidents of restraints and sanctions recorded. The staff are well trained in working with the young people to manage conflict and challenging behaviour. The inspector observed many instances of good practice in this area. The staff were observed to praise the young people, very much focusing on their positive behaviours and linking into the young people's individual behaviour management plans. The staff's interaction with the young people clearly reflected the stated aims and values written within the school's behaviour management policy. They worked with the young people in a manner that respected and valued the individual needs and actions of the young people in their care. The inspector discussed, with the Head of Care, the need for staff to work with the young people to enable them to share their feelings after any restraint, at their level of understanding, and then record on the relevant record.

Since the last inspection, the head has worked well with the governing body and senior management team to ensure that the records of incidents of restraints are monitored.

Comments from placing social workers and parents were very complimentary regarding the staff's way of working with the young people. They included, "The school is very consistent in its approach with the children and young people. Strategies are implemented consistently on a 24-hour basis." "The staff reassure and calm [my child], rather than blaming him and getting angry".

The Autistic Society had undertaken a health and safety audit and relevant reports and recommendations were held on file and being actioned by the school. The sampled health and safety records were clear, accessible and evidence that required checks and monitoring had been undertaken. Fire drills had been held since the last inspection.

The inspector advised the Head to undertake a review of the premises risk assessments.

The inspector also noted that some areas of the school playground required additional lighting in order to ensure the safety of staff and young people using this area to access evening activities.

The inspection highlighted the need for more staff to undertake food hygiene training. This refers specifically to the recently recruited staff and agency staff.

The staff recruitment files were well organised. There was good evidence of interview notes, checks regarding qualifications, references and CRB.

Recruitment records relating to two recently appointed members of staff were inspected. These records demonstrated that the vetting undertaken by the school met regulatory requirements. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks had been completed before these staff started work in the school.

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)

The Commission considers Standards 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.

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

Standards 12, 13 and 22

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The school's residential provision supports educational progress.

The school provides opportunities for children and young people to engage in a range of appropriate activities.

Children and young people receive individual support, as they need it.

EVIDENCE:

The inspector had the opportunity to meet two parents of day pupils at the Kelvedon site. They were very complimentary regarding the care and support provided by the staff team. They were particularly impressed by the opportunities provided for the young people such as outside activities, holidays, confidence building activities, support with eating and mealtimes that had led to visits to pubs and restaurant.

Care staff provided support to the young people in the classroom as well as during residential time and teaching staff undertook after school duties to support the evening activity programme.

The school operates a "24 hour curriculum" for the young people. The staff were very aware of their role in achieving this with and for the young people. They were consistent in their responses with the young people, demonstrating a good understanding and knowledge of the individual plans for the young people in their care.

The links between the school, boarding houses and parents were good. Senior staff support meetings ensured a good cross over between the school staff and house staff. Alongside meetings, the school uses "home/school/day/boarding books and handover sheets that ensured good sharing of information for all involved with the young people, including their parents.

The daily routines for taking and collecting the young people from the school block were observed to take place in a relaxed and welcoming manner. The staff helped the young people move from one area of the school and routine to another in a calm and supportive way. The young people returned to the house blocks to a warm welcome, a snack and time to relax before after school activities and tea.

Parents' comments, regarding the education provided at the school and the links with the teaching and care staff, were very complimentary. One parent stated, "The school is excellent in all areas". Another stated, "The school concentrates on improving children's self-help skills".

Comments from a placing social worker included, "Staff liaise with parents to ensure continuity of care".

The young people had the opportunity to choose from a wide variety of leisure activities. The inspector observed and joined in some of the activities. The young people clearly enjoyed themselves and the staff were encouraging and positive in their comments and feedback to the young people. One young person told the inspector that, "that they enjoyed the different activities including the sports centre visits as they liked playing football".

The activities were age appropriate and the young people were supported in exercising choice as well as following their set programmes, as appropriate. The staff were very aware of the need to follow individual plans, as well as help some young people look at different activities and ways of behaving when in the company of other young people and staff.

In surveys returned to the Commission, parents' comments included, "My child is stimulated and given interesting and pleasurable activities to take part in." "Good range of activities centred around real life experiences and preparation of adulthood."

The individual support provided for the young people by the staff team is of a high standard. The school does, however, need to identify at least one person, independent of the school, for the young people to contact directly or with support, if required.

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)

The Commission considers Standards 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.

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

Standards 2, 9, 17 and 20

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The relationships observed between staff, children and young people were good.

The plans of care for young people were generally good.

Young people were supported in maintaining contact with their families.

EVIDENCE:

The residential and teaching staff groups continue to work effectively together to encourage each young person's personal, social and educational development.

All of the interaction observed between staff and young people was warm and positive.

Parents' comments included, "The staff are consistent in the care provided." "Fantastic staff who know my child really well." "The school concentrates on improving children's self-help skills." "Supportive environment. Every need specifically catered for. A wealth of experience to cope with every problem. The kids love it there!"

The inspector was invited to have breakfast with some young people in one of the boarding houses. The young people were friendly and polite. They made the inspector breakfast and the inspector was impressed by their skills and confidence in the kitchen. The staff supported the young people to make choices and to participate in the morning's routines and conversation. The interaction between the staff and the young people was relaxed and respectful. The atmosphere was very homely. The young people told the inspector that they liked their boarding house and were happy at the school. They were clear that they could talk to the head teacher or staff if they were unhappy.

The young people on the FE site are more involved in the running of their house than at the main site. Clearly, this reflects their age and the expectation and need to support them with their leaving school plans.

The inspection highlighted the need for further work, at the main site, with regard to including the young people more in their life as a boarder. The inspector acknowledged that some work had been done on giving the young people more opportunity to "have their say and be more included", in some of the houses, though this is not consistent practice across the school.

The staff were well trained and aware of the different communication methods used by the young people. The inspector observed many instances of good practice by the staff in their use of communication passports and folders with the young people.

The inspector sampled several care files. They were well-organised and contained good information regarding the welfare and health needs and assessments of the young people. Relevant paperwork from placing agencies and schools were kept on files that were securely stored.

The Head of Care was very aware of the individual needs of the young people. She undertakes initial assessments on young people with their families and social workers as part of the admissions process.

The care plans contained good information for staff regarding the young people's behaviour management plans and individual targets. The staff were observed to follow some of the identified targets for the young people in their

care during the inspection. The inspector was impressed by their skills and knowledge.

The current care plans are written documents and the Head of Care acknowledged that they were not “child friendly”. She showed the inspector a new format for care planning that will support the young people in being more involved in producing their plans by using photographs, symbols or other forms of communication relevant to their individual needs and abilities.

There was evidence of some care reviews taking place but information from the reviews were not transferred to the young person’s care plan.

Examination of daily recording showed that the staff’s comments did not always reflect all aspects of the young person’s behaviour, actions and responses to staff’s interventions and their individual management plans. Some of the recording was repetitive and did not reflect some of the positive interactions and comments expressed by staff and observed during the inspection.

The young people do not have an allocated key worker, though the staff were very aware of the individual needs of the young people in their allocated houses. This was discussed with the Head of Care especially as the school uses a high level of agency staff at present. She acknowledged that this was standard that needed to be addressed.

Care files were examined and the inspector noted some instances of contact arrangements not being updated following reviews or changes in young people’s circumstances.

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):

Standards 23 and 24

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Accommodation provided by the school was of a high standard.

EVIDENCE:

The school accommodation, play and teaching facilities are of a very high standard and very well maintained.

The main school site provides the young people with lots of space and different facilities including a swimming pool, sensory room, activity areas and lots of play space. The young people were observed to enjoy all parts of their living and play space throughout the inspection.

There was evidence of the provision of relevant specialist equipment and adaptations for the young people. The premises provide a very secure environment for the young people though, as stated previously, some play and access areas would benefit from additional security lighting.

The staff in some of the houses had worked with the young people to display some of their artwork, alongside photographs of the staff on duty and of different activities and events done by the young people. However, some of the boarding houses, on the main site, would benefit from more homely touches, pictures and colour.

One member of staff told the inspector that, "the new site is lovely and offers the young people space to play and have time on their own." Some young people told the inspector that they liked their bedrooms.

Parents' comments included, "Very homely atmosphere. Children are well cared for in a clean, safe environment."

The Kelvedon (FE) site is an older building. The bedrooms were personalised more so than at main site. There was lots of evidence of games, music and age appropriate décor chosen by the young people. The garden was lovely and well maintained by the young people, with staff support.

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)

The Commission considers Standards 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.

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

Standards 1, 28, 30, 31 and 32

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Staff had a good understanding of the needs of young people.

Staffing levels and deployment were satisfactory for the number and needs of boarders though the level of agency staff employed is high.

Staff training had improved, but some identified training needs were identified. Few staff have National Vocational Qualifications.

The systems for monitoring some records were satisfactory.

EVIDENCE:

The school's Statement of Purpose reflected the services, aims and philosophy of the school. However, it did not contain all the required information such as the name of the designated child protection person, names and professional qualifications of staff, complaints procedures or more detailed information about boarding for parents and young people. The school has produced a new "welcome pack" for the young people using lots of photographs to better help their understanding. The inspector recommended more detail with regard to boarding facilities and expectations.

Staffing levels were sufficient to meet the needs of the young people accommodated by the school at the time of the inspection. There was evidence of staff providing a good level of supervision. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of the young people's needs. However, there was evidence of too many agency staff being employed on shifts, up to 50% on some occasions.

The Head of Care informed the inspector that new staff had recently been recruited so agency use will decrease. This was one of the few negative points commented upon by parents. As one parent stated, "the staff seem to change so often". Other parent comments included, "Head teacher who leads from the front!" "The staff seem to understand my child's' problems." "The ratio of staff to young people is high ensuring adequate care."

The staff interacted well with the young people. They were consistent in their comments with regard to certain behaviours shown by the young people. The inspector was impressed by the staff's use of distraction and other management strategies with the young people. The staff were very aware of the individual behaviours of the young people in their groups. There are allocated tasks including allocated time with the young people depending on their need and activity. They were observed to interact with the young people in a firm and pleasant manner when encouraging them to respect each other's space and right to being treated with respect.

The inspector spoke to many members of staff. One stated that they, "Liked the team and the training. Feels it is a supportive place to work."

The staff told the inspector that they received supervision. Though agency staff were not clear about the frequency of the supervision provided. The Head acknowledged that this was an area that required improving.

The staff verified induction training, including agency staff. Staff files were examined. They were well maintained and the training programme contained good evidence of induction training and commitment by staff to the training provided by the school.

One member of staff told the inspector that they had received good training and were looking forward to doing their National Vocational Qualification level 3. The Head of Care was aware of the need to work towards having the required proportion of care staff (80%) qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. She commented upon the difficulty in obtaining adequate training courses and assessors. The Head of Care was appropriately experienced and qualified.

Care staff had received a variety of training, including first aid, administration of medicines, understanding autism and Makaton. The Head of Care had attended update training for their role as the school's designated child protection co-ordinator. However, the inspection highlighted the need for additional staff training with regard to Epilepsy and food hygiene.

Systems were in place for the Head of Care or another senior member of staff to monitor the records specified in the National Minimum Standards. Sampled records showed evidence of this monitoring taking place.

The school's governors were regularly undertaking unannounced monitoring visits and producing written reports.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	2
18	X
19	X
28	3
29	X
30	2
31	2
32	3
33	X

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

No

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)
1	RS1	The school must ensure that the Statement of Purpose and Young Persons' Guide are produced in formats that enable a better understanding for young people. The Statement of Purpose must contain all the required information stated at NMS 1.3	
2	RS2	The school should ensure that young people are provided with opportunities to share their views and opinions about life at the school. This refers specifically to the main school site.	
3	RS4	The school should ensure that the complaints procedure is produced in a format that enables a better understanding for young people.	
4	RS17	The school should ensure that care plans are produced in formats that enable a better understanding for individual young people and are regularly reviewed and amended, as appropriate.	
5	RS17	The school should ensure that the young people have a key worker (or similar person) within the school.	
6	RS20	The school should ensure that information regarding individual contact arrangements for young people are held on their files.	

7	RS22	The school should ensure that the young people have access to at least one person, independent of the school, whom they may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school.	
8	RS26	The school should ensure that the external security and safety lighting is adequate.	
9	RS29	<p>The school should ensure that staff undertake training appropriate to their role and the needs of pupils.</p> <p>This relates to the need for the cook to undertake training with regard of specific dietary needs of some young people and for additional food hygiene training for care staff.</p>	
10	RS30	The school should ensure that all staff, including agency staff, receive regular supervision.	
11	RS31	The school should continue to work towards achieving the required level of care staff qualified to NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.	

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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