



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

### **Royal School For The Deaf**

**50 Topsham Road  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 4NF**

*Lead Inspector*  
Tina Maddison

*Announced Inspection*  
6th March 2006      10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

Those outcomes are:

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

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

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

# SERVICE INFORMATION

**Name of school** Royal School For The Deaf

**Address** 50 Topsham Road  
Exeter  
Devon  
EX2 4NF

**Telephone number** 01392 272692

**Fax number**

**Email address**

**Provider Web address**

**Name of Governing body,  
Person or Authority  
responsible for the  
school** Royal School for the Deaf

**Name of Head** Mr John Shaw

**Name of Head of Care** Karen Burgess

**Age range of residential  
pupils** **7-21 years**

**Date of last welfare  
inspection** 19<sup>th</sup> January 2005

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

The Royal School for the Deaf is a non-maintained residential special school for deaf children. Some students also have additional learning difficulties, and/or physical disabilities or visual impairments.

The school was established in 1826 to provide education for deaf children from the south west of England. It moved to its present site in 1828 and now serves more than 30 local education authorities, including those in South Wales, London and Jersey.

The school is registered with the Department for Education and Skills and is a registered charity.

The residential provision consists of three boarding areas, Olding and Kettlewell for primary and secondary age children, and the Further Education College residential units for post 16 students. Students under the age of 16 years are weekly or part time boarders and return home for weekends and holidays. The Further Education College accommodates young people aged sixteen and over as term time boarders. These students return home during the holiday periods and one weekend in three during the term.

The school employs an audiologist and speech and language therapist and has other specialist visiting support, for example physiotherapy, occupational therapy and Orthotist services.

# SUMMARY

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

This announced Inspection took place over three days, the 6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2006. Morning and evening routines were observed on the 7<sup>th</sup> March. Twenty seven pre inspection questionnaires were returned from parents/carers, and four from staff. A pre inspection questionnaire was returned from the head of care. Fourteen students were interviewed with the assistance of a signer. Three members of the care team were interviewed. A tour of the campus was undertaken, and four meals were taken with staff and students.

The Inspectors would like to thank the Principal, Head of care and staff at the school for their assistance and hospitality during the inspection. Also thanks to the students for their full co-operation and willingness to share their views regarding their care at the school. Appreciation of the skills of Connie O'Neil, the signer who assisted during student interviews.

## What the school does well:

Parents believe that the school is fully meeting their child's needs, and praised the commitment and skills of the staff. Students are encouraged and enabled to reach their potential in an environment that understands the issues arising from their disability.

The school is well managed, and there is clear leadership. Staff had made efforts to ensure that the residential accommodation is as homely as possible. Staff had excellent relationships with the students, that were respectful and enabling.

Comments from parents included:

"In the short time my son has been at the school he has been happy and gained confidence and has regained the will to learn."

"How can I ever thank the school for all that they have done for my daughter."

"There is always a good atmosphere and the staff are all very dedicated to the children."

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

A plan of refurbishment of accommodation has begun. Staff records now contain all the required elements. All staff had a CRB check. Staff now have supervision and an annual appraisal.

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

A review of medication procedures and storage is to be undertaken. Fire prevention issues such as door wedges keeping fire doors open and fire exits blocked in the further education block should be addressed. Students would benefit from flashing lights at doors so that they are aware when someone is knocking.

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

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

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

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Staying Safe

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Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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# Being Healthy

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

14,15

Health care needs are identified and promoted at the school. The storage and administration of controlled drugs is to be reviewed. Meals provided are healthy and nutritious.

## EVIDENCE:

The health care needs of each child were documented in case files, and care staff spoken with were fully aware of individual health needs. A local General Practitioner visits the school each week for individual consultations. Students can also visit a surgery outside the school. A community nurse also visits the school as required. The school employs an audiologist and speech and language therapist. Occupational and Physiotherapist and other specialists provide a visiting service to the school. Most students dental needs are attended to during school holidays or on home visits. Staff confirmed that they have received training on first aid and also on a range of medical/health care needs for example diabetes and epilepsy.

Medication is administered by trained care staff. The Pharmacist from the Commission for Social Care Inspection is to consult with the head of care at the school to review the storage and administration systems for controlled drugs.

The Inspectors shared four meals with the students in the dining room. These were pleasant social occasions with staff and students sitting in small table groups, engaging in signed and verbal conversations. The meals provided were found to be appetising and nutritious with sufficient quantity for students to have a second helping if they chose. There is a four weekly rotating menu. Vegetarian and special diets are catered for. Students spoken with said that they would like to have more input with regard to the choices of meals.

# 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.

The welfare of children is promoted and policies are in place to ensure that children are protected from abuse at the school. Students' privacy is respected by staff. Generally health and safety is managed well at the school. The school recruitment policies and procedure is robust.

## EVIDENCE:

Guidance for care staff regarding privacy and confidentiality are found in the staff handbook. Discussion with staff and observations by the Inspectors found that staff are aware that students privacy and confidentiality must be respected.

Doctors visits are accompanied by signing staff who withdraw whilst personal examinations take place if the student wishes. Students in the FE College have

keys to their bedrooms. Bathrooms and toilet facilities have locks that can be overridden in an emergency. One student asked if flashing lights could be fitted on doors on the FE flat accommodation.

Students and parents confirmed that they were aware of whom to speak to in the event of a complaint, and felt that it would be dealt with.

The school has a child protection policy and procedure in place, and staff confirmed that they are aware of how to use this procedure, and felt able to do so should the need arise. All staff were aware of their responsibility to protect the students. The school now has a child protection co-ordinator who will liaise with Social Service Departments.

The school has an anti bullying policy and staff confirmed that they would take any allegation of bullying very seriously. The school uses assemblies, tutorials, key worker sessions and group role play sessions to raise awareness of bullying issues and strategies for dealing with bullying behaviour.

The vast majority of parents who replied in the pre inspection questionnaires felt that the school was very good at letting them know what is happening with their child. The Principal is aware that the school should promptly notify the Commission for Social Care Inspection of any significant events affecting students at the school. No notifications have been made in the last twelve months. Any incidents are logged on incident report forms.

There are clear procedures in place when students go out of the school in the evenings. Over 14 year olds are able to go out alone if parents or carers agree and a risk assessment form is completed. The students are clear about what time they are to return. If a child is missing without consent an on call member of the senior management team will be called.

A system of sanctions is in place to manage behaviour, and students spoken with were clear about these. These sanctions include missing an activity, being grounded in their rooms or restriction of time off site (over 14 year olds), and early bedtimes. Restraints are unusual and are recorded. Staff are trained in team teach restraint methods. This is used as a last resort. A record of all school exclusions is maintained. Staff do have a difficult job managing behaviour due to the vast range of needs of the students. However, Inspectors believe that the behaviour of the students is well managed by care staff.

Well managed records evidenced that health and safety is generally well managed at the school. Gas and electrical installations are serviced regularly. There are risk assessments in place for the premises. On site and off site individual risk assessments were undertaken for students and staff. There are written guidelines for the use of school transport. Fire prevention records are up to date. On a tour of the FE building it was observed by the Inspector that many fire doors were wedged open, and a fire escape was blocked.

Students said that they would like the CCTV cameras to be in operation, as the residential blocks are adjacent to a main road, and some bedrooms are on the ground floor, which made some students feel rather vulnerable.

Staff files contained CRB checks, and written references. The school had a recruitment policy and procedure which appeared to have been followed for new staff. Appointment is subject to the completion of a satisfactory probation period.



# 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

Students at the school enjoy a wide range of on and off site activities. Individual support is available when students need it. Educational progress is supported by the care staff.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Liaison between the educational and care staff was observed by the Inspectors to be positive. The handover time between the start of school and end of residential care, and the end of school and start of residential care was handled well by all staff and the transition was a smooth one. Care staff were fully aware of the educational needs of the students. Apart from the formal handover periods, there are informal lines of communication between different groups of staff in the school. Students in the FE residential provision learn life skills and independent living skills.

A wide range of activities are offered to students outside of the school day. These include swimming in the school indoor pool, football, arts and crafts, cookery, indoor games TV and videos. Two FE students in the flats said that they would like Sky satellite TV installed.

Activities that took place on the evening of the Inspection were observed and found to be well managed and organised. Offsite activities include outdoor pursuits in the summer, such as canoeing or sailing, walking, outings to the beach, youth or football clubs and attendance at the deaf clubs.

The students are provided with high levels of individualised support from care staff. Students spoken with, with the aid of a signer, said that staff were caring and kind and they were able to ask staff for support when they needed it. A key worker system is in operation. Each young person has an annual review and a personal plan. Additional professional support is provided where there is a need identified in the care plan or annual review. One issue raised from four of the students in their discussions with the Inspectors was that they felt that

staff were sometimes not consistent in their actions with regard to sanctions imposed for negative behaviours.

# 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.

Care staff had excellent individual relationships with the students. Detailed plans ensure that students care needs are met whilst they are at the school. The school supports students to maintain contact with their families.

## EVIDENCE:

Students felt that generally their views were listened to. Parents and carers confirmed in the pre inspection questionnaires that they felt that their views and opinions were sought and listened to. There is a school council where students can voice any views or concerns. One area where five students said that they would like more influence is in the choice of meals.

Students and parents both stated in interviews with the Inspector and pre inspection questionnaires that relationships between the care staff and students were excellent. Parents said that they believed that staff worked in a highly professional and supportive manner toward not only the student but their families as well. They believed that children were treated as individuals. The Inspectors observed staff related to the students in a calm, caring and professional manner, taking time and care to listen to and understand what the students wanted to say. It was observed that the students were happy, relaxed and relating well to staff and one another. Staff encouraged students to be inclusive and respectful to each other. It is the school aim to foster an open

and nurturing environment throughout the school where everyone, staff and students are respected as individuals, valued and included.

The school has an admission process that includes an assessment of the young persons needs to ensure that these needs will be met at the school. The Principal will go and meet the prospective student and their parents at their existing school. This process was happening for one student during the inspection. The young person and their families or carers are able to visit the school and residential provision before admission.

Each young person has a key worker and this is decided on an individual basis to suit the young person.

As a student transfers from the main school to the FE provision or another school, a transition plan is drawn up. The school liaises with other agencies, particularly Connexions advisors and social workers. Students individual files containing their placement plans were found to be informative and comprehensive. Each young person attending the school will have an education review. Students and their parents are invited to attend annual reviews and are consulted on the content of reports. Individual needs are assessed and identified as part of the admission processes, thereafter they are monitored by staff on an on-going basis.

Parents who live long distances from the school appreciate that the school encourages family visits by providing accommodation free of charge to parents and other family members. Staff spoken with were aware of contact arrangements for each of the young people that they cared for. Students can use their own mobile phones if they wish, although these were kept by staff at night for the younger students. Evidence was seen of good communication in the home/school books.



# 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 live in generally well decorated and homely accommodation whilst at the school, with sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.

## EVIDENCE:

Staff will support young people in purchasing their own personal requisites on an individual or group basis. Staff may also assist students to purchase clothing if they request this and parents agree. Children are able to select their own choice of clothes during school activities school uniform is worn.

Many people take their clothing home at weekends for changing and laundering. The school provide laundry facilities on site. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their money and use it wisely. Recording systems for the storage of money were seen to be well recorded and accurate.

The school undertakes transition planning as part of the annual review process. The school and College had good links with the Connexions service personal advisors and encourages young people, their families and placing authority to consider on going needs for their future lives after leaving or moving on from the school.

The school is located close to the city centre and local sports, leisure and other amenities. The school has spacious grounds and outdoor facilities. The buildings were not purpose built for the current range of physical disabilities, but students had all the necessary access to all parts of the building and site they need to use.

Refurbishment is going on in one of the sites, and there are plans to move the girls here and reorganise the students. The accommodation buildings are generally well maintained. Some of the bedrooms in Kettlewell are in need of redecoration, and some students said that they felt some of the bedrooms are rather small. Students also commented that the beds are too small and it was observed by the Inspectors that some mattresses were very worn and need to be replaced. Students can personalise their rooms. Residential accommodation was found to be warm and well lit. The school has a rolling programme for redecoration and refurbishment. There are large communal areas for the younger students, and more individual small lounges and kitchens for the older students. The flats that some of the FE students live in are pleasant and spacious, with self contained bathroom and kitchen facilities.

# 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):

1,18,19,28,29,30,31,32,33.

Records and documents held in the school are well managed. Students are looked after by an adequate number of care staff that are well trained and able to meet their needs. The school is efficiently run.

## EVIDENCE:

The school has a written statement of purpose that describes what the school sets out to do for those children it accommodates and the manner in which care is provided. The statement is made up of a range of documents, including the school prospectus and mission statement, annual reports, and information that is supplied to the children and young people, their parents and carers. Staff are clear about the purpose of the school and what is hoped to achieve and the nature of the needs of the students.

The case records of five students (three school, two College) were assessed. These files are held centrally in the school office and the care files are held in

the house units. The files looked at contained all of the information required. The register of children and staff is held centrally in the school office. All visitors to the school are recorded. The school holds records of sanctions imposed, accidents, incidents, staff rosters and menus.

Five parent pre inspection questionnaires were returned to the Inspector, and all stated that the parents thought that the residential provision at the school was adequately staffed. Agency staff are not used. Members of staff sleep in all residential areas. The Principal or Deputy Principal or head of care provide on call support to staff in the evenings and weekends. Staffing levels during the inspection were observed to be adequate and in discussion, care staff said that staffing levels were adequate in general. Students also confirmed that they thought that there was always enough care staff on duty.

Staff feedback was positive about training opportunities provided. All staff had completed NVQ 3 or are registered on the award. In addition, in service training is provided, for example induction training, British sign language, risk assessment training, Team teach and assessors training.

Staff benefit from formal and informal supervision and said that they felt well supported. An annual appraisal system is in place.

The school is well managed by the senior staff team. The Head of Care holds a degree in social work and community studies.

Parents who provided feedback for the inspection agreed that staff do a good job of caring for their child, and that the school is well organised and managed. Parents said that the staff were excellent and should be commended for the high standard of education and care that is provided at the school.

There are clear management structures in the school. The senior management team meet regularly, as do the care team and other professionals staff groups. Liaison between professional disciplines is good. The senior management team led by the Principal provides clear and committed leadership for staff.

A member of the Governing body undertakes unannounced monitoring visits on a half term basis.

# 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>
<b>14</b>	2
<b>15</b>	3

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

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

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

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

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

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.

	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS3	Consideration should be given to installing flashing lights on the front doors of the flats so the students are aware when someone is knocking.	
2	RS14	The storage and administration of controlled drugs should be reviewed.	
3	RS26	Wooden door wedges should not be used to wedge open fire doors. Fire exits should not be blocked.	08/03/06

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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