



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

### Ripplevale School

**Ripplevale School**  
**Chapel Lane**  
**Ripple**  
**Deal**  
**Kent**  
**CT14 8JG**

*Lead Inspector*  
vAlison Spreadbridge

*Unannounced Inspection*  
5<sup>th</sup> December 2006      09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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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](http://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](http://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

<b>Name of school</b>	Ripplevale School
<b>Address</b>	Ripplevale School Chapel Lane Ripple Deal Kent CT14 8JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01304 373866
<b>Fax number</b>	01304 381011
<b>Email address</b>	info@rippleraleschool.co.uk
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	The Principal
<b>Name of Head</b>	Mr Schofield
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	9 -16
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	2/3/06

## **Brief Description of the School:**

Ripplevale School is a residential special school, situated in the village of Ripple, near Deal, Kent. It is about ten minutes drive away from the main town, beach and facilities of Deal.

The school provides day and boarding education within a supported Learning Environment for up to 45 boys aged 9-16 years who are described as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. At the time of the inspection the principal explained to the Inspector that the school was operating with considerably less children. This has been a planned action and resulted in a comparatively stable and settled environment. The school has in this manner to appropriately assessed pupils whose needs can be met by the school and consideration can be made for the careful integration within the existing children group.

The school is set within its own large grounds and the boarding accommodation is contained within the main house. The residential provision is managed by a Head of Care, Deputy Head of Care and team of residential support workers, with the Principal and two working Proprietors overseeing matters. At the time of the inspection there were 12 residential pupils and 17 day pupils. The school has achieved the Investors in People award.

# SUMMARY

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

Alison Spreadbridge carried out the unannounced inspection on The 5th December 2006. The inspector was in the school from 09:30am to 3:00 pm. During that time the Principal, some of the pupils and staff were spoken to. A tour of the premises was made and some documentation was seen.

The school house is comfortable and offers the boys spacious bedrooms, Comfortable lounges. The dining room is used by all of the young people attending the school throughout the school day.

The school offers the children a wide range of activities both in and after school. On the day of the inspection a group of boys were going to visit the Charlton Football club, view the grounds and stay to watch a match. Some of the young players from the football club had been spending time at the school coaching some of the boys on a Wednesday afternoon.

There are currently twelve boys boarding in the school.

The school is responding to the Disability Act and will be having a ramp to allow access to the house.

The school fees range from £25,143.00 for dayboys to 56,835 for boarders.

## **What the school does well:**

The school has made great strides in the last eighteen months to ensuring the admissions process is more robust; thereby ensuring the boys admitted into the school benefit from the small classes, education and social experiences the school is able to offer.

The young people have a six-week assessment period before the placement is confirmed.

The teachers and care staff are committed to providing the pupils with good role models and clear boundaries.

A recent report prepared by Investors in people state that the staff team work across the school is excellent. There is a consistently high quality of people management. The principal and deputies lead by example.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

One of the bathrooms has been refurbished to a high standard. Redecoration of one of the dormitories is finished and new furniture has been provided. Each young person is provided with a lockable facility in their room. The senior care staff have received training in the administration of medication. The older boys now have electronic locks fitted to their bedroom doors, these can be overridden by staff in the event of an emergency or if the young people mislay their keys. The school has moved to a programme of healthier eating in line with the government strategy.

## **What they could do better:**

Some of the other bedrooms are in need of redecoration. The Principal said that the school has an ongoing refurbishment programme.

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](mailto: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.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

# 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):

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**

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

The school ensure the young peoples assessed health needs are monitored and professional advice is always available when needed.

## EVIDENCE:

Boys are admitted to the school between the ages of 9 – 16. The school is meeting its mission statement to ensure the children are provided with good quality care and an education which meets their assessed needs. The school is organised around a moral code. The staff have regular weekly staff meetings and daily briefings are held to ensure all staff are aware of the children's behaviour and support required that day.

The local doctor visits the school once a fortnight. Appointments can also be made at the doctor's surgery if needed. There has been a problem accessing an NHS dentist locally, however arrangements are made for the boys to be seen for emergency treatment.

The boys are able to remain at school and stay in their rooms for minor ailments however if they are really ill or thought to be contagious then arrangements are made for them to go home.

The senior care staff are responsible for the administration of any prescribed medication. These are stored securely, and Medication Record Sheet were seen to have been completed correctly.

It was noted during the inspection that should more boys require their medication to be stored on site, the medication cupboard in situ would need to be bigger. It is appropriate at this time. The fridge used for the storage of medication should be a lockable one.

The school meals provided are varied and according to the young people and staff the meals are excellent. They said the portions are a good size and they could have seconds. The chef said that the school has moved over to a healthier menu in line with government guidelines. If the young people are concerned about food issues they can raise their concerns with the school council.

The day pupils are able to join in with the breakfast club to ensure all pupils have eaten before school begins.

# 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):**

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

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

The schools policies and procedures ensure the children safety is maintained.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Some of the young people are required to share a room. These are large rooms offering the young people adequate room for their personal belongings. Each child has a lockable facility. Privacy is maintained when the young people are washing or bathing. The boarding house now has refurbished bathrooms on both floors. The young people spoken to said they did not mind sharing a room, and they could personalise their part of the room if they wanted to.

The staff said that they all receive training around child protection issues, which is updated annually. The last course was run in May of this year.

The young people are supplied with the schools complaints procedures as part of the welcome pack they are given before joining the school. The young people said they felt their complaints were listened to. If they had worries they could speak to their keyworker, or any of the staff or discuss it at the weekly house meetings.

The school has a very clear anti-bullying policy. Some of the young people said they have been talking about bullying and they had an anti-bullying week and they made posters to put up around the school. One of them was seen in the school reception area. The young people seemed confident that if they were seen to be bullied then one of the teachers or care staff would intervene and appropriate action taken. The school has designed pink forms on which any bullying incidents are written. These are then forwarded to the office for recording.

All significant incidents are responded to, the incidents recorded in full with the actions taken. The incident form is then sent to the office and put on file. The responsible individual or social workers are informed of all serious incidents, which take place during school time. Child protection training took place in May. The staff said they receive updated training in child protection each year.

The school policy for unauthorised absences was seen. There have been no absences recorded since the last inspection.

The school has a sound recruitment policy, which is adhered to. One of the staff files seen did not have all of the information required under the policy but this particular member of staff had been in the school for a long time. All other files seen met the required criteria.

# 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):

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

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

The young people spoken to said they felt they were happy in the school and they felt they were achieving.

### EVIDENCE:

The children are encouraged to do their homework each evening. Staff are available to support the children on a one to one basis when required. The children have access to the schools computers allowing them supervised Internet access. The young people spoken to were very interested and enthusiastic about both IT and sport.

The staff are divided into two teams, one week a team will be assisting in the classrooms and the next week they work in the home. The two teams have a period of two hours each day when all are on site and able to discuss any concerns around the home and the children.

The boys are encouraged to settle down at the end of the day by reading a page from their book. This helps to settle the boys and also aids their reading skills. The principal said that the reading age of some of the boys when entering the school can be quite low so this additional reading time can be very

beneficial. There are five staff on duty in the evening so time can be given to supporting any individual child who requires it.

The boys spoken to said they liked the school and the staff were good. They were very keen to say how much they enjoyed sport in the school and especially the Charlton footballers who had been visiting the school on a Wednesday afternoon, one of the boys said he and some other boys was going to visit the ground that evening and would be staying to watch the match.

The young people said they found the house comfortable. They enjoyed the out of school activities, which were varied and included army cadets. They said that sometimes they went out to the cinema or swimming. They were quite positive about the benefits they would get from being at the school.

## **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):**

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

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

The young people said they felt part of the school and any concerns they had could be taken to staff and they would be listened to.

### **EVIDENCE:**

The children said that they have a school council and they are able to raise any concerns they might have. The main concerns have been around food choices, activities and the use of the two lounges. The meetings were minuted and staff take issues forward to the staff team meetings and responses are then feed back at the next young peoples meeting. The young people felt their concerns were listened to and sometimes things would be changed. They said the staff would give them an explanation if things could not be changed or if they would have to wait.

The children have planned admissions to the school. They come into the school for a six-week assessment period. The Principal said that greater emphasis has been placed on the pre assessment process made before the child is admitted to the school. This has ensured that more suitable placements are made which benefits both the young person and the more general school environment.

The children are resident in the school from Sunday night until Friday afternoon. The majority of the children live with their families or other carers. There is a telephone in the house so that the children can make contact with their family and friends. A number of the young people have mobile phones for after school use.

The children said that on the whole they liked the staff. They said they were fair and the sanctions applied such as early to bed, no television or a missed activity was reasonable. They said they had been given a school guide when they arrived and information about the school rules had been given to them.

# 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):

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

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

The young people benefit from living in a comfortable, clean and tidy home sited in large grounds which offers a range of outside activities.

## EVIDENCE:

The young people are able to wear their own clothes in the evenings. They have small wardrobes and a chest of drawers to store their personal items in. The bedrooms were clean and tidy and it was clear the young people felt alright about leaving their personal items around in their rooms.

The house is nicely decorated throughout. There is some wear and tear on the corridors but the staff said that it is part of the refurbishment programme, which is ongoing. The lounges are comfortable and homily. The two lounges are divided between the younger and older pupils.

The young people have plenty of space to play outside, and the activities programme evidenced that outside activities take place on a regular basis.

# 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):**

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

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

The school is managed in the best interests of the children, and the staff team is well supported.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The school management is excellent. All of the staff team are committed to providing the young people with an environment in which they have the

opportunity to achieve. There have been some changes to the staff team since the new Principal took up office but this seems to have been for the good of all. The staff team is now very cohesive and is creating a positive working and living environment for the young people. According to the staff the more regular staff meetings are proving to be positive events. The Principal said he has encouraged an open door policy for parents, staff and young people to come and speak with him about their concerns. The teaching and care staff are able to offer visible support across the school and home throughout the twenty four hour period.

The young people spoken to said they liked the school and particularly liked the food and sport. One young person spoken to said he hopes he has made enough progress to return to mainstream schooling. The questionnaire sent out to the parents and other responsible adults had a positive response to the care the young people are receiving. A number of them referred to the fact that this was the first time some of the young people had received and participated in any full time education for some time.

Staff training is taking place on a regular basis it has included fire training, health and safety, child protection, first aid and medication training. There are regular staff meetings taking place weekly with daily briefings and staff handovers to ensure staff are aware of the individual children's needs. The staff said they felt the Team-Teach training has been very successful. It has enabled the staff to offer a consistent approach to the more challenging behaviour exhibited at times by the young people.





# 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

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	4
<b>15</b>	4

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

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

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

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

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	4
<b>18</b>	3
<b>19</b>	3
<b>28</b>	4
<b>29</b>	3
<b>30</b>	4
<b>31</b>	3
<b>32</b>	4
<b>33</b>	3

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

<b>RECOMMENDED ACTIONS</b>			
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

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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