



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

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

Skilts School

Gorcott Hill

Redditch

Worcestershire

B98 9ET

19th October 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

The role of CSCI is to:

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

Inspection Methods & Findings

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

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

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School

Skilts School

Address

Gorcott Hill, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 9ET

Tel No:

01527 853851

Fax No:

01527 857949

Email Address:

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

Birmingham City Council Education Department

Name of Head

Mr Charles Herriotts

CSCI Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

10/2/04

Date of Inspection Visit		19th October 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	Christy Wannop	073698
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Jo Johnson	
Name of CSCI Inspector	3		
Name of CSCI Inspector	4		
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):			
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Charles Herriotts	

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

Inspections assess the extent to which the school is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, published by the Secretary of State under Section 87C of the Children Act 1989, and other relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 as amended. Residential Special Schools are not registered as children's homes unless they accommodate, or arrange accommodation for, one or more children for more than 295 days a year.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Skilts School. The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Recommended action by the school
- Advisory recommendations on boarding welfare
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the lay assessor (where relevant)
- The Head's response and proposed action plan to address findings

INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections are undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children Act 1989 as amended, with additional visits as required.

The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Skills is a residential special school operated by Birmingham Education Authority. All children are boys aged between 5 and 11 years. The majority of the boys are in years 5 and 6, the last 2 years of their primary education. There are currently 32 residential pupils and 9 day pupils. Children stay between 2 and 4 nights a week. This is an increase in numbers since last year, when only 22 boys used the residential service.

The school can accommodate 52 children with behavioural and emotional difficulties. All children have been placed by Birmingham with a "Statement of Special Educational Needs". There are 2 detached residential "houses" with 2 separately staffed and self-contained units each.

The school closes on Friday evening until Monday morning. Some staff live on site in separate accommodation.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

The focus of inspections undertaken by The Commission for Social Care Inspection is upon outcomes for children and young people and progress on meeting National Minimum Standards. The inspection will also focus on aspects of service provision that need further development or that pose the most significant potential risk to children and young people.

For a full overview of the operation of this service, this report should be read in conjunction with the report arising from the last inspection of this service, which took place on 10th February 2004

This announced inspection was carried out on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during October. Two inspectors spent time during the evening and morning observing care practice, interviewing key staff and consulting with children.

Following the last inspection the home has taken positive action to meet the requirements made. For this announced inspection, pre-inspection information, children's and parents questionnaires were sent to the provider prior to the inspection taking part. The information

and feedback from the above has been included within this report.

Parents made very positive comments about the staff and their children's experience at the school: "brilliant" "they do all the best for the kids" " how good all staff are" " the school and staff do an excellent job" "the rules are very good" " the staff and school have made a significant difference."

One parent asked for formal notification in writing when incidents occurred and to make plans directly with adults about increasing stays before raising the matter with children. This parent commented that some children might manipulate some staff. Another commented positively about the written weekly diary between home and school. One requested a bedtime story for their son.

21 children completed a pictorial questionnaire. They gave generally very positive views. " Sleeping is good and it has improved my behaviour and sleeping pattern and I think school is the best school in the world." One child mentioned missing his family and another was unhappy about several areas such as privacy and care.

Of the many requirements made last year, the school has met most. This is a credit to the management team, particularly in the light of having had a "mini-" OFSTED inspection in May 2004 and a full OFSTED in June 2004. Outstanding recommendations are largely to do with the level of resourcing by Birmingham Education Authority to meet the mental health, behavioural and psychological needs of the children. The Head is actively seeking to progress this through contacts with the Primary Care Trust.

Throughout this report scores are given to indicate the extent to which this service complies with each National Minimum Standard. The current performance of the service is summarised under the headings outlined below.

Statement of Purpose

This standard has been met.

The school has created a new folder style brochure and makes a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils. There is an introduction to the school that has been written by children and is pinned up and freely available around the children's living areas and the school.

Children's Rights

All three standards have been met; one has exceeded expectations.

There are excellent developments in promoting children's rights and in the school's continuing accessibility to parents. Children are encouraged to make decisions about their lives. There are well thought-out care plans and house meetings and a fully operational school council.

The school has plenty of systems to deal with sorting out problematic issues informally for children and all children knew how, when and to whom to make a complaint. The school's formal complaints procedure was not used to deal with one matter raised by a parent during the last academic year.

Privacy and confidentiality are respected.

Child Protection

Four standards have been met, of which one has exceeded the standard.

Children's welfare is promoted and this is evident from much improved documentation. Staff take a pro-active approach guided by a documented risk management and care planning strategy.

Children are protected from abuse. There is a framework for working together to safeguard children, established with Moses Reid, Team manager for Children at Stratford Social Services Department. Tony Pridding and Charles Herriotts are the key people with responsibility for child protection. A second member of the care team has been trained and is also designated as a child protection coordinator. The school is involved in a cross border child protection group to establish good practice around the often problematic child protection procedures experienced between Birmingham, Warwickshire and Skilts.

The Head of Care has planned to identify children at risk and put in place formal protective strategies within the school based on the extended care plan risk assessment.

Children are protected from bullying and the staff have used creative strategies to reduce incidence of bullying.

Systems are in place to make notifications to commission and other appropriate authorities. Arrangements for safeguarding children who leave without permission are sound in practice.

Care and Control

Two standards have exceeded expectations.

Relationships between staff and children are based on honesty and mutual respect.

Positive behaviour is encouraged. There are constructive staff responses to unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors saw calm, well-mannered children and staff reported no significant incidents or physical intervention in the residential houses since the beginning of the school term. Flashpoints have been imaginatively avoided through closer staff supervision and staggered break times so that classes take natural breaks and not all children are out at the same time.

Quality of Care

Of these six standards, five were fully met, one exceeded the standard and one almost met the standard.

The school has identified and is working on managing the impact of late school year admissions on the existing residential group.

Educational progress is promoted. There are varied leisure activities at the school and in the community. Children have plenty of opportunity to develop activities they want through the school council.

Health and care needs are identified and promoted through an excellent school health team. Staff have only limited access to psychological and behavioural support services. The Head reports a difficulty in accessing a school service from the Primary Care Trust and has appealed for a better Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) specifically for the school. It is reported that a citywide review has taken place. The school caters for some children with a high level of need still living with parents or carers. Outstanding recommendations remain for a mental health and therapeutic service that can meet the needs of the children at the school.

Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals, though the school food budgets have been cut. The food is popular with the children and staff.

Children are encouraged to be independent and take care of personal needs.

Care Planning and Placement Plan

Of these six standards, five were fully met. One standard was not met.

Children's needs, development and progress are recorded in a way that reflects their individuality. Children's records are good and confidentiality is respected. There are now the beginnings of good child-centred care plans. The development of these reflects the team effort made by the residential staff and the Head of Care. Aims identified for children should be realistic, specific, achievable and understandable to children. The Head of Care has established systems for monitoring recording.

General school records are satisfactory. The school must always obtain a copy of the local authority Looked after Children care plan. Children can maintain safe and agreed contact with parents and siblings; all return every weekend to their homes.

All staff are conscious that they are working with children at an early stage in their life and that it was even more crucial to establish positive behaviour and tackle psychological difficulties. Staff give children all the support they can. All staff recognise that some children at Skilts need far more in terms of a therapeutic, psychology service as offered by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. The current service to the children at the school is not adequate. The Head reports that various reviews by the PCT and LEA have taken place but none have yet resulted in an increase in provision for the children.

Premises

Four standards were inspected. One was met. Three are almost met.

Accommodation has been better decorated to improve the surroundings. It is generally pleasant and has sufficient space and facilities. Inspectors were pleased to see children now have mirrors and private phones and to hear how much children liked to have them. Children have requested more mirrors in school toilets. This is all part of children feeling valued and having a positive sense of self. Many bedrooms now have a better standard of décor and have been personalised by children. There are new duvets and bedding.

The school needs to improve the environment to promote privacy in bathrooms. Inspectors note that boys report better privacy than last year and use is made of unoccupied bedrooms for dayboys to change into their school uniforms. Showers in Otter and Seal must be sufficient and must work. One bath has no cold tap! Children still do not have a lockable personal space. Recommendations made last year must be acted upon.

The school has taken steps to promote health, safety and security. Full risk assessments are in place. The school provides a setting that is generally safe and secure and much enjoyed by the children.

Staffing

Four standards were inspected. All were fully met.

Staff recruitment is safe and organised to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers. Inspectors commend the efforts made to fill the gaps in staff recruitment files from many years ago.

Staff understand children's needs and use the skills they have to meet them. Staff demonstrated their competence throughout the inspection. Inspectors noted their imaginative responses to children and their increasing professionalism evident in their own analysis of their work.

Staff access external training and the Head of Care has organised in some excellent in-house courses. NVQ 3 is taking off for care staff and NVQ 4 for three, including the Head of Care.

Staff are well supported, enabled, developed and pushed by an excellent Head of Care to

safeguard and promote children's welfare. Supervision and induction is established. The Head reported that the previous experience of low staffing leading to flash points for children was not happening this year, despite similar staff shortages. Inspectors note that this could be a combination of low numbers and the beginning of the school year, but is also in part due to good management by the Head and the senior management team. (SMT)

Organisation and Management

Three standards were inspected. All were fully met.

Children receive care and services from competent residential staff based at the school.

There are well-organised and functioning management teams for health, safety and maintenance, care and general school management. These teams coordinate and communicate their business effectively into action.

The governing body monitors the welfare of children in the school and the Chair of Governors has been an interested participant in the inspection process for the second year.

NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

Is Notification of any failure to safeguard and promote welfare to be made by the Commission for Social Care Inspection to the Local Education Authority or Department for Education and Skills under section 87(4) of the Children Act 1989 arising from this inspection?

NO

Notification to be made to: **Local Education Authority
Secretary of State**

NO

NO

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION

Recommended Actions from the last Inspection visit fully implemented?

NO

If No, the findings of this inspection on any Recommended Actions not implemented are listed below:

No	Standard	Recommended actions	
1	RS14	Where relevant, specialist therapists or clinicians must be commissioned to work directly with children to address special needs or to guide staff in this regard.	1/10/04
2	RS25	Improve bath and toilet facilities. Make bathrooms and showers more private. Fit appropriate locks that meet the need for privacy and safety.	1/10/04
3	RS30	Provide external specialist guidance for staff working with emotionally damaged and behaviourally challenging children.	1/10/04
4	RS1	The head teacher should commission and provide increased specific psychological and behavioural support to the residential service.	1/9/04

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

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

RECOMMENDED ACTION

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

No	Standard*	Recommended Action	
1	RS14	Where relevant, specialist therapists or clinicians must be commissioned to work directly with children to address special needs or to guide staff in this regard.	Overdue
2	RS22	Ensure that identified need for specialist input can be provided either at the school or by visiting specialists before a child is admitted to the school.	Overdue
3	*RQN	Conduct a safe care/protective behaviours analysis of the school, incorporating children's own perceptions of personal safety, physical environment, staff training and skills and care planning.	Overdue
4	RS25	Improve bath and toilet facilities. Make bathrooms and showers more private. Fit appropriate locks that meet the need for privacy and safety.	Overdue
5	RS26	Put in place a whole school Fire Safety Risk assessment.	1/3/05
6	RS29	Provide external specialist guidance for staff working with emotionally damaged and behaviourally challenging children.	1/6/05

ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

Identified below are advisory recommendations on welfare matters addressed in the main body of the report and based on the National Minimum Standards, made for consideration by the school.

No	Refer to Standard*	Recommendation
1	RS11	The admission assessment must include identification of Child and Adolescent Mental health services needed and acknowledgement that they can be delivered in practice to support the educational residential placement before it is made.
2	RS16	Consult with children about how they wish to keep precious things safe.
3	RS17	Supplement the care plan with specific plans such as “chill out”; behavioural plans or protection plans where needed. Ensure that care plans contain the small steps needed to achieve the targets set.
4	RS17	The school should formally request a copy of the LA care plan for each “looked after” child to ensure consistency.
5	RS32	Inform Commission for Social Care Inspection of the plans to increase specific psychological and behavioural support to the children in the residential service.

Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. RS10 refers to standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS AND FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods were used in the production of this report

Direct Observation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Accommodation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas	YES

Checks with other Organisations

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	NO
• DfES	YES
• School Doctor	YES
• Independent Person	YES
• Chair of Governors	YES

Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	YES
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	NO
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	YES
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	19/10/04
Time of Inspection	9.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	24
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	3

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

SCHOOL INFORMATION

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

NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

BOYS

GIRLS

TOTAL

Number of separate Boarding Houses

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

The scale ranges from:

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

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

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

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

STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

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

Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The Statement of Purpose describes all the information needed by parents and professionals.

The statement is clear for parents, children and professionals alike. There is a children's leaflet, created by children at the school with support from a residential staff member. There is a parents' guide "Welcome Booklet" with essential information. All these documents are accessible for their target audience as recommended by last year's inspection.

The statement has been re-written and approved by the senior management team and Governors. The statement accurately reflects current boarding and care practice at school.

A recommendation was made last year, as the level of therapeutic support provided by Birmingham LEA does not meet the level of children need. The Head reported that therapeutic services continue to be difficult to access for children but that Birmingham City is reviewing Child and adolescent mental health services in general. The Inspectors acknowledge that resources are largely beyond his control. The recommendation remains.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way that the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.
- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.

Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

Children's opinions, and those of their families or significant others, are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and their future. Feedback is given following consultations.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
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The school continues with excellent practice in the area of promotion of children's rights. There has been real movement within the school as a result of children's views. Children's opinions and views are reflected in art - work and written work around the residential blocks and are valued by the staff working with them.

Staff members take into account the religious, racial, cultural, communication methods and linguistic backgrounds of children and their families. by

Children are involved in decisions about their welfare by helping to write their care plans, and key workers feed decisions back to them.

The school enables children to make their wishes and feelings known through house meetings and an active school council.

The school's functioning does not diminish independence or opportunity to make everyday choices.

The school promotes inclusion of children with learning and behavioural difficulties.

Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.11)

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

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

The school has in place procedural guidance on privacy and confidentiality. The head of care has devised an excellent “Who, what, where, when, why” booklet. This cover access to case records by staff and others, passing on Child Protection information, practical details on how to enter children’s rooms and bathrooms. Showering, bathing and toilet arrangements are also covered. The school has guidance and practice specific to gender issues for staff working. Staff supervision of children does not embarrass or intrude inappropriately. “Day” children are now able to change into school uniform in unused bedrooms, rather than in the lounge area.

Staff are guided in providing intimate personal care. There are written guidelines in place regarding this, which cover choice by child, gender issues, and consent.

Children’s records are kept securely.

Staff are told of confidentiality expectations.

Children can make and receive phone calls and e-mails and voice mail in private without staff permission. Each house now has a private phone. Children are very pleased with this. Help line information is displayed in a suitable format next to phones.

Restrictions on contact are made clear in writing by the placing authority and in the care plan.

Children can meet in private with parents and others in the unoccupied “staff flat” in Owl.

There is policy and advice on when it may be necessary to search children’s possessions.

Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)

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

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

The school has a written policy and procedure on considering and responding to representations and complaints. Children, parents, significant others and independent visitors are given information about how to complain and how to access an independent advocate. Children and parents are informed of how to complain to the Commission.

The school has good systems in place for sorting things out for children at an early stage. There are house meetings and school council. Children are clear about how to complain. Staff have had training in responding to complaints.

The school did not use the complaints procedure to manage an issue brought by a parent last academic year. The Head has made a retrospective notification of this matter to the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

Serious complaints against the school or staff should be notified to the Commission, LEA and DfES.

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

Number of complaints received by CSCI about the school over last 12 months:

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.
- Children are protected from bullying by others.
- All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the school are notified by the Head of the school to the appropriate authorities.
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded positively to on return.

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

There are systems in place in the school which aim to prevent abuse of children and suspicions or allegations of abuse are properly responded to. These are known and understood by all staff (including junior, ancillary, volunteer and agency staff).

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The home keeps a copy of Area Child Protection Committee procedures. Tony Pridding, The Head of Care, Ann Hewitt, Team leader and Charles Herriotts act as the designated people for Child Protection. Warwickshire Social services monitors adherence to Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

The school's Child Protection procedures have been submitted to Warks Area Child Protection Committee and LEA. They allow for out of authority placements/ cross boundary responsibilities and Birmingham LEA has established a cross border Child Protection group to address shortfalls in practice.

The procedure meets all elements of Appendix 1.

School information to staff makes it clear that failure to report a suspicion of child abuse is a disciplinary offence. The LEA and Unison have been asked to contribute to the written guidance for staff when they are subject to allegations. There has been uncoordinated access to information and support.

The Head of Care trains all staff in prevention and recognition of abuse and school procedures for Child Protection. The school works together with other agencies concerned with child protection. There have been 8 referrals to Birmingham Social Services Department and two made to Warwickshire in the weeks following the inspection.

Skilts is a member of a group that meets to consider "Cross-border" child protection policy and procedure. This group involves Birmingham, Solihull and Warwickshire Social Services Departments, who relate to the residential schools operated by Birmingham LEA.

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

2

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5) The school has, and follows, an anti-bullying policy, with which children and staff are familiar and which is effective in practice. Where possible children in the school contribute to the development of the policy.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
<p>There school has an anti bullying policy, which includes a definition of bullying, measures to prevent bullying and training for staff in effective strategies.</p> <p>The policy is available and known to staff and children. Anti bullying statements and artwork created by children at the school are highly visible in the residential blocks.</p> <p>The school supports bullies as well as children who are bullied.</p> <p>There are risk assessments of times, places and circumstances where bullying is likely to take place. Imaginative management of break times during the school day has improved relationships. Staff supervise children closely.</p>		
Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied	77	%

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7) All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The school has a system to notify Commission, Social Services Department and DfES, placing authority of the death of a child, any inappropriate conduct by staff member, serious harm to a child, including allegation of abuse, a serious illness or accident and the outbreak of infectious disease.</p> <p>The school knows how to make referral to POCA.</p> <p>There is a written record of action or investigation in relation to significant events.</p> <p>The school has previously made a referral for mental health assessments under mental health Act 1983.</p> <p>The Commission is notified if police are called to any serious incident at the school.</p> <p>Staff inform parents and placing authority of serious incident involving their child, including an offence.</p>		
NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO CSCI DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:		
• conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children		0
• serious harm to a child		1
• serious illness or accident of a child		1
• serious incident requiring police to be called		0

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)		
The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The school has procedures to guide staff in the event of a child being absent without authority.</p> <p>There is a written record of absence without authority, including reason for running away.</p> <p>Staff are aware of what they may do to prevent a child from leaving.</p> <p>The Head reports that children have not run away.</p>		
Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:		0

CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

Relationships between staff and children are based on mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries which are effective for both the individuals and the group.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
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Staff set safe, consistent and understandable boundaries.

Expectations for staff and children are clearly understood and negotiated by those living and working at the school.

The Inspectors found that staff set clear boundaries and that children responded to this.

Interactions observed were low key, affectionate and respectful. Children were pleased to see and be with adults. Inspectors noted skilful child focussed management of potentially difficult situations. It is evident from day to day practice that there is balance between the individual child's wishes, the needs of individual children, the needs of group and protection of themselves, other staff and children and public from harm.

Staff have training in positive care and control including using praise. The Head of Care is an active role model.

Communication was generally good.

Disagreements between children and staff were dealt with appropriately.

The Head has changed the way that staff are deployed to maximise the staff presence when and where it is most needed as part of a strategy to manage behaviour and reduce "flash points". Children live in units and staff are familiar and consistent.

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.26)

Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour, and where the behaviour of children is regarded as unacceptable by staff, it is responded to by constructive disciplinary measures which are approved by the Head of Care.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

The school operates a policy on the control, disciplinary and physical intervention measures that may be used. This allow for positive reinforcement of acceptable behaviour.

Practice in different boarding houses is consistent with whole school policy.

Measures of control and sanctions encourage reparation and restitution. Sanctions are fair and consistent. Specific measures of control or physical intervention are selected, avoided or adapted as necessary to take the child's needs, characteristics, SEN into account. Staff are sensitive to the underlying causes of young people's frustrations and often challenging behaviour.

Children do not have authority over other children to use sanctions or physical intervention.

The school keeps a record of all sanctions and this included name, date and location, details of inappropriate behaviour, the sanction, name of other staff present, effectiveness and a signature.

Physical intervention is only used to prevent likely injury to child or others, or serious damage to property.

Physical Intervention is not used as punishment or to enforce compliance with instructions or in response to challenging behaviour other then as set out in s550 A of the Education Act1996. There have been no instances of residential staff needing to intervene in this way since the beginning of term.

Staff have had training in Physical Intervention based on defence and diffusion and this is borne out in records, which are satisfactorily maintained.

The record is kept in a bound and numbered book and is duplicated on the child's file.

Records are reviewed by the Head of Care at least twice a term.

The Standard 33 visitor reads and makes written comments on these matters.

Information is given to children and parents about expectations of behaviour, physical intervention and sanctions.

There is a house meeting or forum for children and adults to discuss unsafe behaviour.

There are agreed procedures for police involvement.

Staff discuss and agree plans for managing behaviour in the light of children's histories and care plans.

Standards of behaviour at the school are satisfactory.

The Disciplinary policy describes how children may be excluded.

QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.
- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within school and in the local community.
- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.
- Children wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

Admission and leaving processes are planned and agreed with the child – and as appropriate, with parents and carers and placing authorities – as far as possible and handled with sensitivity and care by those concerned.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Admission procedures cover introductions to staff, children, daily routine, school and child expectations.</p> <p>Skills seeks a wide range of information prior to admission. Children who are “Looked after Children” did not always have a copy of the LA care plan on file.</p> <p>Emergency admissions are subject to monitoring and conscious management. The Head anticipates an increase in the admissions as the school year moves on. This can have a dramatic impact on the stable relationships formed with existing pupils. As the school has not managed to secure additional therapeutic services to meet the needs of children from 3 Primary Care Trust areas of Birmingham, the Head must be sure that existing services can meet the needs of children coming from areas other than the south of Birmingham. A recommendation has been made.</p> <p>The Head reports concerns or reservations about any admission in writing to LEA and keeps a copy.</p> <p>Children occasionally leave the school to return to mainstream primary school and staff support children in transition to special secondary schools in Birmingham.</p>		

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.7)

Care staff and the school's residential provision and activities actively contribute to individual children's educational progress, and care staff actively support children's education, ensuring regular attendance, punctuality and a minimum of interruption during the school day.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Care staff are knowledgeable about educational needs and progress of children in their care. They contribute to annual review of statement and implement IEP.
 There are facilities in residence for homework and private study and staff support homework. There are books and educational aids for use outside class time.
 The school has a library.
 Staff bring together teaching and residential elements in promoting Personal and Social Education. Residential staff have some involvement in PSE.

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9)

Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

Children spoke highly of the activities they could do at Skilts; clubs, outings, sport, walks, bikes and skateboards. There is a range of activities, indoor and outdoor for children to access outside class time. The inspectors noted that staff had worked hard and imaginatively to lay- on activities related to Black History week.
 There is a balance between free time and organised activities.
 Even when there are a few pupils, activities are still scheduled.
 There are recorded risk assessments to cover high-risk activity-qualification of supervisor and equipment needed.
 Pupils get involved in planning activities.
 Children have access to a range of books, magazines, newspapers, toys, music, and games.
 Computer games are suitable for age.
 Use of the internet is safeguarded from computer networking.
 Use of play station is not excessive; house rules are clear and agreed by all.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)

The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets any intimate care needs.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Children's primary health needs are well managed and satisfactorily met. Physical, mental and emotional health needs are identified and promoted in the day-to-day care of children. The School Nurse advises on health and personal care issues.

There is a policy on health promotion and the school has previously won acclaim for its excellent approach to PHSE and group work with children.

The school has satisfactory arrangements for each child to receive medical, optical and dental treatment whilst at school.

Each child has a clear, written health plan. Personal hygiene is dealt with sensitively.

There is written parental consent to administration first aid and non-prescription medication or for dental, optical or medical treatment when required.

The nurse holds a current registration with NMC. The school has confirmed this.

The nurse has professional supervision.

Children can choose to see a male or female doctor and they can make choices about treatment. The GP visits once a month.

Prescription medication is given only to the child for whom it was prescribed. Storage of medication arrangements are satisfactory.

There is a policy on administration and storage of medication.

There is a nurse protocol on the provision of non-prescription, household medicines to children.

A written record is kept of all medication, treatment and first aid given to children. This is signed by responsible member of staff and is regularly monitored by the Head or senior member of staff. There is at least one staff member with a first aid qualification on duty each shift.

There is a written record of all significant illnesses, accidents or injuries to children.

When children are ill, they are usually sent home.

The school informs parents about their children's health problems and treatment.

Psychiatric services are available at the school to children who live in only one of the four geographical Primary Care Trust areas of Birmingham. Recommendations were made last year to increase the level of therapy and psychology services. Services have been under review but have not resulted in identification of a behavioural psychology support specific to the school and its residential function. The Head reports that he has advocated for and formally requested an increased service.

This is the third year that recommendations have been made and the second where there has been no action to meet them. The Head reports that the school has identified additional therapeutic support necessary, often not obvious from information available at admission and this has not been forthcoming. A recommendation has been made under standard 11.

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.15)

Children are provided with adequate quantities of suitably prepared wholesome and nutritious food, having regard to their needs and wishes, and have the opportunity to learn to prepare their own meals. Where appropriate special dietary needs due to health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background are met, including the choice of a vegetarian meal for children who wish it.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Meals are well set up, orderly and social occasions.

Children have a choice of main course at each meal.

They are consulted over meal planning. They state their preferences for food and drink and were generally very pleased with the food and the catering staff. The school holds a record of meals as served for the last year. Birmingham EHO has inspected the school. There is no outstanding action.

Medical advice is sought for children who consistently refuse to eat or have eating disorders.

The furnishings are suitable and there are enough dining rooms.

Children can help prepare snacks and they join in with cooking.

Staff have food hygiene certificates and the school was awarded an EHO "Gold Star" rating.

The school provides meals and drinks at set times. Drinking water is readily available.

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.7)

Children are provided for adequately on an individual basis and encouraged to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing and personal requisites.

Children who require assistance to choose what they wear and/or how they spend their money are provided with the assistance they need, in a way which maximises their choice.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Children bring their own clothes to school, but the school keeps and launders school uniform and school sports shoes. Children change into their own clothes after the school day.

Unless their own clothes are heavily soiled, they are returned home for washing at the end of the week. There is no shop nearby where they can buy personal items, but the Head reported that children are taken to nearby Redditch to shop. The school provides all toiletries, though many children bring their own.

Staff do keep pocket money and mobile phones for children.

Children do not have a lockable space to keep their precious belongings safe. There is an outstanding recommendation to consult with children about how they want to do this.

Children trust the staff to look after things for them.

CARE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT PLAN

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.
- In accordance with their wishes, children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.
- Children receive individual support when they need it.

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

There is a written placement plan specifying how the school will care for each boarding pupil in accordance with his or her assessed needs, the school cares for that child in accordance with that plan, monitors progress in relation to that plan, and updates that plan as necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The school has put in place a new care plan format. These are child centred and written with children's input. Inspectors recommend these be supplemented by specific guidelines to cover areas such as behavioural "chill out" plans and protection plans for children at risk. Issues are target focussed but do not contain sufficient detail about how to reach the target. The school should ensure it has a copy of the Looked after Children care plan where children are "Looked after". Plans are agreed with parents, child and any placing authority to the child. Plans state how the school will care for each child, are in evidence in day to practice in residence and are updated and reviewed.</p> <p>Each child has a key worker and there is key worker time. The key worker monitors compliance with the plan. Placement plans/care plans contain information about health needs and health promotion, methods of communication, educational needs and targets, cultural, religious, language and racial needs and how they will be met and leisure needs. Contact arrangements with family, friends and significant others. Children are aware of their placement plans. The school enables children to contribute to reviews and implements action arising from reviews.</p>		

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.5)

Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress which can, in compliance with legal requirements for safeguards, be seen by the child.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Children's files contain all the essential information required. All entries on files are signed and dated and legible. Staff understand requirements of confidential recording. Children know that they can read their files. The school keeps records for 21 years from the DOB of the child or passed on to the next school and a receipt obtained.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.3)

The school maintains clear and accurate records on the staff and child groups of the school, and major events affecting the school and children resident there.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school keeps clear, accurate and up to date records.

The children's register shows date of admission and departure, who was responsible for placement, the address prior to arrival at school, the address on departure and the placing authority and legal status.

An employees' register includes name, gender, address and d.o.b, qualifications and experience for working with children, whether staff are fulltime or part time and resident or non-resident.

Staff personnel files containing a minimum of a letter of application and forms, a CV and employment history, evidence of appropriate checks, a contract of employment, evidence of qualifications, references obtained, interview notes and any disciplinary action.

The school holds details of any other person living or working at the school's premises.

There is an accident log for children, staff and visitors.

Menus are held for one year.

There are duty rosters recording who actually worked.

The school has a diary of events including visitors.

All these records are to be kept for 5 years from date of last entry.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.6)

Subject to their wishes, children are positively encouraged and enabled by the school to maintain contact with their parents and other family members (unless there are welfare concerns) while living at school.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Staff contact parents about any welfare concerns.

The school works with Birmingham Social Services to manage contact restrictions imposed by the court, Social Services Department or parent.

Restrictions or monitoring of phone calls and e-mails is done only after risk assessment and a record is kept of reasons for decisions.

Children can meet parents or other visitors in comfort and in private in the unoccupied staff flat used for meetings.

Staff receive training in working in partnership with parents. During the inspection a parent came for lunch with her child before an educational review.

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.2)

Where a pupil is in care and will be leaving care on leaving the school, the school agrees with the young person's responsible authority what contribution it should make to implement any Pathway or other plan for the pupil before the pupil leaves school. These arrangements are in line with that young person's needs, and the school implements its contribution where feasible from at least a year before the pupil is expected to leave care or move to independent living. The school works with any Personal Advisor for the child.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school enables children to become independent and learn life skills necessary for them. All children at the school are of primary school age, under 12 and have great need for close adult supervision. This is done without promoting dependence and staff have guidance in encouraging boys to be responsible for light domestic duties and rewarding initiative. There is at least one staff member with a first aid qualification on duty each shift. in this area.

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.13)

All children are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes, and children identified as having particular support needs, or particular problems, receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The school promotes inclusion and involvement of all children. The purpose of the school is to provide a place for children who were isolated in mainstream education or did not fit in. children were positive in their comments about the school and the school promotes an ethos of “belonging”.

No language support is currently needed or provided for children for whom English is a second language. No child uses alternative methods of communication. The Head has made contact with speech and language therapy services to look at the needs of the children.

Children can contact any member of staff with personal or welfare concerns.

Staff work to support children develop individual identity in relation to gender, sexuality, racial, cultural or religious background, and disability.

Children experiencing homesickness, divorce, and illness of parent are supported. The school cares for children for a portion of the week. All have parents or carers or a local authority responsible for ensuring the whole needs of the child are met.

The school has identified one independent person to be there for boys to talk to. He has been CRB checked and trained in Child Protection matters and is at the school every week. He is committed to providing a mature listening ear to the boys. Funding difficulties have prevented the development of this role in conjunction with NCH. Birmingham SSD does not appear to have an advocacy service for children living away from home.

External services are provided in a limited form. There is little Speech and Language Therapy, geographically restricted psychiatry, limited educational psychology in school time, but no specific service unique to the residential nature of the service. There are outstanding recommendations from previous years about increasing the therapeutic services available to staff and children. This accounts for the low score here.

Personal Health Social and Sex education is provided for all children, including those with disabilities. Relevant information is passed on when the child moves on. The school has integrated the DfES/DoH Healthy Schools Standard with the Personal Health Social and Sex Education Programme. Excellent work has been progressed by the school nurse and the PSE teacher.

PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The school is situated close to major motorway routes but not in easy walking distance of any community facilities. The school is housed in a historic large building. The 1970's residential blocks are behind this across a play area. There are also staff bungalows. Children can access all parts of the building, though not staff accommodation.

There is an architects practice and farm buildings adjacent to the school being developed for commercial use. Satisfactory safety practice was observed.

There are no outstanding requirements from planning authority, building control authority, fire service or EHO.

School premises are not used for functions or activities that affect the care or privacy of the children.

The school has taken precautions to ensure security of school from access by unauthorised persons, without compromising care of children.

There are listening devices, baby monitors used inside the building. The use of these is detailed in the Statement of Purpose. They are not in relation to any specific child.

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.19)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Residential accommodation is appropriately decorated and furnished to an acceptable standard. This is pleasant, homely and appropriate to age, culture and ethnic background. The interior and exterior is maintained in a reasonable state of structural and decorative repair. The adjacent derelict residential house is horrible and an eyesore, though a staff member has repaired an area of it and is now living there. The school building looks shabby. It has been painted at the front but not the back where the children see it. There is an ongoing programme of redecoration coordinated now by a management team. The grounds play equipment and play areas are well maintained and safe. The playground group has identified an area that is being converted into a "chill out" area for them and now plan to use it as an activities base. During term time, residential accommodation is not reserved for the exclusive use of residential pupils who live there. All children sleep in rooms by themselves, though other boys may use the extra bed on other nights. No rooms are shared at the same time. Requests to change room are considered and agreed if feasible. Bedrooms are well furnished now and children have personalised them. Children said they liked their rooms and were proud to show inspectors their space.

Two of the units have an additional area to the lounge that can be used for private activities, play and recreation. In one unit the room has computers in it and in the other a pool table.

There is a designated sleep-in room in each unit. They are located close to the children's bedrooms. There are alarms that can be activated on the bedroom doors if required. There is no emergency call system. Children knew how to alert staff in an emergency.

Children are very pleased with the mirrors provided in the bathrooms and have requested more throughout the school. Children can personalise their bedrooms. Children showed the inspectors their bedrooms with their pictures and posters in. Children said that they liked their rooms.

Each of the four units in the two residential buildings has a private phone room at the front door. This was well used and much appreciated by the boys.

There are facilities for the laundering of clothes and bedding. The laundry is sited away from the residential accommodation. Each residential block does have domestic washing machines and dryers that are used by the care staff to wash essential items. The school provides pupils with polo shirts and sweatshirts that the school launder. Children bring in their own out of school clothes.

The bedding seen was clean and duvets and covers had been newly replaced. The school can safely manage soiled laundry. Any soiled laundry is left in the bedrooms and taken to the laundry by staff after the school day has started. Lighting, heating and ventilation are satisfactory.

Lockable storage facilities have not yet been provided. A recommendation is outstanding that the Head teacher considers consulting with children for acceptable ways of keeping precious things safe. This could be part of a wider debate about feeling safe.

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Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.7)

The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets, all of good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children. The school has appropriate changing and washing facilities for incontinent children where necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>There is one toilet per four children. All of the toilets or urinals for children’s use are located on the first floor. They all have adjacent hand washing and drying facilities. In each unit there is at least one bath and two showers. Not all of the showers have curtains. The children said there is enough hot water. The bath in Owl House does not have a cold tap and cold water has to be added from the sink by use of a plastic tub. The water did not feel excessively hot. The local authority contractors maintain the hot water systems. Two showers are not working properly. A recommendation has been made. The bathrooms do not offer total privacy and have not been specifically designed with children in mind. There is an outstanding recommendation about this. Doors can be opened in an emergency, by leaning a hand over the top of the door. Appropriate door locks are not used and inspectors considered that some children would not be tall enough to lock the door in the first place. Showers are in cubicles, which are see-through or behind curtains in open bathrooms. All showers need to be made more private. Children reported that staff did not watch them bathe. Not all bathroom doors have locks. No child requires intimate personal care or washing. There are intimate personal care guidelines for staff. Staff have separate toilet and bathing facilities in the main staff sleeping area flat at the end of Woodpecker and Seal Houses. The Head of Care reports that staff have undertaken a general accommodation survey and that appropriate changes will be made where funding allows. He reports that contractors have reviewed water systems with the caretaker. An existing recommendation is outstanding.</p>		

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)

Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, in accordance with Health and Safety and Fire legislation and guidance.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The local authority contractors service and maintain the heating, electrical systems and boilers.

The heating system is oil fired. Electrical installations and equipment are inspected 1:3 years. Boilers are serviced annually

There are now risk assessments recorded for all aspects of the physical environment. The Head teacher reports that health and safety responsibilities have had a "revamp". There is a half-termly meeting of the school general management team to consider health and safety issues. This has resulted in a much more coordinated approach.

Fire safety is the identified responsibility of one member of residential staff. Staff and children know the emergency evacuation procedures, including those at night. Fire drills are held once a term in the school. Local authority contractors carry out emergency lighting tests quarterly. Fire alarms are tested weekly.

Fire fighting equipment tests are made annually by local authority contractors.

The Fire Service made an inspection on 17 July 2003. A fire safety risk assessment is needed.

Staff informed inspectors that water is regulated at taps to a safe temperature.

Stratford Environmental Health Department has advised that the Health and Safety Executive regulates all local authority provision. Birmingham inspects catering provision.

STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- There are careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those employed on a contractual/sessional basis) and volunteers who work with the children in the school includes checks through the Criminal Records Bureau checking system (at Standard or Enhanced level as appropriate to their role in the school), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There is a system for recruiting staff, which meets the requirements satisfactorily. A checklist is now used to check the elements of the recruitment procedure and this works well.

For all adults who after April 2002 began to live on premises, e.g. adult members of staff households, there is a CRB check made at standard level.

Offers of employment are made subject to full information being received.

Staff members do not begin work before all information is received.

Evidence was provided that outstanding references have been chased.

CRB checks have been carried out on taxi drivers booked by the school to drive children unaccompanied by staff.

Total number of care staff:

14

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

1

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)

The school is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the minimum level specified under standard 28.2. Records of staff actually working in the school demonstrate achievement of this staffing level.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There is a staffing policy. This ensures that staffing levels can fulfil the Statement of Purpose.

The policy states:

- Minimum of two care staff on duty by day and evening for every 8 children present.
- By night, each unit has one sleeping staff member. Senior staff of Otter have personal flat opening onto the respective unit.
- Other staff use a sleeping-in room on the boarding corridor of the unit.
- Each house has a team leader covering both units. Management of the staff group by day and night is made clear on the rota.
- Arrangements for calling for senior staff support are identified on the rota. The head of care and Head teacher both stay on-site during the week and share this duty.

Staffing levels by day and night are sufficient and meet the needs of children. No external agency staff are used. The Head has taken action to deploy staff during playtimes in a way that results in better child management and fewer crises.

There is a minimum of 2 staff on duty for every 15 children by day (7am-11pm). This covers the rise in numbers with dayboys using the units at early morning, lunch and early evening. Staff ratios are 1:8 at night with staff sleeping-in. Risks from 1:1 working are detailed in individual risk assessments and written guidance given to staff.

There is one adult in charge of each group of children in school or on trips. Staff have mobile phones to call for back up. Children reported that they knew how to contact staff day or night.

Transport arrangements (supervision, escort, behaviour) are risk managed through individual risk assessments.

The staff group includes both genders and a range of ages.

There is a written record/register of which children and adults are sleeping in the school at night.

Several Skilts' staff live on-site. There are now tenancy agreements or undertakings of conduct whilst in residence.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)

Staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the school.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Head of Care has created an excellent formal induction programme, which is now being used with the newest member of the residential team. This includes guidance on child protection. There has been no opportunity to use it.

Staff are clear about accountability and reporting lines.

Staff are informed of child protection, health and safety, emergency, notification of incidents and procedures in writing in the "Who, what, when, where, why" guidebook to Skills. This book contains all relevant procedures and is kept in the staff area of each unit for easy access.

There are opportunities for staff to access external training and the Head of Care, who has undertaken much training "in-house", promotes training in childcare. He has arranged NVQ 3 for staff. Five staff have been identified to undertake NVQ 3 and three staff to do NVQ 4, including himself.

There is evidence of improved training opportunities in autism awareness, consulting with children, report writing, healthy school, first aid, supervision, team-teach, behaviour management, complaints and child protection. There has been training in working with sexually inappropriate behaviour. Each staff member has a personal training record. The deputy coordinates whole school training records.

Further training and advice is needed for staff from appropriately qualified professionals specific to the needs of children with educational and behavioural difficulties. The Head of Care has done much to provide these skills to staff. This is a work in progress.

Staff are increasingly confident and professional in their approach, but aware of their limitations and the need for people with appropriate skills to work with, talk to and help some of the children with their pressing need for psychological support.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)

All staff, including domestic staff and the Head of the school, are properly accountable and supported.

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

There is a management structure plan showing lines of reporting and accountability. The Deputy Head teacher and a Head of Care contribute to the existing senior management team.

Staff get one to one supervision every half term.

Residential staff employed for extra curricular duties are included in the professional supervision.

There are written records, which show that effective supervision is carried out.

The head teacher receives professional supervision, beyond peer support, through advisors to the LEA.

Annual appraisal is not established.

The Head of Care gives residential staff a clear and positive steer in terms of their professional practice. Staff expressed confidence and appreciation of the quality of information and guidance he has provided.

The Head teacher is accountable to the Board of Governors and a schedule of reports and agenda items is set each year.

All staff know to whom they are accountable.

Job descriptions and person specifications for new staff are in place. This will be a rolling programme of improvement.

There is a rota that shows planned staffing arrangements and working times.

The school has well established formal and informal communication channels and meetings.

All staff groups meet regularly and have professional discussion about their role, children and operations within the school. Full staff meetings are held and there have been whole school Inset days on child protection and bullying. Staff of all sectors reported the ease of mutually supportive working relationships.

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.
- Children enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

The school is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible childcare.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Head of Care has 8 years' experience at a senior level and has begun a professional qualification relevant to working with children (NVQ 4). He has the skills and experience necessary to be an effective manager.

Leaders of care shifts have substantial experience and many years' service at the school. The school has now begun an NVQ programme.

- Staff rotas have time scheduled to allow for the management and administrative elements of their role without compromising care of children.

Children do not have responsibility over other children in the school.

The school's child protection procedure does include neutral suspension in the event of an allegation against a member of staff and this is now understood by all.

The school provides information to parents about child protection, anti-bullying, disciplinary, complaints, health and pastoral policies. Contact numbers for Stratford Social Services Department (for child protection) and the Commission (for other issues) are supplied to parents.

The school has addressed the issue of staff living on site and the school's ability to protect children in the event of a member of staff being suspended or dismissed following Child Protection investigation. This is in response to recommendations made last year. The school has now planned responses to a range of unforeseeable crises i.e., illness, fire, serious allegations, accidents, staff shortages.

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

20 %

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

The Commission for Social Care Inspection is informed within 24 hours if a receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy becomes responsible for the school. Such persons on becoming responsible for the school have ensured that the school continues to be managed on a day to day basis by a Head who meets recruitment and qualification requirements for a Head under these Standards. Such a temporary Head must make sure that the operation of the school meets the requirements of these standards in relation to the day to day running of the school.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Head teacher or head of care monitor and sign records identify patterns or action required and ensure follow up. This is a newly established practice and not fully operational. The inspector was assured that systems were logical and enabled a clear route to ensure action needed would be identified.

Staff appraisals and performance management are not undertaken for non-educational staff.

Action has been taken in relation to concentrations, trends or patterns and there is evidence of feedback to staff and also from the Standard 33 visitor.

The Head teacher carries out an annual review of the operation and resourcing of the welfare provision in relation to the Statement of Purpose, staffing policy, placement plans, internal assessment of compliance with National Minimum Standards. This report was submitted to Governors at the June meeting. It is linked to the school development plan but exists as a separate document. The Head reported that each residential house had a 25% reduction in consumable budget. Staffing numbers have been reduced in the school and these cannot be replaced due to financial reduction in the whole school budget.

The Head teacher reported a positive Ofsted inspection in the summer term.

There is not a high incidence of police involvement.

The Head reported there to have been no formal complaints made to the school. There was one incident involving a disgruntled parent and the inspector suggests that this should have managed as a complaint, regardless of the route by which the school heard of the issue.

The school sought to resolve the matter.

Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.7)

The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body receive a written report on the conduct of the school from a person visiting the school on their behalf every half term.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Governing body has arranged for one of their number to visit once every term and there are written reports in place for May 2004 and October 2004. These are not at the frequency required by the standard. Action taken is recorded. The visits look specifically at the residential provision and the visitor attended a meeting with the residential social workers. Commission inspection reports are made available at the school to staff, children, and parents and to placing authorities.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Empty box for Lay Assessor's Summary.

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

PART D

HEAD'S RESPONSE

D.1 Head's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted at Skilts School and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

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

YES

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

NO

Note:

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

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

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

Action plan was required

Action plan was received at the point of publication

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

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

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

Or

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

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

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

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