



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

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

Ashley School

Ashley Downs

Lowestoft

Suffolk

NR32 4EU

21st 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

Ashley School

Address

Ashley Downs, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 4EU

Tel No:

01502 574847

Fax No:

01502 531920

Email Address:

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

Suffolk County Council

Name of Head

CSCI Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

3/2/04

Date of Inspection Visit	21st March 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit	10:00 am	
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	Jan Davies
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Cecilia Mckillop
Name of CSCI Inspector	3	Not applicable
Name of CSCI Inspector	4	Not applicable
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):	Not 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.	Not applicable	
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)	Not applicable	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection	Mr David Field, Head Teacher	

CONTENTS

Introduction to Report and Inspection

Inspection visits

Brief Description of the school and Residential Provision

Part A: Summary of Inspection Findings

What the school does well in Boarding Welfare

What the school should do better in Boarding Welfare

Conclusions and overview of findings on Boarding Welfare

Notifications to Local Education Authority or Secretary of State

Implementation of Recommended Actions from last inspection

Recommended Actions from this inspection

Advisory Recommendations from this inspection

Part B: Inspection Methods Used & Findings

Inspection Methods Used

- 1. Statement of the School's Purpose**
- 2. Children's rights**
- 3. Child Protection**
- 4. Care and Control**
- 5. Quality of Care**
- 6. Planning for care**
- 7. Premises**
- 8. Staffing**
- 9. Organisation and Management**

Part C: Lay Assessor's Summary (where applicable)

Part D: Head's Response

- D.1. Head's comments**
- D.2. Action Plan**
- D.3. Head's agreement**

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 Ashley 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

Ashley School is owned and managed by Suffolk County Council and administered from the Local Area Education Department. It provides education for children between the ages of 11 years (Yr.7) and 16 years (Yr.11), who are subject to a Statement of Special Educational Need. All of the children will have been assessed as benefiting from increased educational support and a number will have associated emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

The school is located on the northern edge of the town of Lowestoft and is 'in keeping' with the housing estate that surrounds it.

There were steps outside the school buildings and inside boarding houses and any child, or visitor, with mobility problems would find progress around the school boarding area difficult.

The boarding provision, in particular, was not suitable for children with physical disabilities that might impair mobility. In all other respects the school had a very inclusive culture.

The boarding provision could accommodate children and young people in two boarding houses Lighthouse and Breydon. Because of the larger number of boys for whom residential provision was thought to be appropriate, the boarding arrangements were catering for, in Breydon, all male and, in Lighthouse, younger boys and girls.

There were plans to refurbish the two boarding houses further when finance becomes available. Sleeping accommodation was in double bedrooms and dormitory areas in groups of 4's and 5's. This is the object of a recommendation later.

All children, day and boarders, ate in a central dining hall with adjacent kitchen, staffed by employees of the County's Catering Team.

The ethos was very much that Ashley School was an educational establishment with residential provision for children who it was thought would benefit emotionally and socially from the experience. As such, boarders attended school from the residential units as day children would from their own homes and had limited access to the boarding houses during the classroom day.

The approach was one of developing children to their full potential, instilling appropriate routines and habits, teaching the life skills sufficient to enable them to be as independent as possible and encouraging them to flourish.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

At this inspection the Commission for Social Care Inspection included in the pupil interviews two questions about 'what was the best thing about being a boarder at the school?' and 'was there anything about being a boarder at Ashley that was not so good'. ?

The children thought long and hard about these issues and, despite some having limited literacy or communication skills, they made their feelings very clear to inspectors. They liked the activities such as swimming, cycling, being supported by staff, having friends around, 'going out to places, the teaching, the people, the living skills that will be good for the future, the food and playing pool'.

The school had a very pleasant 'feel' about it. Visitors were welcomed, yet matters of access were addressed with an appropriate security system. An audit of security measures had been undertaken.

The children were eager to co-operate with the inspection process. They were very friendly and open in their dealings with inspectors. Staff worked hard in delivering good childcare to the children who boarded either for one night a week or for four nights. Their commitment was clear.

There was a high degree of parental satisfaction with Ashley School, its staff and with the quality of service. On visits to the school parents found they were met politely and pleasantly. This, too, was the inspectors' impression. Parents felt the school developed in their children an independence that they welcomed.

The residential care staff were seen as 'caring and considerate'. The addition of a male head of care with the appointment to Pupil Services Manager post within the last 6 months was a welcome appointment.

This has enhanced the already existing good arrangements for the care of boarders and the post holder has clearly made an impact showing real knowledge, expertise and commitment to the post.

There was a happy, caring, relaxed, yet orderly atmosphere. The staff showed that they knew and understood the children and had thought about his or her individual needs, in addition to the needs of the whole group.

The school rules, in many respects drawn up with the help and involvement of the children, were fair and reasonable.

There was an emphasis on teaching life skills and developing a strong community profile with an appropriate level of responsibility and involvement of children.

The children identified a wide range of staff at the school, but also including their parents and friends, who they could talk to if they were unhappy. There were arrangements for independent listening that were very suitable.

Staff were aware of child protection procedures and this included those working in an ancillary capacity. Care staff confirmed that they have had appropriate training in physical

control and diffusion techniques.

The care staff team showed its stable nature by retaining the same core members, which provided much needed consistency for the children who boarded. Duty rosters, although at times punishing for staff, provided continuity of care for children, with the same staff on duty when they went to bed and when they got up.

Care plans had been appropriately developed for each boarder.

A 'mentoring scheme' for each child, an adapted key-worker scheme, had been introduced.

The boarding arrangements, whereby children returned home every weekend and for longer periods during the holidays, allowed shared care with family members. This was a protection for children who had regular contact with their families.

Some of the information provided for parents and children was available in different formats. Some parents would have limited literacy skills and the provision of information in different ways was confirmed to be of help to them.

Meals looked (and tasted) appetising, and were balanced and nutritious, with a choice of dishes. Inspectors particularly liked the balance between healthy dishes and the items such as homemade fare. Efforts had been made to make the breakfast and supper experience a homely and domestic one.

The pupils' personal files had up to date photographs attached and children's contributions and signatures. It was possible to audit the progress of a child from the first suggestion that boarding might be of benefit to actual admission. This was good practice.

All staff, day and boarding, worked collaboratively towards providing an integrated service. Individual needs were recognised and responded to.

Good risk assessments had been made of the premises and surrounding grounds.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

In answer to a pupil survey question about what was not so good about being a boarder at Ashley school the children said that they liked everything or that there was nothing that wasn't good about being a boarder.

The build of the school is not ideal and for children with physical/ mobility difficulties to be admitted would require a major re-design.

The school was designed and constructed over 30 years ago and the residential provision did need some updating. The Head confirmed that there were future plans to refurbish the boarding houses.

At the time of the last inspection it had been recommended that the Governing body identify one of their number to take responsibility for the residential provision, visit the boarding houses on a regular basis (and on occasions in an unannounced capacity) and produce a written report every half term on the conduct of the school, as this affects boarders.

The Head Teacher reported to the inspectors that this had not occurred since and so it remains an issue for this inspection.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

Twenty-seven of the National Minimum Standards were met or exceeded. Four actions were recommended and two areas of advice identified.

Recommendations related to: -

1. Pipes and water outlets being at 42 degrees centigrade in boarding houses and risk assessments to address the vulnerability of boarders and staff immediately in this respect.
2. The five-bedded dormitory
3. Staff working alone at specific times.
4. The Governing body to identify one of their number to take responsibility for the residential provision, visit the boarding houses on a regular basis (and on occasions in an unannounced capacity) and produce a written report every half term on the conduct of the school, as this affects boarders.

Advisory recommendations related to: -

1. Formal and written supervision records to be kept.
2. Formal and written supervision with the Head Teacher for the Pupil Services Manager.

The quality of the care provision was very high within what was a carefully defined brief. There was a positive reaction from stakeholders and others.

The commitment of the pastoral staff for the children they look after was clear and appropriate.

The children were very well behaved, very polite and good humoured. They provided useful information for inspectors about how the school operated and how, as boarders, they were looked after. They were eager to cooperate with the inspection process.

Inspectors saw a good range of out of school activities The school was being knowledgeably managed by experienced and committed senior staff.

The welfare of the children was being safeguarded and promoted to a high degree in this much needed resource for vulnerable children with special needs.

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	RS24	Those responsible for the management of the school are recommended to have a written procedure to address the transportation of any dirty linen, by children and staff.	Immediate
2	RS24	Those responsible for the management of the school are recommended to consider how sleeping areas could accommodate no more than four boarders at any one time.	On-going
3	RS26	Those responsible for the management of the school are recommended to ensure that radiator and hot pipes accessible to children must not exceed a surface temperature of 43 degrees C.	Immediate
4	RS33	At the time of the last inspection it had been recommended that the Governing body identify one of their number to take responsibility for the residential provision, visit the boarding houses on a regular basis (and on occasions in an unannounced capacity) and produce a written report every half term on the conduct of the school, as this affects boarders. The Head Teacher reported to the inspectors that this had not occurred since and so it remains an issue for this inspection.	Immediate

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	RS30	It was advised that arrangements for the formal supervision of the Pupil Services Manager with the Head Teacher take place and be recorded on, at least, a half term basis.
2	RS30	The Pupil Services Manager was advised, (in line with National Minimum Standards), to keep records of agreed action, by both the supervisor and the staff member following supervision meetings.
3	RS28	Those responsible for the management of the school are advised that where a single member of staff is on waking or sleeping in duty at night (11pm-7am) a risk assessment should be carried out and recorded identifying any risks to children, staff and others.

Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. RS10 refers to standard 10.

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	YES
• School Doctor	NO
• Independent Person	YES
• 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	NO
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	NO
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	YES
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	YES

Date of Inspection	21/3/05
Time of Inspection	10.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	28
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	4

Pre-inspection information and the Head's Self evaluation Form, provided by the school, have 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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There was a suitable statement of purpose and the school's boarding principles and practice that was available to pupils/ boarders, parents and staff.

The statement was included in the prospectus/brochure, boarding handbook and related information about the school. These included the range of pupils needs for which the school catered, its admission criteria, the approved number of day and residential pupils, age range and gender accommodated, any special religious or cultural aspects of the school and any special features of the school.

The pupil's guide was child-friendly and available in pictorial form.

The brochure covered both teaching and boarding aspects and correctly described that the school catered very well for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The standard was fully met.

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?

4

No young person was assumed to be unable to communicate his or her views, whatever their level of ability or dependency. Staff who knew them well, advocated for young people, involved their families and significant others in the process of making decisions. A number of boarders were able to demonstrate the close and appropriate relationship they had with care staff designated to help them with their individual needs and how this facilitated their communication.

Personal files for young people recorded when young people were offered choices and how decisions were made with them and included personalised contributions including children's signatures and comments, where practical and appropriate.

Parents who responded to the questionnaire were very satisfied with the care provided at Ashley School. The parents were particularly pleased that the school attempted to develop the children's independence and that it promoted parental involvement and working in partnership.

All boarders in school at the time of the inspection were surveyed for their opinion of the school, who they talk to if unhappy, whether staff listen to them, the rewards and consequences, the complaints system, bullying and some other matters. Again, the children were extremely positive about their residential experience.

Head Teacher Mr Field described the culture as a verbal one with a great deal of direct contact with parents by telephone and in person.

Each child had an annual review of their Statement of Educational Need.

All girls and boys whose views were canvassed said that staff members listen to what they say. Every child confirmed that staff noticed, and commented positively, when they did something good.

Residential house meetings were held regularly. The independent living skills programme provided opportunities for young people to make their opinions known.

There was an effective Independent Listener.

The standard was exceeded.

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?

4

From discussion with staff and from observation during the inspection, young people's privacy was being respected.

Staff members were clear about when and under what circumstances information was/would be shared about children. There was guidance for staff on the need to respect young persons' right to confidentiality and how confidential records should be stored. This referred to the maintenance of clear and professional boundaries in their work.

Staff members were observed to go about their duties in a professional and sensitive manner. There was procedural guidance on preserving privacy and dignity.

Staff members involved with personal care have had appropriate guidelines and documented training on provision of such assistance. This was recorded on individual staff files. There was always a female carer available. At the time of the inspection the care staff team was mainly composed of female staff and managed/supervised by the (male) Pupil Services Manager. Information available to them included reference to boundaries to be observed during provision of personal care to young people of the opposite sex and took account of any care or assistance needed at night.

Pupils confirmed that they could use the telephone privately.

Where a child's targets were displayed on his or her notice board, these appeared suitably specific in content, they did not include intimate details and did not appear to compromise their privacy or dignity.

Staff gave children sufficient privacy at showering/bath times, and supervised some children with this as appropriate.

The standard was exceeded.

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 procedure was made available to pupils and parents at the beginning of the Autumn term. This was viewed and was comprehensive.

The Pupil Services Manager made the complaints mechanism known and available to boarders from information contained in the children's guide to boarding. From comments received by inspectors during the inspection, pupils would be appropriately assisted to complain using the school's complaints' procedure. Boarders and care staff confirmed this to be the case and added that issues were usually resolved by being 'talked through' with the appropriate people in school. Everybody who was asked were clear that they could raise any issues that might concern them and that these would be appropriately dealt with.

The inspectors were confident that children had been told how to complain and that they would be appropriately assisted to progress any concerns they may have.

The procedure contains contact information for the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

The inspectors noted the positive arrangements for children to have access to an Independent listener who was known to and made welcome by them.

The standard was fully met.

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

Number of above complaints substantiated:

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

Number of above complaints substantiated:

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?

4

There was a written child protection policy that was consistent with the requirements of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and the local Area Child Protection Committee procedures.

The school has given child protection a high profile in the school and has established appropriate and professional involvement and communication with the local authority social services, child protection social workers and parents.

The school's policy and practice required staff to report to a designated senior member of staff any concern or allegation of abuse or other serious harm. All staff, including newly appointed and ancillary staff, had been given a briefing, either during an induction process or through direct training on the action they should take in response to such suspicions or allegations.

Staff members were designated with specific 'welfare' responsibilities for boarders to talk to should they wish to do so and also a named Independent Visitor known to and accessible to pupils.

All staff had received child protection training and governors with particular responsibility for residential care had also been included in this. Ancillary staff members were also aware of what could constitute child protection issues.

This standard was exceeded.

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

X

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**

There was a suitable policy on countering bullying that was clearly known to parents and which was implemented successfully in practice.

The policy was provided to parents of boarders, and was known to both staff and boarders and how this could be accessed.

The inspectors talked to the children during the survey about bullying and what they understood this to be (ie. others being verbally or physically hurtful to them) and what probably did not constitute bullying, such as a falling out with a friend or an argument.

There was evidence to suggest that there was a strong anti-bullying culture in the school, and that children were aware of what would constitute bullying but were very positive about the action they would take to have this appropriately addressed, should it occur in any form.

In discussion groups, pupils did not identify bullying as a problem at the school; they were clear that should bullying occur it would be dealt with and suitable support and guidance provided. Inspectors felt that this was an inclusive and very supportive atmosphere where bullying was not tolerated and, if it did appear, it was immediately confronted appropriately.

The school authorities were well aware of the areas in school and houses where bullying could potentially take place and steps were taken by staff to ensure that children were rarely alone in small groups in these places.

There was evidence that children had been involved in drawing up rules about how they should behave towards others. These were very much related to respect for self and others. Assemblies and other formal social occasions in school were also used to reinforce the expectation that everybody at the school would behave towards others in a considerate way.

The standard was fully met.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied**87 %**

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
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Mr Field, the Head Teacher had put appropriate measures in place to ensure that the Commission for Social Care Inspection was notified about events that affected the life of the school, the children or the people working there.

Parents or guardians were kept informed of any matter that affected their child at Ashley School.

The standard was 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
1
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
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There was written guidance in the school brochure on young people going missing. Staff members were aware of the policy and the practical requirements it placed upon them.

In view of the situation of young people currently placed and their positive comments about their boarding experience, children going absent from the boarding house would be a rare occurrence. No such situations had occurred/been reported since the last inspection.

The standard was fully met.

Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:	X
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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?

4

The core boarding staff group had undergone some change since the last inspection and with the appointment to post of Rupert Green to Pupil Services Manager, children had benefited from the direction and stability this produced.

The established consistency of existing arrangements and the present leadership of the Head Teacher and Pupil Services Manager and experienced staff had created clear professional boundaries that were effective for the individual child and the group.

The boarding staff group was very established and Inspectors spoke in private with a newly appointed member of care staff, well known to children and who had been previously working in the classroom as a Learning Support Assistant, about the care practice followed and were confident that in every respect appropriate procedures were in place.

All staff members (in school and on duty) with responsibilities for the care of boarders were seen during the two-day inspection and were observed to relate extremely well with the children in their care.

Relationships between staff and children were clearly based on mutual respect and at the time of the inspection, as at previous times, young people were observed to be comfortable with staff and to respond very positively to them.

On the early morning visit, preparation and breakfast routines were seen to be sensitive, supportive and appropriate.

The 'house rules' had been developed with the involvement of the children and were understood and internalised by them. When the inspectors asked the children about what they could and could not do they showed that they understood these areas well.

Inspectors observed no favouritism or antipathy towards individual children and noted staff using an unobtrusive style of effectively supervising children demonstrating knowledge of the needs of individual children who may need additional help and encouragement.

This was a small staff team and they were all on shift for the four nights that children were resident. Continuity of care was achieved.

There was a key-worker system that involved each child having a named childcare worker and a senior, taking account of individual roles and responsibilities. This appeared to be working well and focused on every child receiving attention and input from all staff members as appropriate.

The standard was exceeded.

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?

4

The staff team were observed to respond positively to appropriate behaviour and to deal calmly with young people at all times. There were behaviour guidelines and a code regarding control and restraint. A sanction/unacceptable behaviour record was being kept. Instances of unacceptable behaviour were also recorded on children's individual files with the Head Teacher or Pupil Services Manager monitoring these as appropriate.

The information contained the follow-up action the school takes to demonstrate how children were 'listened to', with their version of events, and to evidence the good practice the school had in place.

At the time of the inspection the behaviour of boarders was not observed to be placing them at risk. There appeared not to be a need for physical restraint for their own, or others, safety. The Head said that specific training had brought about a considerable reduction in incidents that may potentially require physical restraint for the safety of all.

The staff operated in a regime that encouraged good behaviour and recognised achievement – taking into account each individual child's starting point.

No unreasonable sanctions were used and children viewed staff as being fair in dealing with them.

Children continued to be able to contribute and have their views recorded at children's residential/house meetings.

On rare occasions when behaviour of children had continued to be inappropriate, difficult to control potentially placing themselves or others at risk, exclusions had occurred and this procedure was recorded as being appropriately used.

This standard was exceeded.

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?	4
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There appeared to be a greater need for places for boys than girls and the make up of the resident group reflected this. Inspectors were able to see how a child progressed from being a day pupil to a boarder. The school did not admit children in emergencies.

Preparations for leaving the residential provision were well developed. Mostly, this coincided with the end of Yr. 10, but was extended in some circumstances, where it was thought that a particular young person would benefit from the additional boarding experience, perhaps as a result of social isolation or other factors. If this happened, it was arranged at review, with all parties, including the children themselves, being involved.

There was a life skills programme that had been operating for a number of years and was a part of the curriculum. This was well developed and had undergone improvement, fine-tuning and modification to reach its current status. It was well reported on by parents and placing social workers.

Residential pupils were being encouraged to keep more account of their pocket money.

The standard was exceeded.

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?

3

The residential provision was integral to the work of the school and pastoral staff supported the educational component. There was an effective procedure for sharing information between the day and boarding settings.

Care staff assisted with homework functions such as reading and spelling practice.

There was an accredited life skills programme that used the Flat as a realistic base for practising activities that were necessary for everyday living and which would be needed later on when pupils moved to less supported settings. Inspectors observed during the late evening and early morning sessions, young people joining in with cooking and undertaking other life skills learning.

The standard was met.

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?

4

The school provided a wide range of activities for boarders, including the opportunity to be involved in things going on outside in the local community. On the evening that inspectors were present two separate groups of children were away from the site enjoying social activities, the cinema and paint-balling/ quazer games.

The school has a dedicated role of activities co-ordinator and educational visits and outdoor challenge holidays had been arranged to accommodate the appropriate ability levels of the children involved. Boarders who had taken part talked enthusiastically of a walking/outdoor holiday to Wales they had enjoyed. One pupil remembered this as the holiday he had been able to 'climb up to the clouds'.

Inspectors observed the children in activities in houses during the evening. Some had a pool/snooker competition in process while others were enjoying painting or reading with staff. Some activities had been specifically planned to develop team working and enhance both independence and group identity. There was also time available to simply 'chill out'.

The boarders had access to both the swimming pool facility on the school site and the gym on planned and supervised occasions. They have accessed computers for private study and social communication skills. From talking with them during the inspection It was clear that they thoroughly enjoyed the activities and pastimes arranged for them by staff both inside and outside the school.

The selection of any videos watched by children was age appropriate and of their choice. Boarders could bring favourite toys to school and inspectors saw evidence of this in the many soft toys in bedrooms. Games were available. On one day of the inspection the children had spontaneously organised a 'talent' competition on the lines of the TV programme 'Pop Idol'

The standard was exceeded.

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?

3

There was no sickbay or Sanatorium on site and children who became ill would go home as soon as practically possible if appropriate or to A/E or hospital if the illness was more serious. Inspectors had the opportunity to speak in private with the School Nurse when she visited the school by arrangement and appreciated the fact that she gave up her time to meet with them.

Referral to the medical services was either through the school direct or from parents, Social Care Services, Occupational Therapists or the School Nurse.

The school nurse co-ordinated programmes for health assessments, ADHD assessments, one to one support for older children, hearing tests and the provision of health related education.

The nurse has had child protection training for herself and was familiar with confidentiality protocols. A significant number of staff members were first aid trained.

Care staff assisted one or two children with personal care such as bathing and showering. Some children were given help with doing their hair and advice on dressing/what to wear to be practical for the occasion.

Inspectors observed the administration of daily medication and the procedures were satisfactory, with written records kept. However the process of administering medication involved pre-preparation when medicine had been decanted from the original package supplied by the pharmacy.

This was discussed both with the Pupil Services Manager and the Head Teacher and inspectors were satisfied that overall this procedure was addressing pupils' health needs but advised there may be benefit from seeking a view from the professional medical advisor/ pharmacist.

It was agreed that the pharmacist inspector for the Eastern region of the CSCI be contacted about this matter for further clarification.

Staff did not use any intrusive medical procedures.

Most dental and eye checks would be arranged by parents, but if care staff felt that there might be a difficulty with this then they did so themselves in consultation with parents.

If sick, a child would go home to their family and if taken ill at night staff would monitor and make arrangements for a return home next morning.

When their views were sought children confirmed that they had been told about healthy eating and exercise.

The standard was met.

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 menu was wholesome and nutritious with a choice of dishes. Children were given drinks at meals. There was a very good reaction from boarders on the question of the school's food.

The school had a healthy eating plan and the inspectors saw plenty of fresh fruit and a mixture of items, including home made bread and cakes and pastry.

At breakfast which inspectors took with boarders in both houses on the second day of the inspection children were enjoying freshly baked bread rolls, which they added cheese to make their 'speciality' cheese rolls, and fresh juice or milk-shakes. They were encouraged to have more but gently reminded not to 'overeat'

Individual dietary requirements were catered for.

Mealtimes were well managed, with more than one sitting. The dining experience was a pleasant, social and relaxed one for pupils. Pupils were not expected to hurry up and finish and the social exercise of mealtimes was promoted.

The children were involved in assisting with laying-up and clearing away the used crockery and cutlery, loading and unloading the dishwasher.

This standard was exceeded.

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

Children confirmed for inspectors that they brought personal clothing with them from home.

Those who stayed for only a night or two probably took their laundry home, but there were good facilities on site.

The Head confirmed that the school generally supplied no clothing, but did maintain spare items in case of hardship or accident. Every child was in school uniform with the items differing slightly in style and colour.

The children did have an opportunity to go shopping in town, accompanied by a member of staff. This was a popular activity.

The girls were given advice and guidance about sanitary protection by the female staff.

The children's pocket money was usually kept by staff and distributed as required, but efforts were being made to encourage boarders to take more responsibility for their own money as a life skill.

The standard was met.

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?

4

The inspectors were satisfied from reading care plans, talking with care staff and from what children said, that they (the children) were clearly consulted and informed of plans being made for, and with, them. There was plenty of evidence in the care plan to show how the school cares for each child in line with her/his assessed needs, including boarders' signatures in children's individual files.

Children clearly 'owned' their care plans/individual files and inspectors were impressed by a number of boarders who proudly wanted to show these to them.

Each personal file had an up to date photograph of the child concerned. Inspectors saw this last year and it remained an example of good practice.

At the heart of planning for a child's placement was the Statement of Educational Need.

Care staff had put a great deal of effort into working with children to involve them with care planning and this was evident from the recording made.

Care plans were 'working tools' that provided staff with the framework of care they delivered for boarders, but also showed any changes that had taken place. These were kept updated and those viewed were accurate.

Each personal file had an up to date photograph of the child concerned. Inspectors saw this last year and it remained an example of good practice.

This standard was exceeded.

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

Each child had a personal file that was kept securely. All the required information was recorded. Learning targets were worded quite simply.

There was evidence of regular monitoring by the Pupil Services Manager. As appropriate the child's file also contained a behaviour management plan with strategies for positive interventions.

Each child had a diary (report) that was current and informative.

(Confidential information for files was separately and securely held and children were aware of their rights of access to information about them and the school's procedure for this should they wish to use it.)

This standard was 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

Inspectors 'tracked' a number of boarders through their individual boarders' files. These showed all the required information including a care plan, SEN, review details, short-term targets and longer-term objectives, stating how these were to be met on a half-term basis. School files were not seen on this occasion.

The (personal welfare) files showed that children had been consulted about what they wanted to happen.

Each staff member had a personnel file. Inspectors examined the personnel files of all the staff identified by the Pupil Services Manager as having been employed since the last inspection.

Menus and duty rosters were kept. Also an Accident/Incident record.

There was a secure system for keeping track of visitors to the school. A written record was held in the reception area of the school. Good communication and staff awareness of the whereabouts of visitors assisted the overall security arrangements.

This standard was met.

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?

4

No child spent more than four nights at school in any one week, as the residential provision was open only from Monday morning to Friday afternoon. The school did not operate at weekends or during the holidays. For these reasons, parental contact was maintained at a frequent and appropriate level.

There had been some training for staff in working with families and 'attachment theory' and the school had a very positive and embracing policy toward working in partnership with parents and guardians. From questionnaires received from parents comments included:

'I'm quite happy with all issues'

'staff are caring' and 'boundaries are set and enforced'

'community spirit is developed'

'all the house staff work very hard'

'my son had a good time when he boarded'

'they do lots of after school activities and encourage social skills and ordinary life experiences'

All parents who responded were unanimous in commenting that there were no areas nothing that they thought the school needed to improve upon.

'I think that the school does all that it can.'

Children were able to telephone their parents and friends if they wished using the school phone, or in some cases, their own mobiles.

In the rare cases that there may be contact restrictions, staff members were aware and acted accordingly and in line with care plans.

There was quite extensive contact in various forms between parents and staff. This included telephone, face-to-face meetings and by mail. There was evidence to suggest that contact for pupils and their families with the school continued even after pupils had left with return visits to give updates on future plans, achievements, progress at college or in employment.

This standard was exceeded.

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?

4

The school had provided opportunities for all older children to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for their likely future living arrangements. There was a great deal of input by care staff into these aspects.

From Yr. 10 onwards there was emphasis on life skills and practising the techniques that will be needed later on. This had included living in the Flat, planning meals and budgeting.

The standard was well met.

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?

4

Children said they felt 'safe' at school and that they would talk to an appropriate adult in the school if they were unhappy or anything was troubling them. The adults included the head teacher, care/house staff especially their key-worker and the Pupil Services Manager.

The Pupil Services Manager confirmed that specialist medical input was available as appropriate. The School Nurse, similarly, said that wider health care needs could be met by referral to other agencies outside.

It was the inspectors' view that the needs of individual children were being recognised and responded to at Ashley School. Support was available to children undergoing particularly difficult periods in their lives.

Older children had appropriate sex education and guidance.

The school had identified an Independent Listener. An inspector interviewed the Independent Listener and was impressed with his experience and approach to the task in hand. The person concerned maintained a suitable professional distance between himself and the staff and saw himself as 'being there for the children'. In professional capacity elsewhere he was used to maintaining confidentiality, but aware of what might trigger a child protection referral.

No specific therapeutic techniques were used at the school but there was an ethos of 'good parenting' in relation to the safeguarding of children's welfare.

This standard was exceeded.

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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Everywhere one went in the school, and in the grounds, involved some use of stairs and steps. This meant that children with mobility problems could not easily be admitted. Neither did the physical layout of the school lend itself to easy adaptation by means of ramps, changes in floor levels, stair lifts or shaft lifts.

In view of this the school did not cater for children who it felt could not cope with the differing levels. The residential provision was certainly not suitable for children with specific mobility problems.

The school maintained appropriate and positive links with the local community and had a good reputation in the community.

The boarding accommodation was due for refurbishment and some change, but lack of finance had not permitted all this work to be completed.

The current design of boarding houses was outdated and could feel claustrophobic in sleeping areas. However with the joint involvement of staff and children, the boarding houses were decorated and made bright and homely. Examples of children's work were on the walls and there were personalised items in children's partitioned sleeping areas.

The site was fenced and there was a security system in place to safeguard the security of the school and especially after dark.

On balance, the standard was met.

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?

2

The school looked to be well maintained both inside and out and risk assessments were in place for identified areas that could present any hazards.

The grounds had attention from the grounds/maintenance staff members who worked in an eco-friendly way in consultation with the school. The school was not used for activities that impinged adversely on the privacy of boarding children.

Both boarding houses had been re-decorated recently, in consultation with the children. The refurbishment included some new furniture and fittings. The boarding houses did have some double/shared bedrooms and separate Flat area where pupils who stayed overnight on different days of the week shared bed-space.

During time when inspectors spoke with boarders about 'what could be improved' comments were received about having choice of more than one pillow and access to additional blankets for when the weather could be colder.

The sleeping arrangements were set out to accommodate five boarders. In organising how this facility could best be organised to allow numbers of boarders who wished to board to do so, the school planned carefully for this taking into account the mix sleeping on any one night.

In one place in the boarding houses, there was a dormitory for 5 boarders. The National Minimum Standards preclude this, the maximum being four young people sharing a room. Staff had completely separate facilities in sleeping in rooms.

The children could personalise their rooms and large pin boards had been provided for this purpose. There was some study space. Staff assisted with reading and spelling practice and homework as appropriate.

Laundry was done centrally on site, but there were some facilities used by older children as part of the life skills programme. The school provided bedding. The children carried/conveyed dirty items (belonging to them) to the laundry. Clean clothes were returned to the boarding houses.

The school is recommended to have a written procedure to address the transportation of any dirty linen, by children and staff.

The school is recommended to consider how sleeping areas could accommodate no more than four boarders at any one time.

This standard is partially met.

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 was assessed as being met. Each boarding house has a large shower and changing area and the design of these ensures that privacy was being maintained.

Bath/shower to pupil ratios were adequate and locks were available on all toilets and bathrooms.

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?

2

The person responsible for maintaining risk assessments on the premises and surrounding areas had done a particularly good job.

Risk assessments had been seen for children in Care Plans, where it was clear that some potential risk was there.

Children confirmed that fire drills were held and they did know what to do in an emergency.

When water temperatures were taken in houses and were found to be in excess of 60 degrees centigrade from some outlets. Radiator and hot pipes accessible to children must not exceed a surface temperature of 43 degrees C. Lack of vulnerability must be determined by written risk assessment.

The standard was not fully met.

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?	3	
<p>The recruitment procedures being used were checked in respect of all staff members who had come to work at the school since the last inspection. One person's appointment was 'on hold' pending satisfactory receipt of all checks.</p> <p>Only staff members with police/CRB checks in place, and visitors with appropriate authorisation, were being allowed unsupervised access to the school.</p> <p>There was a visitor's book and pupils and their relatives or representatives had been given information about the home's visiting policy.</p> <p>It was stated that the school did not confirm appointment to staff until a satisfactory CRB result had been received and that it was aware that staff would need a new CRB in relation to the new appointment.</p> <p>An Inspector was shown that the school recorded details of the date of the disclosure and the numbers of the certificates in relation to new staff.</p> <p>The school keep copies of the documentation confirming identity of staff employed and a record of having seen original certificates and relevant qualifications. This is good practice.</p> <p>No agency staff members were used.</p> <p>The standard was met.</p>			
Total number of care staff:	4	Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:	0

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

Records of staff working in the home including staff rotas, staff profiles, risk assessments, and key working arrangements demonstrated achievement of an appropriate staffing level.

The Pupil Services Manager was not using agency staff and staff from the existing staff group 'covered' the rota between them. Consistency of care was being provided in this way. The staff team was well established and provided a range of skills related to care of children with special needs.

Staffing levels were adequate both day and night and children knew how to rouse a member of staff sleeping in. The residential childcare officers worked split shifts covering the five mornings and four nights that children were present in the boarding houses.

Because staff were on shift at all times during the waking day, with two identified to sleep in or be on call, continuity of care was achieved.

A close note was kept of who was present at night.

Teaching and ancillary staff carried out 'extraneous duties' at times during the week to allow a range of activities to take place.

There as at least one adult in charge of each identifiable group of children, within and outside of school with the means to call for immediate back up from at least one other member of staff if necessary. Children are able to identify the member of staff on duty and responsible for them, and how they can be contacted.

The staff group in day-to-day contact included staff of both genders. Staff members have a written record of which children and adults are sleeping in each residential unit each night.

During the morning of the second day of the inspection there was only one member of staff in one house with the group of children and although this was for a short period of time and effectively managed, National Minimum Standards for residential schools state that in all cases where children under 15 are resident a minimum of two staff must be on duty between 7am and 11pm each day children are resident.

Where a single member of staff is on waking or sleeping in duty at night (11pm-7am) a risk assessment must be carried out and recorded identifying any risks to children, staff and others and this must have demonstrated no unacceptable level of risk from such an arrangement.

This standard was met at the time of the inspection (in view of safe outcome for children and effective management of the situation).

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?	3
<p>There was an induction training programme for staff including an introduction to child protection procedures, fire training, medication procedures and recording.</p> <p>All staff had a personal training plan and accessed training in house, opportunities for personal development through the local authority Inset days and on selected external courses in line with their identified needs.</p> <p>A written record was available for training provided and the staff files were checked.</p> <p>Inspectors were shown a list of the courses attended by residential care staff members that was impressive.</p> <p>The standard was met.</p>		

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
<p>There was an appropriate process by the Pupil Services Manager for the regular review of the performance of each member of staff with boarding duties and a clearly understood system of accountability.</p> <p>The Pupil Services Manager was aware of the recommendation to provide supervision to care staff at an appropriate frequency (and that in Residential Special Schools this would be of not less than once every half term) and was advised, in line with National Minimum Standards, to keep records of agreed action, by both the supervisor and the staff member following supervision meetings.</p> <p>Arrangements for the formal supervision of the Pupil Services Manager with the Head Teacher was discussed and it was advised that this take place and be recorded on, at least, a half term basis.</p> <p>New staff should receive individual (recorded) supervision fortnightly.</p> <p>Care staff members were appropriately supported and they reported a high level of satisfaction in this regard. Supervision included topics such as childcare, school routines and behaviour management issues. It was discussed that personal development issues be added to supervision records.</p> <p>Staff members received annual appraisals and these were held on their staff file.</p> <p>This standard was (on balance) met in view of safe outcomes for children.</p>		

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?

4

The Head Teacher met with, and was immediately responsible to, a Board of Governors.

The care staff members were well qualified and experienced in looking after the needs of boarders.

The Pupil Services Manager had more than 3 years experience at senior level in child-care settings and a qualification suitable to working with children to the recommended level.

There was no prefect system although children were given the chance to take responsibility, usually for tasks and chores rather than over other children with provided opportunities for some of them to show leadership and others to achieve to the level of their abilities.

The figure of 85% referred to below was based on the NVQ assessments of the Pupil Services Manager, senior care staff and care staff of houses and exceeds the minimum advised level.

The Head Teacher has planned responses to a range of foreseeable crises and accounted for the potential of any major incidents or crises that could occur.

The school provides information to the parents of each child resident that summarises the school's child protection, anti-bully policy, disciplinary, complaints, health and pastoral policies and practice. Also it provides the contact telephone numbers and addresses of the local social care services should parents wish to make direct contact in relation to child protection and of the commission for Social Care inspection for other issues.

This standard is exceeded.

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

85 %

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

This is a local authority school so was not likely to go into Receivership or liquidation.

Continual oversight was maintained by senior staff on aspects of care such as placement plans, duty rosters, menus, and accidents. The Head of Care monitored certain records and documents.

All staff had annual appraisals.

The police were likely only to be involved if there was unauthorised access to the premises, say at weekends, or if there was a child protection investigation.

The standard was met.

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?**

2

At the time of the last inspection it had been recommended that the Governing body identify one of their number to take responsibility for the residential provision, visit the boarding houses on a regular basis (and on occasions in an unannounced capacity) and produce a written report every half term on the conduct of the school, as this affects boarders.

The Head Teacher reported to the inspectors that this had not occurred since and so it remains an issue for this inspection.

There was a designated child protection governor.

The standard was not met.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Empty box for Lay Assessor's Summary.

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

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 21st 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

NO

Comments were received from the provider

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

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 23rd May 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: <enter details here>

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I _____ of Ashley School 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 Ashley School 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.

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