



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

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

Vale of Evesham School

Four Pools Lane

Evesham

Worcestershire

WR11 6DH

11th, 12th and 13th of May 2004

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

The role of CSCI is to:

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

Inspection Methods & Findings

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

'X' is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

| |
|---------------------------|
| SCHOOL INFORMATION |
|---------------------------|

Name of School

Vale of Evesham School

AddressVale of Evesham School, Four Pools Lane, Evesham,
Worcestershire, WR11 6DH**Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school**

Worcestershire County Council Education Department

Tel No:

01386 443367

Fax No: 01386765787**Email Address:****Name of Head**

Mr Emlyn Matthews

CSCI Classification

Residential Special School

Type of schoolFor children with Moderate
Learning Disabilities, Severe
Learning Disabilities, Autistic
Spectrum Disorders and those
with Communication Disorders
and for those with Profound
and Multiple Learning
Disabilities.

Day and Boarding School.

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

13/5/03

| | | | |
|--|----------|-------------------|----------------|
| Date of Inspection Visit | | 11th May 2004 | ID Code |
| Time of Inspection Visit | | 10:00 am | |
| Name of CSCI Inspector | 1 | S Moodie | 073081 |
| Name of CSCI Inspector | 2 | Martha Nethaway | |
| Name of CSCI Inspector | 3 | NA | |
| Name of CSCI Inspector | 4 | NA | |
| Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable): | | NA | |
| Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the CSCI. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process. | | NA | |
| Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable) | | NA | |
| Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection | | Mr Emlyn Matthews | |

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INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

Inspections assess the extent to which the school is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, published by the Secretary of State under Section 87C of the Children Act 1989, and other relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 as amended. Residential Special Schools are not registered as children's homes unless they accommodate, or arrange accommodation for, one or more children for more than 295 days a year.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the CSCI in respect of Vale of Evesham School

The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Recommended action by the school
- Advisory recommendations on boarding welfare
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the lay assessor (where relevant)
- The Head's response and proposed action plan to address findings

INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections are undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children Act 1989 as amended, with additional visits as required.

The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates, 11th 12th & 13th May, 2004. Two inspectors carried out the inspection.

Questionnaires were sent to parents and those staff involved in the boarding life of the school. The response was good from both groups. Questionnaires were not appropriate tools to use with the children, nor were structured interviews in small groups. The inspectors substituted more observation time and were able to talk to young people in a semi-structured interview.

The inspectors observed three evening activities, two late evening routines and two early mornings. All meals were taken with the young people in the boarding school. The staff helpfully offered hospitality and every co-operation to enable the task to be carried out.

The inspectors would like to thank the children and young people, the care staff team, and the senior management team for enabling the inspection to run smoothly and for their consistent co-operation.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

The Vale of Evesham School provides education for children and young people with Moderate Learning Disabilities, for those with Severe Learning Disabilities: Autistic Spectrum Disorders and those with Communication Disorders and for those with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities.

The majority of children receive day education but there is provision for boarding, always described as the boarding school, which can accommodate 15 children and young people up to the age of 19 years as weekly boarders. At the time of the previous inspection, one bedroom had become unexpectedly available. Two senior boys who both benefited from the period of boarding had used it for two nights each during the week. It was not, however, the school's intention to make such a service a permanent element of the boarding provision. On this occasion only 1 pupil was using it as a "flexi boarder" and the other boarder had left. Including the one "flexi boarder" there were 16 boys boarding.

The boarding accommodation is placed on the first floor and consists of three suites, one of which is very separate from the other two. Each of the suites was staffed with its own team of care staff under a care officer, all of whom were responsible to the head of care.

The head teacher, the deputy head and the head of care had provided a range of documents in advance of the inspection to meet the requirements of the new National Standards. There was also an extensive collection of guidance documents for staff. The school is to be commended for this intensive preparation.

The school is maintained by the local education authority, Worcestershire County Council Department of Education, and is directly responsible to a governing body.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

The school had set out a clear ethos for caring and for educating the children and young people who board there. This was supported by well thought out methods of enabling the child to develop. The head, with the senior management team, had developed good communication structures to enable staff to have sufficient information to question, to monitor and to be well supported in very sensitive child care work they carry out with young people. The care team were exceptionally well led and managed by the head of care. Integration between the teaching and caring tasks of the school was very good. Good relationships with other professionals further promoted children's welfare.

The ethos of respect and care for individual children extended to the contacts that the school had with parents.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

Further documentation was required for some of the standards to fully met.

The local education authority will need to identify with the school who will be able to carry out the required monitoring visits of the boarding school.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

The inspectors have found that the school safeguards and promotes the welfare of the boarders to a high standard.

Statement of Purpose (Standards 1)

1 of the assessed standards was met.

The school had available a 'Statement of Purpose' and a 'School Prospectus' that set out the ethos what the school hoped to promote.

Children's Rights (Standards 2-4)

2 of the assessed standards were met and 1 was nearly met.

The school had a number of mechanisms in place to ensure consultation was taking place with young people including families/carers. The elected Student Council was active within the school and there was evidence of changes to the running of the school as a direct consequence of pupil's feedback. This was considered by the inspectors to be good practice. The school had documented policies in relation to privacy, dignity, rights and personal care. The complaints system within the school was operational. Some minor additional amendments were identified in relation to the complaints procedure. The head teacher was currently incorporating the new LEA's guidance on the complaints procedure and was aiming to produce one comprehensive document that would address the LEA's and the National Minimum Standards in the near future. The inspectors were informed a copy would be submitted to the Commission for consideration.

Child Protection (Standards 5-8)

4 of the assessed standards were met.

The practice within the school was in line with the standards assessed. The school had addressed the matters as identified in the previous inspection report. Amendments were made to the written policy on Child Protection. Staff had been provided child protection training in February 2004 and further annual refresher training courses were identified through a rolling training programme. Inspectors considered the school would act promptly in matters relating to the safeguarding and the protection of children and young people's welfare.

Care and Control (Standards 9-10)

1 of the assessed standards was met and 1 was not met.

The school provided a clear expectation of the standards of behaviour expected from the pupils. The ethos of the school was to provide a caring and supportive environment, enabling all pupils to feel secure and respected. Staff were provided with training in restraint techniques and behaviour management strategies. There were some shortfalls identified in the recording mechanism that the school used and some modification was required. During the inspectors' feedback session the head of care demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing these shortfalls.

Quality of Care (Standards 11-16)

6 of the 6 assessed standards were met.

The school had in place a thorough admission procedure. Careful consideration was given to ensuring the needs of the children and the existing groups were appropriately matched. The boarding school was particularly strong in the area of providing appropriate leisure activities. The teaching staff and the care staff promoted the identified targets for the children and young people worked with these through their leisure pursuit activities. New health care plans for each pupil were developed and implemented as required in the last inspection.

Care Planning and Placement Plan (Standards 17-22)

6 of the 6 assessed standards were met.

All pupils were provided with a detailed written plan of care known as the 'Residential Plans'. Records viewed by the inspectors were thorough. All pupils had an allocated keyworker. All students were provided with permanent private and secure records of their history and progress. Large selections of the school records were kept on an electronic database. Inspectors observed the staff recruitment record revealed the appropriate checks had been carried out. The school actively promoted constructive contact between the boarding school and the parents/carers. Transition planning was well organised at the school. The head of care ensured active liaison with the families/carers, social workers, adult services and further educational resources. The school had access to external specialists including medical services and psychiatric services. Inspectors were informed that there was a shortage of speech therapists. The school were actively training staff to enable them to specialise in communication including 'Total Communication' methods.

Premises (Standard 23-26)

4 of the 4 assessed standards were met.

The boarding accommodation was fully restructured and refurbished in 1999. The structure, decoration and furnishing of the two boarding suites, Dilwyn and Seymore, reached a high quality specification and standard. Linked by the use of natural woods, calm paintwork and lively soft furnishings, the two suites presented very attractive living areas.

External areas of the boarding accommodation were well maintained, as were the grounds that provided a range of different areas for play and activities. Boarders used the grounds in the afternoons and evenings. The programme to refurbish the boarder's accommodation had included more than sufficient bathrooms, showers and toilets to meet the required standard. They too were designed to a high specification and standard.

Staffing (Standards 27-30)

4 of the 4 assessed standards were met.

The school had a thorough visiting procedure in place for all visitors and the inspectors experienced this process in person. The staff recruitment files examined revealed a systematic approach, although some of the in house monitoring forms were not fully utilised. The Criminal Bureau Checks documents for staff were provided during the inspection. The school had developed and implemented a written staffing policy. The LEA now required 'structured breaks' for all staff and this was to be further monitored by the school. The boarding school was extremely fortunate in relation to the provision of the continuity of care staff and the staff turnover was low. The school provided formal induction for all new employees. The head of care ensured a thorough staff induction took place. Staff reported they were well supported at the school and were provided with structured supervision and annual appraisals.

Organisation and Management (Standard 31-33)

2 of the assessed standards were met and 1 was nearly met.

The head of care had extensive experience in the post and was able to provide relevant documents for the purpose of the inspection. The school had specifically addressed the NVQ training. The inspectors were impressed with the proactive response the school had achieved since the previous inspection in prioritising this training. The inspectors noted the head teacher and the senior management team had systems in place to address the monitoring as specified in the standards. This was positive to note.

Failure to meet this standard fully related to the local authority not selecting a senior officer to carry out the tasks in relation to Standard 33. The inspectors will formally submit a letter outlining these matters to the local authority.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended actions are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare.

| No | Standard* | Recommended Action | |
|----|-----------|--|--|
| 1 | RS4 | The school should ensure that its complaints procedure addresses the point outlined in Standard 4 and in addition ensure parents are confident about knowing how to complain. | |
| 2 | RS6 | The Anti-Bullying Policy should include all the points as outlined in Standard 6.2 as detailed in the report. | |
| 3 | RS7 | The school should ensure that the notification system refers to the new Commission for Social Care Inspection. | |
| 4 | RS10 | The school should maintain a record of any use of sanctions on a child by an adult in a separate bounded and numbered book. It should contain all the information required in Standard 10.9. | |
| 5 | RS16 | The school should ensure that those pupils wherever possible are encouraged to sign their names when they receive their monies. Copies of these records can then be placed in each child's and young person's file as outlined in Standard 18.2. | |
| 6 | RS18 | The school should ensure that each child's file contains all the information as outlined in Standard 18 of this report and develop guidance on enabling children to see their welfare file if they wish. | |
| 7 | RS26 | The school should review the implementation of the generic risk assessment and should include a date, signature and review date. | |

| | | | |
|----|------|---|--|
| 8 | RS27 | The school should ensure that the evidence recorded in staff files clearly indicates when the school has verified references. | |
| 9 | CH29 | The school should ensure that all staff are provided with training in food hygiene. | |
| 10 | RS33 | The school should explore with the local education authority who can carry out the half-termly monitoring of the boarding school. | |

ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

Identified below are advisory recommendations on welfare matters addressed in the main body of the report and based on the National Minimum Standards, made for consideration by the school.

| No | Refer to Standard* | Recommendation |
|----|--------------------|---|
| 1 | RS4 | The school is advised to provide training to the staff team as outlined in Standard 4.4. |
| 2 | RS5 | The school is advised to provide regular child protection refresher courses to help maintain staff vigilance in this area. |
| 3 | RS10 | The school is advised to provide an appropriate list of permissible sanctions in the new bound sanctions book. |
| 4 | RS14 | The school is advised that the health care plans could be included in the same file as the pupil profile and school curriculum folder. |
| 5 | RS18 | The school is advised that Standard 18.2 could provide a useful template for an index system. |
| 6 | RS18 | The school is advised to address the matters relating to Standard 18.4. |
| 7 | RS26 | The school is advised that the young person's behaviour management plan should be dovetailed into the existing risk assessments. |
| 8 | RS28 | The school is advised to continue to monitor the structured breaks to ensure that they do not impinge on the children and young people but also compile with the directive. |
| 9 | RS30 | The staff team is advised to review staff team meetings to ensure that an inclusive approach. |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
|--|--|--|

Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. RS10 refers to standard 10.

PART B**INSPECTION METHODS AND FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods were used in the production of this report

| | |
|---|-----|
| Direct Observation | YES |
| Pupil Guided Tour of Accommodation | YES |
| Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas | YES |

Checks with other Organisations

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| • Social Services | YES |
| • Fire Service | NO |
| • Environmental Health | NO |
| • DfES | NO |
| • School Doctor | NO |
| • Independent Person | NO |
| • Chair of Governors | NO |

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

| | |
|--|---------|
| Date of Inspection | 11/5/04 |
| Time of Inspection | 9:00 |
| Duration Of Inspection (hrs.) | 64 |
| Number of Inspector Days spent on site | 3 |

Pre-inspection information and the Head's Self evaluation Form, provided by the school, have also been taken into account in preparing this report.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Age Range of Boarding Pupils **From** **To**

NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

BOYS

GIRLS

TOTAL

Number of separate Boarding Houses

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the CSCI assessment of the extent to which standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

"9" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not applicable.

"X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

The school has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for those children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement can be made up of other documents, e.g., Letter of Approved Arrangements and school prospectus, which are required to include specific information.

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 3 |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|
|---------------------------|---------------|---|

The school had a 'Statement of Purpose' that described the school's philosophy and ethos. Within the 'School's Prospectus', the 'The Statement of Boarding Principles', 'Our guide to a Caring School' and the induction booklet for boarders and their parents, the school had set out the ethos that it endeavoured to promote. The ethos was essentially child centred, emphasising children's individual rights, and providing information on the school's approach to behaviour and sanctions and to non-disciplinary issues.

The governing body had reviewed the Statement in April 2003. The inspectors were informed the 'Statement of Purpose' was to be reviewed every two years or sooner if there was a need to alter information. Inspectors heard the statement was regularly updated in line with the school's development plan. The head stated that the 'Statement of Purpose' illustrated the continuum of provision through the day and residential settings.

The school had all the necessary policies and procedures, which reflect the aims and purpose of the establishment. All were dated and included a review date.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way that the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.
- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.

Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

Children's opinions, and those of their families or significant others, are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and their future. Feedback is given following consultations.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

Inspectors observed a number of forums that the school had in place to gain children and young people's feelings and opinions. The pupil profile was the underpinning document for the day-to-day plan of care for children and young people. There was clear evidence of seeking parent's views through questionnaires. The overall feedback was positive. The school had in place a mechanism that ensured any issues that were raised would be followed up appropriately. This was considered good practice. A similar process existed and was in place for gathering opinions from children and young people through using questionnaires including the use of symbols.

One day pupil spoke positively about the School Council and described how changes had occurred in the school as a direct result of the school listening and gaining children and young people's views. This was an empowering process and was considered good childcare practice.

Inspectors noted that staff responded positively to children and young people. The staff had received training in total communication and there were further plans to invite staff to specialise in developing an in-house model. The methods utilised included Signs and Symbols, Pictures, Widget computer packages and Makaton sign language. The importance of communication was also emphasised in the new staff induction process.

The school's literature promoted the philosophy of working in partnership with parents and carers. Parents and staff were in regular contact with the boarding school and this was noted through the case files sampled.

The eight questionnaires that were returned as part of this inspection indicated some very positive responses. The school was commended for providing an environment that met the educational needs of the children and young people and provided a friendly home environment whilst boarding. One of the school's strengths was identified as being the support that they can provide to children and young people with Autism and Autism Disorder Spectrum.

The school provided weekly boarding. There were no issues about weekend worship. As part of the school's state provision of education it had conducted assemblies that were broadly Christian. It was possible to meet dietary needs. These observations were on health grounds rather than religious observation. There was nothing to suggest that religious grounds would be difficult if needed.

Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.11)

The school and staff respect a child's wish for privacy and confidentiality so far as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school had available a policy on intimate care. The policy addressed all the points in Standard 3.2. It was clear that children and young people's dignity and need for privacy was promoted. Inspectors noted the sensitivity and skill that staff used when approaching young people who had personal support care needs. Inspectors noted the sensitive and discrete manner with which staff approached young people and this was emphasised in staff interviews.

All children and young people's records were securely stored. The school had mechanisms in place to ensure records were maintained and that access to the files was recorded separately. This was positive to observe.

Staff interviews revealed that staff were aware of how to report matters relating to child protection issues. Staff described the process and was familiar with the school's own child protection policy.

The school had implemented the advice provided in the previous inspection report in relation to providing advice and guidance for staff for visiting parents and this information was now available in the 'Care of Pupil Policy' The school did not provide a designated area for visiting family members. However the environment was spacious and there was scope for students to receive visitors in private. The outside garden area was also accessible.

The school actively promoted contact between children, parents and carers. Inspectors noted one student had their own mobile phone for receiving and making calls. Staff were able to provide practical assistance with students who were unable to make the call themselves.

The care staff team were predominately female. However the school actively sought to address gender balance. Inspectors noted that one of the three residential teachers was male and provided support and guidance during recreational pursuits during the second evening of the inspection. A positive role model was being created.

The school had in place a detailed proforma record in children and young people's files if any possessions needed to be searched. Inspectors were informed that young people usually responded to a specific request if any items belonging to others were missing.

Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)

Children know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the school, and feel confident that any complaint is addressed seriously and without delay.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****2**

Some children and young people could access the complaints process if the need arose. There were also a number of children who would need support from staff to enact this process. All children and young people had access to the School Nurse who was available four days per week to offer private consultation at the request of any pupil.

The school had a policy and procedure that addressed the complaints process. Parents were advised about the procedure for complaints in the School Prospectus. Clear advice was provided that the Head teacher or the Head of Care would always explore any complex situations directly with parents. The school had key principles outlining working in partnership, early intervention and fairness and consistency. The overreaching aim of the complaints system was to address concerns or worries in the first instance thoroughly and resolve issues to the complainants' satisfaction without delay.

- The schools had amended the written policy to reflect the advice provided in the previous inspection in May 2003. This now reflected all the elements of Standard 4.3. A minor omission still existed with one point, details on how external complaints about children will be managed. (e.g. those from local keepers, neighbours, the police etc.) The 'How Shall I tell the School', Pamphlet was directed towards parents and carers and not shopkeepers or neighbours etc.

The inspectors were informed that the LEA's had presented a new guidance document on complaints, with a view to adopting their procedures and guidance. Inspectors were informed the Head teacher would be developing further the documents in consultation with the governors and incorporate the existing procedures so one document could be implemented across the school. All new documents will need to include information about the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

Once the documentation was amalgamated, as a good practice measure consideration for staff to receive training to address the points outlined in Standard 4.4 should be pursued.

Five of the ten parent responses indicated they had received information about how to complain, three were unaware and one was not provided any information for that section.

This standard was almost met

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

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

0

Number of above complaints substantiated:

0

CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The advice provided in the previous inspection report had been instigated by the Head of Care. Inspectors were informed a copy of the ACPC (Area Child Protection Committee) was available in the school office. The procedural guidance dated October 2003-2004 was a thorough document that followed a clear format and was friendly to the user. The school had sought advice from an external body in the development of the policy and this was positive to hear. Contribution was also sought from one of the Governors who was a member of the local Area Child Protection Committee. Four staff were identified as the delegated individuals to enact issues relating to Child Protection. Particular attention had been given to ensuring all staff were provided with up to date training in child protection in January 2004. The school is advised that further refresher courses need to be provided in child protection in the future to help maintain staff vigilance in this area.

Staff interviews demonstrated that they were clear about their responses in relation to any child protection incidents that might emerge. There were clear reporting systems in place and staff awareness to be vigilant ensured the safeguards of the school were effectively maintained when working with children and young people.

There were no current live child protection issues with the boarding school.

This standard was met.

Number of recorded child protection enquiries initiated by the social services department during the past 12 months:

0

Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school had in place a policy and procedure on Anti-Harassment and Bullying that addressed the points raised in the previous inspection. The policy included a definition of bullying with just one omission related to Standard 6.2 (point 1) 'bullying by staff' needed to be included and developed into the policy. The policy was clearly laid out and provided a coherent approach to anti-bullying. The inspectors particularly praised the descriptions in the document that identified areas in the building that could pose a particular risk of opportunities to bully.

The inspectors noted that staff were proactive in their approach and practice ensuring children and young people were provided with effective supervision. Inspectors noted staff responded swiftly when an inappropriate interaction was taking place between children and young people. This was particularly noted in the main school dining room hall.

The school had risk assessments available and the Health and Safety coordinator periodically reviewed these.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

0 %

Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)

All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school had addressed the matters outlined in the previous inspection report. The school's list of events that should be notified was placed in the child protection procedures. The school had now implemented a system that incorporated who would make the notifications and how this should be done. Records were maintained of actions taken and the outcomes of any action or investigation. There was a system in place to notify the authorities and individuals of any serious concern about the emotional or mental health of a child such that a mental health assessment would be required under the Mental Health Act 1983.

The list of events included the need to notify the NCSC. This should be amended to the new Commission for Social Care Inspection.

There was evidence of two notifications that the Commission should have been notified of, as a measure of good practice. This was raised with the Head of Care at the time of the inspection.

This standard was met.

NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO CSCI DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:

- **conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children**
- **serious harm to a child**
- **serious illness or accident of a child**
- **serious incident requiring police to be called**

0

0

0

0

| | | |
|---|----------------------|----------|
| Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9) | | |
| The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance. | | |
| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 3 |
| <p>The school had available guidance that addressed absence without authority. Inspectors were informed that staff were aware of the procedure to follow if a student left without consent. It was identified that it was not a problem faced by the care staff in the boarding school as the entrance and exits were provided with keycode pads.</p> <p>The inspectors noted that two young people who access the community and presented a lack of personal safety and had been provided with belts that were secured around their waists. This could then be used if the young person suddenly wished to run. The use of these belts was appropriately recorded in the young people's plans of care. Consent was obtained from their parents.</p> <p>Guidance was available to staff in the Care of Pupils on the use of restraint if a child or student was determined to go missing. Any action followed the school's behaviour management policy.</p> <p>This standard was met.</p> | | |
| Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months: | | 0 |

CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour.

Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

Relationships between staff and children are based on mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries which are effective for both the individuals and the group.

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 4 |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|
|---------------------------|---------------|---|

A key feature of the school was the emphasis to provide a caring and supportive environment, enabling all pupils to feel secure and respected. This was encapsulated in the guidance from both the care of pupil policy and the behaviour management policy.

Inspectors observed a number of examples of a unified approach from staff in the management of pupil's behaviour and staff paid particular attention to the circumstance and background that lead to a pupil's distress. Staff used debriefing techniques and records accurately reflected the incidents observed. These approaches ensured a cohesive teamwork approach.

Inspectors noted through interviews and observations, a clear understanding of professional boundaries. Integral to this process was the guidance provided by the Head of Care and senior members of the team.

Inspectors did not observe any antipathy directed towards any of the boarders by care staff. There were no critical references to particular children. As inspectors noted earlier the emphasis was on developing consistent staff approaches to the varied needs of the children and young people.

The establishment of sound care practices and the professionalism of relationships between children and staff was a widely accepted principal of the school's ethos. The school's training underpinned this process.

This standard was well met.

Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.26)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?****2**

The ethos of the school was that staff should respond to positive behaviour. The child was therefore assisted to develop positive behaviour through encouragement. Staff made constructive responses to inappropriate behaviour and the overarching outcome for this standard was met well. Guidance was written down and promoted through training and internal on-going staff development. There was an excellent section on promoting positive behaviour for pupils with Autism. The school placed a strong emphasis on positive relationships and responses to behaviour.

At present only one element was omitted from Standard 10.6. This also prohibits the withholding of any aids or equipment needed by a child. Inspectors recognised that the school did not wish programmes of behaviour management to be seen as using sanctions. However Standard 10.9 requires a record that sanctions used, be kept in a bound and numbered book, which should list all permitted sanctions. The recordings should be legible and be made within 24 hours. Standard 10.9 then sets out what should be included in the entries.

- The name of the child,
- The date and location of the incident which lead to the sanction being applied,
- Details of the inappropriate behaviour,
- The nature of the sanction,
- The names of the staff giving the sanction,
- The name(s) of any other staff present,
- The effectiveness and any consequences of the sanctions,
- The signature of the staff member concerned.

There was no separate record kept at the time of the inspection, however the children's individual logs contained records of incidents and responses to incidents under the heading of 'sanctions/actions'. Most of the staff responses were positive but a few could be regarded as using permissible sanctions. One was the removal of a pupil from a bus and returning him to school when he was hitting someone. Another incident described removing a music system from a boarder's bedroom in the morning when music was put on loudly.

Inspectors discussed this with the school during the feedback session, and advised the school to keep a hard backed, bound record book with numbered pages which would include: a statement of what sanctions are prohibited, and a list of those sanctions or actions which would be permissible. Volume 5 of the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations, 3.9.4 suggests that these might include: temporary removal of privileges, mild or moderate verbal reprimand, additional chores, and restriction of leisure activities. The boarding school may wish to provide an appropriate list if these do not meet the needs of the young people. Entries about those incidents should include all of the information that is outlined in 10.9. above. Inspectors also recognised that, from reading the logs, such entries would be few and far between. This system would however provide a source of easily monitored information, which should reassure a reader that the boarders' welfare was fully safeguarded and that no actions were taken under the heading of behaviour management, which might merge into a prohibited disciplinary measure.

Standard 10 also indicates that there should be a hard backed, bound and numbered book containing the records of the use of physical intervention. The school had a report format, which met all of the requirements, copies of which were sent to the local authority. It also had a bound record book in which brief details of the reports were entered. The school was adding the number on the form to each record of physical intervention made in the book, which enabled the information to be easily cross-referenced to that full detailed account. The inspectors considered that this was acceptable.

QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

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

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 4 |
|--|---------------|---|
| <p>All admissions to the school were planned and in line with the County/School Admissions Policies. Procedures for students who were being admitted were consistent with those stated in the admission process. All students and families were provided with written and verbal information about when a boarding place was under consideration. The Head of Care was consulted and assessed the suitability of a placement and compatibility issues were examined with the existing group. Part of the process included information gathering that later formed part of the child's 'Profile'.</p> <p>All children were provided with opportunities to visit the school and view the accommodation and meet other children.</p> <p>The induction process was broadened over a number of pre-arranged visits and the provision of activities lengthened in time to allow children to settle in slowly.</p> <p>The school's transition planning was well organised. Visits to proposed settings took place and staff involvement with the young person's parents and social worker, when one was involved took place. Presently one young person was being prepared to leave the boarding school but would continue as a day pupil at the school. It was clear that considerable thought and staff support had been provided to ensure the transition was experienced positively for the young person concerned.</p> | | |

Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.7)

Care staff and the school's residential provision and activities actively contribute to individual children's educational progress, and care staff actively support children's education, ensuring regular attendance, punctuality and a minimum of interruption during the school day.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

4

All pupils have a 'Statement of Special Education Need', which names the school and the aims of the provision. Pupils were only admitted to the school when the LEA deemed the pupil's stated special educational needs would be met.

Care staff worked closely with each other to plan and monitor student's progress. Areas such as social skills and personal development were clearly identified and progress was recorded. The student's files examined by the inspectors contained a copy of the School Curriculum plans. Care staff were also working towards the same structure, systems and philosophy. These plans were reviewed each term and student's progress was well documented.

The Residential Care Officers were expected to provide a report for children and young people to review. The whole team actively contributed to this process and keyworkers, where possible, attended annual reviews.

The school ensured the residential provision had close links with the educational structure of the school. Three schoolteachers were allocated specific duties working with the residential students. Inspectors noted the effectiveness of this, when two of the evening activities were observed, namely horse riding and using the trampoline. It was pleasing to note the progress that individual students had made participating in these activities.

As noted earlier there was a clear direction to providing the support that students received, it was a trans-disciplinary team approach and this corresponded with the school's Statement of Purpose.

Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9)

Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

Activities for children and young people were well organised. This was a particular strength of the school. The pupil profile was informing the development goals of the leisure activities that were pursued. The timing of the evening meal at 4:30pm ensured that children and young people had sufficient time allocated to individual activities.

Inspectors were invited to attend both the evening scheduled activities. Namely horse riding, the musical session and using the trampoline. Children and young people were encouraged to prepare for these activities and there was a natural sequence of events that did not unsettle the young people. The events were well organised. Staff supervision and engagement was good. Each activity was attuned to individuals and young people's needs.

Children were also provided with opportunities for free time and young people opted to look at books, listen to music or watch television.

All activities were appropriately risk assessed by the teaching staff.

This standard was met.

Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)

The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets any intimate care needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The Head of Care ensured the advice provided in the previous report was actioned.

- A new controlled drugs cabinet and a controlled drug register was in use.
- Included in the medication policy was the protocol on the provision of non-prescribed medication.

The school had implemented a health plan for all boarders. This document followed the points outlined in Standard 14.6. These plans were kept separately in another file in the office. Inspectors advised that the health care plans could be contained in the same folder as the pupil profile and school curriculum folder. This would ensure a holistic overview was maintained for each pupil.

There was evidence that clear communication existed between the school nurse, the head of care and the residential staff. Boarders had good access to specialised medical practitioners.

This standard was met.

Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.15)

Children are provided with adequate quantities of suitably prepared wholesome and nutritious food, having regard to their needs and wishes, and have the opportunity to learn to prepare their own meals. Where appropriate special dietary needs due to health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background are met, including the choice of a vegetarian meal for children who wish it.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The school had a healthy eating policy and had been awarded the 'Promotion of Healthy Options' award. The school has a central kitchen and the school's dining room was used for midday meals. The dining room was large and accommodated all the children and staff on duty. Hot meals were served at midday and the lunches on the days of the inspection were good and provided adequate choice. The dietary needs of the young people lunching with the inspectors were handled sensitively. Breakfast and the evening meals were served in the boarder's dining room. Choices were available for both mealtimes for children and young people. A number of young people were provided with second helpings. Evening supper was available and young people often participated in buying the food for these snacks. This was positive to observe. The Head of Care ensured that records were maintained of the food consumed by the children as outlined in the previous inspection. As the inspector previously observed a number of the boys were continuing a growth spurt and the evening supper provided extra nutrition.

Children and young people's preferred choices with food was given careful consideration when staff obtained information from parents. One example included a young child who was particularly choosy and thorough records and monitoring was evident both while at the school and at home. The young child had subsequently increased their appetite and begun to experiment with a more varied diet. This was positive to observe.

The school had addressed the issue of children obtained cold water. It was now scheduled three times a day.

The inspectors noted that mealtimes were in general orderly and pleasant experiences. Staff provided effective supervision and engaged with the children and young people. Staff were proactive in their approach if a student displayed agitated behaviours. Inspectors noted one situation where the student was guided to leave the dining room. It was done in a sensitive manner and the other students were provided with verbal reassurance.

Environmental health had visited in January 2004 and checked the catering and storage arrangements at the school and action had been taken in line with the recommendations.

All elements of this standard were met.

Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.7)

Children are provided for adequately on an individual basis and encouraged to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing and personal requisites. Children who require assistance to choose what they wear and/or how they spend their money are provided with the assistance they need, in a way which maximises their choice.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

2

The school had appropriate arrangements in place to ensure children's and young people's personal needs were addressed. All the bedrooms had facilities to provide storage for toiletries, personal items and clothing. Financial records were maintained and personal accounts showed the cash expenditure for daily spending. Money was spent according to individual wishes and on outings. The inspectors when participating in shopping events noted this. Inspectors recommended that those pupils wherever possible are encouraged to sign their names do so when they receive their monies. Copies of these records can be placed in each children's and young person's file as outlined in Standard 18.2.

This standard was almost met.

CARE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT PLAN

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- **Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.**
- **Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.**
- **There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.**
- **In accordance with their wishes, children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.**
- **Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.**
- **Children receive individual support when they need it.**

Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

There is a written placement plan specifying how the school will care for each boarding pupil in accordance with his or her assessed needs, the school cares for that child in accordance with that plan, monitors progress in relation to that plan, and updates that plan as necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

All boarders were provided with written placement plans known as 'Residential Plans'. These plans clearly identified children's and young people's needs and included information regarding personal care. They were consistent with other generalised plans in children's care plans, and were appropriately extended to include the details of the children's welfare needs. Targets were clearly set out for each child from a baseline assessment and the residential care team worked on these with each child. Keyworkers used a simple monitoring tool and this provided a visual picture of the progress being achieved. The identified targets worked in conjunction with activities taking place in the school classroom. All targets were reviewed each term. There was evidence in the case files where young people had received award certificates.

As identified in the previous inspection the placement plans complied with most of the points in Standard 17.5 and Standard 17.6. The head of care had revised the plans to include information about any medication and contact arrangements with parents and relatives.

Daily records maintained at the boarding school clearly recorded children's progress and evidenced when the targets were being achieved. As stated previously this was a useful professional tool for the staff team and the head of care. The care team were commended on the quality and standard that these recordings reached.

The boarding school provided an allocated keyworker system for each child. The philosophy relating to keyworking was based on identifying an individual responsible for promoting the welfare of each individual child. The keyworkers interviewed demonstrated they were familiar with the plan of care for each child. This was particularly evident in one staff member's account about one young person's health care needs. The knowledge base cited was thorough and corresponded with the documentation viewed. The staff team were commended for this.

The school convened all annual statutory educational reviews. Care staff provided written reports on each child's progress and contributed to the review process. Children and young people attended their own reviews and attendees were sensitive to the needs of the child.

Inspectors viewed this standard as well met.

Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.5)

Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress which can, in compliance with legal requirements for safeguards, be seen by the child.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

All students have permanent private and secure records of their history and progress. There was also a system to record whether a file had been borrowed and if so, when and by whom. This provided increased security.

The boarding school complied with most of the points outlined in Standard 18.2. From the sampled selected by the inspectors the following should be included in the files

- Details of accidents and illness whilst at school
- Deposit and withdrawals of money and valuables
- The date and circumstance of any control, restraint or discipline used on a child

The boarding school is advised to examine Standard 18.2 as this could provide the template for an index system to ensure that all the information is provided in the student's files. It was positive to observe the staff signature list in young people's files. This was considered good practice.

It was acknowledged by the inspectors that the boarding school did maintain an individual financial record for each pupil. The inspectors consider this record constitutes part of the school records and when completed it must be placed on the pupil's individual file, as indicated in Standard 16.

There was no evidence available on how the boarding school specifically addressed Standard 18.4, which requires that children should be made aware that they may read their welfare files, if they wish. If young people choose to exercise their right to read their files a confidential section needs to be added and that restriction to third party information is adhered to. Provision for adding personal statements or statements correcting errors needs to be included. Inspectors noted that few pupils could read and might also have difficulty in understanding the meaning of the exercise. The school needed to develop guidance on this.

The school had a system of archiving children's files, which ensured that they would be kept secure and for the required length of time. If they were passed to another school there was a record available to reflect this.

Although each child had more than one place in which the information required by the Standard 18 was kept, the inspectors were confident that it could be drawn together when required.

This standard was met.

Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.3)

The school maintains clear and accurate records on the staff and child groups of the school, and major events affecting the school and children resident there.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

One of the inspectors was informed the school records were all kept on an electronic database. Staff recruitment records examined revealed the appropriate checks had been carried out. The inspectors were told the Head Teacher lived in a school house during the week.

Records were maintained of menus as served. The school had introduced a new method for recording accidents. The head of care recorded the identities of those who took part on the duty rota. The school had in place a system for the recording of all visitors to the school. Diaries were kept in the boarding school for all the children and young people.

The school kept and archived all records assiduously.

This standard was met.

Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.6)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

Feedback from parent's questions clearly indicated that contact between the home and the school was actively promoted and welcomed. This was positive to observe. Children's files detailed the contact arrangements for individual families. Keyworkers interviewed, cited the importance of keeping open dialogue with parents on important matters relating to the children and young people. Regular telephoned contact by keyworkers occurred. Social functions were arranged including special assemblies, coffee mornings, summer fetes and barbeques. The head teacher's reports, following consultation through questionnaires, has improved communication with the provision of letters to the homes.

This standard was well met.

Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.2)

Where a pupil is in care and will be leaving care on leaving the school, the school agrees with the young person's responsible authority what contribution it should make to implement any Pathway or other plan for the pupil before the pupil leaves school. These arrangements are in line with that young person's needs, and the school implements its contribution where feasible from at least a year before the pupil is expected to leave care or move to independent living. The school works with any Personal Advisor for the child.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Transition planning was well organised at the school. All boarders, post fourteen years of age, have a Transitional Review each year, with a Transitional Plan to prepare for the next stage after school. These reviews include the Connexions Service and a Disability Assessment Officer from Social Services. One boarder was preparing to leave and a good deal of preparatory work and support was made available for this young person. This was considered good practice.

The head of care ensured there were current plans and procedures in place for the next set of leavers. The head of care liaised closely with parents especially prior to the young person's onward move to 'Adult Services'. The staff team were involved in providing support to parents in looking for the next placement for a young person.

This standard was met.

Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.13)

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

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

All boarders have an allocated keyworker. Inspectors noted the skilled support that the care staff provided children and young people. There were prompt responses to the children and young peoples expressed needs. One inspector participated in a musical session and observed the positive reactions from the children and young people themselves.

The school was able to access specialist medical and psychiatric services. It was reported there was a shortage of speech therapists. The school nurse's hours had been increased. The school nurse also acted as a counsellor or as an advocate when needed. The school nurse was employed externally for the services as a counsellor and advocate thereby ensuring impartiality.

The school's ethos and philosophy ensures that children's and young people's needs are central to the development of the programmes of care for individuals.

This standard was met.

PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children live in well designed, pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.
- Children live in accommodation that is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.
- Children are able to carry out their ablutions in privacy and with dignity.
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.

Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. It serves the needs of the children and provides the sort of environment most helpful to each child's development, and is sufficient for the number of children.

| Key Findings and Evidence | Standard met? | 3 |
|---------------------------|---------------|---|
|---------------------------|---------------|---|

The school itself was well placed towards the edge of a country town. The boarding accommodation was in two wings on the first floor, angled from a central point. Each could be entered from a central staircase and each had another staircase at the far end of the wings. The central staircase opened on to a small lobby that led into a large dining room used by all of the boarders. There was a lift that would facilitate wheelchair access. This accommodation was fully restructured and refurbished in 1999. After many years of struggling with inadequate provision for the boarders, the school now has a residential setting that serves the needs of the children well.

The school effectively secured access from outsiders and has had to ensure that children could not easily wander out by placing handles or buttons high up on external doors.

Auditory monitoring was used at night in one part of the building. Inspectors saw the letters asking for parental agreement when this was introduced. Parents welcomed the suggestion. The use of electronic auditory equipment to monitor signs of disturbance or indications of illness amongst the youngest boys was now included in the Statement of Purpose (Standard 23.7) and all parents were aware that it was used, as well as being included within the individual child's placement plan.

Where children were unable to exit from their bedrooms because they were too small to use both handles the inspector heard that parents had welcomed this. It was included in the child's care plan. It was to be hoped that the school and home would be able to plan jointly for children who grew sufficiently to use the system independently when parents might consider this a difficulty for them at home. It is essential that any such decisions are recorded with the agreement of the placing authority.

The standard was met.

Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.19)

The school provides adequate good quality and well-maintained accommodation for boarding pupils, which is consistent with their needs.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

The structure, decoration and furnishing of the two boarding suites, Dilwyn and Seymore, reached a very high standard. Linked by the use of natural woods, calm paintwork and lively soft furnishings the two suites presented very attractive living areas.

External areas of the boarding accommodation were well maintained, as were the grounds that provided a range of different areas for play and activities. Boarders used the grounds in the afternoons and evenings.

The boarder's living accommodation was examined in detail in the last report from the County Inspectorate, Worcestershire County Council in 2000. It was assessed against the 'Education (School Premises) Regulations 1996' which were re-issued in 1999. The size of the children's single bedrooms and the amount of space which they had for leisure activities all exceeded the minimum requirements.

This inspector had seen Seymore Suite when it was first in use in 1999 and can confirm that there had been no deterioration in appearance and no obvious signs of wear and tear during this visit. Staff reported that any damage was remedied as quickly as possible and they believed that the children responded very positively to the brightness, warmth and comfort of the surroundings.

All of the elements of this standard have been met well.

Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.7)

The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets, all of good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children. The school has appropriate changing and washing facilities for incontinent children where necessary.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

The programme to refurbish the boarder's accommodation had included more than sufficient bathrooms, showers and toilets to meet the required standard. They too were designed to a high standard.

Some of the bedrooms had additional hand basins, which could be locked behind panels. It was noted that in some of the rooms for older young people these basins were in use and were surrounded by personal toiletries.

All of the bathrooms and toilets were lockable with locks that could be overridden by staff. Staff were conscious of the children's need for privacy and dignity and for safety. There were some children who needed direct help from staff to accomplish personal hygiene tasks.

This standard has been well met.

Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)

Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, in accordance with Health and Safety and Fire legislation and guidance.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

The school was proactive and ensured children and young people were kept as safe as possible. The school had a Health and Safety committee and staff were designated with specific responsibilities. Risk assessments were examined and were current and signed and dated. The only area reported to need reviewing was the Behavioural Management Plan, which should be dovetailed in with the existing risk assessment. The Health and Safety coordinator acknowledged this and remedial action was planned for the future.

The new risk assessment introduced by the Council known, as the LEA Generic Risk Assessment did not contain a date, signature or review date. Good practice would indicate that the application of that type of risk assessment should be reviewed.

The head of care was particularly attentive to any perceived hazards identified in the living environment or related to safety issues in the local community or area.

The caretaker carried out routine checks. All fire checks were completed. The inspectors examined the reports for fire extinguishers, fire alarms, waste disposal, electrical installation, the certificate for power lift, steam boiler and the disinfection certificate. All were up to date.

This standard was met.

STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

The school has in place a thorough visiting procedure and the Head teacher regularly examines the visitor's sheets. At the foyer administrators screened visitors, CCTV monitors provided extra security.

An inspector sampled three recruitment files. Most of the elements in Standard 27.2 were in place. There was a mechanism in place to ensure direct contact by the school with each referee to verify the reference. Although this was happening, the school did not always complete the necessary documentation to evidence this. The inspectors recommended the school should ensure that all the processes used were appropriately recorded and easy to find.

Criminal Records Bureau documents were made available to the inspector for checking.

At the time of the inspection, a number of gap students were on work experience placements. All the gap students were provided with a certificate of good conduct and the inspectors were informed that students were not left unsupervised with the children and young people. They were not involved in the boarding life of the school.

This standard was almost met.

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|---|---|
| Total number of care staff: | 12 | Number of care staff who left in last 12 months: | 1 |
|------------------------------------|----|---|---|

Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)

The school is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the minimum level specified under standard 28.2. Records of staff actually working in the school demonstrate achievement of this staffing level.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

4

The school had provided a written staffing policy. This was pleasing to note. The inspectors were informed that it was the practice of the school to ensure that each unit had at least two staff on duty at a time. Three staff covered the sleeping-in duties and one waking night staff was present with overall night time responsibility for all three groups. In addition, a member of the teaching staff was allocated to support a group from each unit when activities were arranged. This was observed during the horse riding and trampoline event. This provision corresponded with the schools Statement of Purpose.

Inspectors were informed that the LEA now required the implementation of 'structured breaks' for all staff. The inspectors were informed it was an EEC working time directive. So in affect each employee now was allocated a 30-minute slot during the evening activities. It was reported that it could be difficult in timing this due to the various activities prearranged for the young people and also a total of 3 hours was needed to meet this directive. The school was not in the position to allocate any extra resources. The inspectors advised the school to closely monitor that this did not impinge on the children and young people but also complied with the directive.

The school has provided an excellent track record with regard to continuity of staff. As outlined in the previous inspection report, the head of care has been employed for a number of years at the school. Three of the senior care officers were also experienced in working in the school. The three staff who undertook the residential duties had been committed to this role for a long period. The pattern of boarding for only four nights a week resulted in fewer changes of shifts than would otherwise have been the case. Additional staff worked full or part-time. Other staff were brought in to cover when sickness or other unavoidable absences occurred in the team. These staff were also known to the young people. It was also possible to obtain additional staff to meet an individual child's needs, if this was required.

This standard was particularly well met.

Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)

Staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the school.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

All new staff were provided with a formal induction. Each new employee was allocated an induction supervisor/mentor who would assist with completing the induction and to help the new member of staff become familiar with the children and young people. The head of care closely monitored this process. Guidelines were available on child protection and staff were provided with training in child protection in February 2004.

The school had a clear statement on staff accountability including a staff flowchart contained in the Staff handbook.

Although teaching staff have pursued post qualifying training this does not yet apply childcare staff. Discussion with care staff indicated that the training available through NVQ Level 3 Care of children and young people did not cover the topics in Appendix 2. Not all staff had undertaken training in food hygiene Standard 29.4 a system existed to ensure this was completed within the school's staff training plan. All staff were provided with a personal development plan.

The deputy head of the school was responsible for overseeing staff training. There was clear evidence that the school provided a varied selection of in-house training courses. Training had been provided in child protection, positive physical holding, team-teach, fire procedures, food hygiene, risk assessments and sensory garden training. Key features of the school training were based on providing communication with children and young people and physical intervention with the management of children.

This standard was met.

Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)

All staff, including domestic staff and the Head of the school, are properly accountable and supported.

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

2

Staff reported they were well supported at the school. Staff were provided with structured supervision as set out in Standard 30.2. Records were available of supervisions. Inspectors were pleased to see that the head of care had implemented a supervision proforma that addressed all the matters in Standard 30.4. The deputy head teacher carried out staff appraisals and valued the opportunity to provide direct feedback to staff about their performance, and to receive information to improve the quality of care provided at the school.

The deputy head of the school as mentioned in Standard 29 was designated with the responsibility of developing and promoting the training in line with the school's development. The school had a progressive process in place with regard to training that was provided to the staff team. A recent example of this was 'De-stressing in the Work Place'. This was positive to observe.

It was noted by the inspectors that there was regular contact between the school teaching staff and the residential support staff. This corresponded with the Statement of Purpose. The inspectors noted with pleasure that there was a close working relationship with the management team and the staff care team. It was cited that staff felt confident in approaching the senior members of the team at the school.

Staff team meetings were held weekly and the senior team also meet weekly. The only group identified as missing out in the process was the care assistants. Perhaps a representative from this group could attend the weekly staff team meetings.

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

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

Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

3

As indicated in the previous inspection report the school was fortunate to have a head of care with extensive experience in the post. The head of care carried out the role with considerable skill and responded professionally and sensitively towards children, their parents/carers, colleagues in the senior management team and the members of the care staff.

The head of care has a management qualification and an assessment had been undertaken by the Head teacher which confirmed that the head of care skills met the competencies required to undertake the role at the required level.

The school had specifically addressed the NVQ training. The majority of the care staff were now currently undertaking in NVQ Level 3. The promotion of NVQ 3 in care of children and young people was in line to meet the target set for 2005. The inspectors were impressed with the proactive response the school had achieved since the previous inspection in prioritising this.

Since the last inspection Human Resources was ensuring that staff working hours were consistent with both the Statement of Purpose and the 'Working Time Directive'. Inspectors heard that there were annual medicals and staff breaks were now enforced.

Inspectors were assured that the school has a set of planned arrangements in response to a range of foreseeable crisis.

The school has met the requirement with providing parents with full information about its policies. Inspectors were pleased to hear that the school nurse has sufficient time to continue training to maintain registration.

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

0

%

Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

The Commission for Social Care Inspection is informed within 24 hours if a receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy becomes responsible for the school. Such persons on becoming responsible for the school have ensured that the school continues to be managed on a day-to-day basis by a Head who meets recruitment and qualification requirements for a Head under these Standards. Such a temporary Head must make sure that the operation of the school meets the requirements of these standards in relation to the day to day running of the school.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The immediate heading of this standard was not wholly relevant to a school run by a local education department. The intended outcome, however, that children and staff enjoy the stability of an efficiently run school, is essential for all schools.

Inspectors noted the school had good arrangements for monitoring the topics in Standard 32.2. The school provided an annual school development plan. In addition there were head teacher reports to the governing body.

The head teacher was clear about the delegation of the management roles, responsibilities and the monitoring process. Clear lines of accountability were ensured.

The inspectors were informed the SEN Review of Special Schools in Worcestershire was nearing completion. Consultation for the Vale of Evesham School was reported to have provided positive information including sharing the views and concerns of the parents/carers and the outcomes would be made known by July 2004. The proposed re-opening of the school as a 52-week children's boarding school had been formally raised as a concern.

Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.7)

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

Key Findings and Evidence

Standard met?

1

The inspectors noted the head teacher and the senior management team had systems in place to address the monitoring as specified in the standards. This was positive to note.

Since the last inspection the boarding school had not made any further development or progress in identifying a person to visit the school every half term. The head teacher reiterated the pressures on the duties of governors had steadily increased over the years. Adding further elements to their roles might make it increasingly difficult to retrain a very valuable group of people who acted in a voluntary capacity. The head teacher did not want to erode this working relationship.

It was identified therefore it would be more appropriate for the local authority to select a senior officer to carry out these tasks. The inspectors will formally submit a letter outlining these matters to the local authority.

In the immediate future the level of internal reviews was sufficiently productive to assuage any fears that this lack of provision had left the school in any way unsafe. The head teacher experienced a gap in support from the local authority and this would be one way to bridge this gap.

This standard was not met.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

Empty box for Lay Assessor's Summary content.

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

PART D

HEAD'S RESPONSE

D.1 Head's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

I am pleased to accept the findings of your Inspection Report and wish to thank you both for the positive style of your inspection in helping us to become even more stunningly brilliant!

Review and Action Plan enclosed.

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

NO

Comments were received from the provider

YES

Head's comments were incorporated into the final inspection report

YES

Head's comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate

Note:

In instances where there is a major difference of view between the Inspector and the Head both views will be made available on request to the Area Office.

D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 26.07.04, which indicates how recommended actions and advisory recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.

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

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

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

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT

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

D.3.1 I Emlyn Matthews of Vale of Evesham School confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the recommended actions made and will seek to comply with these.

Print Name EMLYN MATTHEWS
Signature _____
Designation HEAD TEACHER
Date 15.07.04

Or

D.3.2 I _____ of Vale of Evesham School am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:

Print Name _____
Signature _____
Designation _____
Date _____

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