



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

St Mary`s School

**Horam
Heathfield
East Sussex
TN21 0BT**

Lead Inspector
Kevin Whatley

Key Unannounced Inspection
30th & 31st October 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

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

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

Those outcomes are:

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

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

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

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school St Mary`s School

Address Horam
Heathfield
East Sussex
TN21 0BT

Telephone number 01435 812278

Fax number 01435 813019

Email address

Provider Web address

**Name of Governing body,
Person or Authority
responsible for the
school** St Mary`s School

Name of Head Mr Rick Tracey

Name of Head of Care Mr John Cornford

**Age range of residential
pupils** 10 to 17 years

**Date of last welfare
inspection** 17th January 2006

Brief Description of the School:

St. Mary's School is a residential special school run by East Sussex County Council Education Department. The school accepts pupils with learning difficulties and a large number of these pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The vast majority of the young people who board are from East Sussex. Pupils can board up to four nights a week and the school offers weekend boarding eight times a year in order for the pupils to partake in activities such as the Duke Of Edinburgh Award and sporting events. The school also accommodates young people on a flexible basis and this opportunity is taken up regularly by a number of pupils.

Boarding is set out over three areas with senior boys boarding provision being set in the main school building, the junior boys being accommodated in a house in the grounds and the girls being accommodated in another smaller house within the grounds.

SUMMARY

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

This summary is written in a way that children and young people may find easier to understand.

The Head of St Mary's School, Mr Tracey, was told that an inspection was going to take place just over a week before the Inspectors turned up. Two Inspectors visited the school on Monday 30th October and Tuesday 31st October and spent around 16 hours at the school carrying out the inspection.

Both Inspectors:

- Spoke with Mr Tracey, Miss Hopkins and a lot of the boarding staff, especially Mr Cornford.
- Spoke with quite a few young people.
- Were shown around the boarding areas of the school.
- Watched how the young people and staff got along together.
- Spoke with some parents to see how they felt about St Mary's and the way the school looks after young people who stay there.
- Looked at lots of files and paperwork.

To help the inspectors to write the report even better 3 young people had kindly filled out a questionnaire, whilst Mr Tracey, Miss Hopkins and Mr Cornford had sent the inspector lots of information about how young people are looked after when they board at the school. The inspectors also used other information, which they already knew about the school.

What the school does well:

- Young people who spoke to the Inspectors said they were 'well looked after' and thought they could 'always ask for help'.
- Young people said they 'were listened to' and were able to talk to staff when they needed to. One young person said they 'loved' staying at the school.
- Many young people said they really enjoyed the food and said they had 'choices' about what they could eat.
- The school is also really good at providing activities and things to do in the evenings. Most young people said that they enjoyed a lot of the activities.
- Young people thought that the boarding part of the school has everything they need with 'ok' bedrooms and shared areas where they can watch TV, DVD's, Video's and play pool.
- Most young people spoken to said that when they stayed at the school they were happy, whilst the parents and carers who were spoken to felt the school was a good place for the young people to stay as it could help them with their education and behaviour.
- The Inspectors thought that Mr Tracey was a good Head Teacher.

The Inspectors also felt that Mr Cornford and all the other boarding staff were good at looking after young people who stay at the school and looked after them properly.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school looks after young people who board there pretty well and a few things have happened since the last inspection, 10 months ago, that have made staying at the school even better.

- The school went through a time earlier this year when there was not anyone in charge of running the boarding side of the school and this caused quite a few problems. However in September this year Mr Cornford joined the school as Head of Care which means that he is now responsible for thinking about the best way that young people can be looked after when they stay at the school.
- Since Mr Cornford has been at the school he has started to look at how the boarding part of the school could be better and to improve things he arranged boarding staff into teams so that they can get to know each other well and the young people they look after really well as they will be working in the same houses.
- The school have now changed the boarding houses with older and younger boys now staying in different houses. This means that young people can do the things they wish to do with people of their same age. Most young people said this was a really good thing and meant that the older boys didn't have to be so quiet when the younger boys had gone to bed, whilst the younger boys felt that they were not kept awake by the older boys anymore. The girls have their own house.

What they could do better:

Although the school looks after young people who stay there pretty well the Inspectors felt there were a few things that the school should think about so that the way that young people are cared for gets even better.

- The school should make sure all parts of the boarding houses are as clean as possible at all times and should really think about improving the look of some areas of the houses by putting up proper curtains, painting the walls in brighter colours, putting up lots of pictures and photos that young people like and by making the places that young people stay in more like a home.
- The school should make sure that when they have to write things down about young people who stay there that the way they write it

makes it clear how young people should be looked after, including how best to help young people to think about their poor behaviour. The Inspectors thought it was really important that every young person who stays at the school, even if it is for one night, must have something written that says how they should be cared for.

- The school should also make sure that when they have to restrain a young person or when they have to give sanctions that they write these in separate books so that it is easier for adults and Inspectors to know what happened and when. It is also important that when things are written down that they are written down properly so that everyone can tell exactly what has gone on, what happened afterwards and what can be done to stop the same thing happening again.
- The Inspectors found out that pupils have to earn points during their school day and that these points are gained through good behaviour and effort in class with rewards being given at the end of the week. The Inspectors felt that it would be a really good idea to have the same type of reward scheme for young people who stay at the school at night as it may help them to think more about their behaviour in the boarding houses.
- Some young people said they felt it was a little 'unfair' that the school can stop you staying at night if you have not behaved that well in class. Some young people also felt they are not treated the same as other pupils and said they were unsure of the exact reasons for not being allowed to stay and thought this was confusing. The Inspectors thought the school should think about this carefully and come up with clear reasons for why young people may not be allowed to stay and should make sure everyone knows about this both young people, teachers and boarding staff.

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.

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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

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The young people's health needs are identified and there are satisfactory systems in place to ensure their health care needs are met, though the schools need to ensure that they are reviewed and recorded as such. Medication administration and recording procedures are robust to ensure the children's medication needs are met. Healthy eating is promoted and the young people are provided with a variety of food to meet their dietary needs and choices.

EVIDENCE:

All the young people have a health plan, which contains information about their current medication as well as their medical history, their dietary needs, dental and optical needs and any specific therapeutic treatment needed. These health plans were not dated, which does not demonstrate that the young people's health care needs and any intervention are kept under review. The Inspectors were informed that a new health care plan is being developed. Referrals are made where young people require specialist health care professionals input, such as Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language therapist and counselling. However staff stated that it was often difficult to access these services easily as the young people live in various parts of East Sussex and therefore there is a variance of resources available across the county and these are often stretched. An Educational Psychologist comes to the school once a month. The school does not employ a counsellor at the school but they are currently providing this service out of the school budget, for five young people.

The school now provides a first aid/medical room with one dedicated member of staff who is called upon if a young person is ill or in need of first aid. This person is a learning disabilities nurse and not employed as a nurse, but will contact a school nurse when needed. She has responsibility for making

referrals to the Educational Psychologist, whilst another member of the teaching staff has responsibility for making referrals for Speech and Language therapy. All care staff are trained in first aid and therefore all evening and night time shifts will be covered by a first-aider.

The promotion of healthy living is evident throughout the school and healthy eating is actively promoted. Staff spoke highly of the personal, social, health education that the young people receive at the school. The young people are provided with a varied choice of food and are consulted prior to the implementation of menus in the residential houses. One member of the care team is working with the young people on developing new and healthy menus in the residential houses. The Inspectors ate lunch and evening meals with the young people, which were observed to be well managed, relaxed and sociable occasions. The young people said they "liked the meals". Staff and young people also said there has been improvement in the standard of food provided in the residential houses and noted that although there is never the same group of young people each night that wherever possible young people have been consulted on their likes and dislikes. Care and teaching staff assist the children to engage in religious and cultural celebrations. The school took part in the Health School initiative and achieved a silver award in May 2006.

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, 8, 10, 26 and 27

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The school generally ensures that their policies, procedures and care practices protect young people from the risk of harm, neglect or abuse. However the current procedures in respect of responding to pupils complaints needs to be reviewed to ensure a consistent and robust system is in place, whilst the schools approach to addressing behaviour management must be improved to ensure staff can meet the potentially difficult and challenging needs of boarding pupils in a consistent yet holistic manner and that any incident is suitably recorded. The school and indeed the Local Authority must review the condition of the environment in respect of health and safety to ensure all who live, work or visit the school are kept safe at all times.

EVIDENCE:

St Mary's school have adopted a complaints procedure that entails pupils completing a complaints form. One young person expressed concerns that they had not had their complaint suitably dealt with. On viewing the complaints records an error was found whereby a complaint had been recorded but not responded to. The school normally display NSPCC Childline and anti-bullying posters, with accompanying contact details, near the pupils phone, however these were not evident during the inspection as emergency building work was being carried out near the phone. The CSCI have not received any complaints since the last inspection.

The school consider the protection of young people in a suitable manner and have implemented robust child protection policies and procedures. The Headteacher stated that no major issues had arisen at the school since the last inspection, though one matter of an issue at a pupils home was disclosed by a young person and this was subsequently reported to the appropriate authorities. Staff spoken with displayed a good level of understanding in relation to child protection matters. No child protection matters have been reported to the CSCI since the last inspection.

Pupils confirmed that in general the amount of bullying behaviour that occurs at the school is low. Where bullying has occurred young people stated that they can inform 'any member of staff' whether they work in school or in boarding and that any problems are 'always sorted out'. The Head of care said he is vigilant in respect of bullying issues, and noted that no current matters were occurring in the boarding houses. The level of staff supervision both in school and in the boarding facilities helps to limit the opportunity for such behaviour to occur.

Good systems remain in place to manage absconding, anti-social and criminal behaviour with these being supported by a long-standing working partnership with the local Police Liaison Officer (PLO). Both Inspectors met with the PLO and she spoke positively of her relationship with the school, notably the level of good communication and the school informing her of any incidents or events in a timely fashion. The PLO was keen to point out that on the rare occasions that she has been called out to the school it has always been for appropriate reasons such as a pupil being violent, although she stressed that this rarely occurs. She said she is aware that the school takes a firm stance in regard pupils using physical violence against it's staff or other pupils and noted that she attends the school regularly to participate in PCSE classes to inform young people of general issues regarding good citizenship as well as addressing other issues such as anti-social behaviour, bullying and crime. The PLO stated she was unaware of any negative issues in the local community that have been created by the behaviour of any young person from the school and indeed praised the school's management of it's pupils.

The school places considerable emphasis on the behaviour of its pupils and to this end have established a system of positive rewards for appropriate behaviour during the school day, however there is no such programme once the school day ends. Each pupil has a number of points to achieve during the school day based on appropriate behaviour and good effort. Rewards are given on a weekly basis, with an assembly taking place at the end of each school day to acknowledge and encourage positive behaviour with all teachers giving feedback on the classes they have taken and naming the pupils who had done particularly well. The pupils clearly appreciated this aspect of the school and were seen to be keen to do well. The Head of Care acknowledged that there is some scope to implement a system of rewards for boarders who display positive behaviour after school, during the evening and at night.

Records confirmed that a few sanctions are implemented when necessary as a response to inappropriate behaviour, these were seen as being suitable though the school should establish a separate sanctions book that clearly describes the nature of approved sanctions that can be used and when they can be applied.

The previous inspection highlighted some concerns that the recording of incidents and restraints was not clear enough. On viewing the schools incident and restraint files it became clear that there was still a need to improve the manner that reports are completed. A number of records were found to be partly completed, contained unclear descriptions of events and outcomes and did not describe the actual restraints, all the lead up to them, in sufficient detail.

Most staff have received initial training in 'positive Options' a restraint training programme that focuses on the management of actual or potential aggression. The school have now ensured that they have two Positive Options trainers on the staff team and one of these stated that there was a rolling programme of refresher training for all staff being planned over the next few months, however the new Head of Care has yet to have any training with the Positive Options programme. No young person who boarded expressed concerns that where restraints had occurred that they had not been carried out appropriately.

The school have a good system for risk assessing trips outside of the school with all key risk areas being considered in risk assessments that are completed by the responsible teaching or boarding staff every time a trip leaves the site, with the day time risk assessments being forwarded to County Hall.

A tour of the premises found a number of concerning issues in regard health and safety notably uneven walkways on the drive and particularly poor outdoor lighting that subsequently made it very difficult for both inspectors to move between the various boarding houses safely once darkness fell. There was good evidence of the school undertaking fire alarm and lighting testing on a

regular basis whilst fire drills are carried out at suitable intervals and at different times of the day. All required certification regarding health and safety was seen to be up to date, though clearly the whole environment is not as safe as it should be.

The new Head or Care is the only new member of boarding staff who had been employed since the last inspection. Their staff file confirmed that all necessary employment checks including Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and previous employment and character references were completed prior to them working at the school.

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 and 22

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

There current information sharing systems rely heavily on verbal communication between boarding and teaching staff, a more robust process needs to be introduced to ensure that each young person is assisted in reaching their educational potential. The care planning system needs to be reviewed and organised sufficiently so as to provide young people with appropriate and individualised support to ensure their needs and wishes are met consistently.

EVIDENCE:

Each young person has a Statement of Educational Need, which provides staff with information about their educational abilities, targets and strategies to assist teaching staff in helping the young person achieve their targets. Care staff assist and participate in the annual review of each young person's Statement of Educational Need. Care staff are present in the school throughout the day and support the young people in accessing education within the school and address issues of behaviour management. However, there is no formal sharing of information between the care staff and teaching staff in the morning before the school day starts. The care planning system was found to be unorganised and unclear. It does not provide care staff with accessible, clear information and guidelines on how they are to promote the educational potential of each young person.

Staff know the young people well and relationships are positive, relaxed and friendly. Staff were seen to be caring, patient, calm and good-humoured in their interaction. One young person said "when I feel angry, he makes it better

cos when I see his face I have to smile". The young people spoke positively about the support they get from the care staff. However, the care planning system does not provide care staff with all the information and guidelines to ensure that they are aware of and can meet each young person's individual needs.

The school operates a key-worker system, however the young people and staff were unclear about the role and responsibility of this position. Key-worker notes, which are produced electronically, are written by any member of staff, i.e. teaching assistant, care officer or key-worker and at ad-hoc intervals. One young person had just one key-worker note in the two months he has been attending the school. There were no guidelines, strategies or risk assessments to assist staff in managing this young person's behaviour. On the night of the inspection one young person was clearly displaying some challenging behaviours however no written plan was in place to address this young person's particular needs and indeed the pupil themselves provided a note to staff stating how they may be helped to behave more, though there was no clear record or plan for this potentially insightful information to be incorporated into.

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):

9, 17 and 20

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Pupils are assisted to air their views, concerns and wishes and are able to maintain suitable contact with their families, carers and friends whilst they are staying at the school. Consideration should be given to improve the quality and detail currently found within care plans to ensure that all relevant aspects of how each young person should be cared for is adequately assessed and recorded.

EVIDENCE:

Many young people commented that they are able to talk to staff about most things; no young person expressed any concerns that they were not being listened to. The school operate a school council whereby young people are voted onto the council by their fellow pupils. Meetings take place each term and pupils pass on their concerns, requests or wishes to their particular representative who then takes it to the school council meeting. One young person stated that school council works 'really well' and 'things do get done' as a result of the meetings.

Most young people who were spoken to said they had their own mobile phones and noted that they could stay in touch with family and friends by mobile after school hours. The boarding houses also have telephones where pupils can make calls. No negative comments were received in relation to young people not being able to keep contact with their families, carers or friends.

Each young person has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that focuses primarily on the pupils educational needs, detailing how they should be supported to achieve their educational targets. Each IEP does contain a section that briefly explains how staff should address that particular young persons behavioural issues, though this information was somewhat limited. Each young person also has a pupil profile completed that contains essential information regarding family contacts, consent forms and medical issues. However there are no current files available that explain just how each pupil who stays at the school is to be cared for.

The school operate a system whereby care staff are given 'key-working' responsibilities for a number of young people who board in the house they work in. This means that certain staff would focus primarily on the needs of particular pupils. Key-workers are then expected to write key-worker notes regarding the young people they key-work onto a computer with the notes therefore being saved on data. However on discussing this process with staff there appeared some confusion as to how often these notes should be written and the exact nature of what should be recorded. It was also a concern that such notes were saved to data and no members of boarding staff were seen to access the information during the inspection.

It is acknowledged that the school has a system of boarding that allows for flexible situations to occur whereby the numbers of young people staying on any given night can range between 4 and 18. However, and despite the uncertainty of which pupils stay and when, there is a need to ensure that when young people do stay that care staff know exactly how to care for them, this can only be achieved consistently through implementing a more robust process of care planning. Both the Head of Care and Headteacher stated that the school are aware that they need to review and improve the current system of care planning.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.(NMS 16)
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.(NMS 21)
- Children live in well designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- Children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.(NMS 24)
- Children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity.(NMS 25)

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

23 and 24

Quality in this outcome area is poor. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The current maintenance and cleaning programme for the residential accommodation does not ensure that all areas are clean and well-maintained at all times, whilst consideration must be given to improve the décor of the boarding houses so as to provide young people with a more homely environment.

EVIDENCE:

The main school building has undergone refurbishment and improvement over the past couple of years and this has improved the educational provision at St Mary's. The headteacher informed the Inspectors that there are substantial plans to refurbish and improve the residential provision of the school, this due to begin in the summer of 2007.

The use of the residential accommodation has changed over the past couple of years. Until this September the boys' residential provision was set in the main school building and the girls were accommodated in separate houses in the school grounds. Since September pupils have been grouped into more age appropriate living groups as well as gender.

Currently, boys in year 10 and 11 are accommodated in the main school building and boys in years 7, 8 and 9 are accommodated in one of the houses, whilst the few girls who stay at the school are accommodated in another house. Young people commented that the separating of the senior boys from the juniors has led to more a more age appropriate situation whereby older boys can enjoy a slightly later night that does not impinge of the younger boys bedtimes, whilst the younger boys can engage in a more nurturing environment without fear of the older boys teasing them or keeping them up.

It was noted that the maintenance of these houses has not being carried out adequately. The headteacher informed the Inspectors that the LEA had planned to sell these houses and the school was only informed on the 28th September 2006 that they could keep these buildings.

Several hygiene and safety issues were highlighted during the tour of the residential accommodation notably a general appearance of tiredness and decay with several parts of the accommodation being found in an unacceptably dirty condition. During the inspection it became clear that the boarding areas of the school are in need of redecoration and irrespective of any renovation or redeveloping that is due to take place next year there is a current need to provide young people with a more homely environment.

The headteacher has introduced the criteria of access to the residential provision as part of St Mary's reward system. There is a need to greatly improve the standard of residential provision so that the young people will want to stay at St Mary's.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

1, 28, 31, 32 and 33

Quality in this outcome area is adequate. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The school provides written information that outlines a general overview of the school and boarding provision, however consideration should be given to review the information currently available. Care staff were seen to be caring and considerate, whilst the senior management team appear committed to improving boarding provision across all areas.

EVIDENCE:

The schools statement of purpose outlines the overall educational provision on offer, whilst a general view of boarding is provided. The Headteacher stated that following this inspection it is his intention to review the content of the documentation currently available so that further consideration is given toward

the schools approach to boarding provision including reviewing the criteria for staying at the school and the general ethos of boarding at St Mary's.

Observations of care staff confirmed that they carry out their tasks in a caring and considerate manner and pupils generally spoke positively about the manner they are cared for by care staff whilst boarding at the school. The numbers of care staff on duty during the evening, night and morning was seen to be reasonable.

A considerable amount of information regarding pupils is passed between the boarding and teaching staff, and vice versa, verbally. Whilst it appeared that no key issues were lost as a result of this process it may be more appropriate to instigate a more robust system of communication, such as a member of boarding staff attending the teachers morning meeting to briefly outline any issues the pupils who stayed overnight had. It was also noted that boarding staff are not consistently recording the same things in the house communication books. For instance not all young people who stay at the school have something written about them in the books, whilst there were days when nothing was written about the night-time or morning events prior to school such as if any pupils had woken during the night or how their wake up and breakfast routine had gone.

Since the last inspection a number of changes have occurred in regard the boarding provision including the school being without a Head of Care between February and September this year, a new Head of Care being appointed and a new staffing structure being implemented. The new staffing structure includes the setting up of two set teams of care staff each being led by a Team Leader. Unfortunately the school have only recently been able to confirm one Team Leader position as the criteria for recruitment to this role is still being confirmed by East Sussex County Council and until this process is complete the staffing structure cannot be implemented properly. This has led to some obvious frustration for the senior management team and the Inspectors felt that the sooner the teams are structured as planned the sooner a more consistent approach will be afforded to boarding pupils and staff alike.

The new Head of Care was appointed to his role in September this year and has a wealth of experience of working with young people in similar settings, though he should strive to obtain the required National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) awards. The Head of Care displays a clear and knowledgeable understanding of the needs of boarding pupils and the structures, routines, boundaries and approaches needed to provide a good level of care provision to young people living away from home.

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head of Care acknowledged that improvements are needed to boarding provision at the school and expressed a clear commitment and determination to implement necessary changes to ensure young people who board at the school receive a consistent and high standard of care provision.

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	2
5	3
6	3
7	X
8	3
10	2
26	2
27	3

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3
13	X
22	2

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	2
24	1
25	X

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

Yes

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1.	RS14	That health care plans have the date they were completed or reviewed added.	
2.	RS4	That all complaints need to be responded to consistently and swiftly and should be considered in line with the schools policies and procedures.	30/12/06
3.	RS10	That all records of restraints need to clearly detail and record the reason why the use of restraint was appropriate in all cases, the type of restraint used, the time of the restraint and the outcome (outstanding from the previous inspection).	30/12/06
4.	RS10	That the school should implement a robust care planning process that includes details of how care staff will respond to the individual needs of pupils in respect of their behaviour management issues.	30/12/06
5.	RS10	The school should establish a sanctions book that defines what sanctions are permitted in regard boarding pupils with details of how and when these can given by care staff with clear records of when they are implemented.	30/12/06
6.	RS26	That the school needs to consider the poor level of outdoor lighting and the uneven condition of the outside paths and walkways.	30/12/06
7.	RS2	The school should consider providing boarding pupils with access to an independent visitor and	

		should ensure that the contact details of relevant support groups, such as the NSPCC Childline are clearly displayed around the school at all times.	
8.	RS22 RS17	That the school should review the current care planning format and consider implementing a more robust system that identifies the care needs of boarding pupils in a more holistic manner.	
9.	RS23	The school need to ensure that all areas of the boarding houses provide pupils with suitably maintained facilities that offer young people a homely environment.	30/01/07
10.	RS24	The school need to ensure that all of the boarding areas are kept clean and hygienic at all times.	30/11/06
11.	RS28	The school should consider introducing a more robust process for the passing over of information between the boarding and education staff and need to review the manner that care staff record events, issues and matters that affect all pupils who stay at the school.	
12.	RS31	That the Head of Care obtains the required NVQ Level 3 and 4 awards in Caring for Children and Young People.	
13.	RS32	The school should introduce a more defined process for monitoring standards of care.	

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