



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

St Bernard`s School

**Wood Lane
Louth
Lincolnshire
LN11 8RS**

Lead Inspector
Alison Marshall

Announced Inspection
21st November 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	St Bernard`s School
Address	Wood Lane Louth Lincolnshire LN11 8RS
Telephone number	01507 603776
Fax number	01507 603914
Email address	
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Lincolnshire County Council
Name of Head	Mr Michael Allen Warren
Name of Head of Care	Mrs Ann Stebbings
Age range of residential pupils	
Date of last welfare inspection	23 November 2006

Brief Description of the School:

St Bernard's is a day and residential school for pupils with severe learning disabilities. Children and young people attending the school are aged between 2 - 19 years of age. At the time of the inspection there were four weekly boarders. The school also provides a respite service to children with disabilities over weekends and holidays.

There are two assistant heads within the school, one of which has overall responsibility for the residential provision. The Educational Care Officers (ECO) work across the residential, including respite, and school setting.

The school aims to provide an environment and curriculum that is stimulating, secure, varied in order to develop skills in different learning situations including the home, residential situation and the community.

The residential facilities provide a single bedroom for each young person, lounges, dining areas and a kitchen area. Resources such as the swimming pool and other educational facilities are available beyond the school day and provide varied opportunities for recreational pursuits.

St Bernard's is located in Louth with access to local shops, medical agencies and community facilities. The school provides appropriate transport to access these facilities and the wider resources in the surrounding areas of Lincolnshire.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place over 2 days: from 21 - 22 November and was carried out by one inspector.

Inspection planning was carried out beforehand and reviewed information provided by the school, information provided by other professionals, questionnaires returned from parents, staff and pupils.

During the time at the school the inspector spent time talking with the young people, the residential staff, the Head of Care, and key people within the school. The inspector joined the young people for an evening meal and lunch. A number of records were looked at.

The inspection took place when weekly boarders were in the residential area and focused on the service that they received. Some comments about the weekend and holiday respite service have been included when they were raised by staff.

What the school does well:

Parents responded positively to the questionnaire. They said the staff team were a 'small and friendly group'. Observation showed that there was good interaction between young people and staff. Discussion with staff showed that they were very aware of the young peoples' individual needs and the ways in which they needed support.

The role of the Educational Care Officer who worked in both school and the residential service aided communication between the two areas and helped to ensure young people received consistent support.

There were good arrangements for health care and staff said they received regular training regarding the health needs of the young people. New medication policies were being introduced in line with guidance from the DfES.

There was a good range of activities provided – both onsite and in the community. Young people said there was plenty to do.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The newly appointed assistant head who was responsible for the residential service showed a clear understanding of her role and a commitment to developing the residential area.

There was a rolling programme in place for Educational Care Officers to do Basic Food Hygiene training. Two staff on each shift set had completed the training already.

What they could do better:

The Statement of Purpose needed to accurately describe the residential provision in terms of what it set out to do for the young people and in manner in which the service was to be provided. This also needed to include the respite service.

Although staff had an understanding of child protection, they should still receive training.

Guidance was required for the use of the 'blue rooms': large tent like structures as some staff were insisting young people use them for 'time out', and this was not being recorded or monitored.

One bedroom had only half a door, like a stable door, which meant it would be very difficult to provide any privacy for a young person using that room.

Although a governor had visited the school as required by the National Minimum Standards the report did not cover all of the areas required.

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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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 and 15

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. There were good arrangements in place to meet the health needs of the young people.

EVIDENCE:

The young person's parent/guardian retained the overall responsibility for their child's own health care. Young people were registered with their own GP but could access one in Louth as an emergency patient if necessary.

There were good arrangements with the School Health Advisor for Children with Disabilities, who liaised regularly with the assistant head and the Educational Care Officers. He delivered training to staff on a range of issues relating to the special healthcare needs of young people. Staff could also contact him directly if they wished to discuss specific issues relating to young people. The Scholl Health advisor felt that staff had a good understanding of the health needs of the young people and that they provided good support to them.

Letters had been sent to all parents reminding them that DfES guidance (Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Year Settings) required that all medication be provided in their original containers with a pharmacy label. All medication was booked and off the residential wing and any medication administered was recorded. Only trained staff administered medication, including emergency medication. Parents had all signed consent forms to allow staff to give their child medication. One young person was given medication in yogurt and the tablet taken by another young person was crushed. These methods were both directions from parents. The school was advised that both of these methods should be discussed with a pharmacist, recorded and included in the medication policy that was being reviewed.

Young people ate their main meal at midday in school. A lighter tea was prepared by residential staff in the evening. They also provided all meals for those staying for respite. Following the last inspection, two staff on each team of Educational Care Officers had received Basic Food Hygiene training.

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 and 27

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The school had good procedures for the protection of young people, but some documentation needed to be more robust.

EVIDENCE:

The school had written guidelines for staff on privacy and confidentiality. Discussion with staff and observation showed that staff were aware of their role in supporting young peoples' privacy and ensuring that information was only shared on a need to know basis.

The responses in the parent questionnaires showed that they were aware of how to complain but had never had to. Staff showed that they encouraged and supported young people to say if they were unhappy about anything.

Complaints

The head teacher was the designated person for child protection and had attended the 4 day course provided by Lincolnshire County Council. It was suggested that the assistant head responsible for the residential provision should attend the 4 day course also. The child protection policy was being reviewed. Staff had not received recent child protection training, although in discussion they showed they were aware of the principles and their duty to report concerns. The assistant head was aware of the need to provide training and was considering the NSPCC Child Protection in Education Pack.

The school had a bullying policy but it was not seen to be any issue by either young people or staff.

The Head teacher was aware of his responsibility to notify significant events to the appropriate authorities. Given the needs of the young people and the high staffing ratio no young people had been reported as absent without permission. The school did have a procedure for staff to follow should somebody be reported as missing.

The school had a policy on the use of physical intervention, although this was used rarely. It was suggested that a broader behaviour management policy be drawn up to describe how the school managed the behaviour of the young people: this to include how the school viewed sanctions and how they would be recorded and monitored. There were a number of 'blue rooms' in school. These were large blue tent like structures. The head teacher said young people took themselves to these rooms to calm down. Inspection of records showed that some staff were using them as 'time out' rooms: they were insisting young people go into them. There should be written guidance available to staff about how these rooms are to be used, if they are to be used as 'time out' it must be clearly recorded and the use monitored by senior staff.

Health and safety records showed that regular fire drills and checks were taking place. There were no security issues identified.

No new staff had been recruited for a number of years and so it was not possible to assess and comment upon the current staff recruitment process.

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 and 22

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The range and variety of activities on offer was good. All young people received support in line with their individual needs.

EVIDENCE:

Both teachers and Educational Care Officers (ECO) said that there was a good working relationship between the school and the residential area. They felt that the role of the ECO who worked in both areas aided communication and consistency of care. There were four teams of ECOs, two of which were allocated to the school, and two to the residential area at any one time. Care plan folders went with the young person, again ensuring consistency of information for staff.

The assistant head and staff planned activities on a half termly basis for weekly boarders. This included activities in the community and in the residential area. Activities tended to be undertaken by the whole group or they occasionally divided into two groups. Activities during respite were determined by the ECOs on duty and were dependent on the needs, likes and dislikes of the group of young people in; and staffing numbers.

ECOs showed they were very aware of individual needs and likes and dislikes of young people. The young people presented with very different and at times conflicting needs. Of the four young people two were wheelchair users, non-verbal and completely dependent on staff for support with their personal needs and wanting and requiring a lot of external stimulation. The two other young people had very different needs: both were mobile, required a more

structured, calmer and quieter environment. The accommodation was spacious enough to allow the two groups to separate when needed, however, staff acknowledged that it did not ideally suit the needs of either group. Staff were skilled in managing the environment and the young people to ensure that they received individual support.

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, 17 and 20

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. All young people were able to make a positive contribution to the school and their own development, although the opportunities for this to happen could be expanded upon.

EVIDENCE:

Most young people had a severe learning disability, and communication difficulties. However, staff were skilled at using a range of communication methods, and knew the needs of the young people well. A school council had just been started as a means of enabling the young people to comment on the school and to make suggestions. Within the residential area choices tended to be made at an individual level. Discussion took place with the assistant head and staff about expanding the opportunities for young people to make choices for themselves and also about how the residential area was managed. It was suggested that a section on choice making could be included in the care plan format.

Each young person had an individual care plan. Not all were up to date: the assistant head was aware of this and it was one of the action points within her development plan. Those seen that were complete and up to date were of a good standard and provided sufficient information for staff to support young

people. Staff showed that although care plans were not up to date: they were very aware of the young peoples' needs and how to meet them.

Parents reported that contact with the school and staff was good. They were able to phone and visit. They said that staff were always welcoming and friendly and reported any concerns immediately to them. They were always invited to their child's review.

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):

23, 24 and 25

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The accommodation provided was

EVIDENCE:

The accommodation was large and spacious. It was child focused and as such met the needs of two young people reasonably well. Two other young people were educated in a specialist classroom set up for young people with autism spectrum disorder. As such it was very bare, uncluttered and had clear boundaries for activities. The residential wing was completely the opposite. Strategies were in place to help the young people make the transition between school and the residential area. One bedroom downstairs had only half a door to it. The top half was missing and this room was used by young people during the respite periods who displayed either challenging behaviour or who had numerous seizures. The school should consider ways of managing such situations whilst still allowing the young person in the room some privacy. Another room had a gate in it which could be bolted from the outside and so prevent the young person from coming out. Staff said the bolt was never used and in which case it should be removed. The school had made the best use of

the existing accommodation and every effort was made to ensure it felt homely.

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, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33

Quality in this outcome area is good. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The newly appointed assistant head with overall responsibility for the residential provision had a clear understanding of her role and had an action plan to address shortfalls within the service.

EVIDENCE:

There was a Statement of Purpose available, however, it did not provide a clear statement about the purpose of the residential provision, including the respite provision. Discussion with the senior management team of the school indicated that there was no clear focus and long-term plan for the residential service. There were no clearly defined admission criteria and so young people with very different needs were accommodated. As a result the service tended

to be based on a reactive rather than a pro-active model. A clearly defined Statement of Purpose was required to help address this.

Discussion with staff and inspection of rotas showed that during the week there was never less than three staff on duty to four young people. There was often a fourth person for the whole or part of the evening. Staff felt that there were sufficient staff on duty to allow them to meet the needs of the young people. However, at weekends they felt it could be problematic especially to access activities in the community. Staff described a weekend when five young people were in, four of whom were wheelchair users and one was mobile. With only three staff they could go out in the bus but could not get out of the bus together. The senior management team agreed that the mix of young people in at the weekend needed further thought and planning.

The assistant head had identified a number of areas where training was required. Staff felt that they received sufficient training and that the training opportunities were good. Training records for staff were not all complete or up to date. Staff said that they were well supported: senior staff were approachable and there were regular meetings. The assistant head was in the process of working up a system for staff to have formal 1:1 sessions

It was clear that the assistant head was in the process of evaluating and reviewing the residential service and had already identified most of the shortfalls detailed in this report and had an action plan in place to address these. Since the last inspection one of the governors had visited the residential provision but the report needed to cover those matters as detailed in the National Minimum Standard 33.3.

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	3

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
3	3
4	3
5	2
6	3
7	3
8	3
10	2
26	3
27	X

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

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

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

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	2
18	X
19	X
28	3
29	3
30	3
31	3
32	3
33	2

YES

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	RS1	The registered person should ensure that there is a statement of purpose that accurately describes the purpose of the residential provision, including the respite provision.	
2	RS5	The registered person should ensure that all staff, including ancillary staff, receive appropriate child protection training.	
3	RS10	The registered person should ensure that there is written guidance for staff about how the 'blue rooms' are used and that any use is monitored by senior staff.	
4	RS24	The registered person should ensure that all bedrooms offer privacy to the young person.	
6.	RS33	The registered person should ensure that a representative of the governing body visits the school once every half term, and completes a written report covering the matter set out in standard 33.3 Outstanding.	

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