



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

### **West Kirby Residential School**

**Meols Drive  
West Kirby  
Wirral  
CH48 5DH**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Mr Nick Veysey**

*Announced Inspection*  
**27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> February 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

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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>	West Kirby Residential School
<b>Address</b>	Meols Drive West Kirby Wirral CH48 5DH
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 632 3201
<b>Fax number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	garethwilliams@wkrs.co.uk
<b>Provider Web address</b>	www.wkrs.co.uk
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	Board of Governors
<b>Name of Head</b>	Mr Gareth Wyn Williams (Headteahcer)
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Mrs Yvonne Blackledge
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	9 to 16
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	28/2/05

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

West Kirby Residential School is a non-maintained special school, which provides primary and secondary education for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; medical conditions including aspergers syndrome; and speech, language and communication disorders.

Currently 101 boys and girls attend the school, including 32 residential pupils, from many parts of England and Wales. There is a variety of boarding arrangements available depending on the needs of the child, ranging from one to four nights each week. The residential accommodation is divided into four separate groups, three for boys according to their age, and one for girls.

The school is located near the centre of West Kirby and is close to bus stops, a train station, leisure centres, swimming pools, youth clubs, shops, the beach, parks and other schools. More information about the school may be found at [www.wkrs.co.uk](http://www.wkrs.co.uk).

The school was inspected by OFSTED in January 2004 and a copy of the report may be obtained from [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

# SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place over two days in February 2006 and a total of seventeen and a half hours. The inspector spoke with children staying in the residential accommodation, and school staff including the Principal, the Head of Care, the Deputy Head of Care, Residential Team Leaders, the School Nurse, care staff, members of the Behavioural Education Support Team (BEST), the Continuing Professional Development coordinator, and two of the school's governors. The inspector had a look around the school and the residential accommodation. Also, examined written records and policies, and read questionnaires filled in by children, parents, placing authorities and staff about their views and experiences of the school.

## What the school does well:

West Kirby is a school where children are happy and well looked after by caring, skilled and competent staff. The school has a warm friendly atmosphere and children feel listened to, valued and safe. Children enjoy attending the school and said:

'I feel safe and well looked after'

'I like the responsibility and respect we are given. The best thing that has happened to me is being helped to improve'

'They have loads of things to do and you can see your friends'

Children's families also are happy with the school. A parents said 'the best things about the school are its commitment by all the staff to help my child. The caring way my child is looked after helps me when he is away from home. I feel that the school is a home from home environment.' Another said 'the staff work really well with parents and there is a lot of involvement we work closely together to provide consistency'.

Staff have an excellent understanding of children's individual needs and the support they need. Children valued the work staff do in helping them to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities to become more independent, and feel more confident both at school and out in the community. Children are supported to deal with the challenges they face and to play an active part in the community. They are encouraged to try new things and take some risks in a supportive and controlled way.

All parts of the school are very good at sharing information about children's experiences and needs to make sure that they are being cared for properly in a safe and secure environment.

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

A lot of work has been done to promote children's health needs and to help them learn about healthy lifestyles. Children are being given the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge about their own health needs and encouraged to take more responsibility for their own personal care.

The school has good systems in place for the safe management of children's medication including controlled drugs.

The accommodation is homely and young people have been encouraged to choose how their rooms are decorated. A child said 'I like my room, it has been painted Chelsea green.' Also, the accommodation for the junior boys has been improved.

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

The school's recruitment and selection procedure needs to be reviewed in line with recent guidance to make sure that all the relevant information about people wishing to work at the school is collected and checked out.

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.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

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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

Children welfare is closely monitored and their health needs are well met. The promotion of healthy lifestyles is taken seriously. Children have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge about their own health needs and encouraged to take more responsibility for their own personal care.

## EVIDENCE:

Children said that staff give them advice about staying healthy and how to look after themselves. The school nurse said that they are planning to work with children in developing their own health plans and information booklets to enable children to find out more about their own health needs and play a greater part in managing them.

Children's records clearly described their health needs and the arrangements for making sure that good health is maintained. They receive regular health checks at appropriate intervals, and ongoing specialist appointments were being kept. The outcomes of health appointments and details about treatment are recorded. A written record is kept of all significant illnesses, accidents and injuries to children. There were several good examples of staff monitoring closely the health of children with complex medical needs. Records also show that the school works closely with health professionals and specialist medical services, and children's families to meet children's health needs.

The promotion of healthy lifestyles is taken seriously. Information about health promotion is available for children including advice on healthy eating, exercise, alcohol, smoking, and drugs. Staff described the efforts they were making to give young people advice and encouragement about healthy living. Children and staff have worked really hard to gain the Healthy School's Gold Award. The nurses have rearranged their working hours to enable them to have more time to provide children with advice and support on health and social issues such as diet, exercise, personal hygiene, sexual health and relationships.

The nurse and staff described how they helped children with their personal care staff sensitively. Children's records showed that children were making progress in developing skills and knowledge in managing their own personal care. The school has clear guidance for staff involved in intimate care tasks to make sure that tasks are carried out sensitively and respect children's privacy. Staff carrying out skilled health tasks have been suitably trained and their competency has been assessed.

There are clear policies and arrangements in place to make sure that medication is managed safely. Also, there are suitable arrangements for the storage and recording of any controlled drugs kept in the school. Medicines given to children were recorded accurately and were safely stored. There are sound systems in place to make sure children receive the correct the medication and the dose advised by the prescribing doctor. Medicines were labelled with the name of the child they are prescribed for and the records showed the amounts of medication received into the school and the amounts that go home at the end of the week.

Staff have received training in a range of health issues including the management of medication, dealing with epilepsy, and skilled health tasks. Also, staff and older children have gained a recognised First Aid qualification.

# 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, 7, 10, 26, & 27.

Staff are good at creating an atmosphere where children feel safe and able to raise any concerns and worries confident that they will be listened to and their worries will be dealt with.

## EVIDENCE:

Children said they had enough privacy. The school respects children's rights to privacy and confidentiality. There are clear guidelines for staff on privacy and confidentiality, and searching children's possessions. Information about children is securely stored. Children have access to telephones where they may make private calls.

Children knew about how to make a complaint if they were unhappy about how they were being treated. They described they could raise concerns by talking to staff, in group meetings, and through the school council. Records showed that children were able to use the complaints procedure effectively. All complaints were dealt with thoroughly and the outcome was recorded.

Children said that staff gave them good advice about keeping safe. Records showed that staff gave children guidance about keeping safe and telling them if they had any concerns. Staff were knowledgeable about child protection procedures and issues, and described what they do to make sure children are safe. Staff have attended child protection training and work closely with other agencies such as health workers and social services, and children's families to make sure they are safe. The school is particularly good at alerting social services when they have concerns about a child.

There are arrangements and assessments in place for dealing with the potential risk of bullying. The staff are aware of which children may be vulnerable to bullying, and the times and places where bullying may take place. Staff are vigilant and supervise children closely enabling them to anticipate any problems and deal with them quickly enabling children to feel safe in the school. Most of the children said that bullying was not a problem in the school. A few children said that they felt bullied sometimes. Children also said there were lots of people they could talk to if they are unhappy or worried about anything. One child said that when they had been bullied 'staff sorted it out'.

There is some excellent work being carried out by the school to encourage socially acceptable behaviour and improving outcomes for children by helping to deal with their frustrations and how they get on with other people.

Children were aware of the school's expectations for their behaviour, and were clear about what punishments may be used. They felt that punishments were fair, and that staff discuss behaviour with them a lot. Staff are able to set and maintain suitable boundaries for children. They described how they use negotiation and communication techniques to encourage socially acceptable behaviour, such as praising young people for positive behaviour, and discussing why certain behaviour is not acceptable and the consequences of such behaviour. Children's placement plans clearly describe arrangements for managing any challenging behaviours. The minutes from staff meetings show that any behavioural issues are discussed and strategies for dealing with them are agreed.

The school uses an incentive scheme based on children's behaviour and their individual targets to encourage socially acceptable behaviour and to help them develop their skills. There were examples of targets being set for children to develop their social skills by listening to what other people had to say and taking turns playing games.

The school has a Behavioural Education Support Team (BEST) to monitor children's behaviour and offer support to children who may be experiencing some difficulties, and to provide advice and guidance for staff in the management of difficult behaviour. The team use information technology to record all incidents of difficult or challenging behaviour involving pupils, including incidents of bullying, and where staff have used physical intervention. Detailed information was gathered about each incident, which is analysed to see what could be learned from the incident to help the child involved and to develop behaviour management plans for them. Information technology is used to help identify and review patterns of children's behaviour, responses from staff, the use of different techniques of physical interventions. This information has been used to understand children's behaviour and how best to lessen the risk of similar incidents in the future.

The information is also used to inform staff training needs in behaviour management. The BEST team provides support for staff throughout the school in the management of behaviour by offering advice and guidance about how to support individual pupils, discussions with staff following incidents, and sharing information. They provide training for staff in safe and appropriate physical intervention techniques, the circumstances when they can be used, and training in reducing or avoiding the need to use physical intervention. Also the team are planning training in behavioural management for other people working with children such as drivers and escorts who bring them to school.

The team offers support to pupils who are finding it difficult to cope in class or assisting pupils settle into the school. The school has a room where pupils can go to receive support. The room was decorated in a way to provide a relaxed and calm environment. These sessions are usually timetabled and provide the opportunity for pupils to carry on with their education in a quiet environment and preventing them from falling behind. In addition it provides the opportunity for pupils to discuss any concerns or issues that may be troubling them.

The school makes good use of written risk assessments to identify and manage any potential dangers including young people's activities and the building itself. Suitable health and safety checks have been carried out. Fire safety system and equipment are checked at suitable intervals.

Staff files showed that the school collects and verifies relevant information about people wishing to work in the school to make sure children are protected. This includes taking up written references and completing checks with the Criminal Records Bureau. However, the recruitment system needs to be reviewed in line with recent guidance from DfES. The Principal and Head of Support Services are attending training about recruitment in the near future.

# 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 & 22

Children receive individual support when they need it, and have the opportunity to take part in a variety of educational and leisure activities.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Care staff were aware of children's educational needs. There was evidence of excellent communication between education and care staff about children's learning and development. Educational needs are clearly described in young people's placement plans. There were clear arrangements for children doing homework and children were able to get help from staff if they were having difficulties. One child said 'they help me when I can't understand it'. Another said 'staff help me with my homework, listen to me read'.

Comments from children and staff, and the records described how children get individual support when they needed it suitable to their needs and wishes and feelings. There were many excellent examples of staff working with children to meet their needs and develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Children were getting advice and help with personal problems, identity and cultural issues, road safety, and building their self-esteem, confidence and independence. One child said 'I am a lot more confident about what I do.' A parent said 'staff have a good knowledge of each child's individual problems and can deal with them accordingly'.

Children are encouraged to take more responsibility for themselves appropriate to their age and needs, and to take controlled risks such as using public transport, going to college, and shopping at the supermarket.

Children have the opportunity for specialist support with physiotherapy, speech therapy and art therapy. Staff are particularly good at working together and sharing information to enable them to support children, meet their needs, and encourage them to develop their skills and abilities.

# 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, 17 & 20

Children are encouraged to give their views and to make decision affecting their lives and the running of the school. Placement plans clearly describe young people's needs and how they will be met. Appropriate contact between children and families and friends is encouraged to help them maintain relationships.

## EVIDENCE:

Children play a significant part in the running of the school and are encouraged to talk about their experiences of school life. Children said that their opinions are listened to and taken seriously. Comments from staff and records show that children are encouraged to express their views on all matters affecting them including everyday decisions, and are encouraged to join in developing school policies. Group meetings are arranged and run by the children and there is an active and assertive school council.

Children and staff get on and treated each other with respect creating a warm and friendly atmosphere in which children felt secure and comfortable. A child said 'staff are class'. Any disagreements are sorted out to make sure that there are no on-going difficulties.



Children have comprehensive written placement plans outlining their needs and how these will be met. They also include details of any significant risks to their safety and a written risk assessment showing how the risks are managed. Staff have good understanding of children's needs and are knowledgeable about individual placement plans. Children are clear about the plans for their future and said they were in agreement with them.

Children have regular telephone contact with their families and friends to help them maintain relationships, and families are encouraged to visit them at school. Parents said that they are encouraged to visit the school and staff are 'very polite and welcoming.'

Comments from parents and the written records show that staff work very closely with children's families and are good at letting them know about their children's progress and involving them in decisions affecting their lives. One parent said 'The staff are very approachable and keep us informed of our child's progress'. Another said staff 'talk to us, not down to us.'

# 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):

24 & 25

The school provides suitable accommodation for the needs of the young people.

## EVIDENCE:

The residential accommodation is of a good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children. The accommodation was homely, clean and tidy, and decorated to a high standard. Children had personalised their rooms and have had some choice in how they were decorated. There was enough space for them to store their belongings and clothes, and for them to do their homework. There are rooms available where children are able to meet visitors in private and space for activities.

Work has been done to improve the standard of the children's rooms and bathrooms in the junior boys group. The bathroom facilities are of a high standard and suitable to meet the needs of children, and enable them to carry out their personal care in privacy.

# 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):**

18, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 & 33

The school is well managed and efficiently run providing a safe and stable environment for the children studying and living there. Caring, experienced and competent staff look after the children.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Staff have clear roles and responsibilities, and know where they fit in the school. Communication between different parts of the school is excellent. The senior management team provides effective management and clear leadership. The school is run in a way that delivers good education and childcare practice.

The standard of recording was consistently good and gave a detailed picture of each child's experiences at the school. Individual records for children are well organised, comprehensive and up to date containing relevant information

about them. The records show how the school is working to meet children's needs and describe what progress they are making. Staff produce detailed reports about young people's experiences and progress in relation to their specific needs for children's reviews. The outcome of review meetings are clearly recorded, highlight achievements and progress. Children are encouraged to read what is written about them and to make written comments about how they feel things are going.

There are clear staffing arrangements. Staffing levels are good and there is sufficient staff to meet the needs of the children staying at the school. Staff are caring, competent and experienced, and said they enjoy working in the school. Also, they said they were well supported on a daily basis and by regular supervision. They are clear about their role and responsibilities, the structure of the school and whom they are accountable to. Staff and seniors meetings take place regularly and are recorded. The staff said they supported each other and worked in a consistent way, and are good at sharing information about the children's education and care.

Staff have received training appropriate to their role and the specific needs of children who come to the school. There is a continuing training programme throughout the year. There is a commitment to staff gaining relevant qualifications and to working towards making sure staff have at least NVQ Level 3 in caring for children and young people or an equivalent qualification. The majority of the staff have gained NVQ Level 3 relevant to their job and the others are working towards completing it. Staff in management roles are encouraged to attend training to develop their skills and knowledge, and obtain management qualifications.

There are management systems in place for monitoring the running of the school and the quality of care provided. Records show that the school was reviewing its practice and looking at ways to improve the services it provides. School governors have clear responsibilities for different aspects of school, and visit regularly playing a more active role in the daily life of the school and the children who study there.

# 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>
<b>14</b>	4
<b>15</b>	X

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	3
<b>4</b>	3
<b>5</b>	4
<b>6</b>	4
<b>7</b>	4
<b>8</b>	X
<b>10</b>	4
<b>26</b>	3
<b>27</b>	2

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

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

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

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	X
<b>18</b>	4
<b>19</b>	X
<b>28</b>	3
<b>29</b>	4
<b>30</b>	4
<b>31</b>	2
<b>32</b>	4
<b>33</b>	4

Yes

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

### **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	RS27	The Principal should review the school's recruitment and selection procedure in line with NMS 27.2 and guidance from DfES.	
2	RS31	The Principal should make sure that a minimum of 80% of all care staff has completed NVQ3 in caring for children and young people or an equivalent qualification.	

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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