



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

RNIB New College

**RNIB New College Worcester
Whittington Road
Worcester
WR5 2JX**

Lead Inspector
Martha Nethaway

Announced Inspection
4th 5th & 6th December 2006 10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

Reader Information	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
Further copies from	0870 240 7535 (telephone order line)
Copyright	This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI
Internet address	www.csci.org.uk

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	RNIB New College
Address	RNIB New College Worcester Whittington Road Worcester WR5 2JX
Telephone number	01905 763933
Fax number	01905 763277
Email address	ssmith@rnibncw.ac.uk
Provider Web address	www.rnibncw.ac.uk
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Royal National Institute of the Blind
Name of Head	Mrs Mardy Smith
Name of Head of Care	Mr Olu Hyde
Age range of residential pupils	11-19
Date of last welfare inspection	23/01/06

Brief Description of the School:

RNIB New College Worcester is a co-educational boarding special school for young people from 11 to 19 years of age, with impaired vision, who are able to follow courses leading to GCSE and to pursue study beyond 16. Students enter primarily in year 7 and year 12 but may also join the school at different times during other school years. The campus, set on the edge of Worcester, is pleasantly landscaped and is surrounded by open fields at the back.

Those below the sixth form board in three different houses, of 12 to 15 students, each run by a house parent with a deputy and assistant house parent. Residential staff are directly responsible to the Head of Care. Each house accommodates a wide age range, with pupils from year 7 to year 11.

Sixth formers live in the sixth form hostel and the sixth form house. The residential care tutors, are responsible to the manager of the sixth form accommodation. He is also Deputy Head of Care and he manages and supports the GAP year students who are recruited to the school, usually from the Commonwealth. They have accommodation in the houses and hostel and contribute 18 hours of work a week, in each.

The Head of Care is a member of the college's senior management team and is directly responsible to the Acting Principal.

The young people come to be students at the college from a number of different local authority areas. Some have had to wait a considerable time to be admitted because of funding difficulties. In nearly all cases they do not come from families with a boarding tradition. All have visual impairment and some are totally blind. A small minority only, have additional disabilities such as hearing difficulties, Aspergers Syndrome and Epilepsy.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection was announced and commenced at 10:00am. It took place over 3 days. Two inspectors visited the school. Four children's files were examined and other records were sampled. A full range of staff were interviewed and spoken to. The students gave a guided tour of the school. During the visit, children and young people were spoken to and small group discussions were held. In addition, the student population participated in a questionnaire exercise. Staff were invited to contribute through staff questionnaires.

What the school does well:

RNIB New College Worcester provides visually impaired children and young people access to the national curriculum. The focus on education, personal and social development equips students to maximise their full potential. On offer is an academic curriculum running alongside a full and structured programme to develop independent living skills in a residential setting.

A capable and experienced staff group cares for the students. There is an atmosphere of trust and this is especially true of the younger student's experiences.

There is a good range of extra curricular activities. Students view this positively.

The college has a good reputation for preparing students well for skills they need for independent living, especially progressing onto higher education routes.

What has improved since the last inspection?

- The child protection policy has been reviewed and strengthened. Training and adopting good practice models have improved the protective strategies of the school.
- The school has reviewed its behaviour management policy. Clearer processes are in place for effective record keeping. Key staff have attended training on physical de-escalation techniques to manage unacceptable behaviours positively.
- The access to community resources and activities continues to increase. The school has employed a designated staff member to take the lead with recreational activities in the community.

What they could do better:

- The school should review its health care planning and examine how the level of resources matches each student's needs.
- Students, especially sixth form students felt that the school should be more proactive in providing information and educational material with regard to health and personal care issues for example, healthy diets, sexual health, smoking and drug awareness.
- The school should evaluate the role and function of keyworking and students should be consulted as part of this process. Staff should receive the necessary training in topics related to smoking, alcohol, drug awareness, personal relationships and sexual health.
- How students are informed about counselling services needs to be reviewed as well as the complaints procedures operated at the school. The school should ensure all students are aware of informal and formal routes to express concerns and to complain.
- The forums used to consult with students should be revisited, especially for the older student.
- How information is being shared with the GAP students needs consideration and a consistent approach should to be developed.
- The kitchens for sixth formers need to be maintained at a suitable level of cleanliness.
- A couple of the junior house kitchen storage areas needs to be improved.
- The topic of the evening meal in relation to quality has re-emerged as an issue for students. Students have provided some constructive feedback about portion sizes at meal times.
- Older students would welcome more opportunities to build upon core cooking skills in the independent living skills programme.
- The care planning records needs to be expanded and developed as an integrated process across education and the care settings.
- How the school measures its performance related to the quality and expected outcomes for students needs to be moved forward.

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

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

CONTENTS

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

Standards 14 & 15

Quality in this outcome area is good.

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

The health and wellbeing needs of children and young people are being met. Health care services are well coordinated and effective. Good systems are in place to record and monitor outcomes of health care interventions.

Healthy eating and a balance diet are promoted at the school. The college is committed to continuous improvement around meals, diet and healthy eating.

The school still needs to address the teatime meals, which require further improvements.

Staff need to monitor the cleanliness and hygiene of the sixth former's kitchen areas. Sixth form students would welcome opportunities to expand core skills with the selection, preparation and cooking of meals. This level of enthusiasm is not being connected with.

The school as part of a student's life should promote the positive role and function of keyworkers.

EVIDENCE:

The physical, emotional and mental health needs of each student are assessed during the initial four-day assessment. This information is incorporated with the medical details kept about each student.

Records describing how the college monitors student's health are located in the nurse's surgery. It was easy to track information and evidence following up specific matters or concerns linked to health care needs. It is recommended that the school conduct a self-audit to ensure full compliance with the expected level of detail to be contained in a health plan.

The level of communication between the surgery and the residential houses was evidenced as good. Records showed regular use of the health diary between the nurse and care staff.

The school employs a fulltime nurse and there is a well-equipped surgery and sickbay that is of a high standard. Students can access this at any part of the day if they are unwell. A visiting doctor holds a weekly GP surgery. Students are enabled to attend primary health care resources including dentist and other specialist consultants. Students who become ill are cared for during the day by the school nurse in the sick bay and at nights and during the weekends in their house or hostel by care staff. When a student is ill over a number of days then they may go home. It is recommended that the school should review the appropriateness of moving someone who is ill between the houses/hostel and sickbay. There should also be a review of the ability to isolate a student and use of a bathroom in the houses/hostel.

During other discussions with staff and students a common theme arose about the opening hours of the surgery. Surgery hours are based on a 9 to 5 office based model. It is recommended that the school identify if the resource matches the level of need reported by students and staff. Any gaps should be addressed.

All residential care staff are suitably trained in first aid. The school should ensure refresher training is planned for and the staff rotas should clearly show who is the nominated first aider in each house.

Students, especially sixth form students felt that the school should be more proactive in providing information and educational material with regard to health and personal care issues for example, healthy diets, sexual health, smoking and drug awareness.

Some students had positive relationships with their key-worker and staff members in their house/hostel to whom they could talk about health and social issues. Other students identified their counsellor as the person they would talk to. A number of students expressed concerns for students whose named key-worker was on long-term sickness and students who were not as confident as others in approaching their key-worker. Students experienced this area negatively.

A few keyworkers described a more formal key-working system with regular meetings that in reality were experienced by students as providing ad hoc discussions only. Other keyworkers felt overstretched, their time at a premium due to the numbers of students accommodated in the houses. The school should evaluate the role and function of keyworking and students should be consulted as part of this process. Staff should receive the necessary training to be skilled up and topics related to smoking, alcohol, drug awareness, personal relationships and sexual health.

Students have access to college counsellors, a medical social worker and peer supporters who have received additional specialist training. A number of students referred to the student counsellor and the valuable support they received. Others were aware that there was a counsellor but did not how they could access her. One student commented that often the counselling services were not offered until an issue had become a real concern. The school should ensure that information about how to refer to the counselling service is clearly signposted to all students. Student's awareness of the 'drop in' basis, during surgery times, was limited.

Students with specific dietary needs are catered for including gluten free and dairy free products. Some students who are wheat, nut or egg intolerant, have their foods purchased ahead of meal planning and cooking. It was reported by a couple of the houses that the storage arrangements for these food products was limited. The school should make available adequate food storage.

The school provides a restaurant style dining room where pupils on a Monday to Friday will eat their mid day and evening meals. Pupils are provided with a choice of hot meals or a salad bar and a choice of puddings. The dining area was clean, airy and inviting. Crockery and cutlery were clean.

The standard of meals, which were provided to pupils, was found to be good. Students' reports were, on the whole, positive about the lunchtime.

Several comments were made about the quality and quantity of food available at teatime. The quality of the evening meals has re-emerged and the school needs to re-engage with this topic again.

Sixth form students felt that the portion sizes were in some circumstances small. On a few occasions there was not enough food for the first course and

definitely not for a second course of the same meal. A number of pupils raised the concern that if the main meal was not popular this meant that more pupils would choose the vegetarian option. The result being, there was not enough for vegetarians. It is recommended that the school review the teatime meals. Inspectors recognise that the student council and head student's representatives have made a positive contribution. Questionnaires and discussion groups have not yet fully resolved the areas related to the evening meals.

A few of the sixth formers stated that a 5.00pm evening meal was early and meant that if they had not been signed off by the Independent Living Skills (ILS) team they were unable to prepare another meal/snack. During the inspection feedback it became apparent that older students are encouraged to use the canteen for at least one hot meal each day. Staff need to consider how this area is communicated with students.

Sixth form students raised concern at the cleanliness of kitchen areas, equipment, crockery and cutlery. They were also frustrated at the length of time it took staff to address concerns with regard to cleanliness.

Breakfast and weekend meals are prepared in the houses/hostel by staff and pupils. Younger pupils praised the meals they were cooked by residential staff at the weekends. It is recommended that staff handling food should be trained to an accredited basic food hygiene level.

Sixth form students when signed off by the ILS team are encouraged to shop and cook for themselves. The sixth form house and hostel are furnished with kitchen areas. Students stated that these areas were in need of refurbishment, including a review of the lighting. There was also concern at the lack of basic and necessary cooking equipment in these areas.

Sixth form students would like the school to develop educational and leisure activities that focus on preparing healthy nutritious meals. They felt more could be done during ILS with regard to preparing meals instead of the focus being on operating equipment e.g. preparing a ready meal in the microwave. They also expressed an interest in starting a cookery group that would build up their range of meals they could cook.

Tutorials or PHSE should be developed to educate students in healthy eating.

Sixth form students raised a concern that staff were not monitoring the quality of meals prepared by students cooking for themselves. This is an area that should be monitored and developed during keyworker sessions and at staff meetings.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.(NMS 3)
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.(NMS 4)
- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.(NMS 5)
- Children are protected from bullying by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(NMS 7)
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.(NMS 8)
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour.(NMS 10)
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.(NMS 26)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

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

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

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

Quality in this outcome area is good.

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

The privacy and confidentiality of children and young people is respected and promoted.

The school has a complaints procedure but further consideration needs to take place related to formalising its effectiveness.

The supervision and guidance received by children and young people is appropriate to meet their individual needs.

The safety and welfare of young people is promoted and protected. The awareness of issues connected to safeguarding and protection is apparent in staff practices.

EVIDENCE:

Students indicated staff are good at considering matters connected to confidentiality and sensitive to their rights to privacy and this was stated in group discussion.

The school should review what information is shared with gap students and in what forums. Gap students working in the hostel described attending regular meetings with other care staff to discuss student needs. Gap students working in the houses felt that the same level of information was not shared with them as part of a formal process.

Most young people have mobile phones that they can use to contact family and friends. They also have access to e-mails and MSN. It is planned for Laptops to be connected in wireless form across the campus. The school has been proactive with complying with guidance from the DfES and the school operates 'Microsoft School Internet'. During the last term students attended training about keeping safe when using the Internet. It covered MSN and emailing. The firewall is stringent and complies with good practice guidelines.

Each house and hostel has a telephone that allows for incoming and outgoing calls. The school is considering phone booth covers to provide greater privacy for students.

Students can write and receive letters without these being read by staff and without staff permission. Information is available to all students in a range of formats including Braille, large print and on tape.

The school has a policy about when a room may be searched. It is recommended that the school develop a formal recording mechanism to provide details about how the searches are conducted. Standard 3.11.

The school has a policy and procedure that outlines how it deals with complaints, which was reviewed in September 2005. Details are available about how to contact the Commission but the sixth form handbook needs updating. The school should also include an emergency out of hours contact

system for the Commission. The complaints procedure should include as an appendix the proforma to record a complaint. Likewise this should be contained in the students handbooks. Staff training should encompass the elements outlined under standard 4.4 related to complaints training.

The Children Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 were issued on 7 July 2006. The new procedures have an emphasis on resolving problems for children and young people quickly and effectively. This applies to the local authority complaints procedure. It would be relevant that the school be familiar with this process in light of these recent changes.

Each house had a complaint book available but these remain in various formats. It is recommended that the record fully complies with the elements outlined under standard 4.3 connected to how complaints are being recorded.

The school should facilitate access and provide information to any available advocacy services. This information should be in evidence in the homes.

Students receive information about the complaints procedure in the 'Student Starter Pack' and the 'House Handbooks'.

Not all students spoke to, were of a formal complaints procedure, although most were able to describe what they would do if they were unhappy or had a concern. A number of students described routes they had taken such as discussing concerns with keyworkers, in tutorials or with care staff but felt that often their discussion was then forgotten and an outcome and resolution was not achieved.

One young person described how she had gone straight to the Principal because her concern had repeatedly not been addressed by other staff members.

The school needs to ensure all students are aware of informal and formal routes to express concerns and to complain. Staff teams need to be aware of their role in addressing concerns raised either directly through them or in keyworker sessions or tutorials. These concerns should be investigated, an outcome reached and action taken. Consideration should be given to the methods of recording these informal complaints so that managers can monitor concerns and look for patterns.

A revised child protection policy was issued to staff in November 2006. All of the care staff confirmed they had attended child protection training in the past 12 months and new staff as part of their induction. This training is then up dated through internal training sessions.

The school should review how care staff interpret the procedures linked to allegations. There was evidence that staff are uncertain and the knowledge base needs to be improved. A copy of the Safeguarding Board Procedures

should be available in the houses and staff should be familiar with these procedures.

Two of the senior management team have attended level 2 and 3 for the designated child protection co-ordinator, which is more in depth training. This was with Worcester Social Service and also a two-day non-maintained 'Safeguarding Children's Board' organised by Leeds social services. The feedback was positive and the school has now addressed a list of action points as a result of these training events. It has provided opportunities to increase the senior management's knowledge and skills. The school has firmly established contact with the local safeguarding officer who has responsibility for the special schools. This has been a helpful resource for the school management team. It has enabled the school to be more familiar with interagency procedures. The acting principal has enrolled the governor for similar child protection training. This governor has been identified to take a lead on child protection and offer peer support to managers.

Gap students read the child protection policy and discuss the child protection procedure as part of their induction.

In April 2006 HMI and CSCI visited the school due to concerns being raised by RNIB national with Worcester duty and assessment and the DfES. As a result of this visit, no immediate concerns were found. In response to the visit the school had to produce an action plan to address the recommendations from this visit in April. The school has reviewed the action at two intervals, September and November 2006 and the Commission has been informed of the progress.

The school has an anti-bullying policy reviewed in November 2006. There are periods where bullying behaviours does happen but confidence was expressed with the staff 's ability to provide a swift response. Staff awareness of issues of bullying and practices of dealing with bullying behaviours are consistent with the policy and procedure. Students are aware of the school's anti bullying policy and were able to describe the action they would take if they were concerned about bullying. Students who had experienced bullying in other settings described the school as a safe and supportive environment.

The school also provides an anti-bullying initiative where a working group team meet to review issues and determine strategies.

One staff member's response to the questionnaire illustrates the underpinning ethos at the college. "The college will not tolerate bullying, harassment or intimidation of any kind. Staff and learners are encouraged to report bullying and harassment and has a written policy explaining what to do from the learners perspective and from staff suspecting or receiving complaints of bullying or harassment. No reported or suspected cases of bullying or harassment goes without consideration or investigation and must be reported to management."

The student assessment process discusses the students historic experience of bullying so the school is well informed at the point of the student's admission to the school.

It is recommended that the school should have a risk of the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying behaviours is at its greatest.

Students' whereabouts in the school are well-monitored by staff. Absconding behaviours is not a current issue for the school. Student are expected to obtain passes from the reception desk and during the visit did not appear to drift from this. Similarly, there is a clear process to record students who are in or out of the residential houses.

Students were able to describe the measures of discipline used at the school. They felt that staff appropriately and fairly implemented measures of control and sanctions. A system of rewards exist at the school and students in the lower houses had a good understanding how to achieve these. The reward system is not used with sixth formers but a nominal financial incentive is available. It is recommended that this should be referred to in the sixth former handbook or the policies procedures handbook.

The school has carried out a significant review of the physical intervention policy. This was issued to staff in November 2006. The current guidance from DfES is included and contact is mentioned with one local authority as an example of best practice. Twelve staff have attended 'Team TEACH' training. They are currently considering refresher training.

The school has introduced a newly designed, numbered and bound book. There are no students attending the college who required planned or emergency use of any physical intervention this academic year.

The records of sanctions were examined in one of the houses and it did not cover all the elements outlined under standard 10.9. The school needs to review this. When the complaints book was examined it included a record of a sanction but this has not been cross-referenced to the sanction book. It is recommended that the schools internal quality assurance audit should examine this area more closely. In particular, identifying and paying attention to any patterns related to the incidents.

The school takes seriously its responsibility under health and safety and fire legislation. The school is currently developing a more comprehensive local health and safety policy. It is anticipated that this document will be implemented in January 2007.

Risk assessments are available for activities both in the campus and accessing the community at a wider level.

Students confirmed they were involved in fire drills and were able to describe the action they would take in the event of a fire or fire alarm. Gap students were informed of the fire evacuation procedure as part of their induction. The Fire department has visited the school and has not made any recommendations. Fire records were clear and up to date. Regular training takes place for all staff. This includes refresher training.

All of the domestic installation checks are being monitored. Thermostatic control valves control the hot water taps and comply with the expected temperature of hot water.

The school's recruitment and selection of staff is in line with equal opportunities. The recruitment records were checked. All the files contained a completed application form signed and dated. Records of the interview are documented and two references are being obtained. Clear evidence of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) at enhanced level was available. There is a procedure in place to renew CRB every three years and all except one had been completed. The school does not permit new care staff to start work prior to a CRB clearance.

The inspector noted that there were no copies of the Disqualification Disclosures Form in line with the Disqualification from Caring for Children (England) Regulations 2002. This form should include a statement from the prospective employee that he or she has not been disqualified from undertaking private fostering, (see Sections 65 and 68 of the Children Act 1989).

The school has adopted the 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' that comes into force from January 2007. As a result of this guidance, a new policy is being developed to incorporate all aspects of safer recruitment.

Gap students are recruited via an agency. The agency interviews them in their country of origin. They also take up two written references, one from their school and one from their place of work or a family friend and a criminal background check. The college has a system for interviewing gap students at the point of their induction. This system allows for discussions to take place.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

Standard 12 & 22

Quality in this outcome area is good.

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

The academic support and achievement of students is central to the ethos of the school. The school is able to assess and provide individual support. Students are confident in accessing counsellors and other key staff within the school's environment.

EVIDENCE:

Each student's academic achievement is well supported. The communication between the teaching and care staff enables students academic progress to be monitored. The morning routines permit students to arrive on time for classes. During the inspection visit staff were observed to facilitate enough time to allow students to prepare for the day.

Students have access to books and other study resources in the Learning Resource Centre.

Students are supplied with a laptop. Some students indicated that storage arrangements are limited in the school environment and students end up carrying laptops for lengthy periods. The school should consult with students to improve the arrangements for storing laptops.

Meetings take place fortnightly between four representatives from the residential accommodation and Independent Living Skills (ILS) team. This provides the opportunity for staff to monitor individual student's independent living skills. The pastoral team, teaching staff and care staff are committed to the student's academic achievement. This is facilitated through regular weekly meetings.

Care staff attend 'Form' reviews and annual reviews. Form reviews allow a form tutor to feedback to key staff on the development of the form group. Some sixth form student feedback about the forum group meetings needed to include a more inquisitive approach. Often vague subjects were being discussed and the content was of limited value to students. Students need to feel it is a platform where they can give constructive feedback and share their views. The school should revisit this area with the student's involvement.

Staff weekly meetings focus on specific students and involve key staff from across the site.

Students are provided with appropriate environments to study. Each of the residential junior houses had an extension built to provide extra accommodation for student study areas. This facility is equipped with computers and workstation areas. The feedback from students and staff has been positive.

There is an impressive range of leisure and weekend activities. The Leisure Co-ordinators are developing new links with the community and supporting individual students to access community activities. It is recommended that a forum is needed to ensure an overview of what the student is achieving.

The school employs two qualified counsellors and an independent listener who is available by phone and visits the school monthly. The nurse also operates a daily surgery. Student peer counselling is also available and makes a positive contribution towards supporting pupils.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

Standard 2, 17 & 20

Quality in this outcome area is good.

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

Consultation with young people is a significant aspect to the overall care of students. Relationships are professional. The admissions and assessment process is carried in order to ensure student needs are being identified and met. Students are enabled to retain contact with families and carers.

The placement care plan should be reviewed to ensure that the plan adequately represents individual needs. Systems of communication between the college and parents were well developed.

EVIDENCE:

The school has a number of structures in place to consult with students. The Student council provides a platform to influence how the school is run. The student council has representatives from each year group. There is a clear process of communication between the Head of Sixth Form and the Acting Principal with the Head Boy and Head Girl and deputies to assist with taking forward issues raised at the council. There is a formal agenda and feedback is provided to key staff and the acting principal.

Students are invited to participate in a 'Focus Group' and work has taken place around menu planning, health and safety and equality and diversity.

Feedback from students in the lower houses was positive about how students are engaged with and consulted. House meetings are regular. One student's questionnaire represented this by saying "I always felt comfortable confiding in the care staff in the younger houses as they are very friendly and approachable".

The Sixth formers experiences were less focussed on. Students have already expressed this to the Acting Principal and this also coincides with a review of the staffing establishment with this group. The school should reconsider the methods of consultation, as it was evident through discussions with the older students that they felt the current process was not successful. Subjects and topics were raised but the delay with informing students of the outcomes was a frustrating experience. One response from a student questionnaire is quoted "I think overall we, in the Sixth Form, are looked after pretty well. I think sometimes we are made too independent because of the low interaction we get with the staff. Especially to use who live in the Sixth Form house, we are left alone quite a lot and although it is good to be independent, I still think staff interaction is important".

Questionnaires are circulated to students and this includes an anonymous process. Recently, sixth formers had been consulted as part of the hostel staffing review.

The 'Student Voice' is another element that has contributed to the college yearly improvement plan.

Questionnaires are circulated to major stakeholders and include parents and carers. Regional parents meetings are used to consult and elicit views.

The care planning process was examined and it remains similar to the last inspection visit. The placement plans need further refinement.

There is an excellent assessment tool being used but this process is not referred to in the students file.

The 'Individual Personal Development Plan' covers topics related to daily living tasks and activities but essentially does not yet meet the headings under standard 17.5. This area was discussed with the school and it needs a strategic review. The processes should be fully integrated across the educational and care settings. Some staff expressed concerns about how current or up to date the plans were in the residential provision. There was evidence of a lack of monitoring by senior staff. The quality of staff recordings was not being focussed on. Inspectors could not paper audit where information was being collected as evidence for the annual review. One staff member was keeping individual records for their key students but these were not part of the records maintained in the junior house. Staff should be provided with clear structures to record the progress students.

The junior houses use a students' daily living skill matrix where they are assessed and measured. Another tool used is the task teaching system for daily activities that is well considered. There are no similar teaching tools available for personal care or hygiene. This is an area that should be considered.

Parents and carers are able to contact the school at any time. Contact by phone with the residential units is regular. Facilities are available for parents and carers to visit and overnight stays can be accommodated during the academic term.

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):

EVIDENCE:

None of these standards were assessed on this occasion.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

Standard 1, 28, 31 & 32.

Quality in this outcome area is good.

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

The management and organisation of the school remains effective. Senior staff have worked hard to achieve and implement the plans for de-merger which is leading up to the college's independent status. The governors should re-examine the capacity levels and workload of the senior management team.

The process of staff training, supervision and management overview ensure the focus remains with students. How the school measures and captures the

quality of care needs to be expanded. The quality assurances tools should reflect care practices and identify where improvement can be made.

The school has not yet achieved the required levels of care staff having completed their NVQ level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

The schools intention of increasing the numbers of care staff is welcomed.

EVIDENCE:

The school continues to be supported by a clear management structure. The Acting Principal provides a strong commitment to the process of demerger and the task has been a sizable one, in terms of preparation and implementation. Her approach and style remains closely involved with the operational practices of the school. The governors need to focus the workload among the senior management team (SMT) who have operated with one less staff member for almost three years. It is recommended this area should be given further consideration.

The school has available a Statement of Purpose that has remained static since the last inspection visit. The amended Statement of Purpose was not available. The school should audit to ensure full compliance with all the elements outlined under standard 1. The school should review the Statement against actual practice and summarise the school's residential provision. It should include any major or unusual characteristics of residential provision at the school.

The school demerger is being planned for in April 2007. The inspector did hear that a new school prospectus is being developed to compliment the information available in the Statement of Purpose. This will be available in Braille and large print format.

The school provides three houses for Year 7 to Year 11. These houses are named Bradnack, Dorothy McHugh, Peggy Marks.

The staffing allocation is five staff to each house. During the weekdays three staff are on duty. At weekends this reduces to one staff member who is lone working when there are less students on campus. There is a period of two hours where the staff overlap during the weekends. The school is reminded to examine more closely standard 28.6 in relation to the minimum number of staff expected to care for children who are under the age of 15. GAP students are calculated as making up the staffing for the college's permanent staff arrangements.

The school has accommodated 29 new students this academic term. The school is operating without one of its residential units, Brown House. The plan

is to reopen after refurbishment in February 2007. The feedback from staff in the junior house is that staff time was placed at a premium this term, as a result of the increased numbers. This has placed a strain on staff. The school has already addressed this area. Two staff appointments are being planned for in the New Year and additional staff resources for the sixth form. The number being placed in the junior houses will be reduced and consultation is to take place about which students will move across to Brown House.

There was evidence that new staff complete training and induction programmes and attend core training.

The college is in the process of conducting an audit of training against Appendix 2 of the national minimum standards. Training is to be organised and staggered over a planned phase. The school has reviewed the policies and procedures that match those expectations of the standards.

Personal development plans are being developed for staff.

There was evidence that staff are receiving supervision. Staff consider the management team as accessible.

Team meetings that include all key staff are taking place.

There is a timetable for existing staff and new staff to work towards completing NVQ level 3 in Children and Young People.

The school ensures that care staff have a handover period and time to complete the care records.

The school continues to develop a range of business and management information connected to the performance of the school.

The quality assurance process is a tick box method, set out to meet the criteria in standard 32 and completed by the Head of Care and Deputy. This tool has a limited value and does not provide comprehensive monitoring that is related to the outcomes for students. The school recognises that quality assurance monitoring needs strengthening. The quality assurance needs to capture the importance of the work taking place. The college's ability to examine its strengths and areas for improvement should be given a higher priority.

The school continues to be monitored by an RNIB representative. The school has provided evidence of following up action points as a result of these visits.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

Yes. Just one and this is repeated.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1.	RS14	The school should conduct a self-audit to ensure full compliance with the expected level of detail to be contained in a health plan. The head of care and the school nurse should liaise about the quality and content of the health plan.	
2.	RS14	The school should review the appropriateness of moving someone who is ill between the houses/hostel and sickbay. There should also be a review of the ability to isolate a student and use of a bathroom in the houses/hostel.	
3.	RS14	The school should identify if the resource matches the level of need reported by students and staff with regards to the opening hours of the school surgery. Any gaps should be addressed.	
4.	RS14	Staff rotas should clearly show who is the nominated first aider in each house and the school should ensure refresher training is planned for.	
5.	RS14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students, especially sixth form students felt that the school should be more proactive in providing information and educational material with regard to health and personal care issues for example, healthy diets, sexual health, smoking and 	

		<p>drug awareness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school should evaluate the role and function of keyworking and students should be consulted as part of this process. Staff should receive the necessary training in topics related to smoking, alcohol, drug awareness, personal relationships and sexual health. 	
7.	RS14	The school should ensure that information about how to refer to the counselling service is clearly signposted to all students. Student's awareness of the 'drop in' basis during surgery times was limited.	
8.	RS15	The junior house kitchens should have sufficient storage areas to meet special dietary needs.	
9.	RS15	The quality of the evening meals has re-emerged and the school should re-engage with this topic again.	
10.	RS15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sixth form students felt that the portion sizes were in some circumstances small in the canteen. Staff should discuss with students in the independent living skills programme, how to access snacks and circumstances where the canteen meals are being promoted. 	
11.	RS15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sixth form students raised concern at the cleanliness of kitchen areas, equipment, crockery and cutlery. They were also frustrated at the length of time it took staff to address concerns with regard to cleanliness. Students stated that these areas were in need of refurbishment, including a review of the lighting. There was also concern at the lack of basic and necessary cooking equipment in these areas. Sixth form students would like the school to develop educational and leisure activities that focus on preparing healthy nutritious meals. They also expressed an interest in starting a cookery group that would build up the range of meals they could cook. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sixth form students raised a concern that staff were not monitoring the quality of meals prepared by these students cooking for themselves. This is an area that should be monitored and developed during keyworker sessions and at staff meetings. Tutorials or PHSE should be developed to educate students in healthy eating. 	
12.	RS15	The school should ensure that staff handling food should be trained to an accredited basic food hygiene level.	
13.	RS3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The school should review what information is shared with gap students and in what forums. The school should develop a formal recording mechanism to provide details about how the search was conducted. Standard 3.11. 	
14.	RS4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The complaints procedure should include as an appendix the proforma to record a complaint. Likewise, this should be contained in the student handbooks. Staff training should encompass the elements outlined under standard 4.4 related to complaints training. The Children Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 were issued on 7 July 2006. The new procedures have an emphasis on resolving problems for children and young people quickly and effectively. This applies to the local authority complaints procedure. The school should be familiar with this process in light of these recent changes. Each house had a complaint book available but these remain in various formats. The records should fully comply with the elements outlined under standard 4.3 connected to how complaints are being recorded. 	

		<p>5. The school should facilitate access and provide information to any available advocacy services. This information should be in evidence in the homes.</p> <p>6. The school should ensure all students are aware of informal and formal routes to express concerns and to complain. Staff teams should be aware of their role in addressing concerns raised either directly through them or in keyworker sessions or tutorials. These concerns should be investigated, an outcome reached and action taken. Consideration should be given to the methods of recording these informal complaints so that managers can monitor concerns and look for patterns.</p>	
15	RS5	<p>1. The school should review how care staff interpret the procedures linked to allegations.</p> <p>2. A copy of the Safeguarding Board Procedures should be available in the houses and staff should be familiar with these procedures.</p>	
16	RS6	The school should have a risk assessment of the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying behaviours is at its greatest in accordance with standard 6.5.	
17	RS10	<p>1. Sixth formers can gain a nominal financial incentive to reward positive attitude and behaviour. This should be referred to in the sixth former handbook or the policies and procedures handbook.</p> <p>2. The records connected to sanctions should be monitored and attention paid to any patterns related to the incidents.</p>	
18	RS27	The school has no copies of the Disqualification Disclosures Form in line with the Disqualification from Caring for Children (England) Regulations 2002. This form should include a statement from the prospective employee that he or she has not been disqualified from undertaking private fostering, (see Sections 65 and 68 of the Children Act 1989).	

19	RS12	The school should consult with students about improving the storage facilities for laptops.	
20	RS22	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The quality of the student forum meetings should be reviewed in light of the comments made by students in this report. 2. There is a forum needed to ensure an overview of what the student is achieving in relation to the leisure and weekend activities. 	
21	RS2	The school should reconsider the methods of consultation, as it was evident through discussions with the older students that they felt the current process was not successful. Subjects and topics were raised but the delay with informing students of the outcomes was frustrating.	
22	RS17	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The placement plans need further refinement. The school should ensure full compliance with standard 17.5. 2. Care staff should be provided with a clear recording structure to evidence progress of students. 3. The school should develop the task-teaching system for personal hygiene and care similar to the daily activities where skills are assessed and measured. 	
23	RS1	The school should audit to ensure full compliance with all the elements outlined under standard 1 linked to the Statement of Purpose. The school should review the Statement against actual practice and summarise the school's residential provision, and it should include any major or unusual characteristics of residential provision at the school.	
24	RS28	The school is reminded to examine more closely standard 28.6 in relation to the minimum number of staff expected to care for children who are under the age of 15. The practice of lone working at weekends should be reviewed in light	

		of this standard.	
25	RS31	The school should encourage existing staff and new staff to work towards completing NVQ level 3 in Children and Young People. The school has not yet achieved the 80% target of qualified staff at NVQ level 3.	
26	RS32	The school should develop a comprehensive quality assurance tool that captures a clear process of measurement and is related to the experiences of students. The colleges' ability to examine its strengths and areas for improvement should be given a key priority.	

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Worcester Local Office

Commission for Social Care Inspection

The Coach House

John Comyn Drive

Perdiswell Park, Droitwich Road

Worcester WR3 7NW

National Enquiry Line:

Telephone: 0845 015 0120 or 0191 233 3323

Textphone: 0845 015 2255 or 0191 233 3588

Email: enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk

Web: www.csci.org.uk

© This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI.