



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Ash Field School

**Broad Avenue
Leicester
Leicestershire
LE5 4PY**

Lead Inspector
Joanne Vyas

Announced Inspection
29th November 2005 10:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

Reader Information	
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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	Ash Field School
Address	Broad Avenue Leicester Leicestershire LE5 4PY
Telephone number	0116 273 7151
Fax number	0116 273 9762
Email address	office@ashfield.leicester.sch.uk
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Leicester City Local Education Authority
Name of Head	Mr D Bateson
Name of Head of Care	Beverley Snow (Acting)
Age range of residential students	8 - 18
Date of last welfare inspection	28 th February 2005

Brief Description of the School:

Ash Field Residential Special School is a school for boys and girls who primarily have physical disabilities and some also have an associated learning disability or communication difficulties.

The residence is sited on the ground floor, running on a flexi-boarding basis, with up to 18 students staying over night at any one time. Most students stay in residence for four nights in four weeks. Some students stay only for an “extended school day” visit, these students staying only for activities and tea. All students stay on a voluntary basis.

The residence also incorporates an Independent Living Flat where up to two students can reside from the age of fourteen to practise their independent living skills.

SUMMARY

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

The focus of the inspections undertaken by the CSCI is upon outcomes for young people and their views of the service provided. The primary method of inspection used was 'case tracking' which involved selecting students who stay in residence and tracking the care they received through discussion with students, looking at their records and discussion with staff.

This announced inspection took place between 10:30am and 5:30pm on the first day of inspection, 12pm and 7pm on the second day and 7:30am and 10:30am on the third day and was carried out as part of the annual plan of inspection. Planning for this inspection included reviewing the previous inspection report, school policies and procedures, the Head's self-assessment document and the pre-inspection document. Also a pre-inspection meeting was held with the Acting Head of Care and Head Teacher. At the time of this inspection the Head of Care was unavailable and therefore the Deputy Head of Care and the Senior Residential Link Teacher represented the school. At the time of writing this report, the inspector received no completed questionnaires from care staff or parents but five from students.

The Inspector wishes to thank the Head Teacher, Deputy Head of Residential Care, the Senior Residential Link Teacher and all the staff for their friendly cooperation and hospitality throughout the inspection.

What the school does well:

There are excellent outcomes for students who board at this school. A caring, professional, well-trained and supported care staff support students. Students enjoy residence and find it a valuable part of their education. There are excellent links between education and residence.

Residence offers an excellent opportunity for students to access a valuable resource as part of a well planned and evaluated 24-hour curriculum, gaining essential life skills as part of their personal, social and health education but also enabling students to access learning during the school day by offering structure, routine and consistency. The school is commended for the variety of activities provided and the ongoing consultation processes with students.

Diversity is an integral part of the school – many examples were given including meals, a private place to pray during Ramadan and activities. Students stated that the things they like best about being in residence is being able to be independent and being with their friends.

Health and safety checks and risk assessments are comprehensive and robust.

What has improved since the last inspection?

All the recommendations have been met from the previous inspection.

What they could do better:

No recommendations have been made at this inspection.

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:

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

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

14, 15

Care staff actively promote the health of the students at this school.

EVIDENCE:

- Medication is received, stored, administered and disposed of/returned safely. Care staff have not received any training in the safe handling of medication and, although their procedures are robust, the Head Teacher felt that training would enhance the knowledge of the staff in residence.
- A number of initiatives have taken place with regard to meals giving a mixed view from students. This has included extensive consultation with students and parents giving rise to a new three-week menu. Parents and students were also invited to have tasters of the new menu and give their views. Some students said the food was very good, some said they didn't like what was on offer and others said it had improved and felt it would continue to improve.
- As part of the planned activities in residence looking at healthy eating, students have been enabled to plan, prepare and cook their own tea. This has proved very popular among students and they are currently planning a Christmas meal.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

Staff are competent and have the skills necessary to ensure students are kept safe while residing at the school.

EVIDENCE:

- Students said that they know who to complain to if they are upset and felt they are listened to.
- All staff receive child protection training on an annual basis and were competent in their knowledge. The Head Teacher stated that he will look into a more in-depth course for key residential staff.
- There are pro-active measures in place to counter bullying and all students who completed a questionnaire or spoke to the inspector stated

that they are not bullied. Students said that staff immediately deal with any bullying that takes place.

- The Positive Ethos policy discusses physical interventions and sanctions. However both staff and students stated that physical interventions are rarely used. A positive approach is taken with students using incentive and reward schemes. A bound and numbered book is in place for the recording of any sanctions used but this is currently blank and no evidence was found to suggest any sanctions have been used. The Head Teacher stated that if the need arose, the school would look at training for staff in physical intervention but courses are generally geared towards ambulant children.
- Students are positive towards themselves, each other and the school, showing understanding and compassion towards each other reflecting the school's ethos.
- A school counsellor, who is also the link teacher for residence and part of the senior management team, is available to students. Students can refer themselves to her or a teacher may refer them or, the school councillor may be aware of a situation and may approach the student.
- Recruitment checks are comprehensive and robust.
- Health and safety procedures are robust.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

12, 13, 22

Staff provide students with the appropriate level of support. Education is a valued and intrinsic part of the agenda in residence.

EVIDENCE:

- Care staff have access to the Individual Education Plans for all students in residence. Statements of Special Educational Need are retained centrally but are also accessible to care staff. Care staff demonstrated a good awareness of educational plans of all students during this inspection and work closely with school staff. Some care staff also work in school offering a consistent, seamless approach.
- Individual support is identified and given as appropriate to the needs of the student. Care staff work in pairs when providing intimate care and students know which staff are supporting them each evening and morning as this is posted on the notice board in the residential corridor. The inspector observed students checking this board throughout the day.
- A homework session is undertaken every evening from 4pm to 4.30pm Residential targets are related to independent living skills and are planned and reviewed with the student.
- Activities in residence are planned for in and around the local community as well as within the school. Students choose between two activities each evening and take an active role in reviewing the success of the activities.
- Students said that the best things about staying in residence included spending time with friends, playing hockey and football, cooking and being independent.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

2, 9, 11, 17, 20

The Statement of Special Educational Need, Individual Education Programmes and care targets enable staff to provide a needs led service with the student at its centre.

EVIDENCE:

- Parents/carers are invited to the Annual Review of the Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) at the school. The Care Team are also in regular contact with parents/carers via the phone and letter.
- Students stated that they are consulted in all aspects of their school life via the residential council meeting, formally when evaluating activities and menus and informally when offered choices of clothing to wear etc.
- Staff relationships with students were observed to be positive, caring and professional.
- Admissions to residence are done on a planned and individual basis.
- Preparation for leaving the school is addressed through the Annual Review process.
- Students in residence have care targets, which are developed in consultation with students and the Residential Policy. Each student is allocated a keyworker within the care team. The keyworker is responsible for working with the student to agree targets and for enabling the achievement of those targets. Keyworkers complete an annual report on each student for the Annual Statement Review.
- Files for students are currently being further developed and will contain clear student information including contact details for parents/carers. They will also contain current care plans and targets.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

16, 21, 23, 24, 25

Students are supported and offered choices throughout their short stays preparing them for independent living. This school is well maintained, furnished and decorated although the colour scheme is dull and space is limited giving an institutional look to residence.

EVIDENCE:

- Residential staff focus care targets towards the development of appropriate life and social skills for all students. 14 plus students are given the opportunity to stay in the Independent Living Flat where they can practise their cooking and home making skills.
- Students who are resident bring in their own clothing and appropriate laundering facilities are available.
- The residential wing lacks space but they are able to use school facilities during the evening and morning. Students stated that they felt residence could be “brightened up”. New quilts have been bought but students felt more could be done like brighter colours on the walls in the corridor and the bedrooms. The Head Teacher said he would review the décor in residence.
- The school is well equipped with the appropriate equipment to enable staff to meet the needs of the students.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

The care staff team benefit from good management, leadership and direction, which ensure students receive consistent, quality care providing them with the skills they require for an independent life.

EVIDENCE:

- The Acting Head of Care has recently been appointed to this post but has a number of years experience at a management level. Beverley Snow also has a National Vocational Qualification level 4 in Care and is currently completing the Registered Manager's Award.
- Staff support is organised and effective. Staff felt they were well supported.
- Staff have a range of experience and continue their professional development. Three staff have a National Vocational Qualification level three or higher and two staff have commenced their National Vocational Qualifications but have not yet completed. All staff have annual updates on child protection and moving and handling. Courses on epilepsy, first aid, administration of rectal diazepam, tube feeding, curriculum assistant, I.T and behaviour management are also offered to staff.
- There have been a number of staff absences for various reasons in residence but this does not appear to have affected the quality service students receive and has been managed well by the management team.
- Staff were enthusiastic about a new school governor for residence who has visited residence to shadow staff through the evening and night shifts and has expressed a number of exciting ideas.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

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

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

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	4
13	4
22	3

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
2	4
9	3
11	3
17	3
20	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	3
21	4
23	2
24	2
25	3

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	3
18	3
19	3
28	3
29	3
30	3
31	3
32	3
33	4

No

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)

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