



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

BOARDING SCHOOL

Queen Elizabeth`s Community College

**Western Road
CREDITON
DEVON
EX17 3LU**

Lead Inspector
Heather Chaplin

Announced Inspection
25th September 2006 09:00

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
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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 *Boarding 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.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of school	Queen Elizabeth`s Community College
Address	Western Road CREDITON Devon EX17 3LU
Telephone number	01363 773401
Fax number	01363 777859
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Mr Richard Newton-Chance
Name of Head	Mr Richard Newton-Chance
Name of Head of Care	
Age range of boarding pupils	11-18
Date of last welfare inspection	15 th July 2003. Additional Visit 13 th October 2004.

Brief Description of the School:

Queen Elizabeth School in Crediton is a high-achieving Local Authority Community Technology College with a long history of serving young people from the local community, around the country and from overseas.

There are 1540 pupils, of whom 41 are boarders, and this is the only State Boarding school in Devon. There is Boarding provision for both girls and boys between the ages of 11 and 19 years. Approximately half the boarders are from overseas, mainly from Hong Kong and Germany at present. Children attending local primary schools may also board at Queen Elizabeth Community College.

Boarding provision is managed by the Head of Boarding, Mrs. Muriel Grimes, overseen by the Director People, Ms. Lynette Grimshaw, who is also the designated person for child protection within the school. There is a clear and efficient management structure with delegated responsibility for day-to-day operations and also for the boarding budget.

The girls' boarding house is called St. Martins. It is a large converted detached house on the edge of the school grounds with its own entrance from the road. This house was seriously damaged by fire approximately 10 years ago and has been refurbished to a high standard, with a new interior and roof. It houses the sick bay on the ground floor. Both girl and boy boarders have their meals in the dining room of this house. There is a well-equipped commercial kitchen. Both boarding houses have a staff office, which in the boys' house is shared by any boys who wish to use computers in the evenings.

The boys' boarding house is called The Mount. It is a detached, converted Victorian property standing in a large garden on the other side of the road from the girls' boarding house. Although physical standards do not match those of the girls' boarding house, there has been refurbishment and redecoration of the communal rooms with artwork contributed by the students.

Bedrooms in both houses are almost all shared. In both houses the younger boarders have bedrooms on the first floor and the older boarders on the second floor. Both houses have ample leisure accommodation.

In addition to the main boarding houses there is a small house adjacent to The Mount, for sixth formers. No staff sleep in this house but the boys can communicate with staff easily via an alarm or mobile phone. There is a similar house for girls about 100 metres from St Martins, but it was not being used by boarders at the time of this inspection.

Boarding house staff work exclusively in the boarding houses, supported by teaching staff in the evenings and at weekends. There are currently two Australian Gap Year students who assist with activities and supporting the students.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place over four days, and there were three inspectors: Myra Rodgers (Boarding School Professional Inspector), Michelle Oxley (CSCI) and Heather Chaplin (CSCI), who led the inspection. The inspectors arrived early one morning and stayed late on one evening to observe what happened in the boarding houses at those times. They shared some meals with the students and looked at files and documents to make sure that they were written correctly. In total the inspection took 80 hours at the school and several more days to prepare for the inspection and to write the report. The Lead Inspector visited the school before the inspection to give the students some questionnaires to complete. There were also questionnaires for the Head Teacher and letters were sent to parents. Five letters were received from parents, three of which were from overseas. Letters were also received from the local GP practice and the designated Governor for boarding.

As in the latest Ofsted report, the overall quality rating following this inspection is "good". Although a number of recommendations have been made, the school is very willing to address any issues, and three standards were exceeded.

The inspectors would like to thank the Head Teacher, Director People, the Head of Boarding and the many staff and students who helped with the inspection. Everyone was most welcoming and hospitable; students were confident, friendly and generally willing to chat.

What the school does well:

Some students commented upon the quality and the quantity of the food, and some said that there was not quite enough at times. There are quite long gaps between meals and the school said that they would look at how this could be improved. The food itself is healthy and appeared to be sufficient during the inspection. The inspectors thought that the staff had done very well to manage feeding so many young people while there has been no cook. Menus do sometimes reflect the multi-cultural group of students in boarding, and this is a good idea that could be developed a little more. Meals during the inspection were well balanced and there is plenty of choice.

The choice of activities and emphasis on physical activity in the evenings and weekends was very good. Students are able to follow their own interests outside school as well. All outside activities are extremely well planned and staff look very carefully at all the risks and benefits from that activity.

The level of care and concern for the boarders is very good. The two gap year students offer a great deal of support as well as running activities. There is an excellent atmosphere, and the children are generally cheerful and relaxed. Relationships with staff are friendly but respectful.

The quality of accommodation at St Martins is good. Following a major fire that took place during school holidays, the interior of the house was completely replaced and there is high quality modern furniture and well-designed bedrooms.

Both boarding houses were spotlessly clean and the domestic staff work really hard to keep them like this for the students and staff to use.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Medicines are managed much more efficiently now, and there are some much safer systems for looking after medicines and ensuring that what happens to each medicine is written down. There is still some work to do in this area.

Since the last inspection all staff with boarding house duties had been given two days training in child protection by Devon County Council Social Services and domestic staff attended a one day course.

The school has made efforts to address the potential hygiene issues with the showers in The Mount by locking the doors of the two central shower cubicles. This is a very short-term solution however because students will often open the doors from the outside to use the central two showers.

Work has been done to improve various policies and procedures that help staff to understand how to look after students and keep them safe.

What they could do better:

Some of the policy documents written by the school which explain the school's philosophy and practice for staff, students and parents, need to be improved, in particular the policy on alcohol and drugs and the policy on medicines.

The inspectors said that the toilets in both boarding houses should have liquid soap as this cleanses the hands more effectively than bar soap, and helps to stop bugs from spreading and making people unwell.

Medical forms are sent out to parents before a student can come to the boarding part of the school, but the form is always in English. Many parents do not have English as their first language and had not always given very useful information on the form because they did not fully understand the questions. To help them and their child, the form should be available in other languages.

The inspector found that although there had been improvements since the last inspection, it still was not easy to track a medicine from the moment it was brought into the boarding house to the moment it was given to the student or taken back to the pharmacy to be disposed of, and the law says that the school has to be able to do this. The boarding houses should each have a copy of a booklet called the *Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain Guidelines on the Control and Administration of Medicines in Care Homes and Children's Services*, and should follow the advice in the guide.

Many students are mature enough to look after their own medicines. To help decide who should be allowed to do this, the school should write a risk assessment, which looks at how dangerous the medicine is, what could happen if it went missing or was not taken properly, and how able the student is to look after it and use it safely.

All the boarding staff said that they are well trained in basic food hygiene and first aid, and the inspectors are sure this is correct, but because their qualification certificates were not in school the staff could not prove that this was the case.

The inspectors thought that it was good that the boarders have access to a counsellor, but that some might be worried about asking a member of staff to contact the counsellor for them. The school are now thinking about having a letterbox system or email so that this makes it easier for students to get in touch with the counsellor.

The school has worked hard to draw up a good child protection policy but this needs to be the same as the guidelines drawn up for all schools and other agencies by the Devon Area Child Protection Committee, so a little more work is needed.

The complaints policy should have a timescale built into it, so that anyone with a complaint to make can be told how long they can expect the investigation to take. Sometimes complaints are better answered in a letter, so the policy should reflect this too. Complaints should be written down in a proper complaints book.

Fire alarms and other safety checks should be done once a week to meet the recommendations of the Devon Fire and Rescue Service. The boarding houses' fire alarms are tested each weekend and at the moment this does not happen during holidays, nor for up to a week afterwards if the school returns immediately after a weekend. The inspectors said that the school should write down in the book used to record fire checks when there had been a holiday and test the alarms and other fire safety equipment the day school returned instead of waiting until the next weekend. The school had not done a proper fire risk assessment for Boarding, but this was done very quickly after the inspection.

Students told the inspectors that they never used the showers in the sports hall, but some students said on their questionnaires that these should have curtains for privacy, and the inspectors agreed with this.

Staff are carefully recruited at this school and several staff files were inspected. It is Devon County Council policy to make sure that all staff who work with children and young people have a Criminal Records Bureau check to help make sure that they are safe to work with students. Although this had been done in every case, there was no certificate from the Criminal Records Bureau to confirm this.

The boarding accommodation was safe and generally well designed. However there was no risk assessment for some of the hazards the inspectors found on the route from the boarding houses to school. There was a flight of steps with broken edges, and a rather lonely footpath running up over the fields to Lower School. The inspectors said that these things had to be risk assessed (looking at the risk, deciding how to reduce it) to help to prevent any harm coming to the students. The inspectors also thought that it would be a good idea to put a wash hand basin and liquid soap in the laundry areas so that when students had handled laundry chemicals and dirty clothing, they could wash their hands properly.

The inspectors thought that in view of the number of students from overseas in the boarding houses, some of their cultural festivals as well as European ones, should be celebrated to help all the students to understand and appreciate life in other countries, e.g. Chinese New Year.

The Mount has some problems with the showers, and students told the inspectors that they did not think the showers were good enough. The inspectors are also worried about hygiene in the showers because there is just one drain in the middle of the floor. The top floor toilet needed a wash hand basin. The walls and decoration in some of the boys' rooms needed attention.

The inspectors thought that the TV lounge could be more relaxing if there were some beanbags or softer chairs to sit in.

The student guide needs to explain in more detail how students' cultural and religious needs will be met. Guides and admission information could be written in students' own language.

Emergency procedures should be thought through a little more to make sure that there is a plan for any emergency such as an accident in the minibus, so that staff and students can be certain that they know what to do.

Overnight staff may find it helpful to have an on-call rota for managers, although there has not been a problem to date with finding help when needed.

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

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

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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:

- Boarders' health is promoted. (NMS 6)
- Safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records. (NMS 7)
- Boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary.(NMS 15)
- Boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill.(NMS 16)
- Boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal Problems.(NMS 17)
- Boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- Boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals.(NMS 25)
- Boarders are suitably accommodated when ill. (NMS 48)
- Boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered.(NMS 49)

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

6, 7, 15, 16, 17, 24, 25, 48, 49.

The quality overall in this outcome group was good. Students are encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle and have access to quality food. Further work needs to be done to bring recording and systems in medicine management up to the same standard to make sure that medicines are audited properly.

EVIDENCE:

The inspectors read policy documents including the administration of medication protocol, smoking and drugs and alcohol. The school's sex education policy was also seen. Some of these policies provided the information required but others dealt with the sanctions related to particular incident and were not about education and health promotion. The inspectors would like to see policy development that deals with how the boarding house intends to promote positive health in the all of areas set out in standard 6.

There were no students with disabilities who required help with personal care. The school has a policy on smoking and this applies to boarding too. There are two qualified and registered nurses, both from Crediton Hospital, who provide a link with healthcare services for the whole school. All students are registered with a doctor, dentist and optician. The local GP practice said that the school staff were supportive and sought help appropriately for boarders.

The toilets in both boarding houses should have liquid soap as this cleanses the hands more effectively than bar soap.

St. 7: Some good practice was identified in relation to medical information. When students go out on activities, teachers and staff take copies of medical information with them in case of an emergency.

Medical forms are sent out to parents but given the large number of parents whose first language is not English, the form could be improved so that it is available in other languages when needed. There were also forms for recording the reasons for and outcomes of medical appointments and the inspector thought that the boxes on the forms could be larger to make recording clearer.

St. 15: The doctor's surgery was situated within walking distance of the school. Files examined verified that students had been registered with the local GP. During the inspection, a group of students who had recently joined the school were accompanied to the Doctors for their registration visit. The school's protocol states that staff must accompany students to the doctors, but giving them the choice about whether they wanted staff too go in with them.

The school employs two part time qualified nurses, one in the upper school with the older children and one in the lower school with year 7&8 pupils. The nursing staff were employed to serve the needs of all children and young people in the school. They operated a busy open door policy within the school building which was available to all pupils including boarders. There was no dedicated nurse for the boarding houses, but there was evidence that the nursing staff liaised with boarding school staff and vice versa, in relation to dealing with specific health related issues which were relevant to individual children.

The nurses are also involved in delivering sex and health education as part of the curriculum.

The inspector found that although there had been improvements since the last inspection, there was not yet a clear audit trail for medicines. When medication is prescribed to students, the student or staff member locks it away safely in the medicine cabinet. The boarding houses had an efficient record of the administration of both homely remedies and prescription medication. A log of homely medicine was also held, but there was no overall log of prescription medication coming in to the home and the log of medication leaving the home or medication returned did not record the actual amount of medication in question.

The boarding houses should each have a copy of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain Guidelines on the Administration of Medicines in Care Homes and Children's Services, and follow the advice in the guide.

Some discussions with one Senior House Parent took place about the issue of young people dealing with their own medication. At the time of this inspection, staff had felt very uneasy about how to proceed in this area. Advice was given about clear assessment of the young persons competence, plus individual risk assessment, ongoing monitoring and lockable storage for the young person. A recommendation is made for the service to develop detailed policy documents which state how the boarding houses deal with all medication coming in to the houses, including storage, administration, self administration by students and disposal.

Although all the staff spoken to said that they had received training in essential food hygiene and First Aid, because the qualification certificates were not retained on staff files it was not possible to evidence this.

St. 16: The inspectors were confident that should any young person become ill, they would be checked frequently and appropriate medical help sought for them.

St. 17: Welfare plans for young people were reasonably well recorded but the inspectors thought that they could be improved by sub-dividing the files for ease of reference. However, they do meet the standard. There is access to a trained counsellor via the staff at present, and it was suggested that it would make it easier for students to approach the counsellor if they could contact them direct, via a letter box or email system.

St. 24: The main kitchen is in the girls boarding house. This contained a good stock of fresh, frozen and dried foods. Fresh fruit, vegetables and meats were purchased locally and dry stocks were purchased from a catering company. On the whole there were some mixed responses from children about the food provided. Some of the young men in particular said that they were on occasion still hungry after tea, which is quite early (5.15 p.m.) The school is going to look at how this can be resolved. Supper is also provided and they can "fill up" on toast and spreads if they wish.

There have been some difficulties for catering staff because the cook left during the summer holidays. This had meant that the majority of the work within the boarding houses was being undertaken by staff who had previously worked part time in boarding as well as in the school kitchen. At the time of inspection it is fair to say that it was very much a case of "all hands on deck" with regard to the purchase of food and meal preparation. There were some real benefits in having catering staff working in both the school and the houses because these staff got to know the students who were boarding and were able to raise any concerns about diet with the care staff.

Breakfast and dinner are taken in St. Martins. Breakfast was observed and was excellent. It comprised a healthy well-balanced choice of cereals (7 different types) and toast, with hot drinks available and on the day of the inspection, hot bacon rolls. Hot food is available at breakfast twice a week on a first come, first served basis.

The inspectors took lunch at the school on three occasions, each took a budget of £2.00 which was the amount given to boarding students each day, and all had a satisfactory meal for well below this sum. The inspectors were impressed with the range and qualities of foods available. The meal of the day was different every day, in addition there was a choice of baked potatoes or pasta with a choice of sauces, pizza, fresh fruit, yogurts and a selection of home

made cakes and biscuits. There was a good range of vegetarian options. Water was freely available.

The main evening meal was taken with all students seated together. A seating plan has been introduced to ensure that students from different ethnic groups integrate and to assist with the development of English language skills. Teachers and staff eat with students, sitting at a separate table. The meal observed was a sociable affair with the cheery presentation of a birthday cake for one young person at the end. The food consisted of a choice of either vegetarian or chicken curry and rice. There was also a range of cold meats and salads and a desert was available. Young people who arrived late for dinner had a meal set aside for them. The meal was plentiful and nutritionally well balanced as well as tasty.

Fruit, toast and tea and coffee were available through out the day and boarders had access to kitchen areas to prepare these. In the evening the cook had prepared supper, on the night observed this was a large piece of homemade flapjack each. There was no facility for student to access a mid morning snack whilst at school other than paying for this in the school canteen, and during the inspection, the inspectors suggested that the school either provide a snack or provided some funds to purchase this with, and the school will look into this.

Overall the inspectors considered that the quality of the food provided exceeded minimum standards in terms of quality, taste, variety and value for money. The catering team are commended for their hard work under difficult circumstances. All have made a tremendous effort to ensure that food standards are maintained whilst a new cook is recruited. This standard is exceeded.

St. 25: The inspectors did think that children have to go a long time without food during the morning and overnight, and might benefit from a morning break with something to eat. The Head of Boarding said the boarding houses would provide healthy snack bars. Fresh drinking water is provided to children at all times.

St. 48: There is a sick bay in St Martins, although it was being used as a store at the time of the inspection and is apparently rarely used for sick children. Girls either stay in their own rooms if they were ill, whilst boys come over to St Martins during the day and usually spend the time sitting quietly in the lounge, although there is no sofa to curl up on. Boys then return to their own house and room in the afternoon when the staff for the boys' house come on duty.

The sick room is not a particularly attractive room and it might be a good idea to brighten it up a little, but children are not in this room for very long and in fact it is rarely used. They are either sent home or if very unwell, sent to hospital. Boys come to St Martins during the day if they are not well enough to go to school, but there is no sofa in the TV room for them to curl up on should

they wish to do so. If the TV room is going to be used to look after unwell children, there could be more relaxing seating for this purpose, but the overall provision does meet the standard.

St. 49: Laundry is sent out to a commercial company and they handle all the bedding from both boarding houses. Personal laundry is done for Years 7 and 8 students, and older students may do their own laundry on a rota basis. All clothing is labelled.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are protected from bullying.(NMS 2)
- Boarders are protected from abuse.(NMS 3)
- Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate.(NMS 4)
- Boarders' complaints are appropriately responded to.(NMS 5)
- The operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- Boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school.(NMS 22)
- Boarders are protected from the risk of fire. (NMS 26)
- The welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school.(NMS 28)
- Boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities.(NMS 29)
- Boarders' personal privacy is respected.(NMS 37)
- There is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders.(NMS 38)
- Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises.(NMS 39)
- Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. (NMS 41)
- Boarders are protected from safety hazards.(NMS 47)

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

2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 22, 26, 28, 29, 37, 38, 39, 41, 47

The quality in this outcome group overall was poor. There were some areas of good and even excellent practice, but problems with crucial areas like fire safety, complaints handling, fire risk assessment, hazards in the environment and ongoing issues with the County over CRB checks meant that outcomes for students were not good enough on this occasion.

EVIDENCE:

St. 2: There is an effective anti-bullying policy. No young people identified bullying as a problem, no bullying was observed. Staff explained that they had put a stop to play fighting, and asked the school counsellor to talk to students

about bullying. It was refreshing to hear the school be open and honest about bullying, which takes place in almost all environments where there are a large number of children. The school addresses this proactively instead of trying to pretend that it does not happen. The only issue identified to the inspectors was relayed immediately to staff. This had already been picked up very quickly and had been addressed with the children concerned.

St. 3: The school has a comprehensive child protection policy, but some amendments were suggested because it gives misleading information in places. The most important call to be made in the event of a child protection issue arising is to the local Social Services office, and this information is not clear, but the designated person said that this would be amended. A copy of the Area Child Protection Committee Procedures is available and a recommendation for action has been made that these are reflected in the school's own policy. All staff spoken to had received training in child protection, including ancillary staffs, and were all clear and correct about how they would respond even if this was not accurate in the written procedure. There are plans to send all staff on a half-day refresher course, which is commendable.

St. 4: No restraints have been carried out in the boarding houses. The Head of Boarding is currently researching training in restraint techniques. Any method introduced should be accredited by BILD. The designated Governor confirmed that the use of discipline in boarding is fair and consistent, and she has discussed the behavioural policy with the Head of Boarding. There is a rewards and sanctions book (referred to as consequences in this school) and this was inspected. Some students felt that consequences were not always fair, but this was not born out by looking at examples in practice.

St. 5: Written complaints received by the boarding houses were examined. These appeared to have been dealt with satisfactorily with a record of follow up action seen in the form of letters responding to the complainant. However, the way that complaints were handled by the boarding house as set out in the policy could mean that that some complaints were not recorded either by the complainant or in response to the complaint.

There is a brief complaints policy, but this still has no timescale included for responding to complaints (a recommendation at the last full inspection). It also does not encourage responses in writing, stating that written responses would be issued on request only. There was no overall way of recording complaints. It is recommended that the complaints procedure is revised to include an overall log of all complaints, which states action taken and outcomes. The complaints policy would benefit from being more precise about response times and the all responses should be made in writing so that the school can provide evidence of its actions.

St. 13: There is no prefect system. Sixth formers have a duty system, but they are not involved in disciplining younger students.

St. 22: There is no official education guardian appointment by the school.

St. 26: The fire log was seen and there was insufficient evidence of regular testing. There is a system, which revolves around weekend testing, and when there is a holiday the systems are not always tested straight away on return, hence there are some gaps. The inspector was told that the Fire Brigade had done the last fire risk assessment several years ago. Regulations now say that it is up to establishments and employers to conduct fire risk assessments. A fire risk assessment was requested and did not meet the standard required, but when it was redone immediately after the inspection, it was much more detailed and acceptable.

St. 28: Lettings are arranged, but although boarding staff are on call, students coming into the boarding houses from other schools and youth groups are accompanied by their own staff.

St. 29: Inspectors interviewed a member of the teaching staff who manages outdoor activity risk assessments for the school. Risk assessment is done on the basis of activities being grouped as A (no additional risk, e.g. going to the cinema) B for medium risk and C for higher risk. Teachers have to submit a risk assessment for approval and if necessary modify this if risks have not been adequately addressed. Examples of risk assessment for activities were seen and were of a high standard. The inspectors looked at swimming as a sample activity and it appeared that all staff who supervise this activity have the appropriate qualification.

St. 37: Early morning waking procedure was observed in both boarding houses and was acceptable. No one has complained of lack of privacy in boarding but they did raise an issue about the sports hall showers, which have no curtains. The inspector was told that no one who boards uses these showers. However, boarders could potentially use the showers and so it is recommended that curtains are fitted to provide privacy.

St. 38: The two GAP year students were vetted before coming to the school in their own country. They also had to complete an application for a CRB in this country but the check could not be done because they were not resident here. Staff files were sampled and were found to share the problems found throughout the authority, in that CRB certificates are not present on the file for six months or until the next inspection as agreed with CRB. Instead an internal audit insists that they are shredded and hence not available for inspection. Staff do have the CRB check completed but it cannot be evidenced. This is the subject of higher management discussions between the Local Authority and CSCI.

St. 39: Although it is a large open site, boarders are protected from unsupervised contact with members of the public. If any intruders come onto the site they are asked to leave, and if they do not then the police are called.

St. 41 Boarders are accommodated in two main houses and two small houses. There is good security for these buildings and a key-pad access to the two main houses. There have been no reports made of any intrusion into the boarding houses.

St. 47: Risk assessments for the boarding activities and premises were seen. The premises risk assessment did not include all the hazards accessible to students, e.g. walking along a half mile path between fields, to the Lower School site attended by younger students. The staff member responsible for coordinating risk assessment on premises and managing maintenance was interviewed, and health and safety issues were raised with the Head Teacher, Director People and Head of Boarding. Although the school itself is not part of the inspection, routes used by boarders do have to be inspected for safety (St. 47.5). The inspectors walked along the footpath and said that it must be risk assessed, and also identified some potentially hazardous steps between the technology block and the old gymnasium, where concrete edges had broken away. The senior managers of the school were keen to address health and safety issues promptly, and dealt with the footpath issue by concluding that students would have to use the bus to the Lower School in future.

The accident book should have contained three logs over all but two were missing. It transpired that the school had misunderstood the RIDDOR procedures and had given the record to the person involved in the accident instead of reporting it formally. This error had since been rectified and the inspector was able to see the last recorded accident.

It was suggested that the laundries might benefit from a wash hand basin with liquid soap and towels, so that anyone handling dirty laundry and chemicals can wash and dry their hands afterwards.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities.(NMS 11)
- Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination.(NMS 18)
- Boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands.(NMS 27)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision to study.(NMS 43)
- Boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas.(NMS 46)

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

11, 18, 27, 43, 46

The quality in this outcome group overall is good. Young people enjoy stimulating activities to help them develop and learn, and they are encouraged to participate in the local community.

EVIDENCE:

St. 11: After evening prep, a range of activities is offered. Teachers who do boarding duties arrange activities for the group. Decisions were made with students about which activities they would like to participate in and discussion indicated that weekend activities were particular popular. Activities vary according to the weather and which teacher has been assigned to lead the activities; their particular interests and skills. The girls' boarding house overlooks the schools swimming pool. The pool is used to teach a number of water sports and during the inspection children from the school were observed using kayaks. All teachers supervising pool-based water activities have to hold the Teacher's Rescue Award as a minimum. Surfing only takes place on fully life-guarded beaches. Some of the sports staff hold this qualification themselves.

On the evening the activities were observed, the schools gym was opened and students played basket ball. This was followed by a planned game of fox and hounds in the grounds of the boys boarding house. The school gym is frequently used for evening activities. It is a modern building that has a fitness suite that is available to boarders. Friday nights are regarded as a "chill out " night. On Saturdays there is often in trip to Exeter. The boarding houses have a 16 seat mini bus, which is used to transport pupils. Hobbies and interests are supported and students have the opportunity to go horse riding, attend dance classes and Army cadets. An activities budget is available, the amount is set each term.

The inspectors were pleased to talk with the Governor for boarding who very much promotes links between the school and the boarding houses as well as visiting the boarding houses monthly. This Governor took the opportunity of listening to the views of students. She is part of the school council and is also involved in policy development.

St. 18: The school has taken a flexible approach to helping those children who may have difficulties in learning English as their second language. These are generally children from boarding, although some children have moved to the local area with their families from abroad. The inspectors were impressed with the level of commitment and support offered to these students. This involved receiving support in groups from a Learning support teacher who was also a trained EAL teacher (English as an Additional Language). She has used group settings creatively and has regard for the differing needs and abilities of individual students. The EAL teacher had also acted as a point of contact between the school and the parent, she had used email, often translated to the parental language, to communicate with families about their child's language development.

The school strongly maintains the philosophy of anti-discrimination. Students highlighted that some minority ethnic students were speaking their own language in boarding and were exclusive. However it is easy to see why this occurs. Some Chinese students thought that Chinese meals should be provided sometimes, and the inspectors were told that this does happen. There appears to be limited celebration of diverse cultures and given the numbers of Chinese students, it would be a good idea to consider (for example) celebrating the Chinese New Year.

St. 27: There was no evidence that any student is expected to engage in onerous activities, such as over-training in sports or following a career outside school, such as being a professional musician. The inspectors were told that when such a possibility arises the student's work is monitored very closely to make sure that it is not suffering as a result of their other commitments.

St. 43: In the evenings, after dinner, students have prep for one hour. Teachers from the school worked within the boarding houses at weekends and on weekday nights. These teachers were responsible for supervising prep and there are adequate facilities for prep, with older students able to do this in their own rooms.

St. 46: Students have access to safe outdoor recreational areas and to the school sports facilities. There is a swimming pool just below St Martins, which is covered at all times when not in use.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school.(NMS 12)
- Boarders receive personal support from staff.(NMS 14)
- Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families.(NMS 19)
- New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in.(NMS 21)
- Boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school.(NMS 30)
- There are sound relationships between staff and boarders.(NMS 36)

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

12, 14, 19, 21, 30, 36

The quality in this outcome group overall is good. New students and existing students are very well supported and helped to settle in, which in turn promotes their health, wellbeing and educational achievement. Students' views are taken into account and formal processes for this are still being developed.

EVIDENCE:

St 12 : Students varied in terms of their views of how effectively they are consulted. Some felt that they did have the opportunity to express their views, while others thought that they were not always listened to, but student representation is still embryonic and the developments that have been made are all positive. There is a Boarders' council meeting timetabled in to take place once every half term. Representatives from the students comprise one boy and one girl from each year. The Head of Boarding chooses the chairperson. Currently there is no year 13 boy as there are only two and they declined to participate. The named Governor for boarding confirmed that she would be meeting with the Boarders' Council and took a very keen interest in student representation.

St 14 : Student questionnaires showed that there was no difficulty for students in speaking to any member of staff or one of the gap year students, who were highly praised in one questionnaire for their friendly support. Because they are close in age to the older students, some students find it easier to speak to

them about any issues. However all staff appeared very approachable and supportive.

St. 19: Students have easy access to private phone booths and many have mobiles. All said that they had no difficulty in contacting their families and friends. Phone booths are private and although sometimes there may be a short wait to use the phone (one in each boarding house) students did not identify this as a major issue.

St. 21: New boarders are given the Boarders' Handbook in the July before they come to boarding. On arrival there is a Powerpoint presentation for the new students and they are alerted to any issues that they need to be aware of. There is no buddy system, but one of the gap year students has suggested that it might be helpful if one of the Year 11 students wrote a letter to new boarders to help them settle. The school may adopt this next year.

St. 30: Students have ready access to the TV and to a wide variety of information in school, to keep them in touch with the outside world.

St. 36 There are excellent relationships between staff and students, and this was seen and reported back to the inspectors from all sources throughout the inspection. The named Governor for Boarding also remarked upon this. The school prides itself on the friendly but structured atmosphere in boarding and the support offered to students. There was sufficient evidence of this to justify this standard being exceeded.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders' possessions and money are protected.(NMS 20)
- Boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation.(NMS 40)
- Boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation.(NMS 42)
- Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities.(NMS 44)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day.(NMS 45)
- Boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school.(NMS 50)

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

20, 40, 42, 44, 45, 50.

The quality overall for this outcome group was adequate. Whilst both are substantial and attractive houses, students at The Mount do not enjoy the same quality of environment as those in St Martins. Maintenance in both houses has taken second place to maintenance of the teaching areas of the school.

EVIDENCE:

St.20 : There is lockable storage in every bedroom, in a large locker under the bed. Students' money is kept in the safe. They receive pocket money every Wednesday, up to £5. Students do not have very much opportunity to spend all of this, so any surplus is saved and used for Christmas shopping.

St 40 : Boarding accommodation in St. Martins is of a high standard. The Mount is suffering to some extent from the age of the building and from maintenance issues, but remains satisfactory. The maintenance team has been short staffed and one of its members has had a period of sickness absence, so they are behind with some jobs. There is a maintenance book but boarding issues seem not to have been prioritised. There were holes in ceilings and walls in The Mount and a hole in the lounge carpet, plaster off the walls and the showers on the first floor need to be replaced.

St. 42: Some of the rooms in The Mount had very limited space as there are four beds in most rooms. However they do meet the standard in terms of size, although not in terms of quality, because the décor is rather tired. Rooms had been personalised to some extent. There was adequate storage under the hand made beds, which are specially commissioned cabin beds of very robust and

attractive construction. Some of the young men had moved their beds around the room and had impeded fire exits, which they should not do for safety reasons. The inspector was told that this would be addressed.

St. 44: There are sufficient showers, WC's and wash hand basins for the boarders in both houses. There is an issue with the showers in The Mount, and many of the boys remarked on these in their questionnaires. The showers have been poorly installed and need to be replaced. There is only one central floor drain which is not hygienic. The floor covering is bubbling and this suggests that it is probably no longer adequately sealed. The school applied for Targeted Capital Funding and had it been successful this money would have addressed all the maintenance issues such as the need for new showers. Sadly it was unsuccessful.

St. 45: Changing facilities in the sports hall are adequate but the showers there do not have shower curtains, and so a recommendation has been made.

St. 50: Students are able to obtain personal requisites whilst in school, and go with staff every weekend into town, often Exeter, where they are able to shop. Older students have more freedom to go into Crediton by themselves, and there is a range of shops there.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- A suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- There is clear leadership of boarding in the school.(NMS 8)
- Crises affecting boarders' welfare are effectively managed.(NMS 9)
- The school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare.(NMS 10)
- Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders' welfare.(NMS 23)
- Boarders are adequately supervised by staff.(NMS 31)
- Staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site.(NMS 32)
- Boarders are adequately supervised at night.(NMS 33)
- Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training.(NMS 34)
- Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice.(NMS 35)
- The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted.(NMS 51)
- The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

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

1, 8, 9, 10, 23, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 51, 52

The quality overall for this outcome group is good. Students benefit from strong leadership and supportive staff and management.

EVIDENCE:

St. 1: The School has a comprehensive Prospectus which outlines the school's principles and practice. It is available to parents and to boarders. There is a small guide for boarders, which would benefit from further development. In particular it could be used to describe how students' cultural and religious needs will be met.

St. 8: There is strong leadership offered by the Head of Boarding with her deputy, supported by committed staff. The Head of Boarding is clearly very supportive to staff, regularly visits houses and meets with everyone, and has

worked hard to improve boarding provision. A Governor is specially designated for boarding and is very involved. Regular staff meetings are held.

St. 9. There is an emergency procedures policy but this needs expanding to include planned responses to a wider range of foreseeable incidents, for example a travel accident, a death on site. A recommendation has been made.

St. 10: There are two single gender boarding houses and a house for 3-4 sixth form boys, also a similar house, which is for sixth form girls but is currently being used by the gap year students. The practice of boarding is similar in both houses although the environment in the girls' house is more comfortable. The Head of Boarding works hard to achieve consistency between staff.

St. 23: The Director People monitors the consequences book, but it became clear during the inspection that there was insufficient monitoring of fire and other risks to students in some areas. A recommendation has been made for action.

St. 31: There is adequate staff cover during the day and evening. Overnight there is only one member of staff sleeping in each house, which could pose a problem in an emergency (please see below). There were no issues around supervision of boarders observed or reported during this inspection.

St. 32: There are rigorous risk assessments for off-site activities, and the school follows Devon County policy. There is a signing in book for boarders, which is used when they visit another house or leave the site. Many boarders have mobile phones and could contact staff in an emergency.

St. 33: There is just one member of staff sleeping in each house overnight. This cover could be improved by an official on call rota. At the moment, staff call the Head of Boarding, and so far there has never been a problem with finding assistance, but the inspectors thought that an on-call rota would be helpful as it would clarify who was expecting a call and who was off duty. A recommendation has been made.

St. 35: There is a staff handbook for boarding staff supplemented by the general staff handbook. Between them these handbooks cover the required policies and practice guidelines.

St. 51: Not applicable in this school.

St. 52: Not applicable in this school.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Boarding 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>
6	2
7	2
15	1
16	3
17	3
24	4
25	2
48	3
49	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	3
3	2
4	3
5	2
13	N/A
22	N/A
26	1
28	N/A
29	3
37	2
38	1
39	3
41	3
47	1

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
11	4
18	2
27	3
43	3
46	3

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3
14	3
19	3
21	3
30	3
36	4

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
20	3
40	2
42	3
44	2
45	2
50	3

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

Continued

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
8	3
9	2
10	3
23	1
31	3
32	3
33	2
34	3
35	3
51	N/A
52	N/A

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? Yes

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	BS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The drug and alcohol policy should reflect Standard 6. • There should be liquid soap and a hygienic towel system in the toilets. 	
2	BS7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical information forms should be expanded to provide more room to record. • Basic medical information forms should be available to parents in their own language. 	
3	BS15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school should obtain a copy of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain's Guidelines for Control and Administration of Medicines in Care Homes and Children's Services and follow the advice therein. • The school should develop detailed policy documents which state how the boarding houses deal with all medication coming in to the houses, including storage, administration, self administration by students and disposal. 	31/01/07

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a full audit trail for all medicines received into the school, administered or disposed of from the school premises. • Individual risk assessments should be carried out on young people who are looking after and administering their own medicines. 	
4	BS25	Students should have access to a healthy snack at break times to shorten the gap between main meal times.	
5	BS3	The school's Child Protection policy and procedure should correspond to the guidelines issued by Devon Area Child Protection Committee.	31/12/06
6	BS5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complaints procedure should have a timescale and complaints should be responded to in writing if necessary. • Complaints and their outcomes should be recorded in a complaints log. 	31/12/06
7	BS26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school should conduct fire safety checks at the intervals recommended by the Devon Fire and Rescue Service. • The school must complete, regularly review and update a comprehensive fire risk assessment (already completed by the time the report was prepared). 	31/10/06
8	BS38	The school should be able to produce evidence that enhanced level CRB certificates have been obtained for all staff.	31/12/06
9	BS18	It is recommended that cultural festivals and celebrations are brought into boarding school life, e.g. Chinese New Year	
10	BS45	Shower curtains should be fitted to the Sports Hall showers to facilitate privacy.	30/11/06
11	BS40	Boarding areas of the school should be adequately maintained and decorated, and receive the same priority as teaching areas.	30/06/07
12	BS44	In the boys' boarding house keep the middle shower cubicles out of action or make alternative provision for the drainage of water from adjoining cubicles.	30/06/07
13	BS9	The emergency procedures policy needs to be expanded to meet this standard.	

14	BS23	The Head of Boarding or deputy should monitor risk assessments to ensure that they adequately reflect risks to boarders.	30/11/06
15	BS33	An official on call rota of senior staff would improve the overnight cover.	

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