



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Lonsdale School

**C/O Lonsdale School
Webb Rise
Stevenage
Hertfordshire
SG1 5QU**

Lead Inspector
Louise Bushell

Announced Inspection
1st & 2nd February 2006 10:00

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

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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	Lonsdale School
Address	C/O Lonsdale School Webb Rise Stevenage Hertfordshire SG1 5QU
Telephone number	01438 357631
Fax number	01438 742583
Email address	admin/lonsdale@thegnd.org.uk
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Hertfordshire County Council
Name of Head	Maria White
Name of Head of Care	Lesley Thompson
Age range of residential pupils	10 - 18
Date of last welfare inspection	18/01/05

Brief Description of the School:

Lonsdale School was opened in 1971, as a purpose built school for pupils with physical and neurological impairments. It is located in spacious, attractive grounds in the Pin Green area of Stevenage. Pupils at Lonsdale come from Hertfordshire and the surrounding counties following Statutory Assessment of the Special Educational Needs. In 1998, Hertfordshire County Council and the school agreed that it would be funded for 84 places with 26 residential places. The residential accommodation comprises of four self contained units and can accommodate up to 26 pupils per night. The accommodation is shared by two groups of boarders each staying for 2 nights per week Monday to Thursday. There are four flats with a choice of single and double although a maximum of three can share a room. All of the living and learning areas are at ground floor level. Living accommodation is arranged around gender and peer groups with each unit having it's own kitchenette and living area as well as bedrooms, bathrooms and toilets. All bedrooms are linked to a night monitoring system that alerts the waking night staff if a pupil is unable to sleep or having a seizure. The school provides special fittings and adaptations to meet the needs of pupils. One of the residential units has been fitted with automatic doors upon approach; all remaining unit doors have magnetic devices with hold back mechanisms. The school is led by Mrs. Maria White, Head Teacher and supported by Mrs Lesley Thompson who is the Head of Care. The school has Investors In People Status.

SUMMARY

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

This was an extremely positive inspection for the school. With most of the standards inspected being met and a number of them exceeding the minimum requirements.

It must be noted that where information has remained unchanged from the last report it has been carried forward. The reader is encouraged to read the last report in conjunction with this report.

The inspection took place over one whole day enabling the inspectors to observe each spectrum of the day. Time was spent with the pupils, staff and management gaining a complete overview of the functioning of the school. The second day of the inspection was solely to provide feedback to the Head Teacher and the Head of Care. Parent / guardian and staff questionnaires were also gathered as part of this inspection. They were all received and completed by the 24th February 2006.

What the school does well:

The school aims to achieve excellence in meeting the needs of every pupil through the provision of high standards of care and education. The management of the school was noted to be proactive and have policies and procedures in place to ensure that the overall aim of the school is being met. The school has a good working relationship with other professionals and it was noted that the governors take an active role and interest in the running of the school. The majority of the care staff have completed or currently undertaking their NVQ level 2/3 in care and this demonstrates commitment in ensuring that a well qualified staff team is employed to support the pupils in meeting their individual needs. Training systems are well managed and organised with particular attention being made to manual handling and staff induction. A new staff induction and practice development handbook has been introduced and is a good example of an informative induction programme aimed at new staff, supporting them in a new role. The programme is structured towards an 18-week review. The development of the staff member is directly linked to the appraisal system that the school adopts.

Pupils spoken with and those who completed the questionnaires stated that they were happy with the activities of the school and they were very complimentary of the staff, the school and their accommodation. There were appropriate systems and processes in place to manage the behavioural, social and learning problems of a pupil. Staff reported that their strengths were job satisfaction and a sense of belonging to a very enthusiastic and supportive team.

Pupils have access to a very wide range of activities and interests and said that these make their stay very interesting and enjoyable. Records scrutinised were found to be in good order. The school has addressed all the requirements and recommendations made in the last inspection. The school actively promotes the health and welfare of all children and has sound systems in place to meet all intimate health care needs. It continues to fundraise to introduce additional activity areas and develop a play area with equipment and aesthetic gardens. The staff, pupils and the school should be commended for their continued efforts.

Lonsdale School and its staff meet the main stated aim to give personal attention to the educational, personal and social needs of every pupil through a planned and evolving programme designed to achieve the highest potential for each of them. There is clear leadership, a committed staff team and a satisfied group of pupils who enjoy pleasant premises, a wide range of leisure opportunities and a positive, often humorous atmosphere. The staff should be congratulated for their efforts.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school continues to mature and develop with progress being noted at a steady rate following each inspection.

Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to the induction programme. This is now an excellent working document and direct feedback from newly employed staff ensured that it was effective. The processes ensure suitable support is provided at all times and that progress and performance is monitored at all times. Staff reported that they felt completely supported throughout their individual induction programme.

Appropriate links and developments have been made in the creation of a healthy eating and living programme. Menus have been reviewed and redeveloped. Feedback received from pupils was positive regarding the food available and the menu choices.

Training continues to be consistent and effective. Manual handling and NVQs have been highlighted as being very effective with a high number of staff having enrolled and completed their specific NVQs.

All care plans have been reviewed and a new internal computer system now ensures that the care plans are instantly sent to the four required areas of the school ensuring that they are consistent at all times.

Environmental improvements are continuing and redecoration has been undertaken in the flats and the bathrooms. Works are completed on a rolling programme.

The school is currently developing an independent living flat. The pupils involved were able to discuss the progress that has been made following the last inspection. The Head of Care discussed the ethos and the working principles of the independent living flat and developments that have occurred to date. The work that has been applied to this is commendable and whilst the project is in its extremely early days the efforts and implementation appear sound, practical and achievable.

A new Parker bath and specialist shower unit has been fitted to the bathroom, this allows for more choice for pupils and is an interim measure until further works are completed on the school's bathrooms. The dining room floor has also been replaced.

What they could do better:

The school should consider the completion of risk assessments for the new profiling beds for the protection of staff and pupils.

Care plans should be signed and dated to record when they were last reviewed and implemented.

Records of Fire drills should show clear actions following the drill, training identified as a result of the drill, persons involved and clear details of times and durations.

Bathing facilities and space allocated to be reviewed as planned. Refurbishment to continue. Door opening devices to be reviewed on the residential areas of the school to allow for freedom of movement and accessibility for all.

Recruitment files must contain all required documents with suitable checks occurring for all staff.

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

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:

- 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):

14 & 15

Children are suitably supported with all intimate care tasks and thus the promotion of rights and dignity is respected and maintained for all. Children are provided with healthy nutritious, well-balanced meals and thus each individuals dietary and specialist needs are being met, reviewed and monitored successfully.

EVIDENCE:

Registered paediatric nurses provide a 24-hour cover and any pupil requiring medical attention would be seen immediately, assessed and appropriate action taken. In an emergency, a doctor, who is local to the school, can be contacted or the pupil taken to the local hospital. Any pupil taken for medical attention would usually be accompanied by a member of staff as appropriate to their age, wishes and the circumstances. Annual dental checks are carried out but the school nurse does vision checks in years 5/6. The Audiology Services provide hearing checks in reception/year 1, year 5 and at other times if required. A medical review with the school Paediatrician and other health professionals, as well as those involved in the pupil's care is held on an annual basis. The school aims to provide the best education and care for each pupil and has implemented a Multidisciplinary approach. It has a close liaison with other professionals including the community Paediatrician, Paediatric Nurses, Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and the Hertfordshire CSF. Each pupil has a written health plan, which the nursing staff regularly update. The school has a medicine policy and currently there are no pupils who self-medicate. Registered nurses administer all medicines. Care staff are trained to administer rectal diazepam for pupils who suffer from epilepsy. The records for the administration of medication were kept in excellent order. There is a sound professional relationship between the nurses and the care staff and they work as an extended team. This team has a joint understanding on child protection issues. There is a good system for sharing information on a recognised need to know basis. The procedures that both teams have in place will support any pupil. Staff spoken with stated that they

ensure the privacy and dignity of pupils are maintained at all times specially those who require intimate care. They are also sensitive to individual's emotional and physical needs and provide support as required and as agreed in their care plans. The school has a health education programme that is promoted throughout the school. Residential staff receive first aid training and issues of personal hygiene are dealt with sensitively. Pupils have an annual medical examination as part of their statement of educational needs.

The school provides adequate quantities of suitably prepared wholesome and nutritious food, with particular attention paid to pupils with special dietary needs. Meal times were observed to be orderly and well managed. Pupils have a choice and preference to the food they are given. Additional drinks and snacks are available to boarders at reasonable times. The school actively encourages the intake of fluids throughout the day. Menus reflected that the meals were well balanced and nutritionally sound. The school has employed a new head chef who is excelling in her new role. Recent improvements have been made and include the improvements in healthy nutritious foods. Consultation has occurred with the pupils, family, parents, relatives and guardians regarding the provision of meals. The school has liaised with the dietician to ensure that a health well balanced nutritious menu with suitable choices is being offered. Past menus are kept and bear testimony to the variety of meals provided, (including specialised meals where required). All meals except for supper are taken in the school dining room. Both lunch and tea are provided with cooked meals. Supper is planned on a weekly basis and stock taken from the main kitchen. There are some pupils who are on reducing, non-dairy products, diabetic and vegetarian diets. Each flat has its own kitchenette and the furnishings are suitable for the numbers and needs of pupils.

All residential staff have obtained food and hygiene certificates. Pupils spoken with said that they enjoyed the food and it was noted that alternatives to the menu is also provided. Crockery, cutlery and specialist feeding equipment are available for the children who require them. Appropriate support was observed being offered to the children requiring this. The school was recently inspected by the Local Environmental Authority with positive outcomes.

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):

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 26 & 27

Children's privacy, welfare, protection and security is monitored and respected and thus provides a suitable and safe environment and service to all meeting individual needs.

Children's complaints are dealt with appropriately, ensuring a safe, approachable and secure environment with an open management and staff style.

Recruitment and selection systems are in place which ensures protection for pupils, however systems needs upgrading to ensure all monitoring put into place is consistent across all newly recruited staff and clear paths of evidence is available for all.

EVIDENCE:

The school has written procedural guidelines in relation to privacy and confidentiality and these are incorporated as part of the 'Staff Induction' training. Files and records pertaining to a pupil are open to the parents and the child. However, a separate file is kept for Child Protection information. All records are securely kept locked in filing cabinets. The records are only shared with individuals with a right to access or a need to know in order to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. The school has an Intimate Care Policy, which all care staff are aware of and adhere to. This is covered in some detail during the staff initial induction period. In house training is provided for all staff and new staff are allocated a mentor who is an experienced member of staff. The school provides a pay phone, appropriate support is provided to those who require it. The school has a wide range of communication aids such as Deltatalkers, Digivox, symbol charts, audio sound system, minicom etc which pupils can access. The school is able to provide adequate communal space for meetings in private that pupils can also access. Throughout the inspection it was observed that staff interactions with all children were dignifying of their individual needs and did not intrude inappropriately or unnecessarily. The school provides guidance for pupils and staff regarding the searching of possessions.

The school has a comprehensive Complaints Procedure in place that clearly sets out the rights and means for the pupils to access the complaints procedure. The procedure enables pupils to make both minor and more significant complaints. It is available in a suitable format to meet the learning needs of the pupils. The school has not received any complaints to date. However if a complaint was received, the written reports in relation to the complaints are reviewed and monitored by the Chair of Governors and all incidents are recorded. Parents receive general information on how to make a complaint in the school prospectus and more detailed information in the document for parents of boarders. Feedback from parents and boarders was positive in relation to the complaints procedure. The majority of those interviewed/contacted knew what processes to take if they wished to make a complaint. All care staff have received training in relation to the Complaints Procedure details of which are displayed in every flat and classroom. It was found that the school had other comprehensive mechanisms, processes and communication systems in place to listen to concerns and deal with these at origin. It should be noted the school has received numerous compliments highlighting the success its success.

The school follows the procedures contained in the Hertfordshire 'Child Protection Procedures' which is a guide to procedure and practice for all professional staff in Hertfordshire who work with children. This guide is consistent with the local policies and procedures agreed by the Area Child Protection committee. Children from neighbouring authorities who attend the

school would also be subject to this consistent approach. The Head Teacher and the Head of Care are the designated senior staff for child protection matters. The Child Protection Liaison Officer who covers the North Herts Area also provides training to staff in relation to Child Protection Procedures. As part of their induction programme, the Head Teacher talks through Child Protection issues and procedures with all new staff and volunteers. All staff receives training in child protection, details of which is included in the staff handbook. Local interagency protocols on the prevention of abuse are also included. There is written guidance for any staff who may be subject to allegations against themselves.

The school has a robust anti-bullying policy, which includes measures taken to prevent and how to respond to observed or reported bullying. It promotes a secure environment for pupils to build their self-esteem and confidence. They have opportunities for discussion either on a one to one basis or in groups such as the school council, assemblies or with an independent listener. Staff listen to pupils concerns and respond to them as required. All staff are offered training in awareness of and effective strategies for countering bullying through preventative programmes incorporated in Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum. The school carries out an internal audit every academic year on behavioural incidents, physical restraints and bullying. An annual report is compiled in relation to Anti-bullying Policy and forwarded to the County Council. Any pupil who is bullied would receive support from the staff and pupils can choose which staff they wish to speak to. Pupils are supervised and those spoken with confirmed that they were aware of the action to be taken in an event of being or observed someone else being bullied. The school carries out regular risk assessments in relation to bullying.

The school has a sound system in place to notify the Commission for Social Care Inspection, the Local Social Services Authority, the Department for Education and Skills, Placing Authority and the responsible Local Education Authority of all significant notifiable events. The school has a robust system in place to make the required notification under the Protection of Children's Act of any dismissal or resignation of a member of staff or other persons working at the school in circumstances, which suggest their suitability to work with children. There have been no serious incidents requiring notification in the past year. The school's policy is that any action or investigation of a notifiable event would be fully documented, a written record kept and the appropriate authorities informed. Each pupil has a diary where all the daily activities participated in are recorded and parents are kept informed of any incidents. The residential staff have a system whereby parents receive prompt notification of any allegation that a pupil has committed an offence. The school is aware that any serious concerns about the emotional or mental health of a pupil would be referred to the school's own Paediatrician in the first instance and who would then refer to the appropriate health services if required.

The school has comprehensive systems and procedures in place to respond to the need of a child who is absent without authority. Where pupils have parental permission to be absent from the residential unit, the level and circumstances are normally agreed in advance. Care staff are aware of the measures that they should take to prevent a child from leaving without permission. There is a policy on physical restraint but such measures would normally be part of a package of Positive Handling Programme, agreed in advance and recorded in the care plan. If a child does not arrive to school, the parents are contacted. The school also have routine checks carried out throughout the day and staff are made aware of appointments which pupils would be attending away from school during the day. Written records are maintained for circumstances and all incidences of a child being absent without authority, all actions taken by the staff, the circumstances of the child's return, any reasons the child has given for being absent and any actions taken in light of those reasons.

The school has its own 'Behaviour and Discipline' policy which includes the 'Code of Conduct', guidelines for all staff to minimise disruption, recording and reporting incidents of poor behaviour, positive handling/management programmes, rewards and sanctions and physical intervention. Measures of control and sanction are based on establishing positive relationship. The programmes established are clearly defined with a proportionate response to certain behaviours are shared with pupils, parents and all relevant staff. Internal audits are presented to the Curriculum and Learning Committee. Rewards and sanctions are only used following the decision of a multidisciplinary review and records of all sanctions used are entered in the 'Red Book' with all relevant forms and documentations including the views of the pupil. Controlled and careful physical intervention is only used by authorised members of staff who are directly involved in working with the pupils. This is used as a last resort to avoid injury to the pupil or others in accordance with the HCC Physical Restraint Policy. Incidences recorded determined that the use of physical intervention was very low. Each staff signs a declaration stating that they have read and understood the school's policies including whether they are authorised to use physical intervention or not. Overall, behaviour of pupils during the inspection was observed to be good, courteous and helpful. Pupils were generally well motivated and enjoyed staying at the school. The school also has a Police Liaison Officer who visits the school. The school has a merit system as well as very clear systems in relation to sanctions and restraint, which are regularly discussed and monitored. Direct feedback for the children determined that staff responses to behaviour were fair and proportionate to the circumstance.

The school has implemented many risk assessments to ensure and maintain a safe environment at the school. These include the many aspects of the school activities such as driving the minibus, administration of medication, avoiding risks of infection from blood and body fluids and security. Pupils and staff are aware that there are hazards in the school and its grounds but these are risk

assessed to ensure that these are minimised and managed. General risk assessments are also carried out for off site activities. All risk assessments are reviewed periodically and updated according to change in needs. Risk assessment is also carried out for pupils who use the 'bed rails' and these are kept in individual care plans. There is a need for the school to complete risk assessments for the new profiling beds in the residential area of the school. Fire records are maintained for the checking of the emergency lighting system, fire alarm panel and extinguishers. Fire drill records must be detailed and fully actioned showing clear records of who was involved in the drill, what events occurred and any further training identified following the drill. Periodic checks are taking place and are well documented. Gas safety and boiler records are maintained within the school and are up to date.

The recruitment and selection of boarding staff is completed on site. All applicants have to complete an application form. The school has a clear policy and procedure in place for the recruitment, retention and selection of staff. Staff personnel files were inspected. All staff held a current enhanced CRB disclosure. Files contained verifiable evidence such as identification checks, two references and written evidence that contact had been made with the referee's to validate it, any qualifications held and certificates, a CRB, interview notes and contract. Upon inspection it was found that two personnel records did not contain the required information in order to meet the standard. A recommended action is being made that recruitment and selection processes are reviewed to ensure all personnel files contain required information and the system is further developed to prevent a reoccurrence.

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):

12, 13 & 22

The schools residential provision actively promotes and supports all children's educational progress at the school and thus ensures that all children receive and are offered suitable and individual support and opportunities to learn and develop.

Children have suitable opportunities to engage in meaningful and purposeful activities and thus encouraging inclusion and integration by all whilst developing individual skills.

EVIDENCE:

The school actively promotes the involvement of children in social groups and counters isolation of individuals. Pupils are able to mix with and involve with the mainstream local schools they also access local communities facilities. Pupils are able to contact any member of staff with personal or welfare concerns. Alternative means of communication include the use of Deltatalkers, Digivox, symbol charts, audio sound system, minicom etc with the support of a Speech and Language Therapist. Pupils are given appropriate support following any traumatic incident or bereavement. The school provides professional services where necessary to help children develop individual identity in relation to their gender, religious, racial, cultural or linguistic background, their disability and/or SEN or sexual orientation. Children who require specialist external services (e.g. for recreation, health, education or legal representation/advice) receive those services in practice. Staff cooperate in implementing any programs associated with specialist services such as speech and language therapy or physiotherapy programs. Any specific therapeutic technique is only used with any child at the school if specified in the child's placement plan and if agreed by the child's placing authority in the

case of a child placed by a local or health authority or the child's parent where applicable. Additionally the safe and effective use of the technique is known to be supported by evidence. It is carried out only by, on the directions of, or under the supervision of a member of staff or other practitioner holding a current recognised qualification in the therapy concerned, whose qualification the school has verified as valid and appropriate directly with the awarding body or relevant register.

Residential care staff and the teacher's work in unity to ensure that individual pupil's educational progress is maintained. It was observed that care staff are familiar with the educational needs and progress of the children in their care. Excellent communication methods are in place to ensure a seamless link between residential and school needs and objectives, working together to encourage each child's personal, social, educational development and achievement. The residential department is integral to the school and the development of the children. Each care staff is linked to a class group and is involved in reviewing pupils' care plans and Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) in conjunction with the class team.

There is a wide range of activities provided during the evening in each flat. The pupils spoken to said that they enjoyed board games, colouring, making cards, swimming, going bowling and to the cinema. They also said that they were happy with these programmes and that the school is flexible in allowing them to engage in a different activity of their choice. Time is also spent in socialising with pupils from other flats. Where appropriate the children are assisted in the development of independent living skills by both the teaching and the care staff.

The school provides suitable and adequate activities for boarding children outside of school hours. Children are encouraged to partake in activities, which take into account their race, culture, language, religion, interests, abilities and disabilities. The children were seen to have a well balanced and established time table distributing free time and organised activity time. All activities within the school take into account the safety of the child at all times. Where high-risk activities have been identified a comprehensive risk assessment has been established to ensure adequate safety precautions are taken and risks are minimised. All equipment is reported to have regular checks and maintenance carried out. The residential school offers a variety of in-house activities and uses the external grounds during the summer. There are televisions, video recorders and music centres in each of the house lounges, together with other games. Trips to local facilities include going to the cinema, bowling, shopping and to Leisure Centres. The school has established links with mainstream local primary and secondary schools in other parts of the county. Some of the pupils integrate on a part time basis into these schools. There is some opportunity for leisure activities before supper and bedtime. Individual hobbies are encouraged and supported.

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):

2, 9, 11, 17 & 20

Children are encouraged to make decisions and are suitably supported and encouraged to do as a required, increasing and encouraging their individual development, relationships and mutual respect.

Each child has a detailed care plan in place that supports in all areas of their provision of care.

EVIDENCE:

The school has a council, which is made up of one representative from each class who are voted to represent the pupils. This enables the pupils to voice any issues and concerns in a united forum ensuring that their views are listened to. The pupils also have their own informal meetings to discuss and plan activities of the day and/or the week. The school has the relevant policies and procedures, which are kept in the duty room in the residential sector and are readily available to staff and are supported by the management team. One of these policies is for guidance and training on consulting with and involving children and their families. The school operates an Equal Opportunity Policy. The school currently supports and uses a range of communication methods to support all pupils in effective communication. The opinions and views of pupils are sought informally on a regular basis and also through the annual reviews

and pupils' questionnaires. The school encourages and advocates independence and opportunities are given to pupils to make everyday choices. Staff spoken with stated that each pupil's rights are respected and they attend their individual annual review especially at the 14+ transition meeting, where a Connexions Personal Advisor meets the pupil to discuss the future plan. Staff speak with pupils daily on an individual basis and in groups. Parents are invited and encouraged to meet with staff and the management of the school to discuss any concerns or issues as they arise.

Staff employed at the school were observed being able to maintain safe, consistent and understandable boundaries in relation to acceptable behaviours of the children. Clear expectations of behaviour of both staff and children are understood and negotiated by both parties. It was found that relationships between staff and pupils were positive and appropriate. Although there is a culture of formality with staff, a great deal of good humour was employed. Pupils and staff are very clear about school rules in relation to behaviour and these are firmly and consistently reinforced. The school's 'Code of Conduct' is displayed in each flat and it also has its own policy on 'behaviour and discipline.' Children within the school are looked after without favouritism or antipathy towards any individual or group. All staff are trained with an approved method of control, which as a first resort teaches the use of de-escalation techniques and strategies to diffuse situations. All staff in direct contact with pupils have received training in positive care and control, including praising pupils for their achievements. The 'achievement' ethos is announced in assembly and displayed on notice board for the week. These are also entered in record of achievement files, which are calculated at the end of each term. Pupils spoken with expressed a sense of pride when they are honoured with these achievements. Some have set their own targets in achieving these stars. Communication between staff and pupils was observed by inspectors and found to be very positive. Inspectors were impressed with the empathy and attention staff displayed towards pupils and the inclusive way the school is conducted. Adequate numbers of staff are allocated on duty per shift in each flat.

The school has an admission criteria devised and agreed in conjunction with the Hertfordshire County Council, Children Schools and Families department, which is the admitting authority. The school processes initial referrals for residential placements and pupils are offered a 2-day placement, either on Mondays and Tuesdays or Wednesdays and Thursdays. Offer of placements are made in writing to parents with an invitation to visit and view the school with the prospective pupil. Prior to the offer of a placement, the school receives all the necessary information and reports about the pupil. On agreement, a transition programme is planned. Staff are prepared to receive and support new pupils for a smooth integration into both the class and the residential unit. The residential department is integral to the school and the development of the children. Preparation for reception of pupils includes showing around the school, their allocated accommodation, their bedrooms

and introduction to staff. Parents are provided with all the relevant documents and information about the school and how to make contact. Leaving processes are planned with the early involvement of the Connexions Personal Advisor who is the link person for ensuring the smooth transition of pupils from Lonsdale School to Further Education or Training. She meets the pupil at the 14+ annual reviews. The school's careers education and guidance programme includes discussions about options for leavers, individual advice and planning sessions, work experience and exploratory visits to colleges. The Connexions Personal Advisor works very closely with the school, the parents and the pupil. She assists in the planning for the future placement of the student. Individual reviews with the involvement of all interested parties take place on a regularly basis and this forms part of an ongoing progression to individual's needs and aspiration. Once a future placement has been identified the school works with that place to ensure a smooth transition. It was noted that the above processes are well managed and the school maintains good contact with families and carers.

The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as it is practical with the child, the child's parents and any placing authority for the child. It identifies the needs of that child that the school will aim to meet and specifying how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day-to-day basis. Similar consultation occurs where significant changes are made to the placement plan. The plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by such a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Support to all children is provided appropriate to their individual methods of communication encouraging them to become more involved in the decision making within their lives. Children are encouraged to know their placement plan and its content. Feedback from the children identified that the majority of children were aware of their individual plans. IEP progress reports are also carried out and an achievement award is given for particular progress made. Each pupil has a curriculum record and an annual review is carried out. Care plans scrutinised showed that the school has identified individual's needs and is aiming to meet these on a day-to-day basis. Each care plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect any significant changes in the pupil's needs and progress. Care staff from each flat are allocated to a class to support the co-ordination of the care plans for pupils in the group. It is recommended that when care plans are reviewed that they are signed and dated to show when the last review occurred.

The school has a policy and procedural guidelines in place for visitors and visiting. Pupils have regular contact with their parents as they make and receive telephone calls. Some pupils have mobile phones provided by their parents to enable them to remain in touch. There is also a pay phone available at the school. Pupils are able to meet with their parents and other visitors at the school in comfortable and private surroundings. Staff receive training to

develop skills to work with children and their families. Parents who attend consultation evening are encouraged to visit the pupils in the flats. The school holds numerous functions, where families and parents are invited. These include family get togethers, coffee mornings and meetings with staff and parent. The school supports families and there were many examples of flexible boarding to meet family needs and also by positive choice. There is an Independent Listener who visits the school twice half term. She meets with pupils on an individual basis and completes a report on each child she meets with. Any restrictions on contact with parents, family members or other persons imposed by a court, local authority, person authorised to do so or a parent, are implemented by the school.

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):

16, 23, 24 & 25

Children are supported and encouraged to create a homely environment in all aspects outside of school hours and their independence, individuality and privacy is maintained and supported.

Children live in pleasant well-maintained environment and thus this provides a suitable residing environment and encourages that homely feel. The bathrooms are in need of refurbishment to create greater space for all.

EVIDENCE:

Pupils bring their own clothing/toiletries to school that will last their stay and are provided with adequate storage space in their rooms. All pupils except those who are in the sixth form wear school uniform. Pupils were observed to be dressed appropriately once they had changed out of their uniform after school. Pupils bring in pocket money and staff look after it for younger or less able pupils. Money is kept in individual purses or wallets and securely locked in the office. Any transaction or expenditure occurred is signed by each pupil or member of staff. Feedback from pupils indicates that they are encouraged and assisted to manage and spend their own money as they wish.

The school is located in a pleasant area of Stevenage with lots of space to allow pupils to walk in safety. There are four flats, each accommodating up to

seven pupils. Some pupils choose to have a single accommodation and a maximum of three can share a room. All of the living and learning areas are at ground floor level. Living accommodation is arranged around gender and peer groups with each unit having its own kitchenette, dining room as well as bedrooms, bathrooms and toilets. The arrangement allows for social mixing of genders without impinging on privacy. All bedrooms are linked to a night monitoring system that alerts the waking night staff if a pupil is unable to sleep or is having a seizure. Such equipment is solely for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child or of other children in the school, and with the full knowledge, subject to the age and understanding of that child and any other children affected. The school provides special fittings to improve lighting in the flats and adaptations to bath hoists, toilet chairs, standing frames, electric wheelchairs etc. Light switches are fixed to low level and all areas accessible by wheelchair users. Special feeding equipments with rimmed plates are provided. There is an additional system for pupils with hearing impairment i.e. amplifier on phone. There is an identified charging bay for electric wheelchairs. One of the residential flats has been fitted with automatic opening entrance doors. The remaining three are fitted with magnetically held doors on opening. To ensure that the accommodation allows for freedom of movement and that the children are able to have necessary access to all parts of the boarding facilities, it is recommended that consideration be made to the fitting of further automatic door opening devices. The bedroom doors within each of the flats are sliding doors, further advice is being sort from the Fire Department as to their suitability. The home has adequate space for wheelchair users. All aspects of moving and handling are risk assessed. The Occupational Therapist assesses the school and premises. Currently, the CSF uses the Pennine flat for respite care services from Friday night till Monday morning. A shared facility agreement has been drawn up between the two services. Generally this arrangement does not impinge on the existing pupils. There is a keypad system in use on the front and side entrance and an alarm system is in place to provide security through out the school.

The residential accommodation is appropriately decorated and furnished to an acceptable standard. Redecoration has occurred within the flats, which is on a rolling programme of works. The flats are laid out in a homely fashion, with pictures, photographs and fittings. Bedding, floor covering, curtains, heating and lights were all satisfactory. All bedrooms have adequate storage space. The grounds were safe and pupils were aware of the areas where they could and could not go. Pupils were accommodated according to age and gender in either single or shared bedrooms. There were adequate facilities to enable pupils to pursue hobbies, interests and leisure activities. There are rooms where visitors can be seen in private, if they wish. There is a call system in place for the children to call for help as required. There is now three waking night staff.

There is adequate lockable space available in each bedroom for pupils to keep their valuables. The school has a laundry with three washing machines, a

tumble drier and ironing facilities for bedding and some clothing. Pupils who are able are supported by staff with their washing and a laundry person is employed on a part time basis. All children are able and encouraged to personalise their bedrooms or dormitories within reason. During term time, residential accommodation for pupils is reserved for the exclusive use of the pupils for whom it is designated, with other pupils only having access by reasonable invitation of pupils living in that building or unit. The interior and exterior of the school is maintained in a good state of structural and decorative repair. Damage to the premises and furniture is repaired promptly. The Head Teacher informed the inspectors that plans are in place to upgrade the bathing facilities available within the boarding are to create a larger space and homely environment. Grounds and play areas and fixed play equipment are well maintained and safe. The school is still fund raising for a project that will support the development of the school grounds to include a landscape garden area, further wheelchair adapted areas and play equipment. Commendable progress has been made with this project and the fund raising efforts of all should be noted. The school's dining room floor has been totally replaced.

Each unit has a large bathroom, which includes shower beds, toilet chairs, walk-in shower and domestic size bath. Staff have separate facilities for their exclusive use. The Head Teacher informed the inspectors that plans are in place to upgrade the bathing facilities available within the boarding are to create a larger space and homely environment. Feedback from pupils has indicated that the space in the bathrooms is limiting. All bathrooms have recently been redecorated. Strategic plans are in place for the refurbishment of the bathroom facilities within the school. Interim measures may occur to support this process in the best interest of the pupils. Further plans are awaiting negotiation. A new Parker bath and specialist shower has been purchased and this has commenced the development of the bathroom areas.

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):

1, 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.

Clear records are in place and thus provide suitable and adequate information and advice for all.

All staff are suitably and adequately trained ensuring that the school is run effectively whilst showing their ability to meet specialist and individual needs at all times.

EVIDENCE:

The Head of Care reviews pupils individual the care plans. As part of the school's procedures, the Head Teacher checks, monitors and carries out regular audits of the records of accidents, sanctions, restraints and major incidents. The school is aware that the Commission for Social Care Inspection is notified of any significant events that occur within the residential unit. The

Head Teacher also signs and monitors all the records listed in this standard except where records are delegated to a senior member of staff. She also takes action in relation to any concentration, trend or pattern in recorded issues. The Head Teacher prepares a term report that is presented to the Governors Committee. Yearly reports are produced by the governors, which are sent to parents.

Members of the governing body undertake unannounced visits to the School each term, to meet the above requirements. These include, checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, and use of physical interventions, assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school, and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish). Copies of any inspection reports by the National Care Standards Commission are made available by the school to all members of staff, to children resident at the school, to parents, and on request sent to placing authorities of existing children or those considering placing a child.

The Head of care has successfully completed the NVQ Level 4 in management of care and is an NVQ assessor, currently supporting a number of care staff that are undertaking the NVQ Level 3. Parents are given details of school policies in the school prospectus and addendum for the boarding flats. The Head Teacher undertakes to provide parents with information about how to contact the local Social Services Authority and Commission for Social Care Inspection. The staff and the school should be commended for its efforts in training with particular attention being paid to the completion of NVQ training and manual handling.

All residential staff receive formal and informal professional support and performance management and a confidential record kept. This is in the format of a Performance Management Interview, which occurs twice yearly. Care staff are included in the whole school annual appraisal process. There are also frequent informal contacts between members of staff and the senior managers. They are supported through a range of written policies and procedures (and a 'read and sign' system is in place to ensure that they have each had access to the latest revision). New members of staff are supported through a robust induction procedure with mentoring sessions and probationary meetings periodically spaced to allow for progress and knowledge to be gained. New staff spoken to indicate that they feel very supported within their roles. Currently staff do not receive at least one and a half hours one to one supervision from a senior member of staff each half term, only the informal supervision and the Performance Management Interview's twice yearly, however it is felt that the school is currently achieving and supporting the needs of the staff suitably.

The school has an induction-training programme for all newly appointed care and ancillary staff, which includes guidance on child protection. New staff are

supervised, clear about accountability and reporting lines, and procedures to be followed in relation to emergencies, health and safety, child protection and notification of incidents. Each member of staff has a personal development plan. Each new staff has a mentor and at the end of the probationary period, the Head Teacher and the mentor convene a meeting for the final review with the care staff. All residential care staff are given training on medication, behaviour management, listening skills and Child Protection. They also have access to policies and procedures and a full set is also kept in the main office. Such training has addressed the appropriate response to and management of the children and in any special means of communication used by one or more children at the school. Recent training facilitated within the school includes manual handling. The system in place is to be commended and the efforts of the team to be noted.

The school maintains a register of all children within the school detailing admission and departures from the school. Records were also maintained detailing staffing list including role and hours etc. The residential unit maintains clear records on boarders and the school has full records of the staff it employs. Staff duty rotas for the flats were provided to the inspectors and it was noted that adequate number of staff were rostered on each shift. Major events that affect the pupils are recorded. The accident log was well maintained.

Records required by this standard form part of the pupils care plans and some information is also kept at the school. The Head of Care stated that the school holds copies of educational statements, review documents and parental consents. There are also correspondences and quick references for contacts in an emergency. In relation to dietary, health and dental needs for pupils, the staff member in each flat is aware of and ensures that these needs are met. Appropriate records for tests and other medical examinations carried out at the school as well as all care plans are securely kept. Pupils are supported to be actively involved in their IEP and their care plan reviews. Some records are kept within the units and these are 'working documents' which are available for pupils to read. Boarders are aware that they can access their care plans on request to any member of the residential team, although third party information would first need to be removed if the author had not given permission for it to be shared. Data protection information is kept locked in staff office which is available to staff. All details listed in this standard are contained within the school records and it is understood that the school retains records for at least 21 years from the date of birth of the individual.

The Statement of Purpose describes the overall purpose of the school and describes the theoretical or therapeutic models underpinning the practices within the school. The Statement of Purpose read in accord with the schools prospectus provides all required information. The documents are comprehensive and clear for all. The range of needs to be met under the Statement of Purpose are capable of being fulfilled by the school as it currently

operates, and the school only admits children whose assessed needs can be met within the purpose of the school. The Statement of Purpose is reviewed annually and is modified accordingly.

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	4
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	2
27	2

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

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	3
21	X
23	3
24	3
25	2

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

No

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	RS17	Care plans should be signed and dated to show clear reviewing systems are in place with an implementation date.	30/06/06
2	RS25	Refurbishment of bathrooms should be implemented.	31/12/06
3	RS26	Fire drills should contain detailed information including, the time, duration, persons involved, the actions, the outcome and any training identified following the drill. All profiling beds require a risk assessment.	31/05/06
4	RS27	All recruitment files should contain required documentation with suitable checks occurring as per school policy.	31/05/06
5	RS23	All internal doors must be accessible and suitable to meet the needs of the pupils.	31/12/06

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