



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

**BOARDING SCHOOL**

**Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School**

**Love Lane  
Stourbridge  
Dudley  
West Midlands  
DY8 2EA**

*Lead Inspector*  
Christine Lancashire

*Key Unannounced Inspection*  
27th September 2006      02:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

# SCHOOL INFORMATION

**Name of school** Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School

**Address** Love Lane  
Stourbridge  
Dudley  
West Midlands  
DY8 2EA

**Telephone number** 01384 394633

**Fax number** 01384 393608

**Email address**

**Provider Web address**

**Name of Governing body,  
Person or Authority  
responsible for the  
school** Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School

**Name of Head** N/A

**Name of Head of Care** Deborah Nock

**Age range of boarding  
pupils** 15-17 yrs

**Date of last welfare  
inspection** 6/10/03

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

Elmfield School is situated in a campus, close to the centre of Stourbridge. It is an independent school where pupils follow the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. Education at the school places an emphasis on personal responsibility and social awareness through a balance of academic, artistic and practical activities.

The majority of the pupils are day pupils. However, the school also welcomes a small number of pupils, usually from other Steiner schools, for term or yearly placements. These pupils are usually from overseas, but sometimes include pupils who have moved from other British Steiner schools.

Accommodation is provided in the homes of host families. Checks are made on the premises and the suitability of the host family to provide the service. The majority of these families include a member of the school's teaching staff. There are only six pupils boarding at the school at present. They are aged between 15 and 17. It was possible to speak with five of these young people and to visit host families as part of the inspection process.

# SUMMARY

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

This inspection mainly took place over a three-days during which the inspector spoke with young people, staff and hosts. The school supplied information, policies and procedures. The head of boarding completed a self-assessment form before the inspection and this included areas where the school would like to improve. Some young people completed questionnaires.

The inspection concentrated on those standards which have been assessed as being 'key standards'. These are the standards which are considered to be the most important and concern the rights, welfare, health, safety and protection of young people.

## **What the school does well:**

The welfare of boarders at this school is a priority for staff and host families. There is a network of support for all pupils at this school and this is extended to boarders, who are welcomed into the school community and into their host families. Boarders said that they were very pleased with the arrangements for their care and protection. Host family members displayed a good level of understanding of the needs of the young people. The school makes checks on members of host families and inspects the houses where boarders stay in order to make sure that boarders will be as safe as possible. The staff and hosts work together to make sure that boarders are provided with the support and assistance they need throughout their stay.

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

The school has improved its systems for making sure that the necessary checks are made in relation to boarding provision. There is improved guidance for hosts and this includes specific advice in order to promote a consistent approach, to boarders.

There are better systems for monitoring the progress of boarders.

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

The school has identified the need to maintain improved records of the meetings of the boarding committee. There are plans to put this into practice at the next meeting.

The school also has plans to improve physical safety on site by means of gates.

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

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection



# Being Healthy

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders' health is promoted. (NMS 6)
- Safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records. (NMS 7)
- Boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary.(NMS 15)
- Boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill.(NMS 16)
- Boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal Problems.(NMS 17)
- Boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- Boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals.(NMS 25)
- Boarders are suitably accommodated when ill. (NMS 48)
- Boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered.(NMS 49)

**The Commission considers Standards 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

6,15

Quality in this outcome area is good.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Boarders health is promoted and they receive first aid and healthcare as needed.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Health issues are covered as part of the school's curriculum. The school participates in Dudley Health Promoting schools initiative and takes an active role in informing students about healthy eating and lifestyle choices. The school regards the use of illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco as harmful to the students' physical and psychological well-being and asks for the cooperation of parents in this respect. It is made clear in the information provided that smoking will only be allowed by individual arrangement with consent from the parents of boarders over the age of 16 and that many of the boarding families do not permit smoking in their house or garden.

The expectations of boarders in respect of smoking and other activities are made clear when the placement is arranged. As most of the boarders come from Steiner schools, they are familiar with the expectations of their behaviour in this respect.

There are first aid facilities on the school premises whilst boarders are at school during the day. The host families would follow the same procedures as with any member of their family. All have first aid kits in the houses and use would be made of the emergency services were a serious accident or illness occur. Boarders register as temporary residents with a local GP. They are enabled to access dental and optical services as required, usually outside school hours. Consent to medical treatment is obtained from the boarders' parents or guardians prior to placement and retained in the boarding house.

# Staying Safe

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders are protected from bullying.(NMS 2)
- Boarders are protected from abuse.(NMS 3)
- Use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate.(NMS 4)
- Boarders' complaints are appropriately responded to.(NMS 5)
- The operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- Boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school.(NMS 22)
- Boarders are protected from the risk of fire. (NMS 26)
- The welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school.(NMS 28)
- Boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities.(NMS 29)
- Boarders' personal privacy is respected.(NMS 37)
- There is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders.(NMS 38)
- Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises.(NMS 39)
- Boarders have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. (NMS 41)
- Boarders are protected from safety hazards.(NMS 47)

**The Commission considers Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

2,3,4,5,26,37,38,39,41

Quality in this outcome area is good.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The school implements policies and procedures which ensure that the safety of boarders is promoted and safeguarded and their complaints are responded to appropriately.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The school places great emphasis on the safety and protection of all pupils. Pupils are encouraged to treat other people with respect and to value diversity. The school has a policy which provides definitions of bullying, together with a statement of the school's 'no blame' approach to responding to bullying and monitoring progress. This is clear and well organised. The inspector found no evidence that bullying is a problem at this school and boarders indicated that they feel safe.

The school has a detailed policy on child protection, which was last reviewed in July 2006. Teachers undertake regular training in this area. There are designated child protection contacts within the staff team. Discussion with staff and members of host families revealed that they have a good understanding of this issue. The school will continue to ensure that adult members of the host families, who are not teachers at the school, receive this training and support.

The school has a disciplinary procedure. There are guidelines for hosts concerning the use of restraint as a last resort and this makes clear the measures which should not be used. There is a system for reporting such instances, but there have been no occasions when it has been necessary to use restraint.

The school has a suitable complaints and mediation procedure. Boarders confirmed that they would feel comfortable raising complaints within the host family, should they feel the need to do so. They also identified a range of other people within the school community who would provide assistance should they be experiencing difficulties. Host families are in contact with the young person's family. The view was expressed by boarders and host families that with so many avenues of communication, there would be little need for a formal process to be followed.

The head of boarding checks to ensure that each house has basic measures for fire detection and fighting. Hosts provide instruction for boarders in relation to the means of escape and action to be taken should a fire be detected and any fire drills are recorded.

Hosts displayed a high regard for the privacy of boarders and had consulted them about the request for inspectors to view their rooms. All boarders have their own rooms. Where boarders of both genders are accommodated, the bedrooms for young people of different genders are on separate floors with separate bathrooms.

All staff and hosts are checked through the Criminal Records Bureau system. Boarders do not have unsupervised contact with adults who have not been checked.

Since the last inspection, additional guidance has been provided to hosts in relation to overnight stays and restraints. There are guidelines for coming in times so that the families are consistent in their application of these rules. Hosts described what happens when young people are out late at night at choir and other activities. Young people ring up the host to inform them if they will be late. There is a good network between the hosts and other families, so that the location of boarders is usually known. Discussions with hosts revealed a high level of awareness of the reasons for measure to be taken to ensure the safety of the young people.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders have access to a range and choice of activities.(NMS 11)
- Boarders receive personal support from staff.(NMS 14)
- Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination.(NMS 18)
- Boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands.(NMS 27)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision to study.(NMS 43)
- Boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas.(NMS 46)

**The Commission considers Standards 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

14,18

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Boarders receive personal support from staff and do not experience inappropriate discrimination.

## **EVIDENCE:**

Boarders have a variety of adults to whom they can turn for personal guidance. These include a member of staff with whom they meet on a Friday afternoon to discuss their progress. Boarders acknowledged that the first weeks of boarding can be difficult, with feelings of homesickness, but they confirmed that they had found adults who helped them through this period. They praised their hosts in this respect and described efforts made to make them feel at home. In addition to the adults at the school, boarders are provided with the contact numbers for independent organisations which would act as advocates, should they be experiencing personal problems.

The school's culture and ethos place great emphasis on equality of opportunity and procedures are based on an anti-oppressive approach. Responsibilities are shared, with no hierarchy of authority and great interest and respect is shown towards the language and cultures of the variety of countries from which the staff and boarders originate. The inspectors found no evidence of discrimination in this inclusive atmosphere. Efforts are made to ensure that boarders are matched as closely as possible to a host family which will meet their needs. This may include the presence of a family member who speaks their language.

Pupils and hosts described a high level of communication between the young people and hosts/teachers/boarding staff members and each other. Boarders also have their own families to contact if they are having difficulties. This is a very supportive community, where young people are encouraged to hold and express views. There are good systems for consultation and ascertaining the views of the boarders so they are less likely to make complaints as all issues are sorted out before they reach this stage.

The young people confirmed that they are treated fairly at the school and in the host families.

# **Making a Positive Contribution**

## **The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school.(NMS 12)
- Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families.(NMS 19)
- New boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in.(NMS 21)
- Boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school.(NMS 30)
- There are sound relationships between staff and boarders.(NMS 36)

## **The Commission considers Standards 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

Quality in this outcome area is good.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding. They are enabled to maintain contact with their family members.

### **EVIDENCE:**

Boarders' views are sought by the counsellor, who meets with them on a weekly basis. These views are taken into account in the development and practice of boarding. The members of the school community have frequent contact with the boarders and there are many informal methods of ascertaining their views and opinions. Boarders expressed confidence that their views would be respected and valued.



Boarders confirmed that they are able to contact their parents and family members in private. The host families make their telephones available and discussions revealed awareness of the need for privacy. There are no restrictions on this contact, although host families are aware that boarders who are feeling homesick during the initial period of their stay may experience this more intensely as feelings are aroused each time contact with their parent is made. In some circumstances, discussions are held with the boarder and parent to agree initial levels of contact. Hosts described meetings with parents who have travelled to their houses to visit boarders.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Boarders' possessions and money are protected.(NMS 20)
- Boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation.(NMS 40)
- Boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation.(NMS 42)
- Boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities.(NMS 44)
- Boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day.(NMS 45)
- Boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school.(NMS 50)
- The welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted.(NMS 51)

## The Commission considers Standard 51 the key standard to be inspected.

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

Quality in this outcome area is excellent.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

All boarders at this school are placed in lodgings and their welfare is safeguarded.

### EVIDENCE:

All of the boarding provision in this school is provided within host families. Therefore all of the previous comments relate to this standard. Visits are made to the host families' houses as part of the approval process and a checklist is used to ensure that the necessary areas meet the required standards. The process involves ensuring that the family is adequately prepared for emergencies such as fire and that suitable equipment is available on the premises. Checks are also made on insurance cover, the layout of the building and the room which the boarder will use.

# Management

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- A suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- There is clear leadership of boarding in the school.(NMS 8)
- Crises affecting boarders' welfare are effectively managed.(NMS 9)
- The school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare.(NMS 10)
- Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders' welfare.(NMS 23)
- Boarders are adequately supervised by staff.(NMS 31)
- Staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site.(NMS 32)
- Boarders are adequately supervised at night.(NMS 33)
- Boarders are looked after by staff with specific boarding duties, with adequate induction and continued training.(NMS 34)
- Boarders are looked after by staff following clear boarding policies and practice.(NMS 35)
- The welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

**The Commission considers Standards 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

1,23 (31 and 34 are not applicable as boarders all stay with host families and there are no boarding staff).

Quality in this outcome area is good.

This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

There is a suitable statement of the school's principles and practice, which is available to parents, boarders and staff. Risk assessment and school record keeping contribute to boarders' welfare.

## **EVIDENCE:**

In addition to the prospectus and information available on the school's website, the school has a Handbook for Parents. These documents provide information about the school in general. There is also a statement of Boarding Policy and Guidelines, which is provided to parents of young people who are boarding and to the host families. This provides useful information and reflects the situation and arrangements. This information has been reviewed recently. It is provided to parents and host families who sign to indicate receipt. Individual hosts also provide information about their houses and the composition and culture of their families to help boarders to be prepared for their stay. Together with the meetings held to discuss the progress of boarders, the school has mechanisms for monitoring risk assessments, major punishments, complaints and accidents. This includes the designation of those responsible for carrying out these tasks and evidence of when and by whom these records were monitored. The school has identified the need to maintain improved records of the boarding committee meetings and this is being implemented.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

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

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>6</b>	3
<b>7</b>	X
<b>15</b>	3
<b>16</b>	X
<b>17</b>	X
<b>24</b>	X
<b>25</b>	X
<b>48</b>	X
<b>49</b>	X

<b>STAYING SAFE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>2</b>	3
<b>3</b>	3
<b>4</b>	3
<b>5</b>	3
<b>13</b>	X
<b>22</b>	X
<b>26</b>	3
<b>28</b>	X
<b>29</b>	X
<b>37</b>	3
<b>38</b>	3
<b>39</b>	3
<b>41</b>	3
<b>47</b>	X

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>11</b>	X
<b>14</b>	4
<b>18</b>	4
<b>27</b>	X
<b>43</b>	X
<b>46</b>	X

<b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	3
<b>19</b>	4
<b>21</b>	X
<b>30</b>	X
<b>36</b>	X

<b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>20</b>	X
<b>40</b>	X
<b>42</b>	X
<b>44</b>	X
<b>45</b>	X
<b>50</b>	X
<b>51</b>	3

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

## Continued

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	3
<b>8</b>	X
<b>9</b>	X
<b>10</b>	X
<b>23</b>	3
<b>31</b>	X
<b>32</b>	X
<b>33</b>	X
<b>34</b>	X
<b>35</b>	X
<b>52</b>	X

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? No

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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