



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Elemore Hall School

**Elemore Hall School
Pittington
Sherburn
Durham
DH6 1QD**

Lead Inspector
Mr Leonard Hird

Announced Inspection
16th January 2006 09:30

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

Reader Information	
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk 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

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

Those outcomes are:

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

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

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

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school Elemore Hall School

Address Elemore Hall School
Pittington
Sherburn
Durham
DH6 1QD

Telephone number 0191 3720275

Fax number

Email address

Provider Web address

**Name of Governing body,
Person or Authority
responsible for the
school** Durham County Council

Name of Head Mr Richard Royle

Name of Head of Care Mr Stewart Foster

**Age range of residential
pupils** **11-16**

**Date of last welfare
inspection** 24/02/2005

Brief Description of the School:

Elemore Hall School provides education for children of secondary school age from County Durham who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs that states they require their educational needs to be met within a school for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Elemore Hall School is based on a large site and is in an old and listed building located in a rural area near to Pittington village. The school's residential areas are located within the main building and currently comprise of two residential units, each of which has its own living and sleeping areas. The numbers of children residing at the school at any one time is flexible as children may stay up to four nights per week during term time but this can vary depending on the individual needs of the young people. The numbers of children to be found residing in the residential area at any one time is therefore flexible but the maximum number that can be accommodated is thirty. The extended day provision being offered at the Elemore Hall School offers an alternative to boarding placements.

SUMMARY

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

This announced inspection of Elemore Hall School took place between 16th-19th January 2006. It found that all of the standard areas inspected had been met and that 6 standards had been exceeded. The inspection process included talking to children, staff and senior management as well as looking at different records, documents, questionnaires and files at the school.

There had been no changes to the senior management team of the school over the past year and this well led staff team continues to develop both the educational and residential services for the children who attend the school.

The children spoken with during the inspection process spoke well of their life at Elemore Hall School and they also said that they had good working relationships with both the teaching and residential staff.

Staff were found to be committed and caring to the children they worked with whether it was in the teaching or residential environment. Documentation examined during the inspection was found to be well maintained and accurate in content particularly in the area of medication administration.

What the school does well:

Elmore Hall school provides a nurturing and caring environment for the children who attend and reside at the school. The children's care plans were found to be satisfactorily organised, documented and monitored. The recordings of major incidents (MIRS) were being well-documented and these were being monitored both internally by the head teacher as well as by the local education authority's visiting officer. The school through its pastoral systems ensures that children living within the residential unit were being given opportunities to raise any issues and problems they may have with somebody who they felt comfortable with in a safe and friendly environment. The school had a very low turnover rate of care staff thereby enabling staff and children to get to know each other over a long period of time. The management of the care and education departments within the school is being well led by a senior management team of experienced carers and educationalists who were committed to the children they worked with.

The physical environment of the residential unit is pleasant and generally well maintained and there is significant input from all of the staff and children into ensuring that the residential areas are pleasant places to live in. The school has a designated senior member of staff who manages the safe handling and administration of medication for the children attending the school.

The school had very good relationships with parents/carers, as evidenced by the turnout at Open Day, Christmas Meeting, Termly Progress & Achievement Meetings and Annual Reviews; there was also paper evidence in the form of questionnaires.

Children are well listened to and their views used to guide and influence school development where appropriate, for example in the refurbishment of the basement recreation area. As part of Progress & Achievement Meetings, all pupils complete a comprehensive questionnaire, the responses to every question asked were overwhelmingly very positive.

Children's comments given during the inspection were complimentary about their working relationships with the staff and they also commented on the quality of food they received at the school.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has continued to make progress in most areas. The most significant improvement in the school has been the introduction of pupil Progress and Achievement Meetings (PAMs). These termly individual meetings between key staff, pupil and parent/carer have proved to be a great success. From a school point of view the meetings focused on positive elements, however pupils were encouraged to identify where and how they would like to improve and set

targets for themselves for the forthcoming term. Because the meeting focused on positives and celebrated success, pupils wanted to be involved and consequently attendance at the meetings was 100%. These meetings were also used to review and where appropriate introduce or modify Care Plans and Placement Plans. By inviting parents/carers the school had actively sought to better involve them in their child's education and success in school.

What they could do better:

Whilst the school provided a range of people who pupils could speak to confidentially or casually including school staff, educational psychologists, Local Education Authority monitoring officer, Educational Welfare Officers and the school nurse and promotes telephone help-lines, it should still seek to find a truly 'independent' listener.

Although Every Child Matters outcomes were used when formulating Care Plans and setting other targets for pupils, clearer indication needs to be made on each target to say which Every Child Matters outcome it met.

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 or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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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:

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

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

NMS14 NMS 15

The children residing at Elemore Hall School were living in an educational and residential environment that provided them with advice and support on both their health and personal care issues in a friendly, caring and understanding way.

Children's health and medication needs were being monitored, administered and recorded appropriately. There were clear written policies and procedures available for staff to access when dealing with the day-to-day management of the children.

Children had well-prepared and cooked meals throughout the day and these meals were taken in either the pleasant dining area of the school or where appropriate in the residential areas. Menus were being regularly changed and took account wherever possible of the children's likes and dislikes but always within the context of a healthy eating program.

EVIDENCE:

From discussions with the children and staff as well as observing the administration and recording of the medication given to children by staff both during the school day and after school it was confirmed that children were being dealt with in a friendly, safe, dignified and positive way. The administration and recording of medication was being undertaken in line with the policies and procedures of the school. Staff who administered medication had been appropriately trained in medication administration, there had also been appropriate risk assessments undertaken in regard to the medication being administered. Parental permission had also been sought for the giving of medication and this information was being kept on the individual child's medication file. The school had also sought help from both the children's consultants and GPs to provide split scripts for prescribed medication wherever possible. There were also appropriate policies, procedures and guidance available for use by staff within the school to enable them to give the support

required to the children in the areas of health and personal care. There were members of staff on duty at all times who had undergone training in first aid and records of this training were being maintained.

Children had a choice of food at breakfast, lunch and tea and they could select their choice of food from the menus displayed in the dining area. The cook's confirmed that the menu was changed regularly and that the menu also took account of any specialist dietary requirements. The school had received an award complimenting them on the quality of the food prepared and served from the local authority. Children spoken with said that the food was good and one pupil described it as "lush" The children spoken with felt they could influence the types of food being offered on the menu. Children confirmed they knew the reasons why they should eat healthily not only in school but also whilst they were at home. Fresh fruit and drinks were available on the residential units for the children. Children were being encouraged to prepare and cook under staff supervision , healthy snack type meals whilst on the residential unit. Records within the catering department were being maintained in an up-to-date manner including the menus used in the school, the specialist dietary requirements of the children and the training undertaken by staff working in the catering areas.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.(NMS 3)
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.(NMS 4)
- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.(NMS 5)
- Children are protected from bullying by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(NMS 7)
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.(NMS 8)
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour.(NMS 10)
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.(NMS 26)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

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

NMS 3, NMS 4, NMS 5, NMS 6, NMS 7, NMS 8, NMS 10 and NMS 27

Elmore Hall School is working with in and to these standards. the school is actively trying to ensure that the children who go to and reside at the school are kept safe.

EVIDENCE:

All staff had received training in child protection procedures at the appropriate level for their position and child protection training was undertaken on an annual basis. Records were being maintained of this training on individual members of staff files. The school had two designated and experienced senior members of staff who dealt with child protection issues. Both of these members staff take the principle lead for making child protection referrals to the local authority. Accurate and up-to-date records were being maintained in

regard to this area of practice, including follow up action after referrals been made. Information contained within these files was easy to understand and track during the inspection process. Notification of child protection referrals had been made both to the local authority and the Commission for Social Care Inspection. There were child protection policies and procedures in place and these were available for staff for reference and were consistent with the local policies and procedures agreed by the Area Child Protection Committee. Staff confirmed in discussions on the days of inspection that they were aware of their responsibilities and the need for vigilance in this very important area. All staff employed at the school post-2002 had undergone before their employment the appropriate reference checks and a Criminal Records Bureau Check.

Records were being well maintained and monitored within the school/residential unit of any complaints being made by the children. A poster with information including e-mail addresses/telephone numbers of all people to whom children could complain was being displayed. Information for parents on how to make complaints was also made available via the School brochure this also included how to complain to the Commission for Social Care Inspection. Though the school does provide a number of different options for children to access outside listeners it does not currently have an independent listener from outside the local authority.

Staff were seen to be working in a calm, friendly and positive manner both on the residential unit and elsewhere throughout the school. The children residing and attending the school were seen to be responding positively to this calm and unflustered approach.

The residential units were pleasantly decorated and furnished, children's bedrooms were decorated in a pleasant and personalised manner. The school building was being maintained appropriately for its age and size. Risk assessments had been undertaken on the building and these were being maintained and reviewed regularly.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.(NMS 12)
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

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

NMS 12 NMS 13 NMS 22

Care staff were observed to be working closely with the educational and support staff at the school thereby ensuring that through this working relationship the children residing at Elemore Hall School were being given the support and help they needed. Children's leisure time activities were being well planned, structured and supported by the staff and took account of the needs of both the individual child as well as the group.

EVIDENCE:

There were regular handovers of information about children taking place between residential staff and educational staff before and after-school. There were also opportunities for updates during the school day to ensure staff were fully aware of the progress that individual children were making.

Children had a wide range of different advertised activities to choose from and take part in. Comments received from the children indicated that they thought the opportunities offered to them to take part in such things as golf and football within the local community were good. Activities available to the children in the residential area ranged from board games, modelmaking, books and computer games. It was observed that staff quietly assisted and helped children in an easy and friendly manner during these activities.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.(NMS 2)
- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.(NMS 9)
- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.(NMS 11)
- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.(NMS 17)
- In accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

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

NMS 2, NMS9, NMS 11, N17 and NMS 20

All of the children were being treated fairly and without favouritism by the staff. Relationships between the staff and children were seen to be friendly, positive, caring and supportive even in trying circumstances. Children were being enabled to maintain contact with their parents by telephone contact.

EVIDENCE:

Admission to Elemore Hall School is for children who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Each pupil had an individual placement plan and a risk assessment in place and these were to be found on the individual child's file. Placement plans were being reviewed regularly in conjunction with the child and their family. The different documents looked at as part of the inspection process were found to be accurate and well maintained.

Parents were actively encouraged to take part in all aspects of school life involving their children. This was being achieved by regular recorded telephone contact with staff, termly meetings, educational reviews, attendance at school events and parental representation on the governing body of the school.

Planning for leaving school started mid-way through a child's school life and was looked at within the different review processes from which plans were drawn up. The school tried to ensure that different educational opportunities and vocational opportunities were offered to the child that enabled them to

make informed decisions about their future. As pupils come to the end of their time at Elemore, schools Transitions Coordinator helps them to move onto their next placement by accompanying them to potential training providers, employers, educational establishments, etc., and by working closely with parents/carers. Ensuring that the transition from school into a post-16 environment is as smooth and supported as possible. This support continues once a pupil has moved on in order to help them to overcome any difficulties that they experience in their new environment.

Children were also been encouraged to influence decisions made in the school by voicing their opinions either individually or through the collective group.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.(NMS 16)
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.(NMS 21)
- Children live in well designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- Children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.(NMS 24)
- Children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity.(NMS 25)

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

NMS 16, NMS 21, NMS 23, NMS 24, NMS 25.

Children residing at the school were wearing their own choice and style of clothes, they also had a lockable storage area for their valuables and advice was available to them on how to look after their money. The school provided information both to the children and their parents on the processes of leaving school that took account of further educational opportunities or ways of seeking employment.

EVIDENCE:

The residential areas were found to be generally well maintained, decorated, spacious and safe. Those bedrooms visited by invitation during the inspection were found to be pleasantly decorated, warm and personalised by the children. There were also appropriate levels of privacy for washing, toileting, showering and bathing for the children. Staff were observed knocking and waiting before entering children's bedrooms.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.(NMS 1)
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.(NMS 19)
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.(NMS 28)
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.(NMS 29)
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.(NMS 30)
- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.(NMS 31)
- Children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.(NMS 32)
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.(NMS 33)

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

NMS 1 NMS 18 NMS 19 NMS 28 NMS 29 NMS 30 NMS 31 NMS 32 NMS 33

Elmore Hall School has a well established, experienced and stable management team both in the residential care and educational setting with clear lines of management accountability throughout the school. The school was being managed in an effective and efficient way for the benefit of the children.

EVIDENCE:

There was available at the school a Statement of Purpose outlining the care principles and practice for those children who lived at the school. Records examined confirmed that each child had an individual file that showed when they had entered the school, who was responsible for making the placement, where they lived as well as the progress they were making at the school. Staff personnel records examined contained the appropriate information about, previous employment references, contracts, Criminal Record Bureau Checks

and previous employment histories. There were regular monitoring checks being undertaken by the local education authorities visiting officer on the children's welfare and this information was made available in report form to the school's governing body. Training had been regularly undertaken by staff and records were being maintained of this training e.g. team teach and child protection training on their files.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

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

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

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	3
15	4

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

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	3
13	4
22	3

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

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

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS4	It is recommended that the schools senior management team consider the involvement of an external independent listener for the benefit of children residing at the school.	31/10/06
2	RS17	It is recommended that the schools senior management team should further develop the care plans are currently used to take account of the following areas: being healthy, staying safe, adjoining and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well-being	31/10/06

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