



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Wennington Hall School

**Lodge Lane
Wennington
Lancaster
Lancashire
LA2 8NS**

Lead Inspector
Mr Stephen Trainor

Announced Inspection

28 & 29 November 13 December 2005

10:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

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

Those outcomes are:

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

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

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

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school	Wennington Hall School
Address	Lodge Lane Wennington Lancaster Lancashire LA2 8NS
Telephone number	015242 21333
Fax number	015242 22140
Email address	
Provider Web address	www.wenningtonhall.lancs.sch.uk
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Lancashire County Council
Name of Head	Mr J Prendergast
Name of Head of Care	Mr Andrew Gillatt (Acting)
Age range of residential pupils	11 -16
Date of last welfare inspection	24 & 25 November 2004

Brief Description of the School:

The Lancashire Education Authority administers Wennington Hall School. The School provides an environment that can support up to 70 boys of secondary school age (11 – 16) on a residential or day basis. The young boys using the services provided at the School have experienced some difficulties associated with their academic, social, emotional and/or behaviour development which would make normal schooling inappropriate for them. The School provides a 38-week programme of education with the boys in the main spending every weekend at home or with their carers.

The School is located, internally designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. The first impression gained of the School is extremely positive. The boarding provision comprises of 5 separate boarding houses. These are organised in a way that successfully creates an environment that is ideal to allow the young boys to have suitable levels of privacy whilst allowing appropriate supervision to be afforded. Each boarding house provides accommodation for small groups of children, providing well-designed and pleasant premises with sufficient space and an excellent range of facilities to meet needs. Boarding houses are sensibly separated by age to enable appropriate levels of staff support to be provided during the key times of the day. Three boarding houses are located in the main School building whilst the other two are situated close by in the School grounds. The Accommodation has recently been improved by the provision of a leisure gym, conference area and additional classrooms.

The School's combined prospectus and parents handbook accurately describes the purpose and function of the School outlining aims and objectives, philosophy of care and response to education. Education is regarded as the foundation stone to each pupil's future. The School has recently received a Learning Excellence Award for raising achievement and enjoyment for learners.

Staff are supported by well thought out policies and procedures that continue to be developed through ongoing review. The policies and procedures fully meet the specific requirements of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Schools. The Inspection Team's findings, as reported within this report, clearly indicate that a coordinated response continues to be taken when responding to the needs of pupils.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection was announced and started at 10:30hrs. In total 65 Inspector hours were spent at the School. The Inspection was conducted over a 3-day period including the School Christmas Carol Concert. The Headmaster provided a tour of the School and grounds. Records, policies and guidance were also examined. The Inspection Team was also provided with data from School surveys undertaken with pupils and parents.

The inspection was conducted with the full co-operation of the Headmaster, staff and pupils throughout the course of the inspection. In total the Inspection Team interviewed 15 staff members and received completed questionnaires from 10 Parents, 38 Pupils & 11 Staff. Group discussions and informal observations were also used.

Visiting professionals, lay people and school governors as well as agencies and departments supporting or working in partnership with the School also provided many comments. These included 'friends of the School', social workers, an educational consultant and head teachers from partner schools in the surrounding community. Comments from medical staff including the general practitioner at Bentham and School Health Services were also received. Comments were very positive relating to safe working practices and satisfaction with how the School operates.

Contact was also made with Area Child Protection Coordinator, Fire and Rescue and Environmental Health.

What the school does well:

The School's management, organisation and responsive practice were found to be capable of providing an exceptionally high quality and level of service for each pupil at the School. The collective view of the Inspection Team was that the School was clearly fulfilling its statutory obligations in a constructive and positive manner. From this inspection 31 out of 33 Residential Special School National Minimum Standards are exceeded. 2 standards are marked as met.

The lead Inspector with responsibility for the School has now visited the School during seven consecutive years. The quality of services provided has improved year after year. 5 experienced inspectors supported this School inspection allowing the School's practice, management and organisation to be scrutinised objectively. All Inspectors acknowledge the high standards being achieved at Wennington Hall School. A 'high quality service' and 'exceptional' management' were reported in a recent Ofsted report. There was also praise for 'consistency and continuity linked to – all sections of Every Child Matters'. These are the areas that this report comments on.

The Commission for Social Care Inspection found a settled team of highly motivated staff that have brought a great deal of continuity to the lives of the boys. The boys are safe at this School with welfare being promoted well. Planning for care is thorough. Relationships with the boys are exceptionally positive. Rules at the School are accepted.

Management's response to recruitment, selection and retention of staff as well as the support being provided through induction, supervision, access to training and personal development were all found to be managed efficiently. A parent commented, 'the members of staff do an excellent job. Wennington Hall School is a special School for pupils like my son and I can only praise the members of staff as they are doing an excellent job'. The home's staff are experienced and have relevant qualifications.

Pupil comments are best used to summarise inspection findings relating to welfare matters. 'Brilliant School'. 'No concerns'. 'Little bullying'. 'Food great'. 'Many friends'. 'Bedroom great'. 'The School is absolutely Ace'. 'Rules are fair'. Referring to the School Council one boy said 'a lot of things said by the pupils come into action'.

The Inspection Team viewed the working relationships between all levels of staff to be extremely positive. The Commission compliments joint working arrangements between education and residential staff. A Public Health Development Specialist from the Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust commented, 'the teaching and care staff work hard to ensure that the boys are nurtured and cared for, and the School offers a range of extra curricular activities to stimulate personal growth and development'. Many pupils singled out the School for the support that educational staff had provided. 'The best School ever' was a frequently passed comment shared amongst pupils.



The Commission also awarded a 'Childmark'.

The 'Childmark' is a means, being introduced by the Children's Rights Director, for children themselves to directly nominate their school for a special award if they think it is deserved. Wennington Hall School earned the award as a result of children's nominations for the range of activities that are provided. As well as receiving the predominantly general recommendation of Wennington Hall School 'looking after us well' over 75% of the responses received commented enthusiastically on the range and choice of activities provided at the School. This Award also recognises the safe management of activities within the School.

What has improved since the last inspection?

A seamless response is evident at the School that is capable of responding to the requirements of each Residential Special School National Minimum Standard. The School's practice is underpinned by terms of reference referring to 'accepting the challenge' and 'pride in performance'. This has been part of the driving force in developing the School. Observations confirm that this has been achieved.

Management are responsive and have continually demonstrated the ability to deliver a quality service. Partnership arrangements with local schools have been improved to a different level. Wennington Hall is an Accredited School recognised for many special achievements including the 'Childmark'. Ofsted commented that 'partnerships with other schools are very productive and have raised the profile and impact of the School in the community'.

A rolling programme of refurbishment and development at the School ensures that first appearances are maintained to an excellent standard. Consultation with the boys occurs, when appropriate to do so, on plans and developments for the School.

An appointment of acting Head of Care has been made between inspections. The post holder is experienced and competent. A programme of personal and professional development has been established to support the fulfilment of this role.

What they could do better:

This inspection report highlights a very small number of advisory recommendations. The Inspection Team acknowledges the hard work that has taken place.

Following a change to the School's child protection representative the Inspection Team would advise further and ongoing training for the two new post holders. Some advice was provided on responding to and reporting and recording of allegations or suspicions of abuse to a child. All staff should be familiar with the 'whistle-blowing' policy

The Commission provided the website address for the Criminal Records Bureau. This should be viewed occasionally to ensure personnel files remain up to date. There are frequent changes that need to be assimilated in practice.

Observations made by the Inspection Team highlight the need to clearly date some records. A record of both formal and informal supervision should be kept.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by

contacting your local CSCI office.

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

14 & 15

The promotion of health is taken seriously. Young people's welfare is closely monitored and their health needs are well met.

Meals are varied, healthy and nutritionally balanced and include favourite food preferences of the residents.

EVIDENCE:

The School's practice relating health and intimate care has previously been scrutinised by a specialist Pharmacy Inspector from the Commission. Practice in this area was reported positively. A comprehensive self-assessment occurred on all health related matters at the School following the last inspection. The systems in place and operated at the School were felt to be suitable to fully meet the requirements of this Standard.

There is a policy and written guidance, which is implemented in practice for administering, recording, storing and disposal of medication. Case tracking carried out by the Inspection Team confirmed that up to date health information was held on the selected pupil's case files examined. The health care plans are good. General advice provided was for the date that these plans were produced, plus, the date when plans are reviewed, to be made clearer. When medication is discontinued this should also be reflected within health plans as well as medication administered records.

Staff administering medication are assessed as fit to carry out this task. Prescribed medication is only given to pupils to whom it was prescribed. Staff are aware of the need to record any refusal by pupils to take their medication. A suitable number of staff hold a first aid qualification. There is a nominated first aider available during the 24-hour period of each School day. Staff are aware of the location of first aid boxes within the School and the boarding houses.

Parental permission for administering medicines is gained. Medicines were observed as being kept securely within a lockable cabinet at the time of the visit. Controlled drugs are stored in a double locked cabinet. Records are being kept on all medication, treatment and first aid given to pupils. A senior staff member is responsible for monitoring the records. Significant illnesses, accidents or injuries are recorded. Letters observed on individual pupil files showed that parents are being informed of accidents.

The Inspection Team acknowledges comments that are made by the Bentham Surgery who provide general medical support to the School. A doctor commented - 'I must say at the outset that I have absolutely no concerns from what I have seen. There always seems to be excellent relationships between the school staff and the pupils. They are supportive, empathetic and appear to be able to communicate and relate to the pupils very well indeed. The referrals have always been appropriate, and they have taken great care to try to follow the advice as accurately as possible. I applaud their approach, and would like to take the opportunity to congratulate them'.

A Clinical Team Leader for the School Health Service commented that 'health needs are met and the staff ensure appointments and immunisations are up to date'. It is evident that the Senior Management Team is capable of accessing specialist support for pupils such as psychiatric or psychological services when needed.

Pupils are playing a leading role in developing healthy lifestyles. Focus groups help pupils to explore alternative lifestyles. Information as well as learning and developmental opportunities are being provided to the boys in all the following areas; nutrition and diet, exercise and rest, personal hygiene, relationship and health education, the effects of alcohol, smoking, solvents and other substances, HIV and aids and other blood borne diseases, protecting oneself from prejudice, bullying and abuse. Ongoing programmes run at the School that have had a great deal of success have been smoking cessation and anti-bullying.

Letters from Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust and School Nurse, Kath Garner confirm that they support programmes being run at the School. This integrated response to health and well-being is complimented. The School has achieved 'healthy School status'.

The meals offered to the boys were to a high standard. Pupils expressed their full satisfaction with the quality of meals via the Commissions questionnaire survey. Pupils have a choice of main dishes including vegetarian choice and a salad bar. The boys know healthier eating options. The salad bar remains popular with many of the boys. The boys 'favoured' food preferences are built into the menu design, however, nutritional value is a key to how often these appear. One young man commented that 'the food is nice and tasty and the

pies are great'. Boys have access to drinks machines during mealtimes where they can help themselves to fruit juice or water.

Facilities in the dining hall are excellent. The dining arrangements are managed well and ensure that a positive mealtime experience is gained. Communication between residential staff and catering staff is effective in ensuring everyone is aware of special medical or dietary needs. It is clear that the catering department can respond to individuals' needs and preferences. The catering manager ensures boys' birthdays are celebrated. The boys are also introduced to special themed meals that support work on looking at cultural diversity. The catering staff have shown a lot of creativity when introducing new foods to the pupils.

The menus for the boys' Christmas dinner and the buffet prepared for boys and parents following the School Christmas Carol Concert show the efforts that are made. These are commended.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

Arrangements for complaints, bullying and behaviour management are handled extremely well and ensure that boy's feel listened to and protected. The School is managed well with suitable training ensuring physical safety and security for the boys resident. Full and satisfactory records are maintained to show staff recruitment is safe.

EVIDENCE:

Staff practice was observed to respect the boy's privacy as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect children. Ofsted commented that 'pupils' privacy is respected and they board in houses with other pupils of a similar age'. The pupils can make and receive telephone calls in private. Access

to a pay phone as well as access to house telephones and personal mobiles is possible. Some sensible restrictions on the times that these phones can be used apply. Sensible safeguards to prevent access to unsuitable web site addresses have been installed in School computers.

Staff are clear on the steps to take if they became aware of or if a young person was to disclose any child protection issues. Guidance developed relates to the occasions when it might be necessary to search the boy's possessions.

Staff deal with information about the boys in a professional and respectful manner. All records are kept safe and secure within lockable cabinets within lockable office areas. Only those that have a right to access children's case files will be shown their contents. The School adheres to the LEA policy on confidentiality. Records are maintained in accordance with data protection and freedom of information.

The acting Head of Care has specific responsibility for ensuring the response taken to complaints and representation is transparent. The School is linked to the LEA complaints and representations procedure, which has been developed in accordance with legal requirements and relevant government guidance.

Complaints are clearly listened to. Written information available throughout the School enables the boys to form a complaint if they wish to. Complaints are taken seriously with a record of the actions taken to resolve them being produced. A new prefect role supports younger pupils to resolve minor complaints or to advise pupils on whom to contact if they had any concerns. Complaints procedures have been publicised widely. Complaints procedures are discussed each term. The boys were confident that complaints would be taken seriously with their views and opinions listened to. The Inspection Team viewed a complaint that had been made by one pupil. The complaint showed that the boy's parent, a School Governor, had been involved in the complaint resolution.

The School has suitable policy and procedures for responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse. Staff have received training and are capable of responding to child protection matters. Information is regularly reviewed and updated when required. Local directives are quickly incorporated into School policy. Information is freely available to staff, pupils and parents.

Observations made at this inspection have led to the following recommendations being made. Further and ongoing training is needed for the Schools nominated representatives for child protection matters. The Commission would encourage the School to make contact with Barbara Woods - Area Child Protection Coordinator at Lancaster who is happy to provide additional support and guidance. Guidance can be used to support judgements on whether incidents involving complaints or physical intervention need to be reported as a child protection matter or as a notifiable incident as outlined

within Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standard 7. The policy on Whistle-blowing needs to be discussed and known throughout the School. Some general advice was provided relating to the writing up of investigations and making the outcome clear. There were no ongoing or outstanding child protection matters. The Commission has been kept informed of all matters previously highlighted or investigated. Significant incidents and events are reported to the relevant authorities.

A safe environment continues to be maintained. The boys indicated they had no serious concerns when asked the question 'are you being bullied at the School at the moment?' Risk assessments are produced on the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest. Monitoring of the Schools operation has led to quick identification of any areas of concern and more importantly has enabled a prompt response to be taken to address any concerns.

An anti-bullying 'focus group' has been operated at the School for many years. This has been extremely successful. Anti-bullying national awareness week was supported the week prior to this inspection. Materials used in discussions were available within the School. A notice board in the main assembly hall highlights materials used to educate and reduce opportunities for bullying to take place. The staff at the School have been ahead of the national response to this issue and has long had a zero tolerance to bullying.

A suitable philosophy of care has been created that has meant no boys have needed to be reported as absent without permission from the School. Attachment to the School appears as one of the factors in deterring or distracting pupils from thinking about going missing. Staff are aware that some boys new to the School can become homesick and are afforded additional support. The boys do take responsibility for themselves. The Inspection Team was satisfied that staff were familiar with missing persons protocol and reporting system.

Parents confirmed that they had been told about the School rules. This forms part of the partnership arrangements and the discussion that takes place at the start of the placement. One parent wrote 'I am happy with the rules and it makes my son realise that he has to abide by them'. Another parent commented 'the rules are firm but fair. School, parents and children all know where they stand'. Another parent commented that 'the rules at the School are very fair', then she went on to say 'I am supportive of Wennington Hall School, as in such a short space of time, I am very impressed with the way my son is turning his behaviour around'.

The Head of Care at another Lancashire County Council EBD School commented that 'Wennington has very clear structures and systems in place which allow the staff and pupils to work together positively. The pupils can

explain the system of rewards/consequences, which is in place for them at Wennington'.

This Inspection confirmed that behaviour management including care and control are managed extremely well. Staff are encouraged to work with pupils in a positive and calm way and are being supported through appropriate induction and ongoing training. All staff have received training in the methods and techniques to be used if physical intervention (Team Teach) is needed. Permitted techniques to be used are known by staff. Updated training is regularly provided.

Records and data analysis confirm that there has been a massive reduction in the number of times that physical intervention has been used at the School. 2004 – 2005 saw a reduction of 35% from the previous year. To date there have been a further reduction of 33% leading up to this inspection. Staff confirmed that they would only use physical force as a last resort. Many pupils confirmed that they felt safe at the School and that they were looked after well. Incidents that require physical intervention are clearly recorded and are being discussed with both pupils and parents. Quality assurance measures mean that School Governors check that incidents are being managed safely. The Inspection Team had the opportunity to case track an incident that had occurred during the inspection. The response taken by staff was suitable.

The response to health, safety and security is well coordinated. The School operates a health and safety committee who meet regularly. Records of the last meeting, 31.10.05 were viewed and provide indicators on how the School environment is managed to ensure the boy's safety at all times.

Other records checked revealed annual servicing to electrical and gas installations were taking place. Personal appliance testing is routinely undertaken ensuring all electrical equipment is safe. This includes the boys personal electrical items. Risk assessments have been carried out on all aspects of the School premises and grounds. The response taken to ensure all activities undertaken remain safe is subjected to robust risk assessment procedures. It is clear that the boys accept these procedures. The Inspection team viewed the programmes followed to ride mechanical equipment such as motorbikes and go-karts. The School liaises appropriately with the Lancashire Education Authority relating to outdoor activities. The County Council have also looked at health and safety at the School. Some changes to the procedures within the science lab and a workshop were made to further improve safety.

There are no outstanding recommendations from Fire and Rescue, Environmental Health or Building Control. Fire and Rescue confirmed that, as per policy, there had been no reason for an inspection to the School. Staff are aware that they can request a visit if the premises are identified as a high risk. A premises risk assessment form would need to be submitted. Environmental Health contacted the Commission as part of the fieldwork activity prior to the

inspection. This department confirmed that they were satisfied with the School's response to the Food Safety Act 1990 Regulations.

From a random selection of personnel files full and satisfactory information including Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Checks and verified references were observed. Some up to date Criminal Records Bureau information was shared with the School. The School management has established good 'vetting' procedures for visitors.

General advice is that the CRB website be checked periodically. In circumstances when a staff member is dismissed or resigns from the School there is a system in place that would lead to a referral for consideration to the Protection of Children Act List.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

12, 13 & 22.

Education is actively promoted and ensures that boys are supported to develop, achieve and prepare for the time they leave. Staff practice engages the young people in a massive range of activities to develop skills and individual potential through new experiences.

EVIDENCE:

The School's prospectus outlines the aims of Wennington Hall as being:

To allow each individual to fulfil his own potential in an environment appropriate to his special education needs.

To help each individual learn to live and work as a member of a multi-cultural society accepting its discipline and responsibilities, and respecting the rights and needs of others.

To provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which encourages every pupil to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to adult life, the world of work and leisure.

From observations made by the Inspection Team during this particular visit it is evident that this is being achieved. The performance of the staff group and the management of the School in providing a "holistic" response to individuals needs should be commended. The key worker role at the School is well developed. Staff are aware of and skilled in implementing individual care arrangements. One young person commented that the best thing that has happened to him was the 1:1 support that he receives with his key worker.

A Public Health Development Specialist from the Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust commented 'I have been involved in supporting the School in working towards becoming a 'healthy School' as part of the Lancashire Schools Programme. One of the things that has always impressed me about the School is the caring, supportive ethos and the attention given to pupil emotional health and well-being and fostering self esteem'.

A new staff member who attended an interview felt that the role being provided by Residential Care Officers 'gives the opportunity to influence and shape the boys life and character'. The Inspection Team would agree with this view in that educational and care staff do work together closely providing a seamless response to individuals' educational and welfare needs. There are regular meetings to ensure continuity with the response to be taken. Ofsted commented that morale is high and there is no doubting the determination to provide the very best opportunities for the pupils

The planning, budgetary control and the investment in activities and individual pursuits within the School are complimented. This is an area where the School excels. The School is accredited as a centre of excellence. The School was also awarded the Commissions 'Childmark' due to the boy's own nominations. The range of recreational activities and the constructive manner in which the staff engage pupils clearly warrants this award. One boy commented that 'Activities are cool so I don't get bored'.

The School's resources are exceptional. Equipment is high specification and well maintained. It is no coincidence that there has been no damage to equipment when you look at the risk assessments carried out prior to individuals pursuing their interests/hobbies. Ofsted commented that 'the pupils buzz with excitement when they discuss their activities'. Staff with suitable qualifications and experience undertake all activities. Activities include quad biking, karting, paint balling, and motor biking, grass boarding, skating, BMX, kite flying, canoeing, wind surfing, singing, and homework club.

The School's resources can be utilised for educational visits. A recent Ofsted report noted the positive partnership arrangements with the surrounding community. It is clear that both education and welfare staff are competent in engendering the School's positive standing in the community. A partnership with a local primary school has led to some pupils organising football training and tournaments. The exercise goes beyond the skills to coach and includes all aspects of organisation including ensuring suitable resources; transportation and coaching aids are available. Other project work has seen work undertaken by the boys to support sick children from Belarus. The skills that are being gained are preparing the boys for their future away from the School. Individual's talents are harnessed to ensure they fulfil their potential.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

2, 9, 11, 17 & 20.

Staff's effective ongoing consultation maintains positive relationships throughout the School placement. The individual needs of the boys placed at this School can clearly be met.

EVIDENCE:

The School operates a boys' council that has elected members from each school year. Weekly house meetings also take place. The boys' views and opinions are clearly being listed to. Boys are genuinely involved in the management of their respective boarding houses. This was reflected within both verbal and written comments provided by the boys throughout the Inspection.

The Inspection Team is satisfied that staff at the School routinely seek to build working relationships with parents and other professionals involved in the lives of the boys. The Key Worker role was seen to be liaising effectively with parents. Phone contact is routinely made to discuss progress and problems. A parent commented, 'the staff are respectful when they call and they seem to understand that parents are feeling quite anxious because their children are not at home'. Many parents commented that contact was good. One comment made was 'regular contact is maintained and all staff I have contact with are excellent'.

Other evidence of effective liaison with parents presented throughout the calendar year includes School Open Days, Carol Concerts and Burns Night celebrations. Parents stated that they were encouraged to visit and were made welcome at the School.

The School has developed many forums and formats in order to facilitate effective communication channels. A School web site and School Prospectus and Parental Handbook are provided to all. Survey questionnaires administered by the School on behalf of the Commission provided clear evidence of the effectiveness of consultation processes. A parent commented 'I can phone any time and I have several letters per week keeping me informed about what is going on'. The School also produces progress reports, holds reviews and produces a periodical newspaper – the Wennington Chronicle.

Throughout the inspection, the observed contact and communication between staff and boys was extremely positive. Staff consistently demonstrated good communication and care practice. The Inspection Team observed effective consultation taking place during group briefings, roll calls, assemblies and frequent question and answer sessions. Clear professional and personal boundaries have been set which are effective for both individuals and the different groups that make up the whole School. Relationships with boys are excellent and are on the whole very well maintained. This comment recognises the 'challenging' needs that many of the boys have.

Expectations of behaviour for both staff and boys are clearly understood and negotiated by those living and working at the School. This comment would be supported by the Head of Care at another Lancashire County Council EBD School in Cheshire who commented that 'Wennington has very clear structures and systems in place which allow the staff and pupils to work together positively. The staff have a positive outlook and the pupils respond well. The pupils work within very clear boundaries which enable them to make the right choices most of the time. The pupils can explain the system of rewards/consequences which is in place for them at Wennington'.

The Inspection confirmed that the School has clear and effective systems in place relating to pupils being admitted to and leaving the School. All introductions are planned. Suitable information is obtained prior to admission. A partnership contract is entered into. A decision to offer a placement will only be reached when the School is satisfied that a positive experience can be gained from a placement at Wennington Hall School. Parents confirmed that School rules are being discussed. The following comment was provided by a parent whose son was in his first term at the school, 'I am so relieved that we were given a place and life is so much more settled. I know that he is being cared for well and I have no outstanding worries'. Another parent commented, 'my son has settled very well. This is his first term and he was quite unsure of

what to expect. The staff have been patient with him and have made him feel welcome’.

The predominant response by parents was satisfaction with placement arrangements at the School. The following comments were provided by parents to the question - Please tell the Commission whether you think the staff at the School do a good job. Parents comments included ‘Excellent job’, ‘They really care on all aspects’. ‘Staff and my children are happy and I cannot praise the School enough’. ‘I think the school is doing well with my child’s care. I know I can phone anytime and the staff are great’.

This inspection confirmed that care planning is managed well. Detailed placement plans are in place for each boy. Plans highlight general and specific response to be taken to meet individual needs. The School’s success has been in how well these plans have been implemented on a day-to-day basis. It is pleasing to hear so many positive comments from parents.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

16, 21, 23, 24 & 25.

The School is safe and pleasantly decorated providing sufficient space and resources to meet needs.

The School is providing suitable support including independent training for boys who are preparing to leave.

EVIDENCE:

A recent Ofsted inspection commented that 'overall the School complies exceptionally well with the National Minimum Standards. The effectiveness of the boarding provision is at least good in all aspects and exemplary in many. The accommodation is very good and very well furnished. Consequently pupils take great pride and care of their surroundings. There is a strong sense of School community'. The Commission agrees with these comments. An extremely positive initial impression is gained when driving through the School grounds and when viewing the premises.

Premises standards have been marked as exceeded during the past 4 Inspections. The appearance of the School and its grounds has been developed to an exceptionally high standard over many years. Innovative thinking at the School continues to come up with further enhancing improvements to the School's appearance and the resources available to the boys. The standard of accommodation enriches the boys experience throughout the time that they

spend at Wennington Hall School. School Development plans highlight the numerous improvements and developments that have taken place.

The School is managed extremely well within a rolling programme of redecorations and refurbishment. Maintenance and building work are being coordinated efficiently. The School's budget is being managed wisely. The quality and the condition of furniture and fixtures within all the areas of the School are testimony to the commitment for excellence.

Recent improvements include an extended gym that is wheel chair accessible. A high specification weights and training room and classrooms and conference suite have also been added. The creation of a wet play area with networked games consoles has been a particularly good attraction to the boys for the cold and wet winter months. Merlin House has been reorganised and has gained more space since taking over the old conference room. New showers and flooring have been fitted in Harrier House. A new heating system in Eagle house was proving to be problematic. Engineers were in the School at the time of the inspection resolving heating issues. The maintenance at this school is responsive ensuring the premises remain suitable at all times. Risk assessments ensure all areas of the school remain safe.

The Inspection Team are satisfied that every effort is being made to provide pupils with skills and qualities that future employers would be looking for. Preparation for leaving the School starts to gain momentum at the early age of 14. Allowing sufficient time has enabled staff to successfully prepare many boys for the time that they leave the School. The School coordinates a good response to both boys looked after by parents at home and those boys that are looked after in public care. The collaborative arrangements that need to be organised are being planned as part of the annual education statement review. Transition plans are being produced for pupils. Personal Advisors and Connexions Advisors support these.

Daily life at the School provides pupils with many opportunities, appropriate to the age and need, for the development of knowledge and skills that will be needed for all possible future living arrangements. The arrangement of the School boarding houses can lead to semi-independent or independent living opportunities being created for the pupils.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

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

Wennington Hall School is managed extremely well under the leadership of the Headmaster with the support of a competent staff team.

EVIDENCE:

The School has the full range of policies as outlined within Appendix 3 of the National Minimum Standards for Special Residential Schools. Policies and procedures at the School are both accessible and known to staff. Practice is fully reflective of the guidance provided in these documents. Guidance is regularly reviewed and updated when necessary.

The School Prospectus, complaints and child protection procedures have recently been reviewed and developed further. Additional age appropriate guidance has been produced, distributed and explained to boys. The colour presentation, layout and wording of many of the School documents are

appealing to readers. The Inspection Team was impressed with the consistent response being taken by all levels of staff in carrying out their roles. The Inspection Team commend the clear 'team response' being taken to support the boys.

From observations it is clear that the pupils assessed range of needs can be met at the School. Accurate records of the boys' needs, development and progress are maintained. General school records are equally well maintained. Both hard copies and computerised records are being maintained. Suitable security ensures that these records can only be accessed by those permitted to do so. Case tracking undertaken by the Commission confirmed that records can be easily accessed and are capable of being cross-referenced. Records are stored safely and securely within lockable cabinets. The boys are aware of the information being held on them. Records and graphical illustrations discussed with the boys have enabled them to comprehend their exact situation. Many behavioural improvements have been prompted through key worker discussions.

All staff spoken to commented that they received good support. Training and staff development is well coordinated. The School's annual development plan allows for the budgeting of staff's future training needs. Each staff member was found to be appropriately supported with good records of induction training and supervision being maintained. General recommendations made are to record both formal and informal supervision and to ensure both inductee and trainer sign off the induction process when finalised. The Inspection confirmed that supervision had clarity of purpose and was focussed on the needs and outcomes of the boys. Staff personal development plans were also viewed to be to a good standard.

The boys are receiving care and services they need from competent staff. This is evident in the high percentage of staff that hold National Vocational Qualification level 3. Continual improvement is at the heart of the School's ethos. One quality assurance measure viewed by the Commission was the continuous improvements maintained via parental and pupil surveys. Information gathered is analysed then used to prioritise future work. The School development plan reflects identified issues.

The acting Head of Care is experienced and has worked at the School since 1992. There is a personal and professional development programme to ensure the post holder gains all the relevant skills to fulfil this role. A coordinated and continuous programme of support is being provided to facilitate the post holder's potential. The Commission can be contacted for informal guidance.

Ofsted commented that 'the leadership of the Head Teacher is both skilled and inspirational.' Further comments went on to say that 'the governing body, the staff and partners in the community make major contributions to the success of the school'. After close scrutiny of records provided on the School's business

management and the monitoring on behalf of the person carrying on the School the Commission was satisfied that Wennington Hall School is stable and efficiently run.

The chairperson of the School Governors commented 'at this time, I am happy to report that I and my colleagues are more than satisfied with the welfare provision at the school and have no specific areas that we would like to bring to the Commission's attention'. The comments contained throughout this report support this statement.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion
 “N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

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

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

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

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	4
21	4
23	4
24	4
25	4

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
1	4
18	4
19	4
28	4
29	4
30	4
31	4
32	4
33	4

No

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1.	RS5	<p>Further and ongoing training is needed for the staff with designated responsibility for child protection.</p> <p>Staff with designated responsibility need to view School procedures alongside Appendix 1 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.</p> <p>Staff with designated responsibility need to make contact with the child protection coordinator. Joint consideration between the School and local social services department is required to support judgements on when reports need to be made.</p> <p>The policy on whistle-blowing needs to be discussed and known throughout the School.</p> <p>General advice is to ensure a suitably detailed record be maintained in writing up investigations which includes making the outcome clear. A prompt notification of the initiation and outcome of any future child protection enquiries would need to be made to the Commission.</p>	01/03/06
2.	RS14	Health plans should be adjusted if medication ceases/discontinues. Health plans should be	01/03/06

		clearly dated.	
3.	RS27	General advice is that the Criminal Records Bureau website be checked periodically.	01/03/06
4.	RS29	Observation lead to the general recommendation to get all induction records signed off, by inductee and trainer, when this process has been completed.	01/03/06
5.	RS30	Staff with a supervisory management role should record the dates of both formal and informal supervision.	01/03/06
6.	RS31	Ongoing support is required to enable the acting Head of Care to fulfil his role.	01/03/06

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