

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Littlegreen School

Compton Chichester West Sussex PO18 9NW

Lead Inspector
Ms E Southall

Announced Inspection
5th December 2005 11:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life. Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- · Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school Littlegreen School

Address Compton

Chichester West Sussex PO18 9NW

Telephone number 02392 631259

Fax number 02392 631740

Email address office@littlegreen.wsussex.sch.uk

Provider Web address

Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the

school

West Sussex County Council Education

Department

Name of Head Mr Toby Salt

Name of Residential Services Co-ordinator Age range of residential

pupils

Mr Paul Standing

7 - 14 years

Date of last welfare

inspection

24th January 2005

Brief Description of the School:

Littlegreen School is a West Sussex County Council Local Education Authority Special School for boys with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Littlegreen provides negotiated flexible boarding provision in order to support and promote pupils' social and emotional growth and the school's behaviour management programme. Pupils can be provided with negotiated time limited residential provision and are also accommodated in order to take part in after school activities and 'sleep overs', however full-time boarding provision is not available.

The school has a capacity roll of 42 pupils with 6 class groups of approximately 7 pupils per class. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Littlegreen is situated in a rural area north of the village of Compton, approximately eleven miles from Chichester. The main school building is a large country mansion, set in extensive and attractive grounds. Some of the facilities are housed in outbuildings. The pupil residential accommodation is on the first floor of the main school building. On the day of this inspection 4 boys were resident at the school.

The Principal of Littlegreen is Mr Toby Salt. The Residential Services Co-ordinator is Mr Paul Standing.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection began at 11.00 am and took place over the next seven hours. The inspector spent time with the Principal, Mr Toby Salt, the Residential Services Co-ordinator, Mr Paul Standing, and the school's Home and Agency Liaison Co-ordinator, Mrs Joan Frost. Two of the residential care staff were interviewed. The case files of five pupils were seen, together with written records, logs, policies and procedures. The Inspector shared two meals with the staff and pupils. She spent time with the four boys who were staying at the school that night and was shown round the boarding accommodation and some of the recreational areas by three of them. Questionnaires were completed by five boys and their parents/carers.

The care programme at Littlegreen School continues to be of a very high quality. All of the boys told the Inspector that they are very happy with the way they are cared for at the school. The residential facility is used in a flexible way, as an earned reward for responsible behaviour. "Staying over" is clearly thoroughly enjoyed and valued by the pupils.

The Inspector was again made very welcome by both staff and pupils, and would like to thank the staff for the work and planning that was carried out in order to ensure that all the necessary information was available both before and during the day of the inspection.

What the school does well:

BEING HEALTHY

• The food provided at the school is of a very high quality.

STAYING SAFE

- The procedures used to protect children from abuse are robust. Care staff are developing an active involvement in joint working with the other agencies involved in child protection.
- The strategies used at Littlegreen to help pupils develop appropriate and responsible behaviour have resulted in a very positive and enabling environment for them.
- The Health and Safety and security procedures at the school provide a safe environment at all times. Risk assessments, particularly those covering the school transport arrangements, are of a high standard.

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING

 The organisation of the school is based upon a close liaison between care and teaching staff that ensures that each pupil's care, social and

- educational needs are addressed within an integrated and interactive framework.
- The activities provided for the boys who stay over at the school are varied, imaginative and very popular with them.
- Individualised support in line with the assessed needs of each pupil is central to the care programme. The staff clearly know each boy as an individual and work closely together to recognise and manage specific needs.

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

- The pupils are well supported and always involved in decisions that are made about their lives.
- The boys clearly feel confident and safe in their relationships with staff. They are treated with respect at all times.
- The admission and assessment procedures are of the highest quality, well supported by the role of the Home and School Liaison Co-ordinator, who works closely with the pupil's family/carers throughout their time Littlegreen.

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING

• The residential accommodation at the school is comfortable, spacious and well equipped.

MANAGEMENT

- The Statement of Purpose/Prospectus is presented to a particularly high standard, with the school's care principles and flexible boarding programme clearly described and incorporated within the overall purpose of the school.
- There is a very stable group of care staff at the school, who are committed to the welfare of the pupils. The boys clearly feel secure within the continuity and consistency of the relationships that they have with the care staff.
- The training programme provided for the care staff is of a high quality.
- Littlegreen is an efficiently run school. Practice in the school is subject to ongoing monitoring by the Principal and the Governors. The school is child-centred in all areas of practice and continues to develop and adapt in order to meet the changing needs of the pupils.

What has improved since the last inspection?

- The structure and content of written logs and records continues to improve.
- The bedrooms in the residential area have been redecorated and refurbished.
- A structured system for regular staff supervision is now in place and operating well.

What they could do better:

• Care should be taken that all records and assessments include the date that they were completed or the information reviewed/updated.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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Scoring of Outcomes

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.(NMS 14)
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.(NMS 15)

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

14 & 15

Arrangements for managing pupils' health needs are satisfactory. The meals provided at the school are of a very high quality.

EVIDENCE:

Pupils remain registered with their home dentist and GP and bring in their own medication when staying on the residential unit. A designated member of the care staff team oversees the administration of the medication, which is kept in a locked cupboard. The Inspector saw up-to-date administration records for prescribed and non-prescription medication, signed by staff and the pupil.

The Inspector also saw satisfactory written records of all day-to-day health issues affecting each pupil. All core details of the pupil's medical history are kept on a medical information sheet. Copies seen in files contained all key information. The sheet would benefit from the inclusion of the date that it is completed, so that it is clear that the information is up-to-date.

Annual medicals are carried out at the school by the school doctor and nurse. All of the care staff are qualified first-aiders. Records seen by the Inspector showed that care staff attend CAMHS appointments to support the pupil and his family/carers.

All of the boys said that the food at the school is very good and that they always enjoy it. The Inspector shared lunch with the whole school, and tea – the main meal of the day – with the four boys who were sleeping over that night. All of the food was freshly prepared and attractively presented. At lunchtime a choice of sandwiches, hot dogs, fruit juice, salads, prepared fresh fruit portions and yoghurt was enjoyed. One boy, who didn't like the sausages in the hot dogs, had been given his own egg salad roll. At tea, chicken curry, rice, chips, sweetcorn and peas were on the menu, with poppadams and naan bread as well. Most of the boys chose plates full of everything on offer. The

Inspector was particularly pleased to see that the boy who had written in his questionnaire that: "I love curry" was obviously very happy with his meal.

A record of menus shows that the food provided is varied and nutritious. It was praised by everyone that the Inspector spoke with.

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.

Confidentiality is a priority in all systems and procedures used in the school. Arrangements for complaints and protection from abuse and bullying are well managed.

EVIDENCE:

All pupil records are kept safely and securely. The boys' right to privacy and confidentiality is seen by staff as a priority at all times. All of the boys who spoke with the Inspector and filled in questionnaires were clear about what they would do if they wanted to make a complaint. "Let me speak" forms can be used by anyone who wants to let staff know about a worry or concern. Copies have been pasted into a hard-back log book as a record of each

complaint. There is only one response included – it would be good to see more. More details of action taken are included in each boy's individual file.

All care staff have received training in child protection. The Principal, Mr Salt, and the Home/Agency Liaison Co-ordinator, Mrs Frost, are the school's designated child protection officers. Strong and active working links are maintained between the school and other agencies involved in child protection. The Inspector saw minutes of statutory meetings attended by Mrs Frost, when information provided by the school was central to decisions made about child protection issues. The school liaises with placing social workers to ensure that it holds key information about Looked After Children who are placed at the school. Records show that the school takes appropriate action when dealing with any child protection issues.

The pupils spoke confidently with the Inspector about the school's approach to bullying. They were open about their thoughts and feelings about conflict in their relationships with others, but clearly felt safe in the fact of continuing staff supervision of their activities. In school time, bullying issues can be addressed in PHSE lessons and during circle time. The use of a CCTV system is a clear benefit in the staff's opportunity for early intervention in confrontational situations. The system is installed in the grounds, classrooms, and communal areas of the school. It is not installed in the residential units, in order to ensure the privacy of the boys sleeping over, who are supervised by an adult at all times. A waking member of staff is present at night. Mr Salt told the Inspector that staff are careful about the selection of the group of boys each night, taking their relationships with each other into account.

The school operates a merit award system based upon earning credits for responsible behaviour, achievements in learning and progress towards individual targets. Earned privileges include snacks, WH Smith and cinema vouchers, and framed certificates of achievement. Rewards can also include choosing to sleep over at the school and access to school activities including use of the Big club, go-karting and cinema and swimming trips. All achievements are celebrated at the weekly school assembly and also at the lunchtime meal. Sanctions used can include loss of a breaktime, activity, or detention. Pupils told the Inspector that they think that the sanctions used are fair. The programme at Littlegreen promotes a very positive and enabling framework for pupils to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour. The Inspector saw some boys come to the Principal's office during the day to be congratulated on an achievement. They were clearly proud and encouraged by the recognition and support that they were given. A letter from a parent seen by the Inspector says: "He is enjoying it so much that he wants to earn enough points to be able to go on all the school trips, stay behind for after school activities and even stay overnight." An annual review report says: "Everyone present felt that he had had a tremendous year and that he was extremely happy at Littlegreen. [.......] was very pleased with his achievements and glowed with pride in front of his family." The inclusion of the flexible

residential provision in the whole school approach to managing specific behavioural issues is a key feature of the evident successful outcomes for the pupils.

The school's Health and Safety policies and procedures continue to be maintained to a particularly high standard. All records and checks seen by the Inspector were up-to-date and in good order.

Detailed risk assessments for the premises and all activities/trips are in place. The Individual Care Plans for transport arrangements take the specific behaviour of each boy into account, and set out clear staff guidelines for managing their behaviour while on the school bus.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.(NMS 12)
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

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

12, 13 & 22.

Care staff actively support pupil's educational progress at the school. Activities provided for boarders are varied, imaginative, and very popular with them. Support for individual children lies at the heart of the care programme.

EVIDENCE:

A good outcome depends upon the close integration of each pupil's care, social and educational needs. Care staff liaise closely with teaching staff and contribute to the annual review of the statement and implementation of the individual education plan. Discussion with care staff demonstrated their close involvement with the education of the children in their care. One boy's questionnaire said that he is helped with his homework by a member of the care staff team. A report in a confidential file states that the Home and Agency Liaison Worker was: "...asked by [......'s] class teacher to do a home visit as she was concerned about his early morning routine."

All of the boys who spoke with the Inspector said that they really enjoy the activities when they sleep over at the school. Some boys stay on after school just to take part in the activities. The Big Club is most often mentioned – where the boys can play snooker, table tennis, table football, Playstation and Gameboy. On the residential unit they also have access to television, computer games, DVDs, books and board games. The boys told the Inspector that they also like outdoor activities – cricket, football, Go-Karts and the outdoor swimming pool in the summer, and games of Kick the Can in the Winter. Before Christmas the younger boys are going on a trip to a Pantomime. The older boys have decided that their Christmas treat will be to stay in school with a DVD and a meal – takeaway or cooked at school.

Discussion with pupils, observation of interaction with staff, and documents seen in a sample of pupil files demonstrated that the support provided for individual children at Littlegreen lies at the heart of the care programme. The organisation of the Total Curriculum supports and promotes the development of the security, self-confidence and responsibility of each pupil. Those who spent time with the Inspector were clear in their understanding of the school system and confident in stating their own thoughts and feelings in response to her questions.

Records show close liaison between care and teaching staff in recognising and addressing individual needs. Care and behaviour programmes are built around the specific needs of each pupil, and can take into account the different behaviour patterns of boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties and the increasing numbers of pupils placed at the school who are on the autistic spectrum.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views. (NMS 2)
- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.(NMS 9)
- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.(NMS 11)
- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.(NMS 17)
- In accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

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

2, 9, 11, 17 & 20.

Pupil's views are taken into account in all aspects of their care. Relationships between care staff and children are sound. All assessments of need are completed to a high standard. The school works closely with parents/carers at every stage.

EVIDENCE:

Pupil's files contain a Home/School Partnership contract which includes agreements signed by the school, parents/carers and the pupil that clearly state the shared responsibility of all in helping the pupil to benefit from the care programme. Individual education plans were all signed by the pupil. The boys who spent time with the Inspector and who completed questionnaires said that they know what plans are being made for them. A behaviour contract seen on file stated: "By mutual agreement [......] will continue to monitor his plan until Christmas. If he maintains this he will receive a DVD/CD of his choice." The school council meets each month. Minutes of the October meeting record that the pupils have asked for a board to display the meeting minutes so that they can be easily seen by all pupils, and a possible alternative to chocolate bars for merit awards. They have suggested a scheme where snack vouchers can be saved up and used to buy small items such as pens in a school shop.

During the time she spent in the school the Inspector observed that relationships between care staff and children were relaxed, open and respectful. Staff set clear and consistent professional and personal boundaries within which the boys are secure while still able to express their individuality.

The care staff group is particularly stable and therefore able to offer consistency in their relationships with the pupils who use the residential provision. Records in case files show that all assessment and planning is carried out to a commendably high standard, involving the young person and their family/carers at every stage. Records of key decisions made, together with records of all visits and communication with each pupil's family/carers are kept in the case file and a separate Confidential File.

The school's system of flexible individual boarding arrangements does not require separate written placement plans. Pupil records, incorporating the Statement of Special Educational Needs and the Individual Education Plan, together with social assessments kept separately in a Confidential File, contain all the information required by this standard. All plans are regularly reviewed and updated.

Pupils currently stay on the boarding unit for only one night each time and the care staff maintain close and ongoing contact with families/carers as a central feature of the planning process.

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):

23, 24 & 25.

The residential accommodation provided at Littlegreen is of a high standard.

EVIDENCE:

In answer to the question "What are the best things about the school's buildings and grounds?" one boy answered: "It's lovely". The pupils enjoy the benefits of an attractive historic house and the space to play in the extensive grounds. The building is well maintained and decorated and the residential area has a warm and homely feel. The rooms have recently been redecorated and new duvet covers, curtains and pictures provided. Each room now has a radio which the boys who showed the Inspector round enjoyed demonstrating to her in every room. All boys who stay over have single occupancy of the large rooms, which are all warm and bright. The lounge is large, comfortable and well-equipped. There are adequate bath, shower and toilet facilities and a new bathroom has recently been installed that can be used for boys who may need extra privacy.

The boys who showed the Inspector round the residential area were clearly very happy with the accommodation provided for them at the school.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.(NMS 1)
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.(NMS 19)
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.(NMS 28)
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.(NMS 29)
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare. (NMS 30)
- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.(NMS 31)
- Children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.(NMS 32)
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.(NMS 33)

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

1, 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 & 33

The school's care principles are clearly laid out in the prospectus. All records are completed to a high standard. The staff group is stable and committed to the pupil's welfare. The training they receive is good. The school is run efficiently and practice is regularly monitored.

EVIDENCE:

The Littlegreen school prospectus is presented to a commendably high standard. It clearly states the manner in which the residential provision contributes to the whole school approach to meeting pupil's needs.

All records seen during the inspection were detailed, up-to-date and maintained to the highest standard. They are regularly monitored by the Principal and the Standard 33 visitor, who is a designated member of the governing body.

The stability of the staff group provides continuity of care that is obviously valued by the pupils who stay over between Monday and Thursday nights. There is a waking member of staff on duty each night. The Principal and his deputy live on site and each provide back-up cover for two nights each week. Staff sickness and absence is covered from within the team, no bank or agency staff are used.

The care staff are provided with extensive training opportunities and are well equipped to meet the needs of the pupils in their care. Increasing numbers of boys with Autistic Spectrum Disorder are being placed at the school, which is currently full. Members of the care staff team who spoke with the Inspector said that the team has: "Grown with the change" and that: "Training has given us a broader and deeper understanding of the changing needs of the children." Training courses completed in the last year have included Child Protection, Fire prevention, Parenting Skills and Anger Management, Children with Autism, Controlled Physical Intervention, and Positive Care and Control of Children. Many of the courses have been accessed within the whole school training plan via Inset days. Care staff are also working towards NVQ 3 & 4. Training records were seen in the staff training log. Records of regular supervision were also seen. Staff told the Inspector that they value the inclusive and child-centred approach that the Principal has established in the school.

The school is well managed and has consolidated established practice and proven good outcomes while incorporating within the care programme the differing individual needs of new pupils.

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)
 2 Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)
 3 Standard Met (No 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		
Standard No	Score	
14	3	
15	4	

STAYING SAFE		
Standard No	Score	
3	4	
4	3	
5	4	
6	4	
7	4	
8	X	
10	4	
26	4	
27	X	

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING			
Standard No Score			
12	4		
13	4		
22	4		

N
Score
4
4
4
4
4

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING		
Standard No	Score	
16	X	
21	N/A	
23	4	
24	4	
25	4	

MANAGEMENT		
Standard No	Score	
1	4	
18	4	
19	4	
28	4	
29	4	
30	4	
31	4	
32	4	
33	4	

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last N/A 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)

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