



Champions for
Social Care
Improvement

inspection report

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

Potterspury Lodge School

Potterspury Lodge

Towcester

Northants

NN12 7LL

10th November 2003

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

Potterspurty Lodge School

Address

Potterspurty Lodge, Towcester, Northants, NN12 7LL

Tel No:

01908 542912

Fax No:

01908 543399

Email Address:

mail@potterspurtylodge.co.uk

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

The Trustees of Potterspurty Lodge School

Name of Head

Miss G Lietz

NCSC Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

19/5/03

Date of Inspection Visit		10th November 2003	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		10:00 am	
Name of NCSC Inspector	1	Ms Sika Schaad	076079
Name of NCSC Inspector	2	Ms Maria Johnson	
Name of NCSC Inspector	3		
Name of NCSC Inspector	4		
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):			
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. 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		Miss G Lietz	

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) 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 NCSC in respect of Potterspurpy Lodge 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

Potterspurty Lodge offers education with boarding for up to 36 boys of the age range 8 years to 16 years. There are also a limited number of places for day pupils, some of whom take part in evening activities. Founded as a Steiner school, the school retains few of the Steiner principles, but the community ethos remains strong. Many of the staff live on site, including most care staff, the principle Miss Lietz and head of care Mr Laidler.

The main house is a large grade 2 listed building and accommodates some of the school class rooms, some boarding areas, the main office and medical 'station'.

Further boarding accommodation and school facilities are provided in various buildings adjacent to the main house, and the lay out is compact.

The school is set in several acres of land providing a very tranquil and spacious setting with some beautiful features and scenery. A stream running into a small lake filled with various fish, where boys can fish for pleasure, marks the school boundary to one side. Another boundary is marked by a large vegetable garden, orchard and oakery, though these areas are out of bounds to the children unless accompanied by an adult. A large field provides a football pitch, running track and large play area including climbing frames and swings. There is a skate park, tennis and basket ball courts. Indoor facilities include a large sports hall, pottery and music room, a chapel and other education facilities that can be used for extra-curricula activities.

The boarding accommodation consists of 6 self contained units providing accommodation for groups of up to 6 boys. This accommodation is homely and comfortable. Boarding is available from Monday to Friday, during term time only.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

1. Small group living arrangements promoting a homely environment.
2. Strong commitment and dedication demonstrated from all management and staff spoken to for the welfare of all children.
3. Dedicated House parent supported by a co-worker in each hostel provide continuity of care.
4. Good staffing levels which exceed the DFES recommended adult to child ratios
5. The school location within its spacious setting, extensive grounds with good facilities for a range of leisure, sporting and art pursuits.
6. Excellent provision of activities and leisure pursuits, which is cited as the best thing about the school respondents who completed the NCSC questionnaires.
7. Good emphasis on freedom of movement based on principles of trust and reasonable risk taking.
8. Strong links and partnership between education and care staff. An integrated programme of activity where education staff are involved in non-education activities, and care staff support education as required.
9. Children state that they feel safe and very little bullying is reported.
10. Emphasis on healthy eating and use of organically produced food, and avoidance of additives and highly processed foods.
11. Improved, comprehensive procedures for dealing with child protection and bullying.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

1. Improve the induction training for all new staff to ensure their competence and ability to fulfil their responsibilities in safeguard and promoting the welfare of all children.
2. Improve framework for evidencing care planning and reviews of need.
3. Improve the recording of assessment of need including risk assessment.
4. Improve overall standards of record keeping to enable the school to more effectively evidence and monitor a range of aspects of management, organisation, planning and standards of service overall.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

This first full inspection of the School against the National Minimum Standards has found that taken overall, Potterspurty Lodge School makes good provision for boarding welfare of all children. The school has responded positively to most areas for improvement identified at the last audit inspection, and further advice has been provided to assist the Head of Care to progress the areas for development have been identified on this Inspection. This has generally been well received and commitments given to address the areas for improvement as identified.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended action and any advisory recommendations 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	RS1	It is recommended that the School prospectus, which incorporates the Statement of Purpose, is further developed to fully meet the information requirements as set out in Standard 1.	By no later than 1 st March 2004
2	RS3	It is recommended that a written guidance is developed and implemented for arrangements for searching children's possessions.	By no later than 1 st March 2004
3	RS10	It is recommended that the school written guidance for behaviour management is further developed to include detailed guidance on the positive behaviour reward arrangements; and more detailed guidance on permissible sanctions; and that a more durable style of bound book be used for future recording of sanctions and serious incidents.	By no later than 1 st March 2004
4	RS17RS14	It is recommended that a health plan which includes a record of health care arrangements, in line with Standards 14.6; and 14.10., is in place as part of each child's placement plan.	By no later than 1 st February 2004
5	RS29	It is recommended that the school further develops the staff induction training programme, including time-scales for completion.	By no later than 1 st March 2004

6	RS29	It is recommended that the school fully reviews the training needs of all care staff in relation to the issues listed in Appendix two, and implements a training programme to meet any unmet training needs identified.	By no later than 1 st February 2004
7	RS31	It is recommended that the school develops a written policy for actions to be taken if an allegation is made against a staff member in line with Standard 31.8.	By no later than 1 st March 2004
8	RS29	It is recommended that the Head of School implements a programme for annual review of the school's welfare provision for the boarding pupils in line with Standard 32.4.	By no later than 1 st April 2004

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
		None are made.

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	YES
• Independent Person	NO
• 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	NO
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	YES
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	NO
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	10/11/03
Time of Inspection	09.40
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	17
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 NCSC 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?

2

The school publishes a prospectus that is photographically illustrated and summarises the purpose and function. The brochure is supplemented by various policy and information documents printed and updated as appropriate. Mr Laidler identified at the last inspection, the need to update the brochure to fully reflect the new Standards and developments within the school, but has not yet been able to action this. Shortfalls include statement of admission criteria and assessment processes; and information about child protection processes. This is now subject to a formal recommendation.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The views of parents and children about decisions affecting individual lives are sought through placement reviews. Parental views are sought in writing and children are encouraged to attend their reviews. A questionnaire of parents views has been undertaken. Each hostel holds its own care group meetings, and each care group has a representative on the school council, which is a key forum for consultation and communication between the school's management and pupils.

School rules are explicitly clear and within those boundaries children have good opportunities to exercise choice. All children spoken to had an impressive insight to the running of the school, decision-making processes and decisions as they are made. They felt well informed and confirmed that they have good opportunities to influence decisions. At the time of inspection, no children were actively practicing in any religious persuasion, though the school states it would facilitate observance of such as required.

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?

2

There are effective policies and procedures in place to ensure care practices observe the privacy and confidentiality for children in line with the Standards. Children's feedback is that they do have privacy. At the last inspection, the school identified the need to write guidance for staff on searching children's possessions in line with Standard 3.11. This has not been completed. The need for such guidance has become pertinent in the context of recent a current known welfare risk within the school. This is now subject to a formal recommendation. (See also Standard 30.7.).

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

There are procedures in place for dealing with complaints and representations in line with the Standards. Complaints records read indicated that complaints are dealt with appropriately.

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The school has made good progress since the last inspection, to improve its arrangements for child protection. Mr Brown the school designated child protection officer has established links with both the Area Child Protection Committee and local area child protection team. With assistance from these, the school has further developed the child protection procedures and put in place arrangements for staff training. Revised procedures are currently with the local child protection team for consideration and ratification. Training for all staff is planned for February 2004, from which it is planned to identify and respond to any further training needs. The need to provide a training programme in child protection as part of the induction of new care assistants in September is also identified.

The procedures for recording child protection issues have also improved markedly, and recent records provide a detailed record of actions taken and demonstrate appropriate and effective responses.

There is no written guidance for staff who are subject to allegations against them as required by Standard 5.6. This is an area for development.

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

1

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
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There are policies and procedures in place for prevention of and dealing with bullying. Staff and children spoken to say that the school has a strong anti-bullying ethos and when bullying arises it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school identifies the time of transition between education and free time as the time of highest risk and puts in place prevention strategies.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied	100	%
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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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There are policies and procedures for significant events to be notified to the appropriate bodies and those with parental responsibility. Children's records read on this inspection indicated that those with parental responsibility are promptly notified of significant events.

Number of the following notified to NCSC during the last 12 months:

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

0
0
0
2

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?**

2

There is written guidance for staff to deal with absence of a child without authority. Since the last inspection this has been reviewed and now includes all information requirements of Standard 8. Unauthorised absences are recorded in the School Incident book, though staff do not consistently record all information in line with the guidance, for example in one instance there was no record of the child being interviewed on their return, or of any actions taken in light of any reasons for the abscond. Greater rigour and consistency in record keeping remains an ongoing issue in many aspects of the school's recording practices.

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

3

CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

All children spoken to gave very positive feedback of their relationships with staff. Each house has a dedicated house parent and childcare assistant, providing good continuity in relationships with the children in each care group. Teaching staff and care staff meet daily to share information and ensure continuity of care and expectations. The school needs to make arrangements for all new staff to receive training in positive care and control of children in line with Standard 9.5.

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?

2

Throughout the inspection, the children's behaviour as observed, was very good and age appropriate. It is evident that staff set high and appropriate expectations of children's behaviour. The children are very clear of what are acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, and they respond positively to staff. Children spoken to said that the school sets appropriate expectations of behaviour, and the rules and sanctions are fair.

There is written guidance for staff on managing children's behaviour. School rules are clearly set out. The guidance emphasises communication with children and positive behaviour management. Some arrangements for sanctioning are set out, though some sanctions such as early bed times and time out in bedrooms, which are used in the school, are not explicitly listed as permissible. The school's positive behaviour rewards schemes are not set out in the guidance. Mr Laidler and Miss Lietz acknowledge these shortfalls in written guidance as areas for development.

Good record keeping systems are in place for recording sanctions though the standard of recording is not yet consistent. Records often lack detail of the inappropriate behaviour, and the views of children are not being recorded. It was noted that the bound books in which sanctions and physical interventions are recorded are ring bound and in one instance pages were tearing away from the binder. It is therefore recommended that in future, the school use a more durable bound book.

All staff employed at that time, in May 2003, completed a programme of training on dealing

with challenging behaviour, including physical intervention. Arrangements must now be made for newly appointed staff to receive training in line with Standard 10.12. The above shortfalls were discussed and are subject to a formal recommendation.

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?	2
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The information set out in the school's 'care and admission policy' does not meet all aspects of Standard 11. It is evident in the outcomes for children within the school that the admission process is relatively effective in identifying children whose needs can be met within the school. However, as identified in the last inspection the school's records do not evidence comprehensive information gathering and assessment to enable the school to plan all aspects of the care to be provided from the time of admission. Records also did not evidence the extent to which children and those with parental responsibility are involved in the admission process. Little progress is evident in this regard, and Miss Lietz and Mr Laidler identify difficulties in obtaining comprehensive information from placing authorities as a longstanding constraint.

Further advice was given as part of this inspection, that the formalisation of the referral process, to include written referral forms and information checklists that must be fully completed by those responsible for the child and requesting the placement, would assist the school to meet this Standard.

Mr Laidler informed the Inspectors that work to develop the leaving processes has been delayed by the current vacancy of Deputy Head of Care, and will be continued as a matter of priority when this post resumes.

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
Care staff actively support children's educational progress, ensuring children attend their lessons and supporting with homework as required. Each bedroom has a desk for studying and children have access to a school resources to support their studies. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a library resource for which the pupils proudly said the school had fund-raised last year. A programme of education for independence is being provided for the older children. Children give positive feedback about the support they receive with their education.		

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9) Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
Children have good opportunities for joining in activities and leisure pursuits, and the school actively encourages children to pursue interests. The school provides a range of resources including a fishing lake, sports hall, pottery club and music lessons, large playing fields with play and games equipment. Teaching staff run various sporting and art clubs during the week day evenings. Excursions, day trips and activity-based holidays are organised. Earlier this year there was a skiing trip. The high level and range of activities available is cited by most children as the thing they like best about the school. Due to the isolated location of the school there are limited opportunities for children to pursue social and leisure activities independently in the local community. The school applies appropriate protective restrictions on media access.		

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?	2
The school has a strong ethos to promote the health and well being of its pupils. There is some written guidance in place for health promotion. Mr Laidler advised that much of the health education is undertaken as part of the education curriculum. Mr Laidler identifies the need for this to be reviewed to ensure it fully meets the new Standards. The health plan and health care arrangements for individual children are not always recorded in line with expectations of Standards 14.6. and 14.10. For example, those with parental responsibility do not always complete the medical questionnaire, and records do not evidence that arrangements for necessary dental treatment are made in a timely fashion. This is an area for development. (See also Standard 17) Since the last inspection, the school has liaised with a pharmacist to further develop and improve procedures for safe medication management and the school's practices are now sound.		

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?	3
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The school places a strong emphasis on the provision of a healthy diet, and provides a well balanced menu using a range of organic foods where available. The meals taken with children were well prepared and presented and meal times are a pleasant social occasion with an emphasis on appropriate behaviour. The kitchen facilities are spacious, well equipped and hygienic. Main meals are prepared and served from the main central kitchen. Each house has a kitchenette where children can prepare light snacks and drinks. Feedback from children as to how much they enjoy the food is on the whole positive.

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
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Those with parental responsibility are responsible for the provision of children's clothing, toiletries and pocket money. The school organises shopping trips for children to purchase personal requisites. As children board only Monday to Friday term time, the school is not involved in arranging any major purchases. The school does assist children to look after their pocket money and records are now kept of all transactions.

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?	2
<p>This was identified as a key area for development at the last inspection, and the school has made good progress to identify procedures for placement planning and risk assessment that would be effective for the school, and meet the Standards. It is acknowledged that progress in this area is limited by the short time lapse since the last inspection, the long summer holidays, and the impact of the vacant deputy head of care post. A programme of implementation has now commenced and the first set of revised plans were inspected.</p> <p>The principles of risk assessment and placement planning are evident in the revised records seen. However, Mr Laidler and Miss Lietz acknowledge that there remains a lack of detailed information in risk assessments and placement plans. A further difficulty is that in some instances, the placement plans cross reference with other related records, which were in themselves incomplete. Further advice was given by Inspectors to illustrate the level of information required in these records. The need to ensure records evidence how information from assessments provided prior to admission is evaluated and acted upon, and how the progress of the placement plan is monitored, was also re-iterated.</p> <p>There is no formal key worker system identified and it is expected that the house parent undertakes the responsibilities of this role for each child in their care group. It is evident that the school contributes to statutory reviews. It is expected that the extent of information formally contributed to reviews will develop in line with the development of information in placement plans.</p>		

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?	2
<p>The school has for each child a permanent record, which incorporates most of the information required by Standard 18.2. Areas of information shortfalls that were found included lack of parental contact details where parents do not live together; records of visits to the child whilst in school; details of special dietary, health or dental needs; address of GP or Dentist where child is registered; records of health related tests; examinations or treatment carried out whilst at the school.</p> <p>Overall, the information record is fragmented, and the required information would be more easily accessible if it were collated into a single format, which would provide a quick reference to key information for the reader. This should be partly improved by the development of comprehensive placement plans (Standard 17).</p>		

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
<p>The school maintain all of the required records in line with the Standards. One shortfall noted was the absence of the record of interviews undertaken in staff files.</p>		

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?	2
<p>The school enables and supports children to have contact with their family whilst at the school, by letter and telephone contact. Children can receive visitors at the school. Training for staff to develop skills to work with children and their families is not explicitly available and this is yet to be reviewed as part of the school's staff development programme.</p>		

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?**

2

Mr Laidler informed inspectors of a delay in the progress being made to develop the independence living skills programme including the designation of semi-independent living flats. This is due to the sudden departure of the Deputy Head of Care at the end of the summer term and the position remains vacant at the time of inspection. The current level of provision is appropriate to the needs of the children currently boarding, however, Mr Laidler stated that the further development of this area of work will remain a priority when the vacancy is filled.

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?**

2

The school provides good support to children. The organisation of children into small care groups promotes inclusion and involvement. Children spoken to identify staff members with whom they can discuss any concerns they may have. The school also employs the services of a Consultant Educational Psychologist; a Child Psychiatrist; a Curative Eurythmist and a visiting counsellor. An area for development is to evidence in children's records, the arrangements for individual children to receive any of the above specialist input, and any related professional advice that informs individual placement plans and risk assessments. (See also Standard 17). None of the children whose records were read have a named independent person to talk to and there is no information for children about contact with independent people in line with Standard 22.8. This is an area for development.

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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The school location, design and size are conducive to the needs of the children and school purpose and function. The school is not adapted or suitable for children who would require mobility equipment such as a wheelchair. Pre-inspection communication with the fire officer and environmental health officer state that at the time of the last inspection, the school provides a safe environment in these aspects of safety. The school supports links with surrounding communities as far as possible given the rural location. Children gave positive feedback about the location, and particularly appreciate the space and leisure facilities.

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.19)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The school provides homely and comfortable accommodation to its boarding pupils. There are 6 hostels providing accommodation for small groups of children of no more than 6. Each hostel has a sitting/ dining area and kitchenette as well as toilets and bathrooms, and provides a homely small group living environment. All but one of the bedrooms are shared by no more than 2 children. The exception being one bedroom that is shared by three children. Children are able to personalise their rooms. Each hostel has staff living accommodation, and a member of staff lives in each unit during school terms. There is a central laundry facility managed by a member of staff. Children do not have facilities to do their own laundry and the school may wish to look at this as part of the development of independent living skills.

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
The school provides baths, showers and toilet facilities in line with the Standards. Privacy is afforded in all toilet, shower and bathing facilities. Children gave positive feedback about privacy in this respect.		

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)		
Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, in accordance with Health and Safety and Fire legislation and guidance.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
There are appropriate systems in place to provide for good health, safety and security within the school. Since the last inspection, a full range of environmental risk assessments have been completed in line with the Standards. Processes have also been implemented to record risk assessments in relation to children's needs as part of the pre-admission assessment and placement planning. An area for further development is to improve the detail of recording, particularly more detailed recording of risk management strategies. (See also Standards 11 and 17). During the tour of the premises, two bottles of cleaning liquids were found to be accessible to children, highlighting a need for greater vigilance in the safe storage of such items. The school has commissioned an independent inspection of fire safety arrangements, and is committed to fulfilling any recommendations of the report.		

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

Recruitment practices in relation to permanent members of staff are undertaken in line with the Standards and prevent children being exposed to potential abusers. Since the last inspection, the school has developed a written staff recruitment procedure, which reflects good recruitment practices. An area for further development is to specify the arrangements for interviewing child care assistants from abroad. In line with revised government guidance, the school has delayed applying for checks on all staff employed prior to April 2002, from the Criminal Records Bureau. Where no police clearance has been obtained in relation to staff employed prior to April 2002, it is recommended that an application for CRB clearance is now made. The school does not use staff supplied from any employment agencies. It is noted that five of the seven staff who left have done so as a result of their short term contracts coming to an end.

Total number of care staff:

12

Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:

7

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

Since the last inspection, the school has developed a written staffing policy in line with the Standards. The staffing policy sets out clearly the responsibilities of all staff. Current care staffing levels exceed the minimum levels specified for the school by the DFES and meet the National Minimum Standards. The school's policy for the deployment of House parents and care assistants requires an intensive commitment to split shifts, which provides excellent continuity of care for the children. The reduction from termly to weekly boarding which took effect in September this year, has resulted in even greater continuity of care for the boarders, who now receive unbroken continuity of care from their house parents, who are supported by the care assistants.

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?	2
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The school provides all staff with regular in house training programmes tailored to meet the needs of the school. Whilst all house parents are very experienced, and have undertaken varying levels of professional training, it is not evident that all care staff have undertaken all of the training issues listed in Appendix 2. An area for development, which is subject to a recommendation, is the need to review for all care staff, their training needs in relation to Standard 29.4 and appendix 2, and to put in place a personal development plan in line with Standard 29.5.

Since the last inspection, a formal staff induction programme for childcare assistants has been developed and implemented. The programme is comprehensive. The initial time frame for completion of 2 days was found to be unachievable, and though in post for 2 months at the time of inspection, the new care assistants had not yet fully completed their induction. Further advice was given, that the school should consider appointment of care assistants in advance of the new school year, to allow for a period of induction before commencing work with the children. Further advice was also given of the need to revise the time frame for induction, and including systems for formalising the completion of induction and confirming the suitability of the employee.

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?	2
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There are clear lines of communication and arrangements for support for staff in the school. There are regular staff meetings for all staff. Formal recorded supervision has now been implemented, though it is not being provided with the frequencies specified in Standard 30.2. The vacant deputy head of care position has hampered progress in this area, and Mr Laidler and Miss Lietz are considering deploying some supervisory responsibilities to other staff. An area for development remains the implementation of annual appraisal for all staff.

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?

2

Taken overall, the school is well organised and managed to deliver the best possible child welfare. The management group, including the Head of Care Mr Laidler, are well established and experienced in working in this type of setting. Mr Laidler identifies as an area for development the need to implement a staff-training programme to achieve Standard 31.4. To date, two house parents hold qualification equivalent to or above NVQ level 3, 3 house parents are undertaking this training and the remaining one is due to start. The school is still considering how this training will be pursued for the care assistants employed. There is no written policy for actions to be taken if an allegation is made against a staff member, in line with Standard 31.8 and this is subject to a recommendation.

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

33 %

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

The National Care Standards Commission 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

Mr Laidler has implemented a formal system for monitoring records and compliance with procedures as outlined in Standard 32. To date, no arrangements have been made for the Head of School to carry out an annual review of the school's welfare provision for boarding pupils, in line with Standard 32.4 and this is subject to a recommendation.

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

The governing body representatives are undertaking the monitoring visits as required. These are recorded in a dedicated book. To date no record has been made of actions taken by the school on recommendation or issues of concern raised in these reports in line with Standard 33.5. This is an area for development.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

[Empty box for Lay Assessor's Summary]

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

Lead Inspector Sika Schaad **Signature** _____

Date _____

Locality Manager Hazel Hudson-Green **Signature** _____

Date _____

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 10th November 2003 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comments were received from the provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
Head's comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report	<input type="checkbox"/>
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	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 28 day date given on the covering letter, 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan was received at the point of publication	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider has declined to provide an action plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: <enter details here>	<input type="checkbox"/>

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I Miss G Leitz of Potterspur Lodge 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 _____

Action Plan not required. Comments are available at the Area Office where this has been submitted.

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.