



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

Residential Special School (not registered as
a Children's Home)

Wells Park School

School Lane

Lambourne Road

Chigwell

Essex

IG7 6NN

3rd and 4th March 2005

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

The role of CSCI is to:

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

Inspection Methods & Findings

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

'X' is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School

Wells Park School

Address

School Lane, Lambourne Road, Chigwell, Essex
IG7 6NN

Tel No:

0208 502 6442

Fax No:

0208 502 6729

Email Address:

admin@wellspark.essex.sch.uk

Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school

Essex County Council

Name of Head

Mr David Wood

CSCI Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Residential Special
School

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

10/03/04

Date of Inspection Visit		3 rd & 4 th March 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:30 am; 07:45 am	
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	David Downes	079647
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Jenny Elliott	076559
Name of CSCI Inspector	3		
Name of CSCI Inspector	4		
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):			
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		David Wood	

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

Inspections assess the extent to which the school is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, published by the Secretary of State under Section 87C of the Children Act 1989, and other relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 as amended. Residential Special Schools are not registered as children's homes unless they accommodate, or arrange accommodation for, one or more children for more than 295 days a year.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Wells Park School

The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Recommended action by the school
- Advisory recommendations on boarding welfare
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the lay assessor (where relevant)
- The Head's response and proposed action plan to address findings

INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections are undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children Act 1989 as amended, with additional visits as required.

The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Wells Park School is owned and managed by Essex County Council. The school provides boarding education for up to 40 boys or girls of primary school age during the working week. The school is closed at weekends and for the usual school holidays.

At the time of the inspection, the school was accommodating 34 children, each of whom was the subject of a Statement of Special Educational Needs identifying emotional and behavioural difficulties that affected their education.

The residential area is located in the main school building. Children are accommodated in four groups. In addition to outdoor play areas, the school has a sports hall and an indoor swimming pool.

The overall aim of the school is to work towards reintegrating children into their home or family environments with appropriate schooling.

The school is an approved provider of teacher training. The Head Teacher is the Director of the combined school and training centre. During term time, some twenty trainee teachers are based at the school.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

Members of the care staff team worked well together, alongside teaching staff, to deliver a good level of consistent and appropriate care for pupils. There was effective leadership and management of boarding welfare by the Director and senior staff. Pupils responded well to the school's well-established routines and benefited from a safe and nurturing environment. The achievements of pupils were recognised and praised by staff. Practice was underpinned by appropriate policies and procedural guidance. The overall standard of recording and monitoring was good. Staff presented as enthusiastic, knowledgeable and committed to the best interests of pupils. The school continues to work very well with parents.

The school was assessed as exceeding the minimum standards in the way that pupils' residential experience supported their educational progress, the arrangements for health care, the training and development opportunities for staff, and the quality of meals provided.

The school had continued to develop the range of after-school activities and these were clearly enjoyed by pupils. The school had reviewed and improved the organisation of the after-school period. Additional opportunities had been introduced for pupils to spend more time with care staff in house groups.

The premises were well maintained, with good health and safety procedures in place. Since the last inspection, the school had refurbished the lounge and kitchen areas of the residential accommodation to create a very pleasant, homely environment. A programme of upgrading of bedroom furniture had started.

Pupils' comments, behaviour and interaction with the staff indicated that they felt safe and well cared for at the school. Parents were extremely positive in the views that they expressed about staff and the operation of the school. Social workers and other external professionals were also positive in their evaluation of the school's welfare provision.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

The school should ensure that all aspects of staff recruitment procedures meet the requirements of the National Minimum Standards.

The school should continue to implement its strategy to meet the requirements for care staff to achieve National Vocation Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People and for the Head of Care to undertake training at NVQ Level 4 (or equivalent).

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

This was the first inspection of the school by the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the third since the introduction of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. Completed survey questionnaires were returned by 31 pupils, twelve parents, four members of staff and three placing officers/social workers.

Following recommendations made after the last inspection, the school had completed a number of developments in records, written guidance and the information provided for pupils. These and other positive developments resulted in the school meeting (or exceeding) the minimum requirements in 97% of the standards, compared with 87% at the time of the last inspection. However, there were two outstanding recommendations from the last inspection which need to be addressed by the school, in conjunction with the Local Education Authority. In all other respects, the evidence from this inspection demonstrated that the school continues to provide a good standard of appropriate care and accommodation for pupils, which was clearly valued by parents and external professionals.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended actions are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

RECOMMENDED ACTION			
Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare.			
No	Standard*	Recommended Action	
1	RS27	The school, in conjunction with the LEA, should ensure that staff recruitment procedures and related records comply with the requirements of NMS 27.2. This is a repeat recommendation	Immediate and ongoing
2	RS27	The school, in conjunction with the LEA, should ensure that staff members do not start work in the school until a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure check has been satisfactorily completed at the appropriate level. NMS 27.7 This is a repeat recommendation	Immediate and ongoing
3	RS31	The school should continue to implement its strategy for meeting the requirements of NMS 31.4 in relation to care staff obtaining the National Vocational Qualification Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or an equivalent qualification.	To await Action Plan
4	RS31	The school should continue to implement its plan to enable the Head of Care to meet the requirement of NMS 31.4 by obtaining a qualification at National Vocational Qualification Level 4 (or an equivalent qualification) relevant to working with children.	To await Action Plan

ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

Identified below are advisory recommendations on welfare matters addressed in the main body of the report and based on the National Minimum Standards, made for consideration by the school.

No	Refer to Standard	Recommendation
1	RS1	It is recommended that the school includes in the next revision of the children's guide a summary of the written information already produced for pupils about safe holding and the complaints procedure.
2	RS15	It is recommended that the school gives further consideration to the timing of the evening meal, particularly for younger pupils.
3	RS30	It is recommended that staff supervision records be developed to indicate more clearly how, and by whom, any issues are to be addressed.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS AND FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods were used in the production of this report

Direct Observation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Accommodation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas	YES

Checks with other Organisations

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	NO
• School Doctor	YES
• Independent Person	NA
• Chair of Governors	YES

Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	YES
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	YES
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	NO
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	03/03/05
Time of Inspection	10:30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	18.5
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	4

Pre-inspection information (including the Head's Self Evaluation form) provided by the school has also been taken into account in preparing this report.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Age Range of Boarding Pupils **From** **To**

NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

BOYS

GIRLS

TOTAL

Number of separate Boarding Houses

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the CSCI assessment of the extent to which standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

"9" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not applicable.

"X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

The school has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for those children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement can be made up of other documents, e.g., Letter of Approved Arrangements and school prospectus, which are required to include specific information.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The school's Statement of Purpose was composed of several documents, which provided the range of information needed to meet this Standard. These documents clearly identify how a continuum of care is created for the children attending the school.

The school had continued to update and develop the children's guide (on CD-Rom). Copies of the guide were available for children to view on the computers in the school and as part of the pre-admission information given to new pupils. The guide was in a format suitable for the ages and understanding of pupils and contained detailed information about daily life at the school. Please see comments under Standards 4 and 10 in relation to the additional written information that had been produced for pupils, covering 'safe holding' and the school's complaints procedure, and also the related advisory recommendation for the school to incorporate a summary of this information in the next revision of the children's guide.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way that the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.
- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.

Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

Children's opinions, and those of their families or significant others, are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and their future. Feedback is given following consultations.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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Evidence from observation of staff interacting with pupils, from pupils' and parents' questionnaire responses and from sampled records demonstrated that this standard continues to be met.

Pupils were given a variety of opportunities to express their views about daily life at the school and to make appropriate choices, including through the school council, regular house meetings, time spent with their key workers and weekly 'house nights'. At the end of the teaching day, pupils were observed at the 'Token Shop' enjoying the opportunity of choosing how to spend the tokens that they had earned (see Standard 10) with assistance from staff. Pupils told the Inspectors that they had been involved in choosing furniture and equipment for the recently refurbished lounge areas.

All of the parents who completed questionnaires said that they were involved in key decisions about their children and that they were asked for their views about the school.

Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.11)

The school and staff respect a child's wish for privacy and confidentiality so far as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****3**

Written guidance was available for staff covering privacy and confidentiality, including the arrangements for any occasion when it may be necessary to search a child's possessions. Pupils' confidential records were kept securely in the school. Staff were clear about the need to pass on to an appropriate person any information that may have child protection implications.

Payphones were located adjacent to each of the residential areas. These telephones afforded reasonable privacy and staff were aware of the need to ensure that pupils respected each other's privacy when using them. Pupils had to ask a member of staff for money in order to make a call from a payphone. However, the school's written policy stated that no child would be denied access to a telephone and that children were allowed a free phone call each evening, with additional calls "as and when necessary".

Discussions with children indicated that staff respected their privacy and encouraged other pupils to do so.

Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)

Children know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the school, and feel confident that any complaint is addressed seriously and without delay.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school's complaints policy and procedural guidelines had been developed in line with the recommendation made following the last inspection. Separate written information about the complaints procedure had been produced for pupils. The Inspectors were informed that copies of this written information would be given to new pupils with the children's guide and made available to current pupils.

Pupils spoken with, and the majority of those who completed questionnaires, were able to identify a member of staff to whom they would feel able to talk if they were unhappy about something connected with their care at the school.

Number of complaints about care at the school recorded over last 12 months:

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

Number of complaints received by CSCI about the school over last 12 months:

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- **The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.**
- **Children are protected from bullying by others.**
- **All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the school are notified by the Head of the school to the appropriate authorities.**
- **Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded positively to on return.**

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

There are systems in place in the school which aim to prevent abuse of children and suspicions or allegations of abuse are properly responded to. These are known and understood by all staff (including junior, ancillary, volunteer and agency staff).

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Appropriate written guidance on child protection procedures was available for staff. Copies of the local authority's child protection procedures (known as the 'Blue Book') were available at the school.

Care and ancillary staff were able to give a clear description of the actions that they would take in the event of a concern about a child or a disclosure of abuse being made. Refresher training in child protection awareness had been provided for ancillary staff since the last inspection.

The school had a clear system for identifying and responding to any concerns that a child may have been harmed, or is at risk of harm, including prompt referral to the relevant investigating authorities. The Director is the school's designated person for child protection and holds the central record of these concerns, referrals and outcomes. School representatives continue to attend strategy meetings and child protection conferences.

The Director stated that he had raised with senior managers within the local authority certain concerns about the way that some referrals and requests for social work involvement had been responded to.

Pupils spoken with said that they felt safe at the school and questionnaire responses also indicated that pupils experienced the school as a safe place in which to live.

Parents and social workers who completed questionnaires considered that pupils placed at the school were safe and well looked after.

"Excellent multi-agency working. Excellent awareness of child protection issues and attendance at all meetings set up to support the child." (Child's social worker)

Number of recorded child protection enquiries initiated by the social services department during the past 12 months:

0

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)

The school has, and follows, an anti-bullying policy, with which children and staff are familiar and which is effective in practice. Where possible children in the school contribute to the development of the policy.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school had a clear anti-bullying policy, which had been revised since the last inspection.

The Inspectors' observations, together with discussions with pupils and staff and analysis of pupils' questionnaire responses, indicated that this standard was met.

The school takes a proactive approach to dealing with bullying and other difficulties that may arise in relationships between pupils. Pupils received a high level of supervision, thereby reducing the risk of bullying taking place without staff being aware. No concerns about bullying were raised by the parents or social workers who completed questionnaires. In their questionnaire responses, pupils mainly described other pupils as being 'friendly' towards them all, or most, of the time. The majority of pupils said that adults helped them to sort out the problem if they were hurt or upset by another pupil. The Inspectors were impressed by the understanding and consideration that older pupils showed towards younger pupils.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

X %

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

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.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

This standard continues to be met.

NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO CSCI DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:

- **conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children**
- **serious harm to a child**
- **serious illness or accident of a child**
- **serious incident requiring police to be called**

0

0

0

0

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)		
The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Evidence from discussions with staff and reading of relevant policies indicated that this standard continues to be met.</p> <p>Pupils received a high level of supervision and, as such, the likelihood of a child going missing without it being immediately noticed by staff was minimised. The only incident during the past twelve months in which a pupil had left the school without permission involved a pupil making their way home. Appropriate action had been taken by staff.</p>		
Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:		1

CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

Relationships between staff and children are based on mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries which are effective for both the individuals and the group.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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Observations of staff-pupil interaction, together with questionnaire responses, demonstrated that this standard continues to be met. Pupils appeared to enjoy the company of staff and spoke positively about them to the Inspectors.

“...[the child] has formed positive and trusting relationships with all members of staff...” (Social worker)

Parents comments reflected a high degree of satisfaction with the relationships that staff established with the children. The following are examples of the responses received from parents:

“...all the staff take the time to get to know the children individually and really care for them.”

“The staff are friendly and approachable, welcoming and inclusive.”

“Brilliant staff ... these children can be very hard work.”

“I think the staff do an excellent job – they are caring, polite, happy and always good with the children.”

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.26)

Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour, and where the behaviour of children is regarded as unacceptable by staff, it is responded to by constructive disciplinary measures which are approved by the Head of Care.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Behaviour targets were included in sampled care plans and education plans. Pupils were aware of their individual targets in these areas. Staff were observed praising pupils for good behaviour and giving explanations to pupils about any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils told the Inspectors that the staff were fair.

A token system underpinned the school's approach to helping pupils to 'manage' their behaviour. Tokens were awarded for acceptable behaviour (including meeting individual targets) at regular intervals throughout the day, thereby providing positive reinforcement of this behaviour. Pupils were then able to exchange their tokens for a variety of items, activities and privileges. It was clear that pupils understood the token system and were responding very positively to it. There was appropriate written guidance for occasions when tokens were deducted for 'pay back' as, for example, in the case of reparation for deliberate damage. The children's guide included information about the school's expectations of children's behaviour and a detailed explanation of the token system in a format suitable for the age and understanding of children at the school. Separate written information about "safe holding" had been developed for pupils. The Inspectors were informed that copies of this written information would be given to new pupils with the children's guide and made available to current pupils.

The school had written guidance on "safe holding", detailing how and, in what circumstances, staff were permitted to hold or restrain a child. The techniques used were based on a recognised training course and had been adapted to provide more appropriate methods for the age of the children attending the school. All staff received training in the school's methods of physical intervention during their induction and in refresher sessions. Sampled records of physical interventions indicated that the school's policy was being followed by staff. The forms used for recording physical interventions covered an appropriate range of information. The completed forms were numbered and stored in date order in loose-leaf folders. The school was not using a separate bound and page-numbered book, as specified in this standard. The Director gave his assurance that the arrangements in place for signing, counter-signing and monitoring of the completed forms provided robust safeguards to ensure that records could not be altered or lost. The school will need to keep this recording system under review to make sure that it continues to operate effectively.

Parents and social workers confirmed that they were aware of the school's behaviour policy and agreed with the methods used.

"The school operates a really good and consistent [behaviour management] system which really reinforces good behaviour." (Parent)

"The way that the staff interact with children and the reward system that they use seem to work really well." (Parent)

QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.
- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within school and in the local community.
- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.
- Children 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.

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

Admission and leaving processes are planned and agreed with the child – and as appropriate, with parents and carers and placing authorities – as far as possible and handled with sensitivity and care by those concerned.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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This standard continues to be met.

Discussions with the Director and care staff, together with sampled records, demonstrated that the school's written admissions policy and related procedural guidance had been followed in practice. Before admission, information about children's care needs had been obtained from professionals already involved with them and home visits had been undertaken. Prospective pupils and their parents had also visited the school before the child's admission. Written records were made of pre-admission visits and, together with other documentation, such as the child's Statement of Special Educational Needs, these formed the basis of the pupil's initial placement plan.

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.7)
Care staff and the school's residential provision and activities actively contribute to individual children's educational progress, and care staff actively support children's education, ensuring regular attendance, punctuality and a minimum of interruption during the school day.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	4
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Evidence from discussions with staff, direct observation and sampled records demonstrated that the arrangements in place and their overall effectiveness continued to exceed the criteria for this standard.

Since the last inspection, the school had improved pupils' access to computers in the residential accommodation. Work was also in progress to develop Individual Social Plans as part of the school's aim to further integrate planning systems for care and education (see also Standard 17).

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9)
Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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Observations and discussions with pupils and staff indicated that the school's arrangements for activities continued to meet the requirements of this standard. Since the last inspection, the school had developed its programme of activities for pupils to include after school 'clubs'.

Pupils were able to choose from a wide range of activities in the evenings, with access to additional options through the token system. Pupils collect tokens towards 'saver' outings organised by the school. The school continues to make good use of its swimming pool, gym and grounds, and also the leisure facilities in the local community. The variety of toys and games available for the pupils to borrow from the Token Shop had been extended.

Pupils who completed a questionnaire said that they enjoyed the evening activities and many identified this as one of the things that they liked most about the school. Parents also commented positively on the range of activities available. The activities observed during the inspection were well supervised and most pupils participated enthusiastically. At the end of the evening, pupils relaxed in the comfortable lounge areas by watching films or listening to stories with staff.

Sampled risk assessments for activities, both on and off the school site, were satisfactory.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)

The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets any intimate care needs.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

The arrangements in place for health promotion and for meeting the identified health needs of pupils exceeded the requirements of this standard.

The dispensing of medication to pupils was carried out by staff in line with the school's procedural guidelines. A written protocol was in place covering the use of non-prescription 'household' medication. Records of medicines administration were appropriately maintained and medication was stored securely at the time of the inspection. The school operated a robust system for the safe transfer of medication from home to school and kept clear records of this process. Staff had acted on the recommendations of the pharmacist who had made an advisory visit to the school. The systems used by the school for medication administration, transfer and recording, continue to be of a high standard.

Regular visits are made by the school medical officer and the school nurse. Routine appointments are made with the dentist and optician who visit the school, thereby avoiding pupils and staff having to travel to appointments. Pupils' health records were well organised and included written parental consent to medical treatment. The sampled records of regular medical, dental and optical checks were well maintained. The school nurse confirmed that the school worked effectively with health services by, for example, initiating and contributing to assessments and working closely with health professionals to reduce levels of medication for individual children, where appropriate.

Health professionals were involved in the delivery of aspects of the PHSE curriculum.

Staff had received appropriate First Aid training.

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.15)

Children are provided with adequate quantities of suitably prepared wholesome and nutritious food, having regard to their needs and wishes, and have the opportunity to learn to prepare their own meals. Where appropriate special dietary needs due to health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background are met, including the choice of a vegetarian meal for children who wish it.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

The meals provided by the school continued to exceed the minimum requirements for this standard. The quality of food provided was particularly good, including plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables. The school grows its own organic vegetables in season. Pupils were given choices about their meals and encouraged to try new food, whilst also maintaining a healthy, balanced diet.

Mealtimes were pleasant, well-ordered social occasions. The change to pupils eating the evening meal in their houses instead of the main dining room was welcomed by staff and pupils. This arrangement provided more time for social interaction and enabled staff to monitor pupils' food consumption more closely.

The recently revised evening programme had resulted in pupils eating their evening meal closer to bedtime. After the inspection visit and as part of the school's response to the report, the Director advised the CSCI that, in the opinion of the school nurse, the arrangements in place were satisfactory.

A high proportion of the pupils who completed a questionnaire said that the food was one of the things that they liked most about the school.

“Mainstream schools could learn a lot from the quality of food supplied at this school.” (Parent)

The school has received awards for the healthy diet provided for pupils and for consistently high standards in food safety and hygiene.

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.7)

Children are provided for adequately on an individual basis and encouraged to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing and personal requisites. Children who require assistance to choose what they wear and/or how they spend their money are provided with the assistance they need, in a way which maximises their choice.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Observations and discussions with pupils provided evidence that the school was continuing to meet this standard.

CARE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT PLAN

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- **Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.**
- **Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.**
- **There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.**
- **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.**
- **Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.**
- **Children receive individual support when they need it.**

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

There is a written placement plan specifying how the school will care for each boarding pupil in accordance with his or her assessed needs, the school cares for that child in accordance with that plan, monitors progress in relation to that plan, and updates that plan as necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Sampled care planning documentation, together with placing officers' and parents' questionnaires and information from discussions with staff and pupils, provided evidence that this standard continued to be met.

A key worker was allocated to each pupil. Key workers contacted parents at least fortnightly to discuss their child's progress and home/school communication books were being used effectively.

Pupils' placement plans were composed of a number of documents, including Statements of Educational Needs, Individual Learning Plans and Individual Behaviour Plans. This collection of documents formed the child's 'placement plan' for the purposes of this standard. The sampled placement plans covered the areas specified in this standard, but less detailed information was available about some areas, such as pupils' leisure needs. Pupils' health plans were held in separate medical files. Individualised behaviour targets were agreed for each pupil and reviewed regularly. Pupils spoken with were aware of their targets and how the school was helping them with their behaviour.

All of the parents who completed questionnaires said that they were very satisfied with the way in which the school was looking after their children.

The Inspectors were shown the draft format for the school's new Individual Social Plan, which is to be introduced for all pupils. This is a very positive development which would integrate other elements of the school's planning system for individual pupils. As discussed during the inspection, it is recommended that the school reviews the draft format to ensure that it will include all of the items of information (NMS 17.5) needed to meet this standard.

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.5)

Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress which can, in compliance with legal requirements for safeguards, be seen by the child.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school's policies and sampled records evidenced that this standard continued to be met.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.3)
 The school maintains clear and accurate records on the staff and child groups of the school, and major events affecting the school and children resident there.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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Sampled records demonstrated that the school was continuing to meet the requirements of this standard.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.6)
 Subject to their wishes, children are positively encouraged and enabled by the school to maintain contact with their parents and other family members (unless there are welfare concerns) while living at school.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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Evidence obtained from discussions with staff, responses received from parents and placing officers, together with sampling of records, demonstrated that the school continued to meet this standard. Staff demonstrated awareness of individual pupils' contact arrangements, including any agreed restrictions.

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.2)
 Where a pupil is in care and will be leaving care on leaving the school, the school agrees with the young person's responsible authority what contribution it should make to implement any Pathway or other plan for the pupil before the pupil leaves school. These arrangements are in line with that young person's needs, and the school implements its contribution where feasible from at least a year before the pupil is expected to leave care or move to independent living. The school works with any Personal Advisor for the child.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	9
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This standard does not apply to the age group of children accommodated by the school.

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.13)

All children are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes, and children identified as having particular support needs, or particular problems, receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

This standard continues to be met.

“I really like it here. I have got on so well since my old school.” (Pupil)

“The school is fair. It is really cool and good. I like this school.” (Pupil)

“The child has been given tremendous support by the school...” (Social Worker)

Very positive comments were also received from parents about the quality of individual support that the school provides for pupils.

During the inspection, pupils appeared to receive individual support from staff when it was needed and staffing levels were sufficient to facilitate this intervention.

The school had good links with external professionals and pupils identified as needing services were referred appropriately.

There was good communication between care staff and teaching staff, ensuring that pupils could be supported at times of personal stress.

Please see comments under Standard 17 about the school’s plans for the development integrated placement plans for pupils.

The school had identified the need for some children to receive a more individual ‘bespoke’ service, based on their assessed needs. It was stated that this could, for example, include greater access to mainstream provision and more flexible use of boarding accommodation. These matters were under considered by the school and the LEA.

PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children live in well designed, pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.
- Children live in accommodation that is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.
- Children are able to carry out their ablutions in privacy and with dignity.
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. It serves the needs of the children and provides the sort of environment most helpful to each child's development, and is sufficient for the number of children.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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This standard continues to be met.

Residential and teaching areas were welcoming, spacious and well maintained (see also comments under Standard 24). The grounds of the school were well maintained. Appropriate arrangements had been made to ensure the security of the school premises. There were no outstanding requirements or recommendations relating to the school from the Fire or Environmental Health authorities.

A CCTV system was in use for the corridors of each boarding area to assist the night-waking member of staff in supervising and supporting pupils. Pupils spoken with were aware of this system and understood that it was there to help in keeping them safe at night.

The school was continuing to make progress in developing its links with the community.

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.19)

The school provides adequate good quality and well-maintained accommodation for boarding pupils, which is consistent with their needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school continued to meet the requirements of this standard.

The residential accommodation was well maintained and appropriately decorated in a child-centred manner. Many photographs of pupils involved in activities were attractively displayed on the walls and pupils enjoyed telling the Inspectors about them. The lounge areas and kitchen/diner areas had been refurbished to a high standard since the last inspection. Pupils had been consulted and involved in this process. This had created very pleasant, homely areas and pupils were able to eat their evening meal in their house groups, instead of using the main dining room. Both pupils and staff commented very positively on this development and on the standard of the furniture and equipment in these areas.

Pupils were accommodated in single and shared rooms. Pupils who showed the Inspectors their sleeping areas said that they were happy with their surroundings. All of the children's bedrooms were personalised to varying degrees and suitably furnished. The school had started a rolling programme of replacing the existing beds and bedroom furniture with new, good quality beds and furniture.

Pupils were looked after during the night by a night-waking member of staff, with the additional support of two staff sleeping-in.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.7)

The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets, all of good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children. The school has appropriate changing and washing facilities for incontinent children where necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

This standard continues to be met.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)

Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, in accordance with Health and Safety and Fire legislation and guidance.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

Evidence was available to demonstrate that the school continues to undertake the appropriate safety checks and risk assessments to meet the requirements of this standard.

STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- **There are careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers**
- **Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.**
- **Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.**
- **Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.**

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)
Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those employed on a contractual/sessional basis) and volunteers who work with the children in the school includes checks through the Criminal Records Bureau checking system (at Standard or Enhanced level as appropriate to their role in the school), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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The recruitment records for two recently appointed members of care staff were inspected. These records were generally well maintained and included good records of interviews. However, one member of staff had started work at the school without a completed Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure. The disclosure was applied for five days after the member of staff commenced work and was satisfactorily completed three months later. Additionally, the second (previous employer) reference for this member of staff was received two months after they commenced work. The Director stated that the school was continuing to follow the guidance of the LEA's Personnel department in relation to CRB disclosures and that, in line with this guidance, staff were allowed to start work before their CRB disclosures had been returned, provided that they did not have unsupervised contact with children during this time and their continued employment was conditional on a satisfactory disclosure being received. The school did not have a written record of its risk assessment in relation to this situation. The report of the last inspection included a recommendation that staff should not start work until CRB disclosure checks are completed. In its action plan, the school had stated that it had been unable to comply with this recommendation because the CRB was unable to process applications in a timely manner. The school, in conjunction with the LEA, needs to ensure that it addresses this matter.

In addition, the Director stated that the LEA was in the process of reviewing recruitment procedures (including the CRB disclosure process) in the light of the recommendations contained in the report of the Bichard Inquiry.

Evidence was available to demonstrate that the school met the other requirements of this standard.

Total number of care staff:	15	Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:	X
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Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)

The school is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the minimum level specified under standard 28.2. Records of staff actually working in the school demonstrate achievement of this staffing level.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

This standard continues to be met.

Sampled records, discussions with staff and observations made by the Inspectors indicated that staffing levels were in line with the school's written staffing policy and were appropriate to meet the needs of the children accommodated by the school at the time of the inspection. There were clear and appropriate arrangements for the supervision of pupils at all times.

Since the last inspection, the school had introduced new arrangements that had enabled more staff to be on duty when the pupils were getting up without adversely affecting staffing levels at other times of the day.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)

Staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the school.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

It was considered that the school's arrangements for staff training and development exceeded the requirements of this standard. The induction programme for new staff was clear, well organised and appropriately recorded. Staff had access to a good range of in-house and external training opportunities relevant to meeting the needs of pupils. Personal development plans had been implemented. As part of a training programme co-ordinated by the Head of Training and Development, each member of the care staff team was undertaking a piece of supervised 'action research' related to their work and linked, as appropriate, with the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 award. Staff spoke enthusiastically about their particular projects and about the perceived benefits of this approach.

Please see also related comments under Standard 31 about the school's progress with NVQs for care staff.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)

All staff, including domestic staff and the Head of the school, are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

All members of staff spoken with during the inspection said that they felt well supported by their managers and by other colleagues. Care staff received supervision each half-term. Sampled records of one-to-one supervision were adequate, but would benefit from the inclusion of more detail about how any issues raised are to be addressed. Whole school and care staff meetings were each week, thereby facilitating effective communication between staff.

As was the case at the time of the last inspection, ancillary staff did not have planned one-to-one supervision in line with the expectations of this standard. The school had considered the related advisory recommendation, included in the report of the last inspection, but had decided against introducing formal one-to-one supervision sessions for ancillary staff. The ancillary staff who spoke with the Inspectors confirmed that they were in regular contact with managers as part of their normal working day and that more formal meetings were arranged when necessary.

Evidence was available to demonstrate that the school met the other requirements of this standard.

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.
- Children enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

The school is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible childcare.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The Head of Care worked effectively with the Head of Education and the Director to ensure that continuity of care was provided for pupils. It was clear from discussions with staff that the Head of Care and Deputy Head of Care had continued to develop their leadership roles since the last inspection and this was also reflected in a number of positive developments referred to in the relevant sections of this report.

As reflected elsewhere in this report, parents and placing officers/social workers commented very positively about a range of aspects of the care provided by the school.

The school was aware of the need to meet the requirements of this standard, which states that a minimum of 80% of care staff should have completed their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, or hold an equivalent qualification, by 2005. All care staff were working towards this award, supported by a planned programme of training delivered by a local college. It is, however, recognised that the timescale for the delivery of this training programme is not within the school's control. Senior staff were training to become in-house NVQ assessors. The Head of Care had completed NVQ Level 3 in Care and was appropriately experienced in residential child care. The school had plans to enable the Head of Care to meet the NVQ Level 4 (or equivalent) qualification requirement (NMS 31.2), but again this will extend beyond 2005.

Evidence was available to demonstrate that the school met the other requirements of this standard.

Percentage of care staff with relevant NVQ or equivalent child care qualification:

7 %

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

The Commission for Social Care Inspection is informed within 24 hours if a receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy becomes responsible for the school. Such persons on becoming responsible for the school have ensured that the school continues to be managed on a day to day basis by a Head who meets recruitment and qualification requirements for a Head under these Standards. Such a temporary Head must make sure that the operation of the school meets the requirements of these standards in relation to the day to day running of the school.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Evidence from sampled records and discussions with the Director and Head of Care demonstrated that the school continues to meet the outcome for this standard.

The Head of Care completed an informative report for the governing body each term, detailing any changes and developments in the provision of care at the school. The Director completed an annual report on the operation of the school.

Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.7)

The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body receive a written report on the conduct of the school from a person visiting the school on their behalf every half term.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

School governors with identified responsibility for care and residential accommodation visit regularly and supply written reports to the governing body. Discussion with the Director and sampling of records indicated that this standard was met. The staff are appreciative of the support provided by the governing body.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

Lead Inspector David Downes **Signature** _____

Date 15/06/2005

PART D**HEAD'S RESPONSE****D.1 Head's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.**

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 3rd and 4th March 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

Action taken by the CSCI in response to Head's comments:

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

Head's comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report

YES

Head's comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate

Note:

In instances where there is a major difference of view between the Inspector and the Head both views will be made available on request to the Area Office.

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 10th June 2005, which indicates how recommended actions and advisory recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

Status of the Head's Action Plan at time of publication of the final inspection report:

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other:

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

Head's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies.

D.3.1 I _____ of _____ confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the recommended actions made and will seek to comply with these.

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

Or

D.3.2 I _____ of _____ am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Head both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.

Commission for Social Care Inspection
33 Greycoat Street
London
SW1P 2QF

Telephone: 020 7979 2000
Fax: 020 7979 2111

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120
www.csci.org.uk

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