

inspection report

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

North Hill House School

Fromefield

Frome

Somerset

BA11 2HB

24th January 2005

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

North Hill House

Address

North Parade, Frome, Somerset, BA11 2AB

Tel No:

01373 466222

Fax No:

01373 300374

Email Address:

Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school

Farleigh Education Group

Name of Head

CSCI Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

04/02/03

Date of Inspection Visit		24 January 2005	ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit		09:30 am	
Name of CSCI Inspector	1	Pam Fletcher	096736
Name of CSCI Inspector	2	David Kidner	080905
Name of CSCI Inspector	3		
Name of CSCI Inspector	4		
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):			
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.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection		Andrew Cobley and Sharon Edney	

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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 North Hill House

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.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

North Hill house opened in September 1999. The school is one of a number of school's owned by Priory Education Services.

The school recently moved premises, to a purpose built site in Fromefield, Somerset.

The school is specifically designed for boys with Asperger's Syndrome and for a number of boys who have other additional support needs.

The school provides a thirty-six week placement, and provides both residential and day care. The age range of the students at the school is from 7 to 18 years.

The school is approved under section 347(1) of the Education Act 1996 for students aged 7-18.

The new premises include 6 small residential areas as well as a range of specialist classrooms.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

The inspection was undertaken over the course of three days. The inspectors had many opportunities to observe a very high standard of practice from staff, in relation to the care and support given to each young person resident at the school.

All the staff seen and spoken to showed evidence that they had a sound knowledge of the individual needs of young people. Care planning and meeting individual needs was achieved by good leadership, excellent communication, clear records and by a high level of monitoring.

The residential areas were well maintained, clean and suitable for purpose. Each young person is offered a good degree of privacy and space.

The inspectors felt that good progression had been made in developing a more 'seamless' approach to the provision at North Hill House. Links between the care and education staff had grown, there was evidence that staff valued each other's roles, and that all staff actively promoted both educational and social needs.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

The school has good systems in place to promote and maintain the welfare of the students. The inspectors felt that the recent changes and expansion of the school have been managed well by both Senior Managers and by the staff team. There was no evidence to suggest that expansion had compromised the high standard of provision, however staff reported feeling 'stretched' at times, in meeting all the demands of their roles. The inspectors were impressed by the attitude of staff, all reported and demonstrated a real commitment to the school and to the young people placed there. Any further expansion and growth, needs to fully take into account the needs of staff, who are already working very long hours, sometimes over and above their contracted hours.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

The inspectors would like to thank the young people, Senior Managers, and all the staff met during the inspection for their helpfulness. The inspectors saw evidence that boarding provision was provided in a flexible, creative manner, the aim being to fully take into account the individual needs of the young people at the school. There was no evidence of a distinction between day and boarding students and a good deal of evidence that staff and young people are proud of the school. The school offers young people an opportunity not only to achieve academic success but to also develop confidence in social situations.

NOTIFICATIONS TO LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY OR SECRETARY OF STATE

NO

**Local Education Authority
Secretary of State**

NO

NO

The grounds for any Notification to be made are:

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION

YES

No	Standard	Recommended actions	

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	RS26	It is strongly advised that Gas safety checks are undertaken at least annually in line with Standard 26.2	14/03/05
2	RS30	New staff should be given supervision at least every two weeks during the first two terms of their employment. Measures, planned to address this shortfall should be put into place as soon as possible.	01/03/05
3	RS15	It is recommended that advice be sought from the dietician where young people have specific dietary needs.	01/03/05

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	RS3	It is advised that the plans to put doors on the telephone booths is acted on promptly, in order for young people to be offered as much privacy as possible.
2	RS5	It is advised that a system is put into place to ensure that all staff have gained sufficient confidence and knowledge in relation to child protection procedures.

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	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	YES
• 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	NO
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	NO
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	24/01/05
Time of Inspection	0930
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	29
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 has a 'Statement of Purpose' describing what it sets out to do for the students placed there. Methodology is briefly described and is backed up by numerous training and policy documents.

The Statement contains a list of both academic and care staff, their qualifications, and a flow chart of the organisational structure in place.

The Statement of Purpose' is supplemented by a young person's handbook which is attractively illustrated and written in appropriate language. Since the inspection the school has been proactive, and have added the Commission for Social Care Inspection contact number to the list, already contained in the young person's guide.

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

There are systems in place in the school to try to gain the views of young people wherever possible. These include school council meetings, where staff attending the meetings take young people's views forward. The inspectors found evidence that suggestions had been acted upon. One example was in relation to food. The school had recently introduced 'Healthy Eating'; in part this had been at the suggestion of young people. Where this has caused difficulties for a number of youngsters, steps had been taken to monitor the changes, and to also adapt menus to take into account individual preferences.

The school has a system in place where young people are given both an academic and a personal tutor. The inspectors found evidence, by discussion and from records seen that the 'Tutor' role plays an integral part in meeting needs and offers also young people a chance to put their views, feelings and issues forward to an identified member of staff.

The school has a 'Suggestion' box. One young person reported to inspectors that he finds this a good way of letting staff know about his feelings.

Weekly reports were devised on each young person. These reports were sent to parents or carers. Each report contained not only comments about academic progress but also a report on the care aspect of provision.

The inspectors received 21 responses from the questionnaires sent to parents. The majority of respondents reported being very satisfied with all aspects of care provision and reported that they are fully consulted about all aspects of their child's care at the school.

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 staff observed during the inspection demonstrated a good awareness of the need to promote confidentiality and to maintain records securely.

Staff reported always knocking on bedroom doors and waiting for a response from the young people before entering. Young people spoken to during the inspection confirmed this.

Where staff needed to offer additional support in meeting care needs, the manner in which this was to be offered, was planned and then clearly recorded in care plans. One example was where, in one instance, support had been needed in hair washing.

Each floor area had a telephone for specific use by young people. The school are waiting for doors to be attached to telephone booths, in order to fully meet privacy needs. The majority of young people have their own mobile telephones and also have the opportunity to send E-mails. The use of the internet is closely monitored and relevant safeguards applied in order to balance communication needs with safety and welfare.

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?****3**

The inspectors spoke to 20 young people. When the inspectors asked young people if they knew how to make a complaint 16 commented that they did. However, due to the specific individual needs of the young people involved, the inspectors could not ascertain whether or not they fully understood the complaints process. This was discussed with the Senior Managers at the end of the inspection.

The inspectors received 21 responses from parents, elicited from pre inspection questionnaires. Of these, 17 parents reported that the school had told them how to make a complaint.

The school had a complaints by pupil policy, dated September 2004. There is a grievance procedure in place should an employee at the school wish to make a complaint.

The inspectors saw a complaints log, held by the Head of Care. Records include the complaint, action taken and outcomes or resolution. The young people had made a number of these complaints. Young people's complaints were mainly around play areas and equipment and action had been taken to address these issues.

During the inspection process the inspectors were able to observe the Head of Care responding to and following up on a complaint made by a young person.

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

19

Number of above complaints substantiated:

9

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

1

Number of above complaints substantiated:

X

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 Vice Principal (Head of Care) acts as Child Protection co-ordinator in the school with the Head Teacher taking on this role in her absence. The school holds a current copy of local Area Child Protection Committee policies and procedures. This is readily available to the staff team.

The Head of Care informed the inspectors that she had supplied the school child protection policies to the local social service department for consideration and comment.

All staff receive a level of child protection training during their induction period. They also receive ongoing training, as identified in the school's training and development programme.

The inspectors informed the Senior Managers that after discussion with some staff members it was evident that some staff had gained more confidence than others in relation to child protection processes. The Senior Managers said that they would be addressing this.

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 has an anti bullying policy in place. Staff demonstrated an awareness of the need to be vigilant in this area. The Head teacher and Head of Care told the inspectors about the difficulties experienced by some young people, with Asperger's Syndrome, in their perception of what or what is not bullying. They explained that responses to complaints about bullying have to include an awareness of the young people involved and their individual needs.

The inspectors noted that in the assembly room there is a large notice board, which contained information and explanation of what constitutes bullying and how the young people can report to any staff members if they feel they are being bullied. It was also noted that there are posters and information about anti bullying throughout the living areas.

The inspectors spoke to 20 young people individually. 11 young people stated that they are not being bullied. It appeared that 1 young person did not understand what was being asked, 4 young people stated that they had been subject to bullying, but that it has now stopped, and 3 reported still being bullied.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

X

%

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 has a process in place for reporting notifiable events. One Notification had been made to the Commission for Social Care Inspection since the last inspection

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

1

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
The school had a process and protocol in place in the event of young people being absent without authority. The inspectors noted detailed records of 1 such incident. This had occurred a year previously.		
Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:		1

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
The inspectors had the opportunity to witness and observe evidence of sound relationships between the staff and young people at North Hill House. Staff were very aware of the individual needs of the young people. The inspectors witnessed staff communicating with each other in a very professional manner in relation to responding to behaviours exhibited by young people towards other young people and towards staff. Staff addressed inappropriate behaviours in a professional and sensitive manner. On a number of occasions the inspectors were able to witness staff giving 'one to one' support.		

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?****3**

The school has a policy for the use of 'Restrictive Physical Intervention.' The Head Teacher, Head of Care, Senior Team Leader, Speech and Language Therapist and the Occupational Therapist devised this policy. The school Governors had also viewed this policy. The Head of Care and Senior Team Leader had attended a three-day course run by Somerset Social Services and Somerset and Avon Police force in the use of 'Breakaway' techniques and 'Restrictive Physical Intervention'. The school also had a guidelines booklet for staff around the use, and documentation of Restrictive Physical Intervention. The school had an agreed list of manoeuvres and techniques that can be used. The Head of Care stated that all staff receive Restrictive Physical Intervention training and are only taught techniques that are required for individual young people. Records are kept of all staff who have undertaken this training. Staff that the inspectors spoke to confirmed that they have received this training. The Head of Care stated that parents have been invited to attend physical intervention training. All documentation relating to incidents of Restrictive Physical Intervention are completed by the staff involved and are always sent to the Head of Care for her information. The school has a physical intervention log. The Head of Care or the Head Teacher sign off the log.

One of the inspectors was able to case track incidents that had resulted in the use of Restrictive Physical Intervention, a sanction and the need to complete an accident form. The documentation was easily accessible and the inspector was able to cross reference information. The Placement Plan that one inspector viewed, noted that the parent had signed the agreed intervention plan. The Head of Care takes the lead role in monitoring and reviewing the use of physical intervention at the school.

All staff had signed an agreement of awareness and understanding of sanctions, behaviour policy, and Restrictive Physical Intervention policy and child protection. The Head of Care also stated that all the local education authorities had been forwarded such policies.

The school also monitors all incidents of physical intervention at the school and produces a spreadsheet that highlights any physical intervention that has been undertaken for each young person. More detailed graphs are kept for individual young people, who appear to be more challenging to the service. The school had recently produced an Analysis and Trend of Behavioural Incidents and had developed Behaviour Plans for every young person at the school highlighting the behaviour, action to be taken and any sanctions agreed. The school maintains a sanctions log.

The school has a Draft Timeout Procedure dated November 2004. This has been developed to compliment and clarify the agreed action to take in relation to the time out plans that are devised for each young person when needed. The behaviours that some young people may exhibit may pose a serious threat to themselves and other people. The Head of Care stated that staff will follow the agreed plan of care, prior to the young people asking to take themselves to the time out area, be asked to go to the time out area, or the need for staff to escort young people to the time out area. The time out area does not have a locked door and the young person can leave if so wished. The Head of care stated that all de-escalation, physical intervention and time out plans are agreed by the parents and the placing authority

and are reviewed regularly. The school wish to be very open and transparent in relation to the use of 'Restrictive Physical Intervention,' de-escalation and the use of 'Time Out' when needed.

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?

3

There are clear policies in place that underpin the admission process to the school. The school obtains appropriate information about young people before admission.

The young people stay at the school for a trial period, over the course of approximately 3 days. During this time an assessment is undertaken. The duration and pace of the admission process is very much dictated by the needs of individual young people concerned.

Where young people are in the process of transition and moving on again arrangements are made on an individual basis. A connexions worker visits the school on a weekly basis. The school has good links with a local college. Young people, families, care and educational staff are all involved in the planning processes.

The inspectors saw evidence on file of the steps taken to enable young people to gain confidence in managing the 'day to day' tasks needed for independence. One example was where young people are taught to use public transport. This is undertaken over three stages. Firstly with staff, secondly followed closely by staff and then finally staff supporting the young person at a distance.

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**

The inspectors found evidence, both on record and from discussion, that the care staff are proactive in supporting young people in school. Young people are encouraged to eat breakfast and helped in preparing for their school day.

Recent appointments to the school have meant that some of the staff work both in education and in the residential area. Staff told the inspectors that they had felt that this had benefited all concerned, and said that staff had a greater understanding of each other's roles. This is also helped by the fact that all staff work together to support young people during their school breaks. This includes Senior Managers, Care Staff, Education Staff and Speech and Language therapists.

The ethos of the school puts an emphasis on a team approach. The inspectors observed staff praising young people for achievements gained in school. They were informed that on Fridays there is an assembly involving all staff and young people. This is used as a period of celebration, when all those attending have the opportunity to say something good about what has occurred during that week. Young people are part of that process. Evidently people can thank each other for successes, good behaviours and so forth.

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 are an important aspect of provision at North Hill House. Outdoor activities include football, games, visits to local parks and walks. Further a field young people are taken swimming, to the cinema and to wildlife parks.

The school had recently started a youth club approximately 6 miles away. The inspectors were able to attend, observe and join in with some of the games at the club. The club was very well managed, focussed, creative and above all fun for those young people attending.

Individually some young people attend clubs in the community such as Judo.

In the school recreational facilities include computers, televisions, books, games and art materials.

Activities were underpinned by clear risks assessments. The school uses a mini bus for transport. Clearly this is essential and very important, however, the inspectors felt that it would have benefited the young people's right to privacy and dignity not to have had the name of the charity, which had donated it clearly written on the bodywork.

The inspectors were informed that there are plans in place for a sports hall to be built on site.

Some young people who had attended the school for a long period reported missing the grassed area on the old site.

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 young people's files all contained a Health Care Plan. Those seen by the inspectors were clearly recorded. Medical files were also kept in a designated medical area. Two members of the care team have responsibility for overseeing the storage and administration of medicines, and for keeping First Aid kits replenished. One of the two staff members is a qualified First Aid trainer and is shortly undertaking all First Aid training to school staff. There were a number of First Aid boxes held in the school.

Optical, Dental and Medical treatments are undertaken either in the young person's own locality or if requested young people are registered with local practitioners.

Many young people at the school are given prescribed medicines. All medicines are stored, double locked, in the floor areas where the young people in question reside. Records of medicines given are recorded on separate sheets.

Stock records seen were recorded in separate hardbound books, located in whichever residential area the medicines were kept in. A larger stock record was kept in the designated medical area.

The inspectors had a useful discussion with the staff involved and with Senior Managers, regarding strengthening the systems of recording the stock balance of medications held. The staff and managers together with the inspectors agreed to seek further clarity from the Commission for Social Care Inspection, Pharmacist Inspector. This was discussed with the pharmacist following the inspection and he has agreed to undertake an additional inspection by arrangement with the school.

It was commendable to see that where there had been any doubt about changes in doses, clarity had been sought from prescribers, and faxed information had been retained on file.

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

Meals are eaten in a communal dining room, which was pleasant and suitably furnished. The school had recently commenced a 'Healthy Eating' plan, which had been received with mixed responses by young people. The inspectors were pleased to note the way the school endeavours to balance nutritious options alongside choice. One example was the lunches, which are currently sandwiches. Each young person's sandwich filling was his own choice and very individual. Each sandwich was individually wrapped, plated and named.

The inspectors enjoyed a number of meals at the school. Food eaten was enjoyable, very nutritious and nicely presented. Salad and fruit was also available.

Where there are eating problems staff were creative. One of the inspectors was told that when one young person had a real problem with hot food, he had been supported in regularly buying a 'Take Away' meal in order to get used to hot food and to encourage healthier eating.

Following discussion with the inspectors the Senior Managers decided to consult advice from a dietician in order to ensure that where there are difficulties, dietary needs are met.

Drinking water and snacks are readily available in the residential areas.

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?**

3

Young people have school uniform and wear their own clothes after school. All young people seen during the inspection were cleanly and appropriately dressed. The inspectors viewed the main laundry area; this area appeared well organised, clean and tidy.

Where applicable staff held young people's monies securely. Records were held on file of the balance of monies held.

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?

3

The inspectors looked at the files of 4 young people. These files included a box file, containing all relevant educational and social information, and also a 'Tutor' file which contained care and 'placement plans. The files were well maintained and records clearly recorded. Plans seen were devised in conjunction with families and information giving background histories had been collated before admission.

Plans seen contained health information; educational needs; cultural needs; contact information; behaviour management and where necessary clear instructions on how to support young people with hygiene needs.

Each young person at the school is given a Pastoral and an Educational tutor. Pastoral tutors take responsibility, together with senior managers for the development of 'Tutor' files. There was some evidence that young people had been involved and contributed to their plans.

There was evidence that reviews take place and that files are updated as necessary. The inspectors commented that tutor records should be countersigned and dated more frequently.

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?****3**

The standard of record keeping was good. Those young people's files seen by the inspectors showed evidence of gaining a clear picture of young people's needs and contained all the information as listed in Standard 18.2. Not all information was held on one file. For example incidents were recorded in separate, designated, individual files.

The inspectors did note that not all records had been dated and signed. One example was that of 'Pen Pictures' that had been devised for young people. (Standard 18.3)

Staff and Senior Managers demonstrated a good awareness of the need to keep files securely.

Some young people had signed areas in plans such as contracts; however, the majority demonstrated little awareness around the plans that had been devised for them. This was discussed in the inspection feedback, and the Head Teacher and Deputy Principle felt that this lack of understanding might possibly have been a reflection of the terminology used in questionnaires.

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**

The inspectors saw a register of the young people's admissions and departures from the school. This information is also retained on computer records. (Not seen at this inspection)

A sample of staff personnel files was inspected. At the front of files, a human resources personnel checklist was held. This consisted of identification confirmation; CRB clearance; References; Employment histories-including details identifying gaps; start date; induction date; appraisal date and leaving date. The contents of files correlated with front sheets. The school had also retained staff interview notes, which were seen, although not held on the main file.

The school maintains and retains records, which include an accident log; copies of menus; duty rosters and visitors to the school.

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**

Contact with families, by young people, is fully supported and encouraged by the school. Contact arrangements were clearly recorded on young people's files seen by the inspectors. The majority of respondents to parent questionnaires reported excellent levels of contact with the school. A day pupil's parent who met the inspectors reiterated this. She reported being informed by the school about every aspect of care and educational provision.

The degree of parental contact is arranged on an individual basis, with some families having telephone contact at least once per day, others having less contact. On the files seen a record was made of all telephone contact with parents and families. All the young people at the school have a weekly report, which is sent to parents. This includes not only educational progress but also discusses the residential and cares aspect of provision.

Young people are able to meet parents and appropriate visitors in private if so wished.

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**

The files seen did not include transition plans, as the young people concerned were not at that stage of progression.

This area was discussed with the Head Teacher and the Deputy Principal. Planning for leaving the school is undertaken on an individual basis. Some young people move towards a specialist 6th Form provision. Others to a local college. The staff at North Hill House have forged good links with both local providers of further education and also with a number of Local Education Authorities. Staff from North Hill House school had on occasion provided ongoing support to young people, even when they move on to an educational provision out of the locality.

A connexions worker visits the school on a weekly basis.

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?****4**

The inspectors were impressed at the manner in which staff at the school endeavour to fully meet the care and educational needs of young people in a manner, which is individual to the young people concerned. The inspectors gained the view that the school tried to match individual need rather than trying to make young people fit into a rigid system.

Issues relating to homesickness are highlighted in the 'Kids Booklet.'

The school has been creative in enabling young people to learn to socialize. The inspectors had the opportunity to observe the young people at a youth club, which had recently been started by the school. This is held at a venue approximately 6 miles from the school, and the plan is for this to be expanded upon to include other young people from outside of the school. The inspectors were impressed at how inclusive the club felt. Group activities were encouraged, but alongside this the needs of young people who needed 'one to one' support were also met.

The school has the input of a speech and language therapist, who works regular hours on site. Staff, in both the educational and care sides of school have the benefits of being able to work with the therapist in order to meet additional communication needs. The school also uses the services of their own Occupational Therapist.

The school has an independent person, who is available for young people to contact in the event that they wish to talk to someone outside of the school. The contact number is available on notice boards, and the person has also visited the school in order for young people to be familiar with her.

The young people and the staff team at the school have access to a specialist counsellor, should individual support be needed. In addition the use of an external psychologist is used from time to time. Where young people are in receipt of psychiatric support in their home areas, the school actively seek and receive any updated information. There was evidence of this, seen by inspectors on medical files.

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 is purpose built and is situated in the outskirts of Frome. The residential provision is sited at the back of the building and is separated from the classrooms by corridors. Residential areas are broken down into 6 areas. Each area is similar. All areas appeared clean, modern and fit for purpose. The inspectors felt that it would be pleasing to see each area looking more individual. The Head Teacher and Head of Care said that this had been discussed, and that the next phase of settling in to the school would be to fully consider how best to personalize living areas. CCTV is used to monitor the grounds for security reasons.

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?

3

All but 2 of the bedrooms are single, with each young person having their own toilet facilities. There are 2 double rooms; young people who have opted to share a room currently use these. Each young person has lockable facilities for storing possessions. Bedrooms had been nicely personalised and contained sufficient study areas, lighting was satisfactory.

Each floor area has access to a coin operated telephone. The telephones are in a booth, but are waiting for the addition of doors to afford more privacy.

Each residential area held a number of games, a television and art materials.

There did seem to be some disparity in the levels of heating around the rooms, at the time of the inspection this was being looked into.

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?**

3

All young people accommodated have the use of a single bedroom with en-suite facilities consisting of a shower, toilet and wash hand basin. There is one bath available to the young people. After discussion with the staff it was confirmed that all young people prefer to take a shower, however, on occasions there may be a request to have a bath. It was strongly felt by the staff team that this could be managed effectively and was not a detriment to the young people and that privacy and dignity is still maintained.

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 has a Health and Safety Policy. The Head of Care has completed a vast number of environmental risk assessments and risk assessments in relation to activities that the young people attend and risk assessments for individual young people. These are well documented and accessible and are reviewed on a regular basis. Risk assessments had been conducted in relation to window restrictors and hot water. The inspectors commented that all risk assessments could include the actual date on them, as opposed to the month they were written. The inspectors advised that a risk assessment must be conducted for one young person whose bed is located next to a radiator. The Head of Care advised that the Estates manager will also conduct risk assessments where needed. The inspectors did not view risk assessments relating to this. The school has a Fire Procedure and has conducted a Fire Risk Assessment. The inspectors noted that all records relating to fire checks were satisfactory including weekly fire checks. The Fire Alarm system and Emergency Lighting certificate is dated 28/10/04. The fire equipment certificate is dated 06/09/04. The Gas Safety Certificate was dated the 14/10/04. Portable Appliance Testing took place in September 2004 and January 2005. The Electrical Hard Wiring Certificate was not viewed. However, the documentation seen indicated that the hard wiring certificate was due for renewal in 2005. Following the inspection the Commission for Social Care Inspection were supplied with copies of the testing of the Electrical Installation; Emergency Lighting; the Fire Alarm Completion Certificate;

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.
- Staff who are trained to meet their needs looks after children.
- 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?

3

There was a stringent system in place to monitor visitors to the school, with daily signing in and daily visitors badges supplied.

The inspectors were told that all staff and visiting staff (for example the independent visitor) had been subject to a CRB check, cleared prior to starting employment. This was confirmed by discussion with newly appointed staff and by the sample of staff records that were seen.

The Head Teacher and the Deputy Principal informed the inspectors that there some companies who will only acknowledge that staff have worked for them, and who are working within a policy of not supplying references for anyone. The inspectors advised that in these instances a written record is kept of all the efforts made to obtain references, and that a reference is sought from another of the applicant's previous employers. Copies of passports and birth certificates were retained on personnel files.

Total number of care staff:	35	Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:	4
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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?**

3

The school had made a clear assessment of what staffing numbers are needed in what residential areas. The inspectors were told that staffing numbers are always achieved. In times of difficulty agency staff have been used, always the same agency and often the same staff. Where there had been uncertainty about nighttime levels the Head Teacher and the Head of Care had worked at night, in order to establish what are satisfactory numbers. A risk assessment relating to night- time staffing levels had been undertaken.

At the time of the inspection there were 3 'waking' night staff on during any one night. On call support was also arranged between the senior managers.

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

The school has a clear induction in place that is divided into 3 phases. The Deputy Principal said that induction had been devised in this way in order for staff not to be overloaded at the beginning of employment, and are therefore more able to absorb training at a measured pace. Staff training records, were held on one main file. The school had developed a staff training/development plan.

The staff spoken to during the inspection all felt supported and able to access support from both within their teams and from Senior Managers, at any time. All were clear about their lines of accountability.

All the staff spoken to had received training in Asperger's Syndrome fairly early on in their employment. The Deputy Principal told the inspectors that it is felt that this is essential in order for Child Protection training to include an understanding of the special needs of the young people at the school.

The school has a rolling programme of training, which includes Child Protection; Fire Safety; First Aid; Restrictive Intervention; Aspergers Syndrome; Food Handling; Manual Handling; COSHH; Tutor Role –as part of induction; Supervision and Management (for senior staff); Medication Training; Report Writing; Behaviour Workshop; Autism Conference; Inspection Workshop; Appraisal Training (Senior Staff) NVQ; and ICT.

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?****3**

The staff spoken to during the inspection said that they feel well supported by the Senior Managers at the school and by the support they receive from each other. There appeared to be systems in place for supervising staff, and most staff reported receiving regular supervision. (Records were not seen at this inspection) The inspectors did find that a minority of new staff had not received formal supervision regularly. In discussion with the Head Teacher and the Deputy Principle, the inspectors were informed that senior staff had started supervision training, and that any shortfalls will be redressed. A newly appointed member of staff told the inspectors that new staff are really well supported, and said that they are supernumerary until they feel completely confident. The inspectors noted that there are no arrangements in place for the supervision of the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher and the Head of Care clearly work very closely; discuss any issues and share decision-making.

Ancillary staff also receive supervision.

Staff were clear about their lines of accountability and about whom they should report to.

Staff meetings are held regularly, this includes the whole care team meetings and also floor meetings. Meetings are minuted and typed up.

The education staff meet every morning. The Head of Care and or other Senior Staff attend these meetings and handover any young people's issues that have occurred, overnight in the residential area.

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**

The inspectors found that there is an ethos of teamwork within the school, and staff reported being able to approach senior staff for advice or to share issues. The Head Teacher, Head of Care, together with other senior staff clearly work in partnership. Since the last inspection links between the education and care side of provision have been further developed. A number of staff work in both the residential and the educational sites. This has strengthened the understanding between the two areas, and provided a more seamless approach to meeting young people's needs. All the staff, including senior staff, care staff, teachers and speech and language specialists are involved in providing support during school day breaks, including lunchtimes.

There have been problems in progressing with the original headway made with staff undertaking NVQ level three 'Caring for Children and Young People,' (as noted at the last inspection). All staff that have completed their probationary periods are enrolled on the NVQ process. Good links have been made with the local college and an assessor linked to the college gives support. The Deputy Principal facilitates learning workshops on Sunday afternoons; Staff are at various stages of progress.

Staff spoken to during the inspection were highly motivated and told the inspectors that they "love coming to work." Nevertheless the inspectors became aware that staff at times feel overstretched by the amounts of paperwork required. Tutor files seen, were very well maintained and staff clearly take their role as pastoral tutor very seriously. Staff spoken to, almost all reported receiving regular supervision, and all reported being able to access support at any time, night or day.

'Floor' meetings are held in the various residential areas regularly and records of meetings are then held on file. Because of the nature of the young people's needs handovers are cascaded amongst the teams on the various residential areas. The Senior staff liaise with the teachers and any significant difficulties are then passed to team leaders. Because care staff support young people during break times in school, they have a good knowledge of any issues arising. Staff at the school frequently use E- mails to circulate information. In addition a log- book is used to record on-going 'day to day' events.

The school had devised action plans for use in the event of crisis. Copies of child protection, complaints and anti bullying policies are supplied to parents.

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**

There was evidence that school records had been monitored and signed. In order to identify trends the school has used graphs on computers. Examples of this were in monitoring incidents necessitating the use of 'Restrictive Intervention'

There was evidence that the Head Teacher and Deputy Principal had monitored and reviewed the care and educational aspects of the school, and that action plans had been devised.

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?****3**

A representative from the Priory group had made inspection visits to the school and written reports had been devised. The school governors also visit the school and complete written reports following visits. These reports were made available to the inspectors.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

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.

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on January 24th -26th 2005 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

Head's comments/factual amendments 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

YES

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 Friday March 25th 2005, 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 Mr Andrew Cobley of North Hill House School, Fromefield, Frome, Somerset, BA11 2HB 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 _____

Signature

Designation

Date _____

Or

D.3.2 I Mr Andrew Cobley of North Hill House School, Fromefield, Frome, Somerset, BA11 2HB 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.

Commission for Social Care Inspection

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