



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

### **Chaigeley Educational Foundation**

**Chaigeley School  
Foundation Offices  
Lymm Road  
Thelwall, Warrington  
Cheshire  
WA4 2TE**

*Lead Inspector*  
Jeff Banham

*Announced Inspection*  
21st November 2006      08:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

Those outcomes are:

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

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

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

# SERVICE INFORMATION

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name of school</b>   | Chaigeley Educational Foundation   |
| <b>Address</b>  | Chaigeley School<br>Foundation Offices<br>Lymm Road<br>Thelwall, Warrington<br>Cheshire<br>WA4 2TE |
| <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01925 752357   |
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| <b>Provider Web address</b>   | <a href="http://www.chaigeleyschool.org">www.chaigeleyschool.org</a>                               |
| <b>Name of Governing body,<br/>Person or Authority<br/>responsible for the<br/>school</b> | Chaigeley Educational Foundation   |
| <b>Name of Head</b>   | Mr Drew Crawshaw   |
| <b>Name of Head of Care</b>   | Mr. Tim Hancock  |
| <b>Age range of residential<br/>pupils</b>  | 8 - 16   |
| <b>Date of last welfare<br/>inspection</b>  | 06/12/05   |

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

Chaigeley School was founded by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) during the Second World War. It provided care and rehabilitation for traumatised children fleeing the Liverpool blitz. The school's nature and functions have changed dramatically over the years from that of a hostel to a school.

Chaigeley now provides education for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties and related needs between the ages of eight and sixteen years. It has places for up to seventy-five students with residential provision for twenty-four students. The school is itself part of the Chaigeley Education Foundation, a registered charity, and is managed by a body of Governors/Trustees in accordance with its Instrument of Governance. The Foundation runs the school and is a not-for-profit body; its income is used in meeting the needs of its pupils.

Chaigeley school is situated in its own grounds, in a rural area of Thelwall, in Warrington. Accommodation on the school campus is provided in the main school building and in a detached house. The campus includes classrooms, workshops, a garage and gym, as well as a games room. The school also has its own gardens and playing fields.

The school offers residential care from Monday mornings to Friday afternoons, each week of term for a maximum of twenty-four students. The residential accommodation is provided in three residential units within the main school. In addition the school has developed weekend provision. During term time the school provides accommodation for a maximum of three boys in the 'Weekend Cottage'.

Students are referred to the school from local Education Authorities across the country, though primarily from the North West, the Midlands and North Wales.

# SUMMARY

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

The site visit took place over two days. It was part of the school's annual key inspection.

Completed survey questionnaires were received from three parents. The visit included observation of practice throughout the day, in the early evening after school and early morning as the boys prepared for school.

Policies and procedures were seen, together with the case files for three boys staying in the residential accommodation.

Pupils gave the inspector a guided tour of each of the three residential units. Seven boys were spoken with in a variety of situations. Care and teaching staff were also spoken with, together with the senior catering officer, the anger management therapist, the head of personnel, the medical co-ordinator and the senior administrative and administrative officer.

Each outcome area in this report contains a judgement of the quality of the service provided by the school. This judgement has been made using all the available evidence, including the site visit.

The overall service provided by the school is good.

## What the school does well:

One parent told the inspector *"My son has been to an EBD school before and compared to Chaigeley I'd give it nought out of ten. My son has settled quickly, and the change in his behaviour is brilliant."*

The school demonstrates a great deal of commitment to the development of practices to support children. A great emphasis is put on the "whole school approach" by which all staff work as a team to support each other to provide education and care to the children living there.

The systems and resources for health care are excellent, as are the systems for risk assessment and all aspects of health and safety.

The relationship between the senior managers and the board of governors is good, and this ensures the school is well supported in providing and developing its services.

The care staff are a team of experienced and committed people who work well together. They provide children with a balance of care and control, and remain positive about them in the face of sometimes challenging behaviour.

The school places a great deal of emphasis on staff training and development, and continues to demonstrate its intention to review all aspects of its provision and the continuing development of its services so that children can receive the best possible care and education.

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

Aspects of the care planning system and documentation have improved.

The residential accommodation has been upgraded.

The staff induction process has become more structured and thorough.

There has been a positive response to the provision of more meals on the residential units.

The school has provided more resources for the professional development of its entire staff, for pupil support and for the management of pupil behaviour. A system for debriefing staff after an incident of challenging behaviour has been introduced, and the emphasis for managing behaviour is moving from the use of restraint to de-escalation.

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

The school needs to commit itself to the obtaining of full CRB clearance on all staff before they begin work at the school.

Care planning systems could demonstrate the involvement of children in the review of their progress, and could be based on as much information as possible being obtained before admission.

The systems for the monitoring of children's files could be more robust and provide evidence for the work that goes on.

The staffing of the Weekend Cottage, particularly the “on call” arrangements could be reviewed to ensure they provide safe care for staff and children.

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

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.



# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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# 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 and 15

The quality of the service provided in this outcome area is excellent. Children's health care needs are established at an early stage and form the basis of the care plan. Staff actively promote the health care needs of children, and the resources of the health care co-ordinator are used to monitor and develop the systems for ensuring children are cared for effectively and safely.

## EVIDENCE:

The school has a number of sources to obtain information about the health care needs of children coming to live at the school. These include information from parents, health care professionals and social services where children are "looked after".

This information is used to contribute to the written "health" section of the individual care plan placed on each child's file. Records of treatments, reactive and routine - for example dental and optical screening -are also kept on file. The school has a Health Care Co-ordinator who liaises with parents and health care professionals to identify and promote health care issues. She is responsible for managing the health care of all boys at the school, and actively develops and promotes the ways in which children are cared for.

Contacts are also established with Warrington Health Authority, and children are registered with a local GP where this is in accord with parents' wishes, or they remain with their own GPs. Health care issues are discussed and recorded during both the review of the statement of special education needs and the statutory reviews for "looked after" children.

The whole school is involved in an "anti-smoking" programme that recognises that some boys smoke, that provides them with advice and encouragement to stop, and restricts smoking to certain times and places. Children's records demonstrate that action is taken against children who smoke in places that lead to potential danger to themselves or others.

The school uses the services of a speech and language therapist. Drugs awareness support is also available, and other specialist services such as CAMHS, the School Health Nurse and the Looked After Children Nurse are also used and records kept of their involvement with individual children.

A number of staff have been trained in first aid and the administration of medication. Senior staff administer medication in accordance with the school's policy on the storage and handling of medication.

A newly equipped medical room has been provided away from the main activity of the school. It also has a "quiet area" where children can discuss their problems or recover from conditions in peace.

The school has a "healthy eating" programme. This is based on a written identification of dietary needs and preferences, established through pre-admission information, consultation with children through individual discussion, "unit" meetings and meetings of the School Council.

The "tuck shop" has changed the items stocked to offer primarily fruit, cereal bars and healthy option drinks. The dining room displays the day's menu with a range of options that all include fresh fruit and vegetables. Children spoken with said the food is good, and this was borne out by the observation of them enjoying their food on both the residential units and the main dining room.

Breakfast for children resident at the school is served on their residential unit. There are three of these, for juniors, inters and seniors, and each is furnished and equipped to provide a warm, homely and comfortable domestic-style environment. Children appear to enjoy the informality of the social occasion of breakfast.

Lunch for the whole school is taken in the main dining room. Sessions are staggered in an attempt to manage the numbers involved and to offer some segregation for the various ages. Inevitably lunchtime is less of a social occasion and more functional in dealing with all the children at the school. The dining room itself is institutional in design and furnishing. The Principal said plans are in hand for redecoration and refurbishment of both kitchen and dining room.

Tea for children resident at the school is also taken in the dining room. It is available between 4.15 and 5.00. Given that the dining room is not conducive to a domestic-style occasion, and the fact that the mealtime is relatively early, it is less of a social occasion than breakfast.

Supper is taken on each unit; children are able to take up a box of food each evening. This includes items such as bread, fruit, milk, eggs and bacon. Children can then help themselves or are assisted by staff to eat during the evening before bedtime.

The issue of taking more meals on the residential units was raised at the last inspection and the Head of Care said that extensive consideration has been

given to extending the provision. Staff confirmed that the topic had been discussed fully with them.

As a result "hostess trolleys" have been bought. These were in the school ready for deployment on each unit. The senior catering officer confirmed that he would prepare food for tea that would be taken up to the residential units, and that this would offer more "domestic- style" mealtimes and give more flexibility to taking tea.

# 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):

3,4,5,6,7,8,10,26 and 27

The service provided by the school in this area is good. This judgement has been made using all the available evidence, including the site visit. The school operates a number of policies and practices that ensure staff and children work in safety, and are cared for safely.

The most significant issue is the need for an improvement to the policy and systems for ensuring new staff are appropriately checked to ensure they are safe to work with children.

## EVIDENCE:

Chaigeley has a policy on confidentiality of information that is made available to staff at the start of their employment and reinforced through training and supervision. Staff said they are aware of the need for the sensitive handling of

all information about children and their families. Written information about children is stored in locked cabinets in either the main office or on the residential units.

Children are informed about the complaints procedure through speaking to staff and in the written "Welcome Pack" given to every child. Complaint reporting forms are available. When a child makes a complaint they can complete a report form, by themselves or with assistance. This is recorded in the complaints log, and the form itself, with its outcome, held on the child's file. The school has a system to differentiate between complaints made by children about other children, from complaints made about the school and its staff, but maintains a record of the former in order to monitor the incidence of bullying. A member of the senior management team monitors the complaints log. Children said they are treated fairly by staff, and know to whom they would make a complaint should the need arise.

The school has detailed child protection procedures. Training for the whole school in child protection has been delivered and senior staff have completed a two-day course organised by Warrington Borough Council. The Head of School has been recently appointed and said he was due to attend the course early next year. Staff say they were aware of the child protection procedures and understand the need for vigilance in monitoring all aspects of children's safety.

Anti-bullying measures are in place, through the use of policies to inform staff of the need to prevent bullying, to react to any identified concerns, and to enable children to report incidents of bullying or abuse. One boy said that he thought incidents of bullying had gone down, and he was confident that staff would help anybody should help be needed. Two boys were temporarily excluded during the site visit for bullying a boy attending the day school. The school had taken part in "Anti-bullying week" and posters were displayed around the school.

The school has a policy for responding to children missing from school. Staff were seen responding to children going off site on both days of the inspector's visit.

Notifications are made to the appropriate authorities, including CSCI, about significant events affecting both children and the school.

Given the needs of the children admitted to the school the issue of managing behaviour, and its impact on staff, is significant. The underpinning ethos of the school is the promotion and reward of positive behaviour through clear guidelines contained in the "Good Behaviour Policy". This describes what is expected of children in their behaviour towards one another, staff and themselves, and emphasises the importance of consistency of approach by staff towards children's behaviour. Staff are trained in "Team Teach" methods of intervention, and this training is regularly updated.

The sanctions log details actions taken where children had not behaved appropriately and in line with expectations, and the record of serious incidents describe occasions where restraint has been used. These records demonstrate that children are given the opportunity to reflect on their actions at a later time.

The Head of Care said that care staff are allocated to a class during the day, and senior staff are on duty during the day in a "pupil support" role. This involves them in supporting education staff by dealing with difficult behaviour of children not known to them as well as children on the residential unit. In response to the impact on staff of this work the school has developed a formal "de-briefing" process where staff involved in "positive handling" (restraint) can discuss the event its impact on them and any implications for practice.

The Senior Administrative Officer carries out specific responsibilities in relation to health and safety. Working with other staff she has developed comprehensive risk assessments for the premises, activities and individual children. She has undertaken a detailed audit of the premises and grounds, and had prioritised all work required. Significant concerns over safety are identified as the highest priority. The serious incident sheets are reviewed in order to assist in the development of children's behavioural risk assessments. The school has a Health and Safety committee that meets regularly, and a maintenance meeting every week monitors the state of the premises and identifies remedial work that is required. There have recently been a number of incidents involving boys climbing on to roofs. The school has developed a policy to guide staff's actions after such incidents have occurred.

Fire protection systems are tested regularly and are documented in the fire log.

At the start of the site visit the Head of Care told the inspector that two members of staff had been employed before CRB checks had been completed. It was only brought to the attention of the Head of Care some weeks after one member of staff had been at the school. The school had responded quickly by putting into place written risk assessments and supervision strategies for one member of staff. The other has only just started, and was on her induction. The Head of Care said she would be sent home on full pay until the CRB was through.

The response of the school has been positive and effective. However, the risks associated with this area would be eliminated if the school had a policy of not employing staff unless and until a CRB check is provided. This would be in line with the guidance contained in Standard 27.

**See recommendation 1**

# 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 and 22.

The service provided in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using all the available evidence, including the site visit.

The residential contribution to education is well established and involves close liaison with teaching staff at all levels.

The school has well-established links with a range of agencies and uses a variety of resources to ensure children are provided with support.

## EVIDENCE:

The school has a number of ways in which the care staff support the education of each young person. Copies of statements of educational need are held on the child's personal file. "Education" was one of the elements identified in the individual care plan compiled by the residential key worker. Communication between school and care staff, in both written and verbal form, takes place each day to ensure that significant information was passed on. Care staff produce written reports for the annual review of the statement of educational need, and are involved in the personal education plan (PEP), and each child's individual education plan (IEP).

Care staff are allocated as key workers to a class during the day; they said that it helps them become familiar with a wide range of pupils other than those on the residential unit. Senior staff are involved in "pupil support" during the day, and this may involve them in taking children out of class and offering individual support, or assisting education staff in managing children in the classroom. When there are staff shortages school support staff work on the residential unit, thereby increasing their knowledge of the children. There is a "handover" meeting for all care staff each day at 3.15, as the school day was about to end. Both education staff and care staff said they feel communication



and co-operation between them is positive, effective and works for the benefit of children.

The school provides a range of activities, both formal and informal, for leisure and education purposes. Children are involved in discussing the activities for the evening at the end of the school day.

Each residential unit holds its own formal meeting, with an agenda and minutes, and these also consider longer term planning for the type of activities the boys might wish to access. Risk assessments are compiled for all out of school activities; assessments for swimming, travelling in the mini-bus, going to the supermarket, eating out, visits to the Warrington Peace Centre, Delamere Forest, museums and libraries and a number of other activities are available. Photographs on the unit show children participating in a range of sporting activities, including rugby and football tournaments.

Children are also taken on holiday in the summer; letters asking for parental consent and financial contributions are on the administration files. Children are also encouraged to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

Each child is allocated a key worker and a link worker. These are their primary contacts during their time at the school. Key workers said they allocate specific time during the week for working with children on the development of care plans and other specific issues as they arose. Staff are also involved in assisting children to reflect on their involvement in issues of difficult behaviour, and these are recorded on the serious incident forms. Specialist support is also available. The school has a speech and language therapist who works with staff to support identified children.

Drug awareness counselling is also available.

There is also a specialist in anger management available to work with children and to offer particular support if children wanted it. He was in the school seeing children during the site visit as he had been in the previous inspection.

The senior management team is looking to the continued development of practice in the support of children. The school has employed a "Pupil Progress Manager" and a "Pupil Behaviour Manager". Together they are working with all staff to ensure that systems are in place to set targets for progress, to develop practices and procedures to support staff, and to ensure that children's progress is monitored and reviewed.

## **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 and 20.

The quality of the service provided in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using all the available evidence including the site visit.

The practice of the school ensures that children are given every opportunity to be involved in their care. Records could be improved to evidence the extent to which this happens.

Relationships between staff and children are good and this provides children with security and structure.

The information on children obtained as part of the admission process could be improved.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Children are encouraged to participate in the management of their care and in their lives in the school in a variety of ways at both an organisational and individual level.

Review meetings of the statement of educational need and of “looked after” children involve children and their parents. The School Council meets regularly, its discussions and decisions are minuted and, where appropriate, action taken.

Each residential unit has meetings of staff and children, and more informal meetings take place each day to decide on activities for the evening. The key worker system provides the opportunity for individual discussions between care worker and child. Staff are allocated time each week to engage in "care planning" activities with the children for whom they are key worker. Children are also able to contribute towards reflection on serious incidents, and to identify complaints or concerns through both formal written systems, and more informal discussions with staff.

At the moment there is little evidence to show the extent to which children are involved in discussions about their behaviour and their care. The school could improve the ways in which the key worker- child sessions were recorded. Care staff could be asked to evaluate the progress records they keep on a daily basis at regular intervals, and discuss these with the children at regular intervals. Children's views could then be obtained and recorded, to demonstrate their involvement in the care planning process.

**See recommendation 2**

Observation of the interaction between staff and children throughout the inspection, and discussions with staff, demonstrated that the relationships between them are based on respect, a clear identification of responsibilities and boundaries, and a strong commitment to developing a sound professional approach founded on clear structures, procedures and policies. The commitment of the care staff, from the senior managers to all care workers, to promoting the interest of the child through sound systems and practice is constantly evident.

Children are dealt with in terms of their behaviour, not their personalities. Staff are able to describe the issues faced by children and use a variety of techniques to engage with children and provide effective and consistent support, sometimes in the face of difficult and challenging behaviour. The focus on developing the ways in which they work with children, and the concern about reviewing and evaluating practice are a very positive feature of the staff team.

The admission process could be improved. The availability of full and accurate information, provided before admission, on which initial care plans should be constructed, remains an issue. The information is not always available, or sometimes not provided by referring authorities, despite the best efforts of the school.

The information on one child who was "looked after" (i.e. in the care of a local authority) is relatively sparse, and does not reflect the information that is available on such children. The full set of "*Looking After Children*" (LAC) documentation should be a mandatory part of the information required by the school as part of the referral process. The most recent LAC review, and copies of "*core assessments*" should also be sought. Copies of any orders confirming the legal status of children should also be requested.

The Head of Care said he had recently attended a review on a child who was resident at the school and had learnt far more about the child than the information provided as part of the admission process.

**See recommendation 3**

The information provided for children from a variety of sources is used to construct the care plan. This is based on an assessment of needs, both educational and social, and is a written document that is held on the personal file of each child. The care plan identifies needs and tasks over a range of areas for each child, and provides an effective tool for working with children. The school has undertaken a review of its care planning systems and staff are able to demonstrate their commitment to the process.

The quality of the initial care plans depends on the quality and quantity of information that the school has about a child on which those plans are based. The fact that it significant information is not always obtained, for example information about a child's health needs, inevitably influences the quality and effectiveness of the care plan.

Children confirmed that the school actively promotes contact between them and their parents and carers when they are living at Chaigeley. The care plans contain information about family relationships and significant contacts. Children are assisted in making phone calls, or going home if it becomes necessary. Parents say that contact from the school is good, and that they are always made to feel welcome when they visit the school.

# 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):

16,21,23,24 and 25.

The quality provided in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using all the available evidence including the site visit. The school continues to improve its accommodation in order to provide children with an environment that is homely, well furnished and well equipped.

Children are supported into independence and staff work well to equip children with the skills to move on.

## EVIDENCE:

The school deliberately promotes a “non-institutional” atmosphere both before and after school. The young people living in the small residential units are encouraged to wear their own clothes. They have access to their own money upon request as it has to be held by staff for security purposes since there is no secure storage for personal possessions. An inventory is made of items brought from home in order to safeguard children’s possessions.

The school has developed a range of supports for young people about to leave school. Training in the development of self-care skill is available through the AQA system of accreditation, there is an “independence flat” available in the main residential accommodation, and the school has developed close links with the local college and with the ConneXions service.

A number of improvements had been made to the school premises and accommodation. Despite the fact that most of the buildings are old, and not what would be designed to fulfil the current purpose of the school, staff have created a pleasant environment that is appropriately decorated and furnished.

The residential accommodation consists of homely and comfortable sitting rooms with well –equipped and furnished kitchen /dining rooms. Each child has a single room that has been personalised with posters and furnishings. The school has allocated each child a sum of money that they could spend on items to personalise their rooms.

Most toilets and showers on the units have been upgraded and are now pleasant and modern in design, and offer comfort and privacy to young people. The “weekend cottage has been significantly improved, and provides a warm, domestic and relaxing environment in which children can live.

The “appearance of the “independence flat” contrasts with the appearance of the other parts of the residential units. The Head of Care said that upgrading would take place when the budget allowed.

Maintenance work is prioritised to take account of health and safety issues. Regular meetings take place between the maintenance staff, staff responsible for health and safety and the unit staff to identify and prioritise repair and renovation work. Care staff said they are well supported by maintenance staff who they feel respond quickly to requests for work to be done.

# 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):**

The service provided in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using all the available evidence, including the site visit.

The senior management team has developed an effective "whole school approach" to the delivery of all its practices. Systems, policies and procedures are designed and reviewed to ensure staff are well supported, and the school offers the best possible education, care and support to the children for whom it provides a service.

Systems of file audit could be improved, and the staffing levels of the Weekend Cottage should be reviewed to ensure children and staff are safe.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The school has a statement of purpose that is available as a written document, on the school's web site, in Braille and on an audio CD. Copies are provided to parents and all placing authorities. Children are given a "Welcome Pack" that gives a shortened version of the prospectus. A "Welcome Pack" is also available for the weekend cottage. Newsletters are sent to parents, and they are invited to regular parents' evenings.

The school has produced a business plan and the school development plan that outlined its key future activities. These demonstrate that the school is anxious to continue to provide a range of services that meet children's needs, and to develop its systems and practices to support the continued provision of effective education and care.

Each child has at two files containing their personal information. There is the main administrative file held in the front office. There is also the working file used by staff on the residential units.

The Head of Care said that monitoring of children's files takes place. A more explicit system of recording the monitoring activity on the child's file would provide clear evidence of the practice.

**See recommendation 4**

Care staff have been diligent and positive about producing chronologies of each child's history. They have started to work on the collection of the child's background information. Staff involved remarked on how important it had been to give them a wider picture of the child's circumstances, and this helped them to understand the child's behaviour and needs.

The "Weekend Cottage" generally has a maximum of three children in residence at any one time. From 11pm the unit is staffed by one person who "sleeps in." There is no explicit "on call" system, and it is not clear how the member of staff would receive assistance in a timely fashion if this were required.

**See recommendation 5**

The residential care staff are in general relatively long serving and familiar with the school and the children. They said they work well together, are supported by the senior management team, and support each other in what is a sometimes challenging and arduous job. The inspector spoke with most of the care staff during the inspection, either in groups or individually. Their enthusiasm and commitment is evident, and observation of their practice demonstrates their care and concern for the children and the professionalism of their approach.

Staff absence is managed through a flexible approach to shifts, by staff undertaking extra work and the use of education support staff to ensure the residential units remain fully staffed even when there are difficulties.

The deployment of staff in "pupil support" during the day is felt to be beneficial in widening their knowledge of all children in the school.



The key worker system is effective in providing individual support to children, and the allocation of specific "care planning" time, when key workers can work with children on a one-to-one basis a positive practice.

Staff are given training from the time they started at the school. Each new member of staff is subject to a formal and recorded induction process and allocated a "mentor" with whom they work closely. The induction process has recently been reviewed and provides new staff with a comprehensive and structured introduction to the school. Two new staff members confirmed that a high level of support was available for them.

Performance management is available for all staff, and regular supervision takes place with records kept of each individual session. The school places great emphasis on "*Continuing Professional Development*" (CPD) and the Assistant Head with responsibility for this area was able to describe, with great enthusiasm, the current and future developments to which the school is committed.

The school had arranged two days training in which teams of care and education staff would visit a number of schools in the north of England in order to compare their practices and systems, and determine if there were any ways in which improvements could be made to its own policies and practices.

The staff group as a whole is well trained, with virtually all having obtained NVQ to level 3 or 4. The Head of Care and one of the care team leaders are qualified social workers. Training is available for all staff on a continuing basis, and includes refresher Team Teach training, child protection, first aid, and food handling.

Supervision, appraisal and performance management is undertaken for every member of staff. Staff confirm that supervision takes place, that they feel supervision helps them and that it is one of the ways in which the school supports them.

There are regular and recorded daily handover meetings, unit meetings, care staff meetings and whole school meetings and training through INSET days. The school had introduced a system for monitoring the range of records on which the activities of the school were based.

Different members of the senior management team each have a responsibility for a selection of records and there were examples of how the evaluation of the records has contributed to the development of practice. Individual risk assessments of children exhibiting challenging behaviour have been produced as a result of the monitoring of the serious incident sheets.

The school governors have a system of monitoring visits. The Chair of Governors said these were largely unannounced. Written reports are produced and held on file, and the governors' visits have resulted in a range of

improvements to the premises in both the main building and the Weekend Cottage. The Chairman said that all governors have been subject to CRB checks. The Governing body also holds a number of sub-committees and working groups in key areas such as finance, personnel, curriculum, buildings and health and safety.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion  
 “N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

| <b>BEING HEALTHY</b> |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>   | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>14</b>            | 4            |
| <b>15</b>            | 3            |

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

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

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

| <b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b> |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Standard No</i>                  | <i>Score</i> |
| <b>16</b>                           | 3            |
| <b>21</b>                           | 3            |
| <b>23</b>                           | 2            |
| <b>24</b>                           | 3            |
| <b>25</b>                           | 3            |

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

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

| No. | Standard | Recommendation  | Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only) |
|-----|----------|---|--|
| 1.  | RS27     | The Head of School should ensure that CRB clearance is obtained for all staff before they start to work at the school.          | 31/12/06   |
| 2.  | RS2      | The Head of School should introduce methods to demonstrate children's involvement in the construction and review of care plans. | 31/12/06   |
| 3.  | RS11     | The Head of School should ensure that all available information on children is obtained at the point of referral.               | 31/12/06   |
| 4   | RS19     | The Head of School should introduce a more explicit system of file audit.   | 31/12/06   |
| 5   | RS28     | The Head of School should ensure that sufficient support is available at all times for the Weekend Cottage.                     | 31/12/06   |

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