



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

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

Witherslack Hall School

Witherslack

Grange over Sands

Cumbria

LA11 6SD

6th October 2004

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

Witherslack Hall School

Tel No:

015395 52397

Address

Witherslack, Grange over Sands, Cumbria, LA11 6SD

Fax No:

Email Address:

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

Witherslack Group of Schools

Name of Head

Michael A Barrow

CSCI Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Residential Special
School

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

2/7/03

Date of Inspection Visit		6th October 2004	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	Mrs Anne Bannister	072806
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	Mrs Cath Wilson	072824
Name of CSCI Inspector	3		
Name of CSCI Inspector	4		
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):			
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)		Mrs A Branch Pharmacist Inspector	
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Mr Michael Barrow	

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 Witherslack Hall 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

Witherslack School is located in the village of Witherslack and has operated as a school for well over 30 years. There are extensive, well maintained grounds which pupils use freely with a clear understanding of boundaries. The School is a member of the Witherslack Group of Schools, registered and approved by the Department for Education and Science to accommodate 72 pupils aged between 11-19 years with special educational needs relating to emotional and behavioural difficulties. The boarding facilities are split into 8 living units that include two independent living units in cottages within the grounds. The School offers a post 16 provision with a purpose-designed programme to meet the needs of young adults.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

There was a clear management structure within the school, which ensured that the level of care provided meets the needs of young people. Systems were in place, which regularly reviewed and revised care practices where appropriate. The school had a very child centred approach to young people, assessing their individual needs and ensuring that targets for each young person were appropriately individualised. The school were able to offer a range of accommodation, suited to young people's assessed needs. The care staff team worked hard to maintain a consistent approach in their dealing with young people. There were systems in place to ensure that young peoples opinions, and those of their families and significant others, were sought over key decisions effecting their daily life.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

The pharmacy inspector joined the team for part of the inspection. This was her first visit to the school and as a result there were a number of recommendations relating to administration and storage of medicines. Although the structure of care plans had been revised, and provided detailed information, they would benefit from further development to ensure that they become working tools for the care staff team.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

The positive responses from Local Authorities and parents confirmed their satisfaction in the service provided and praised the school for the positive changes experienced in young people who attended the school. There was a commitment from the Head of Care and Head Teacher to promote best practice. Significant investment had been made in training to ensure that staff were equipped with the skills needed to meet the needs of the young people resident on the units.

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	RS3	The specific reason why a room search is implemented must be indicated.	Immediate
2	RS3	All units must have the facilities that enable young people to make calls without reference to staff.	1.1.05
3	RS4	The young person's right to contact the Commission for Social Care Inspection if they wish to complain should be made clear in the pupil guide.	1.1.05
4	RS4	It is recommended that complaints training should clearly identify what constitutes a complaint. Staff training should be updated to ensure there is clarity amongst the staff team.	1.1.05
5	RS14	It is recommended that the procedures for secondary dispensing be revised to include appropriate packaging and labelling, and checking procedures.	1.1.05
6	RS14	It is recommended that the school have a policy and procedure with risk assessment for self-medication.	1.1.05
7	RS14	It is recommended that the school request information from the child's specialist and other prescribers on possible side effects to medicines and areas requiring monitoring. It is recommended that the school request patient information leaflets from the supplying pharmacy, and ensure that all staff who administer medicines are familiar with their use.	1.1.05
8	RS14	It is recommended that parental consents include first aid.	1.1.05

9	RS14	It is recommended that the school obtain dates of immunisations where possible.	1.1.05
10	RS14	It is recommended that the school obtain Controlled Drugs cabinets, that comply with the Misuse of Drugs (Safe Custody) Regulations) 1973, and bound registers for each area that stores Controlled Drugs.	1.1.05
11	RS17	The care component of the individual care and education plans should be further revised to ensure that they clearly state the objectives, how they are to be achieved and by whom, for care staff under each heading as specified under standard 17.5.	1.1.05
12	RS24	It is recommended that the mattresses in bungalow 3/4 be replaced.	Immediate
13	RS24	The room in Tarn unit designated sick bay/isolation room should be further renovated before it is considered for use by young people.	1.1.05
14	RS27	Staff recruitment records should cover all areas highlighted in standard 27.2 of the National Minimum Standards.	1.1.05
15	RS30	The Head Teacher should receive professional support and supervision within the frequency indicated in standard 30.2	30.11.04

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	RS3	The Head of Care should discuss with his staff team issues raised by some young people, which suggest some staff practice in relation to room inspections needs to be reviewed.
2	RS24	As units are upgraded there should be sufficient electrical sockets provided to allow all young people to have a bedside lamp.

--	--	--

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	NO

Checks with other Organisations

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	YES
• School Doctor	YES
• Independent Person	YES
• Chair of Governors	NA

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

Date of Inspection	06/10/04
Time of Inspection	9.30
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	22.5
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	3

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
---------------------------	---------------	---

The School had a statement of purpose, which, read alongside the prospectus, parent handbook and pupil handbook accurately describes the facilities the school offers. The prospectus had been updated since the previous inspection and incorporated information regarding the 16+ unit. Although these documents met the requirements of this standard the inspectors felt that they did not fully reflect the high level of provision available for pupils accommodated in the school.

Parents and pupils received information booklets, which contained pertinent information. There was a rolling review of policy statements that detailed all policies as required in Appendix 3 of the Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002.

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
---------------------------	---------------	---

There were systems in place that gave young people and their families or carers opportunity to put forward their opinions. These systems were recorded and monitored. Systems included weekly residential unit meetings for young people. School council meetings were held twice per half term. Keyworkers sessions were held fortnightly, and gave young people an opportunity to express their opinions individually and privately. Keyworkers also maintained home contact by telephoning parents/carers fortnightly and carrying out home visits prior to admission. Key workers compiled reports for reviews in consultation with the young person, ensuring the young persons views were represented. Senior staff monitored that regular key worker sessions were taking place.

30 parental questionnaires were returned and evidenced a high level of support for the school. The school had also implemented its own quality assurance questionnaire for parents/carers and young people to had used the feedback to review its practice.

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

Written policies on privacy and confidentiality covered all areas highlighted under standard 3.2 of the National Minimum Standards. Staff groups interviewed showed a sound understanding of good work practices and principles in these areas. Inspectors observed appropriate work practices whilst on the residential units. There was an appropriate method of recording room and property searches, which was compliant with standard 3.11 of the national minimum standards. On the records examined there were some occasions when the reason for conducting the search was not clearly recorded. In pupil questionnaires some young people complained that some staff did not always respect pupil belongings. They indicated that if bedrooms were felt to be untidy belongings and bedding was tipped into the middle of the room and they were instructed to go and tidy their rooms again. They felt this was unacceptable. This practice was not evidenced by inspectors during the course of the inspection but was raised in feedback with the Head Teacher and Head of Care. Only one of the 8 units failed to make adequate provision for young people to make and receive calls without reference to staff. This unit was soon to be upgraded and inspectors were advised that the phone would be re-sited.

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?**

2

Young people interviewed had knowledge of the schools complaints procedures and how to access them. The Parent Handbook, which was a guide to the school, explained the role of the Commission for Social Care Inspection in relation to complaints and provided a contact telephone number. This information had not been duplicated in the Young Person's Guide. Although there had been no formal complaints since the last inspection inspectors found that there were systems in place, which confirmed complaints were frequently dealt with informally. Staff had received training on how to implement the Witherslack Group complaints procedure but this training had not defined what constituted a complaint.

Inspectors observed that the Commission for Social Care Inspection telephone number displayed in the telephone areas for the use of young people in the school was correct.

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There were proactive systems in place to promote the safety and well being of young people. Key members of staff, including the designated person had received up-to-date training. Staff spoken to all had appropriate knowledge of how to respond to an allegation by a young person. Staff were also aware about who the designated person was for reporting concerns. A rolling programme for staff training was in place to ensure training matters were current, relevant and progressed appropriately. The child protection log was well maintained. The school had a policy and procedure and all child protection issues were comprehensively monitored.

Number of recorded child protection enquiries initiated by the School to the Social Services Department during the past 12 months:

44

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school had appropriate policies and guidelines advising of what pupils can do if they were subject to bullying. Notices were displayed at strategic points throughout the school. Young people advised inspectors that they felt staff dealt appropriately with bullying when it did occur. Inspector's observations were that negative behaviours between young people were immediately dealt with.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

0 %

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

The designated person for child protection matters has been diligent in her duties in this area. The school has notified the Commission for Social Care Inspection of all issues detailed in standard 7.2. The designated person was pro-active in the monitoring of these systems.

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

3

7

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)		
The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>The school had provided clear guidance for staff when dealing with pupils who go missing without authority. Close liaison with the placing authority and parent where appropriate was maintained. Incidents continued to be monitored with the aid of the school's I.T. system. This system informed on patterns and outcomes making it possible to make an effective risk assessment, which could be actioned accordingly.</p>		
Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:		10

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
<p>Both through discussion and observation inspectors evidenced that care staff have a clear understanding that the basis of good behaviour and discipline lies in developing a positive working relationship with young people. In day-to-day decision making inspectors saw staff demonstrate an appropriate balance between the needs of individual young people, their wishes and preferences, and the needs of the group of young people resident at the time. Staff were observed to manage individual behaviour in a positive and kindly manner. The School continues to use the Team Teach model as their approach to behaviour management of young people. All staff spoken to, including ancillary staff, had received training in both de-escalation of challenging behaviour as well as physical intervention strategies. Inspectors observed staff responding to young people in a calm, non threatening manner, using humour and diversion skills to de-escalate inappropriate behaviours.</p>		

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.26)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Inspectors observed progressive management of controlled discipline and physical intervention, with a very pro-active monitoring system. Inspectors observed that some of the sanctions records did not cross reference with other documentation. This deficit had already been identified by the Head of Care in his monthly monitoring of records and was an agenda item for action at the next team meeting.</p>		

QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>There were well-structured, supportive systems in place for admitting pupil's to the school. The school made efforts to ensure that all relevant information and documentation was received before admission, although they were somewhat dependent on outside agencies and personnel to provide this. The admission process had recently been reviewed in light of a recent admission where the local authority had been selective about the information it shared and which resulted in the placement being terminated. Where possible a senior manager and the proposed key worker visited the young person in their home area before interview at school took place. The young person was aware of which residential unit he would reside in and who his key worker would be before admission to the school. New entrants were given a Pupil Handbook guide, which covered most essential information about the school. Systems on admission endeavoured to assist and support the young person to settle happily in to school life.</p>		

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 were allocated hours during the school day for class support or school support. Some education staff worked one evening care duty per week. The library had been restocked and was available to young people outside school hours. All young people had homework to complete on their living unit and care staff had received training on how best to support them in the tasks set. Inspectors attended hand over periods in the morning and evening between care and education departments. Procedures in place ensured these times were managed well with little fuss or disruption

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

There was opportunity for young people to become involved in a wide range of activities both within the school and its grounds and also within the local community. Public facilities in nearby towns and surrounding areas were used for various activities. Evidence was seen of a varied range of activities, trips and outings that had taken place at weekends. All units had a newspaper delivered daily. Residential units in the main building had access to satellite television. The Head of Care was in the process of trying to further develop young peoples access to leisure activities within the local area and some young people were involved in local army cadets and a local rugby team. A notification of all planned weekend activities was passed to the designated person for Health & Safety on the Thursday afternoon prior to the weekend, for him to risk assess. If he did not sign approval the activity did not take place.

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

Policies and procedures were inspected and certain aspects required review including procedures for secondary dispensing. The children's GP provided parents/guardians with prescriptions for medicines during periods of leave in order to avoid secondary dispensing where possible. It is recommended that the procedures for secondary dispensing be revised to include appropriate packaging and labelling, and checking procedures. The school did not have a policy and procedure with risk assessment for self-medication.

The inspector was informed that all staff had received basic first aid training and all senior staff would shortly complete "first aid at work" training. All staff and teaching assistants who handle medicines had received training in safe handling.

Where children had input from a specialist this remained at the child's own home. On

admission of new children to the school information was requested from the specialist regarding medicines and review dates. At the time of the inspection this information did not include a request for information on possible side effects to medicines and areas requiring monitoring. A pre-admission questionnaire was completed by parents to include details of past medical history, immunisation history and relevant family history. The immunisation history was incomplete for dates. Parental consents were inspected and the consents obtained did not include consent to administer first aid.

The school lacked information on some medicines including specific requirements for administration, for example fluid restrictions, and cautions for use including monitoring. The school liaised with the children's specialist to provide information on behaviour in preparation for the child's review. An annual report was prepared containing all medical information including all appointments, medical interventions and first aid.

Medication was inspected on four units and was held in secure cabinets. A record of receipt, administration and disposal was maintained for all medicines. The school did not have Controlled Drugs cabinets, that comply with the Misuse of Drugs (Safe Custody) Regulations 1973, and bound registers for each area that stores Controlled Drugs. The school did not routinely store medicines requiring refrigeration but used locked boxes in fridges when necessary. First aid supplies were inspected and appeared appropriate. Adrenaline pen was stored and the school had a risk assessment for use in place. The inspector was informed that training for use had been given to staff who had access to the injection if necessary.

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

Inspectors dined with young people at various times throughout the inspection. Mealtimes were well ordered and relaxed. Young people were familiar with the dining room routines. Food was appropriately cooked and served. A choice of meals was available with a vegetarian alternative on offer. Fresh fruit was available. Special diets were catered for. There was a five-week cycle of menus. Some residential units in the main building had the facility for young people to prepare snacks and have their breakfast on the unit. In the units for the 16 plus group young people helped to compile the menu, shop for provisions, and prepared meals with the assistance and guidance of unit care staff. The school was endeavouring to promote a healthy diet and had replaced high sugar snacks with fruit and yoghurt drinks.

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

The pupils were expected to wear a school uniform during the school day and then change into casual clothing. Pupils were able to bring personal toiletries and other similar requisites from home. All pupils were well presented and were encouraged to take a pride in their appearance with prompting from individual staff members. Personal money and pocket money was appropriately recorded.

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

Each young person had an individual care and education plan (ICEP). The school had revised these to try to ensure that the care component of the plans addressed all areas specified in standard 17.5. There was significant information relating to care issues but the system needed to be further revised to ensure that they clearly stated the objectives for care staff, how they were to be achieved, and by whom under each of headings specified in standard 17.5. The individual Care and Education Plan set out each child's needs in accordance with the Statement of Special Educational Need provided by the Placing Authority. Young people were allocated a key worker prior to admission and met weekly with them.

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

Confidential files and documents relating to young people were safely and securely stored. Young people spoken to were aware that they can read their files and had been supported in this and in their reviews by their key worker.

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

The School ensured that staff were adequately informed through unit logs, staff log book and detailed handover meetings. Inspectors observed these to be effective ways of ensuring consistency in practice between staff teams. Duty rosters clearly indicated which staff actually worked on each unit for care duty and advised who had slept in each night. They also evidenced that when one member of staff was rostered to work alone on a unit a risk assessment had been undertaken.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

All pupils were positively encouraged to maintain contact with families and friends. Home leave takes place according to agreements in the care plan. These are usually on a fortnightly basis and weekly where appropriate. Additionally, at times of particular stress in a child's life, arrangements were made for the child to remain at home on compassionate grounds.

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?**

3

The school had a comprehensive programme of 'Working Towards Independence', which was implemented with all senior pupils. There was evidence that the school had experienced some difficulties with Local Authorities who had failed to meet statutory responsibilities in relation to 'Looked After' children. There was evidence that the school had actively pursued young peoples rights.

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There was evidence that all young people were given individualised support and guidance. There was evidence that specialist support was sought to address health issues. The school had recently appointed a full time educational psychologist who it was envisaged would continue to work individually with young people and also advise the staff team. They had also employed two personal development coaches who worked on particular issues such as anger management with young people.

One of the strengths of the school was the relationship between staff and young people. Young people spoken to were confident that they were able to approach a number of staff member if they had concerns.

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
---------------------------	---------------	---

The school was located just outside Witherslack village in a rural setting. The main road, which linked to the nearby motorway system, was some 2 miles from the school. The school was set in its own grounds. The main building was a large country house, which was a listed building; this imposed some limitations on scope for redevelopment or alterations. Four cottages had been adapted to provide post 16 independence units for young people. There was good use of the available space in the main building, with no feeling of over crowding. The immediate grounds included grass soccer and games area, adventure play area, basketball court and lawns, which were all well maintained. There was also a garden and livestock area used for rural studies classes.

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 was divided into eight houses or units. There were some single rooms but most of the accommodation, especially for younger pupils was in shared rooms. No more than four pupils would share a room. Three units were designated as nurture units for young people with more complex needs. These units were smaller and benefited from higher staffing ratios. The school had two cottages on the site so that older pupils in the process of leaving can be helped towards a more independent lifestyle.

In a number of residential units within the main building décor and furnishings benefited from significant renovation and decoration. Some young people had been provided with bedside lamps, but this facility was not available to all due to inadequate provision of electrical sockets in some rooms. Most young people had a personal lockable area to store personal items for safekeeping. No bedrooms in units in the main buildings contained furniture that gave pupils space to hang clothes. Inspectors were informed that the school were negotiating with Department for Education and Skills regarding the room designated sick bay/isolation room in Tarn unit. Inspectors were advised that this facility was not used, that the school would send pupils home if they needed to be isolated from other young people. The room's current furnishings, décor etc make it unsuitable for accommodating children. A significant number of new mattresses were evidenced in units, but inspectors observed that the mattresses in cottage 3/4 were worn. The school had recently implemented a unit audit process, which linked to the rolling programme of refurbishment and redecoration.

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

All residential living units have sufficient baths, showers and toilets to comply with national minimum standards. All had suitable locks to afford appropriate privacy. Bathrooms and shower areas had been significantly upgraded since the previous inspection.

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

The school had a designated person for Health and Safety matters and they also engaged the service provided by an external Health and Safety Consultancy. Staff also attended training courses relating to Health and Safety issues and there were regular health and safety meetings within the school. Comprehensive risk assessments were undertaken and routinely reviewed. All systems were monitored and recorded in a proactive manner by the designated personnel. The documentary evidence assessed showed that fire drills and tests were appropriately recorded and systems inspections were up-to-date. Records of patent checks on electrical equipment were seen. Records showed that checks on heating and installation systems had been arranged.

STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Inspectors examined 30 files of staff that had been employed since the last inspection. All files were in reasonable order although not all files evidenced that standard 27.2 had been fully adhered to. The deficits were discussed with the staff member responsible for recruitment files, who will review all files in relation to the requirements of this standard.

Total number of care staff:

38

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

Staffing levels were in line with those outlined in the schools statement of purpose. Waking night staff had a sleep in staff available to them for support and assistance on every unit. Instances of staff working alone with groups of young people occurred and such instances were part of the duty rota. There was evidence to show that this work practice had been risk assessed as per standard 28.6. The staffing compliment for residential care staff had increased from 34-38 since the previous inspection.

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

There was an induction programme in place, which covered key areas. All care staff had been enrolled on either level NVQ level 3 or NVQ level 4. A rolling programme of training addressing issues referred to in Appendix 2 of the National Minimum Standards Residential Special Schools was in place. Each staff member had a personal development plan. All care staff had either gained, or were enrolled on NVQ level 3 or NVQ level 4. The school was on schedule to meet the 80% requirement as detailed in Standard 31.4

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

There was evidence to show that systems for supervision and support of staff were in place. A comprehensive induction booklet has been introduced for new staff. Each new staff had a mentor or "buddy", an experienced member of staff, who "shadowed" them through the induction process. Evidence that supervision sessions were taking place was seen. The school had "Performance Management" appraisal system for all staff and all staff had personal development plans. All staff, except the Head teacher, were receiving supervision within the requirements of standard 30.2. The Head of care monitored that staff with supervision responsibilities provided support to care staff within required frequencies. The manner in which he recorded these checks did not accurately reflect the good practice he was evidencing.

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There was a clear management structure within the school, which ensured that the level of care provided meets the needs of young people. The Head of Care had completed the Registered Manager Award since the previous inspection and there had been a significant investment in training for all care staff. Inspectors observed that care duty teams were appropriately managed and supported to enable them to provide positive child care practice. Duty rosters were structured in a manner, which allows for full weekly staff meetings, key worker sessions, supervision and handover.

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

65 %

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

The school had very effective monitoring systems in place that ensured the day-to-day management of the school is sound. Senior staff met daily to obtain an over view of issues concerning pupils and staff and where necessary an action plan was put in place. The Head teacher provided a term up date for directors to ensure that they are fully informed of the schools operation. This report was very comprehensive and covered all incidents concerning pupils, management and staffing issues as well as proposed developments and the progress of developments already in place.

Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

There was documentary evidence to indicate that external monitoring was taking place according to the national minimum standard. Inspectors were also shown action plans formulated following such visits.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

N/A

Lay Assessor N/A **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 Announced Inspection of Witherslack Hall School conducted on 06 October 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

An action plan has been received and is available to view at the CSCI Penrith local office.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

NO

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

NO

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

NO

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, within 28 days of receipt of this report, which indicates how recommended actions and advisory recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other:

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I _____ of Witherslack Group of Schools (Witherslack Hall School) confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the announced inspection conducted on 06 October 2004 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 Witherslack Group of Schools (Witherslack Hall School) am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the announced inspection conducted on 06 October 2004 for the following reasons:

Print Name _____

Signature _____

Designation _____

Date _____

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

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

Telephone: 020 7979 2000
Fax: 020 7979 2111

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

S0000040063.V181059.R01

© This report may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of the Commission for Social Care Inspection



The paper used in this document is supplied from a sustainable source