



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

**Alfriston School**

**Penn Road  
Beaconsfield  
Bucks  
HP9 2TS**

*Lead Inspector*  
Sue Smith

*Announced Inspection*  
27th February 2006      09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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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](http://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](http://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

<b>Name of school</b>	Alfriston School
<b>Address</b>	Penn Road Beaconsfield Bucks HP9 2TS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 673740
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<b>) Provider Web address</b>	<a href="mailto:Office@alfriston.bucks.sch.uk">Office@alfriston.bucks.sch.uk</a>
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	Mrs Valerie J Gordon
<b>Name of Head</b>	Mrs Valerie J Gordon
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Mrs Mandy Levitt
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	<b>11 to 16</b>
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2003

### **Brief Description of the School:**

Alfriston School is a day and weekly boarding special school for girls only run By Buckinghamshire County Council Education Authority. The school provides for girls with moderate learning difficulties in the age range of 11-18. The school had 117 pupils on roll at the time of this inspection with capacity for 23 boarders. The actual numbers boarding had been restricted to 21 in part to address the issues of overcrowding in some dorms noted at the last welfare inspection. The boarding provision was also currently limited to three nights a week operation due to continuing care staff vacancies.

The school is located close to the town of Beaconsfield in an attractive rural setting with spacious and well-maintained grounds. The main school building, which houses the residential accommodation, dates back to 1907. Various building additions and developments have taken place since then. The school originally opened in 1950.

This was the third welfare inspection of the school's boarding provision.

# **SUMMARY**

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

This was an announced inspection carried out over 2.5 days by Sue Smith and Joan Browne, Regulatory Inspectors for the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

During the inspection the inspectors assessed 32 of the 33 standard with 1 standard not applicable and 1 standard (standard 26) not fully assessed due to a planned Health and Safety inspection that will shortly take place.

The Inspector carried out a pre-inspection questionnaire with boarders to ascertain their views of boarding regimes. Parents letters were sent directly from the school for return to the commission to gain their views and the Head of School completed a pre-inspection questionnaire and Heads self assessment both of which were received prior to inspection.

During the inspection the inspectors implemented a triangulated methodology to gain an overview of boarding life and the systems and regimes of the school. This entailed assessing documentation, speaking to staff and boarders and then observing practice. In addition to the day time inspection one inspector joined the boarders for morning breakfast and evening activities.

As a result of this inspection the school have received one recommendation to support them to improve practice and maintain the safety of the children until such time as the health and safety inspection is carried out.

Advisory recommendations are made throughout the main body of this report, all of which were discussed with the Head of Care or Head of School during the inspection.

The inspector thanks the school and its children for the warm welcome received and support in completing the inspection process.

The Inspector would like to take the opportunity to wish the Head of School Mrs Gordon and Mr Gordon (Teaching Staff) a happy retirement at the end of this school year.

## **What the school does well:**

The school has consistently demonstrated the value they place on their pupils providing a variety of forums for them to express their views for the future development of the school.

A suitably qualified Head of Care oversees the day-to-day management of the boarding facility.

There are clear lines of accountability with the Head of Care supported by the Head of School in a positive and supportive manner.

Suitable numbers of staff are provided to efficiently manage the boarding facility with familiar relief staff available to cover sickness or absence.

All boarders have an individual Careplan, which is subject to review and reflective of their personal goals and needs.

Staff that are knowledgeable meets all personal care needs and in a manner that is agreed upon by the child.

Care and support is offered to the girls in a non-intrusive and sensitive manner in line with the Childs needs.

There are positive relationships established between staff and pupils, which are based on mutual respect.

The boarding staff have a commendable approach towards meeting the needs of their boarders, providing an abundance of opportunities for them to reach their full potential.

The school facilitates an excellent activities programme, which is both educational and enjoyable for the girls. In addition an independent living skills programme is in place with the senior girls able to enjoy and learn from using the senior flat to improve their skills.

Meals offered are of a high standard with frequent monitoring of the menus taking place to ensure the meals remain nutritiously balanced and enjoyed by the girls.

Systems to promote the health and welfare of children and in place, these include a full PSHE programme supported by the whole school.

Medication procedures are in place with all staff undertaking the administration of duties fully trained.

There is good support from the Medical Support Assistant, which ensures the health needs of children are being met.

All records are held securely ensuring confidentiality is maintained.

Complaints are taken seriously, with all complaints investigated in line with the current school policy, within recognised timescales for action. There have been no complaints received at the school in relation to boarding in the past 12 months. Girls reported they could raise their concerns without reprisal and felt supported by staff.

All unauthorised absences are documented with telephone follow-ups to ensure the safety of the child.

Child protection policies and procedures are in line with the Buckinghamshire County Council policies and reporting systems with regularly updated training in place. A Child protection officer is identified and there are established links with outside agencies.

There is a clear sanctions policy in place, which aims to address inappropriate behaviours in a manner that becomes a supportive learning experience for the girls. The girls reported there were no excessive sanctions and those in place were used fairly.

Recruitment systems are of a high standard with the school ensuring all relevant security checks take place prior to an offer of employment.

All admissions and leaving processes are planned and documented.

The school are to be commended for its commitment to staff training. Staff are competent in their roles, receiving additional training and support, which enables them to professionally develop.

All staff employed for boarding duties receives regular supervision, which they all find beneficial when discussing the needs of the children and their own professional needs.

The senior management team remain focused with a commitment to reaching the schools targets efficiently.

Monitoring systems are in place, which ensure necessary reporting to outside agencies is completed within recognised timescales.

The school produces a commendable improvements plan, which highlights the necessary improvements, goals and targets to be achieved in each school year.

The school has maintained its Investors in People and has recently achieved the Health Schools Award.

A supportive Board of Governors supports the development of the school.

The school site remains secure with the use of external CCTV cameras and key coded doors. A buzzing in system is in place for the school office with a signing in book accessible to all visitors.

The school are proactive in their approach to eradicating bullying, ensuring the principles of the school policy are followed by all staff and pupils.

An independent Councillor is employed by the school to support both the boarding and daygirls.

The boarding facilities provide a homely and comfy environment, which has been adapted to meet the needs of the girls. Suitable communal and private space is provided.

Bathrooms and toilets are suitable to meet the needs of the girls, ensuring their privacy and dignity are maintained.

Consultation takes place between the school and the parents on all issues affecting the welfare of a child.

The school provides support to families for whom English is a second language; ensuring necessary information is available through the translation of documents.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The complaints policy has now been revised using LEA guidance; the Governors agreed the policy in November 2005.

Child protection training is now available to all staff employed at the school.

Records held for sanctions and restraints are now provided in a bound book with staff signing they have received policies and guidance for reading.

A new computer programme for children to express their views on the sanctions and behaviour systems in place is presently being trialled, this will provide the school with the views of the children on how staff contribute to the

school systems and staff training will then be provided in line with the conclusions of this questionnaire exercise.

Current Careplans/placement plans now include a summary section; further advice has been received by the HOC during this inspection to support further improvements to this document.

A policy has been put in place for guidance on pupil access to their records.

The boarding dormitories have been re-organised to provide 4 bed spaces, additional space produced from the reduction of numbers has provided the girls with an additional comfy seating area and a computer work station in each dormitory.

After consultation with the Fire Authority additional door closers have been fitted to areas identified as a high risk in the boarding facility. An expensive but effective new fire detection box has been fitted. Risk assessments are now in place for all at risk areas.

A programme of supervision is now in place for all boarding staff.

A Policy and procedure for the management of visitors is now in place.

## **What they could do better:**

The school are advised to ensure all recommended actions received as a result of the planned health and safety inspection are carried out as soon as is reasonably practicable to ensure the ongoing protection of the girls, staff and visitors to the school.

The hot water temperatures of hand basins in all bathrooms accessible to boarders are risk assessed and regularly monitored to ensure they remain within the guidance of 43°C - 45°C. This will greatly reduce the risk of scalding.

It is advised the planned improvements to the medication administration records held in boarding take place as soon as possible to eradicate the amount of crossings out and visible mistakes in recording that are presently taking place.

The one outstanding Governor must ensure their CRB disclosure application form is completed, until such time they must remain supervised when attending the school in an official capacity.

The Inspector has suggested the Head of School formulates a checklist, which includes all points outlined in Standard 32.2 to support senior staff to maintain consistent monitoring practices when she retires at the end of this school year.

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](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

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# Being Healthy

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

14, 15.

The school implements systems that promote the health and welfare of its children, thus ensuring children the health and welfare of children is maintained.

The school provides varied menus that are both nutritiously balanced and appealing to children, thus ensuring their dietary needs are met.

## EVIDENCE:

The school implements a full PSHE programme, which is also supported by the Medical Support Assistant who delivers talks on puberty and childhood illnesses.

The school has a thorough medication policy, which is put into practice by the Medical Support Assistant (an ex registered Nurse). Accurate records of administration are held which are documented on individual recording sheets.

It was found that records maintained by the boarding staff were not of the same quality as held by the MSA with several scribbling out present. This was discussed with the MSA (Medical Support Assistant) who was in the process of addressing this issue by redesigning the administration form to make it easier to read. The Inspector will leave this in the capable hands of the MSA advising that this work be carried out as soon as is possible.

Some staff have been trained to administer such things as rectal medications, training was undertaken by the School Nurse who has ensured all staff received both theory and practical training before being deemed competent. Only staff appropriately trained to do so would undertake any invasive procedures.

Individual healthcare needs are identified with the necessary measures outlined in the children's individual Careplans.

Due to the flexi boarding regime (boarders live in 3 nights per week) all children remain registered with their own G.P. service, should a child need to see a G.P. the school will ensure the parents are informed to arrange an appointment. Those children and families who require additional support to attend appointments are offered such support by the MSA.

There are adequate numbers of staff trained in First Aid with certificates and training records open to inspection.

The school has engaged the services of a catering company to ensure school meals delivered are of a high standard. All of the children spoken with throughout the inspection were complimentary of the meals offered, alternative meals were available for those children either unable to eat meals from the main menu or disliking certain foods. Dining is well organised with children asked what meal they would like out of three options provided daily, vegetarian options are available with a range of salads also made available.

Regular food surveys are undertaken to ensure the meals provided are still what the girls require with changes made to menus as needed.

The chef runs an efficient kitchen with all recommendations from Environmental Health reports actioned within recognised timescales. There are no outstanding recommendations at this time. The chef ensures a wide range of fresh fruit and vegetables are on the menu as well as home cooked meals, ensuring minimal usage of processed and pre-packed foods.

Children with identified eating disorders are fully supported, with all children observed during meals to document eating patterns and changes in appetite.

The dining area is suitable for its purpose.

## 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.

Good attention is paid to providing privacy to pupils in a non intrusive manner, with support offered with such things as bathing and changing in a manner that ensures children feel protected and supported by the Boarding Team.

Children are given information on how to voice their concerns or raise a complaint in the boarder's handbook, supporting policies and systems are in place which ensure children are able to make a complaint without fear of reprisal.

Systems and training are in place, which aim to prevent the abuse of children.

The school are proactive in their approach to eradicating the bullying of children; a thorough Anti-Bullying policy is made available which supports practice within the school.

The school has a policy and reporting system for the follow up of un-authorized absences from the school, with an absconding policy in place, which is reflective of timescales for action, ensuring the ongoing safety and protection of its children.

The school has policies and supporting reporting systems in place for any sanctions, these are relevant to boarding and ensure all children are treated in a fair manner.

Physical intervention is only administered by those staff trained in Team Teach techniques, with supporting policies and guidance in place, thus ensuring the ongoing protection of the children.

Systems are in place, which protect the health, safety and welfare of children and staff whilst on the school premises. However further work need to take place to ensure supporting monitoring tools are developed.

Recruitment procedures in place ensure staff are compelled to apply for legislative clearances that render them appropriate for the post applied for and in turn are suitable to care for and support children.

**EVIDENCE:**

The school ensures all confidential records are held in lockable facilities, which are only accessible to those who are authorised to do so. Staff are aware when information needs to be shared and who to report information to.

Suitable telephone facilities are provided to boarders, which are private. A system, which ensures all girls are able to make calls, is in place, which the girls appreciate, as described in their words "it stops people hogging the phone".

Care and support is offered to the girls in a non-intrusive and sensitive manner in line with the child's needs. The girls were complimentary of the way staff work with them, they reported feeling they could ask any of the staff to help them and they would not feel embarrassed or as was reported to the inspector "they don't make you feel stupid".

The school has a thorough complaints procedure, which is available to staff, children and significant parties. Girls know how to make a complaint without fear of reprisal; a sense of empowerment is evident throughout the school, which supports the girls to voice their concerns through meetings such as the student council.

The school has received no complaints in the past 12 months.

Child Protection policies and procedures are in line with Buckinghamshire County Council with all staff employed at the school receiving regularly updated training. A Child Protection Officer is identified and links with other agencies such as social Services is established ensuring any concerns the school may have concerning the welfare of a child is reported to the appropriate persons.

The school implements an Anti-Bullying Policy, which is reflective of a positive and supportive ethos, this enables the school to act quickly and sensitively when resolving issues amongst pupils. The girls reported bullying as not being a huge issue at the school and felt they could report any instances to staff and they would be supportive and available to them.

All significant events are reported using the established systems in place. The school maintain contact with other agencies and will make referrals as needed.

There is an absence policy in place which also addresses the actions to be taken and timescales should a pupil abscond from the school. A structured absence notification system is in place and the actions taken are documented.

The school operates a clear sanctions policy, which is reflective of rewarding positive behaviour and addressing inappropriate behaviour in a manner that becomes a supportive learning experience for pupils. There are no excessive sanctions in place, the girls are proactive in supporting the systems in place and were clear on how sanctions could be further developed. The girls reported all sanctions being given fairly by staff and they had not experienced inappropriate or demeaning sanctions whilst at the school. It was evident when talking to pupils that they had a clear understanding of the school rules and fully supported them.

A clear record of sanctions is maintained which also reflects records of restraint. Staff that have been trained in the recommended 'Team Teach' techniques undertake all restraint. Training is regularly undertaken; at this time only newer members of the team are awaiting training, which has been scheduled to take place.

The Head regularly monitors records of Sanctions and Restraint.

The school is presently working on improving its Health and Safety measures and documentation. A planned visit by the local authority will be used to ascertain a base line for improvements in the present systems. The inspector is satisfied once this takes place the school will be able to implement further systems, which will support their current practice and will leave the assessment of health and safety to this inspector. However in the interim this inspector does need to make a recommendation to ensure the hot water temperatures in washbasins is maintained at a safe level, presently the water is running in excess of 43°C and could cause scolding to younger or more

vulnerable pupils. The fitting of individual thermostatic devices would be advised to regulate temperatures, however the inspector will leave this decision to the H & S inspector. It is advised that the school do ensure monitoring tools be further developed to support a health and safety audit trail, again the decision as to what tools will be required will be decided by the H & S inspector.

The reader of this report will note the inspector has scored the health and safety standard for this inspection (standard 26) as not assessed, this is due to the planned H & S inspection. At this time the inspector does not feel she would be able to add a scoring decision that would be a true reflection of the activities and systems in place. As previously stated the recommendation made is to ensure the children remain safe in the environment until this inspection takes place.

Recruitment files are maintained to a high standard with the school ensuring all relevant security checks take place prior to an offer of employment. The school meets all areas of standard 27.2 with commendable practice observed. There are thorough systems in place, which is supported by good use of training packages.

One ongoing issue of concern has been raised in relation to the failure of one Governor to ensure application for a CRB disclosure can be completed. To have this in place was a recommendation of the last inspection report and the failure to provide this information has necessitated a further recommendation of this report. This CRB must be applied for immediately. As stated until such time as this is received this Governor must not meet with children in an official capacity unsupervised.

The inspector would personally remind this Governor of their duties and responsibilities as an appointed representative of the school to ensure they are actively working towards maintaining the standards of the School.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

12, 13, 22.

The school provides a 24-hour curriculum, which ensures children are supported to reach their full potential.

A variety of planned activities are offered to children accessing both school facilities and external clubs and facilities, activities are meaningful and enjoyable, ensuring the children at the school are able to access the wider community and achieve their personal goals.

Individual support is offered to children who may be undergoing personal difficulties in a constructive and documented manner thus ensuring children do not feel isolated.

## EVIDENCE:

The school facilitates a homework session for boarders after school, which is well supported by teaching staff that undertake boarding duties.

The school has established an excellent independent living skills programme, with the girls supported to learn new skills and improve on those they already possess, in addition the girls work towards living in the senior flat. This concept works well, taking into consideration the individual capabilities of senior students and developing and adapting the programme to enable them to live in this area with minimal supervision.

The school provides a variety of suitable educational and good fun activities for the boarding girls to participate in. All trips out of the school grounds are well organised with sufficient numbers of staff and suitable risk assessments to

support pupils needs. Girls spoken with throughout the inspection were complimentary of the range of activities offered and the support they receive. The inspector joined in during one evening's activity programme, the activity attended was work towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award, which was well managed, and a fun way for the girls to learn camp cooking skills.

All support offered by staff is based on a learning experience; girls are given the opportunity to learn new skills in a safe and fun environment. The girls are very supportive of each other; understanding each other's limitations and helping each other to reach their full potential. Staff ensure the girls receive praise for all their achievements ensuring small steps are praised.

The school has employed an independent councillor who is accessible to the girls as needed. The councillor is also involved with the care and welfare of the day pupils.

# **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.

A variety of systems are in place which ensure children can make decisions that influence the way the school is run.

Positive relationships between Boarders and Boarding staff was observed throughout this inspection, which is supported by a proactive Head and Head of Care who ensure a supportive and mutually respectful philosophy is implemented.

There are structured written processes which ensure all admissions to boarding are appropriate to the needs of the children, with supporting leaving plans formulated as required.

The school have implemented plans of care to ensure the needs of children can be met.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The school provided evidence of commendable practice when supporting families for whom English is a second language; ensuring necessary information is made available through the translation of documents.

Parents and children are consulted on all issues affecting the welfare of the child and all decisions made are done so by considering what is in the best interest of the child. All children are given the opportunity to make positive decisions through choice, supporting their personal development. At all times the school endeavours to support the child to maintain a level of independence.

Throughout the inspection the inspector had opportunity to assess the relationships between pupils and staff, at all times it was evident that positive relationships have been established which are based on a mutual respect, ensuring the children felt valued. Children were complimentary of the support they are offered and felt they were able to talk to any member of staff without fear of ridicule. Staff have established these open and positive relationships whilst maintaining school rules and necessary boundaries to ensure the protection of the children.

All personal care needs are met by staff that are knowledgeable and in a manner that is agreed upon by the child.

All children have a clear statement, which supports staff to provide necessary care and support. Children are admitted to boarding taking into consideration their ability to integrate with other boarders and what can be achieved for their personal growth through boarding. Emergency boarding admissions are undertaken with relevant information available prior to admission to ensure the staff are able to meet the child's needs.

The leaving of boarding is planned and ensures the child is supported to progress to their next life experience. Those children who will be leaving the school to attend college do so with relevant documentation to ensure all of their learning needs can be addressed within the new environment.

All children who are boarders have an individual Careplan, which outlines their specific needs and personal development needs. A previous recommendation had been made to provide a summary of the Careplan to ensure relevant information could be accessed easily; in response to this the Head of Boarding had developed a summary area on the section outlining the assessment of needs, the inspector has suggested that in addition a pen picture summary be developed which would provide additional necessary information to staff, a quick mock version of this was provided by the inspector, the inspector has advised the Head of Boarding to adapt this to best fit for the school.

Good provision is made to ensure families are able to maintain contact with their child whilst they are in boarding; as boarders are only in residence for 3 nights per week this is not such as issue of concern for the school, however they appreciate the girls need to maintain strong links with families.



# 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.

Children are supported to wear their own clothing outside of school time, thus maintaining their own identity.

Systems are in place, which ensure all pocket money is held securely, ensuring the receipt of monies is documented and kept safe on behalf of the child.

The children have adequate communal and personal spaces, which are well maintained to meet their needs.

The privacy and dignity of Boarders is maintained whilst carrying out their personal hygiene and care needs, ensuring staff support is non-intrusive and delivered in a safe and professional manner.

## EVIDENCE:

All children wear their own clothing once the school day has finished, time is set aside after school which enables the girls to get changed out of their uniforms.

The school operates a boarders bank with accurate documents held on file for each transaction. Separate sheets are available for each girl to ensure a clear audit trail.

At this time there are no looked after children in boarding who will be leaving care on leaving the school, therefore standard 21 is not applicable to the school.

All children supported in the boarding facility are looked after by knowledgeable and skilled staff, all care is implemented in a manner that ensures the privacy and dignity of the girls is maintained at all times. Those girls who may require additional physical support are assured it will be carried out in a professional and safe manner, which ensures they are able to maintain a level of independence. Girls who may have specific medical or psychological issues, which require additional support, are given that support in line with their written Careplan.

The boarding facilities are pleasant and homely, decorated in soft and relaxing tones. A lot of work has been carried out since the last inspection to create more space in dormitories; numbers have been reduced per room with additional partitions removed to create a study space and relaxation area. A computer, desk and chair have been provided for each room as well as comfy seating with side tables and additional lamp lighting. The girls expressed their appreciation for these areas and find they are able to relax in their own dormitories with ease or carry on with study without interruption.

All girls have been provided with bedside drawers and additional wardrobe storage space is provided for each dormitory. New bedding has been purchased which are colour matched to the décor of the individual dormitories. Additional small lockers, which the girls can access with their own key, have been provided to store things such as Ipods, jewellery and other personal items.

The communal common room is decorated to a high standard, providing a large and comfy area for the girls to relax in. The facility is large enough to accommodate all of the girls with adequate amounts of seating provided. This is a relaxing and functional area of the boarding facility, which is greatly used by the girls.

The facility provides toilets and bathrooms in sufficient numbers, which are pleasant and provide privacy to the girls. The school are reminded to ensure that hot water temperatures are monitored regularly as they are presently running higher than the recommended 43°C, this advice has been further addressed in the 'Staying Safe' section of this report. Bathing facilities include both showers and baths, which ensure the girls, are able to maintain their personal preferences.

The school are to be commended for the work that has been undertaken in the past 12 months to improve the facilities available to boarders, in doing so they have been able to demonstrate commitment to their improvements plan and have provided a high standard of boarding facility which is both safe and appealing.

# 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.

The school provides a Statement of Purpose and School Prospectus document to support children, families and placing authorities when making a decision for admission.

A plan of care that is reflective of the children's needs, development and progress is in place, thus ensuring all children are supported to reach their full potential.

There is good staff to children ratios within the boarding environment, ensuring children remain safe at all times.

Training is provided to Staff, ensuring staff possess the necessary skills to meet the needs of the children.

The school are implementing a full supervision programme for staff, ensuring the ongoing safeguarding and promoting of children's welfare.

Staff are competent in their roles, providing a safe and professionally run service to vulnerable children.

There are clear lines of accountability in place with a suitably qualified and experienced Head of Care working with the support and management of the Head of School.

The school continues to be monitored by a variety of outside agencies to ensure the development of the school, thus ensuring the best possible outcomes for its children.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The school provides a written Statement of Purpose, which is of a high standard; this document provides prospective girls and their families (as well as placing authorities) with enough information to be able to make an informed decision on admission. Additional information is made available to parents and pupils through the boarding handbook supplied by the school.

All children have an individual pupils file, which provides information such as school health records, academic performance and significant events. Pupil school records are held securely in the Heads office, these have been assessed as meeting the standard during previous inspections and as such were not accessed during this inspection. In addition separate Child Protection files are held by the Head of school, which remain confidential to the Head and can only be accessed with the Heads permission on a need to know basis.

As previously mentioned in this report children also have an individual plan of care, which outlines their needs, and aspirations. Personal goals are set in a way that promotes independence. Information contained is supported by the pupil's files ensuring that all necessary information held in these files is copied into the Careplan.

The school ensures the site remains secure with the use of CCTV cameras, which scan the outside environment; this is monitored from the school office. A signing in system is in place for all visitors to the school with key coded access providing a buzzing in system for the main door to the school. Other areas of the school, which includes boarding, are also operated by a key coded access providing additional security for the children and staff. This proved to be an efficient system demonstrated by the need for Inspectors to seek staff support to access some areas of the school.

There are sufficient numbers of suitably qualified and skilled staff employed within the boarding facility; there is no use of agency staff due to relief staff who can be relied upon to cover additional hours necessary to maintain the safety of the children. All staff have consistent hours of work as outlined in their contracts of employment, these staff are also available to cover gaps in staffing numbers which could be caused by illness. There is a sense of commitment from staff that undertakes their duties in the best interest of the children.

All sleep-in staff are within close proximity of the girls dormitories to ensure availability, whilst remaining far enough from the girls sleeping area to ensure privacy.

The school is to be commended for its commitment to providing training to its staff to undertake their duties in a safe and knowledgeable manner. The school maintains its own training budget, which is realistic, all training request applications are assessed by the Deputy Head who will then organise relevant training for individuals.

The school has a commitment to providing NVQ 3 training to its boarding staff, the recent collapse of the training provider necessitated this training to be put on hold until the county was able to find an alternative training organisation. This has now been resolved and NVQ training is up-and running with the staff eager to obtain this qualification. The Head of Care is presently waiting for confirmation that NVQ 4 in Management can be provided which will further support her in the role.

The school provides all boarding staff with a thorough Induction programme, which is documented. Staff reported finding this an informative and supportive programme, which enabled them to practice in a professional and safe manner.

All staff employed in boarding undertakes regular supervision, this is a documented process which staff felt was beneficial. The Head of Care ensures all supervision files remain confidential and are stored in a lockable facility.

An annual Appraisal system is in place, which identifies training and professional development opportunities; this is then included in the schools Improvements Plan which supports the continued development of the training budget.

The Senior Management Team remains focused with a clear understanding of the schools aims and objectives. There are excellent relationships evident with a team spirit present, ensuring targets are met.

Crisis management policies and procedures are being developed using the Buckinghamshire County Council's provided format. These should soon be

completed and distributed to staff. The inspector advises this is seen as a priority for completion.

The school has productive monitoring systems in place, which ensure all necessary reporting takes place within recognised timescales. The Inspector has suggested the Head of School formulates a checklist, which includes all points outlined in Standard 32.2 to support senior staff to maintain consistent monitoring practices when she retires at the end of this school year.

The school has a commendable Improvement Plan, which clearly identifies the actions the school will need to take to meet its targets. The plan is reflective of the ongoing monitoring of the schools systems and includes realistic goals and timescales. The school are to be commended for maintaining such a high standard of plan and the value it has on ensuring the school is run in the best interest of the children.

The school has maintained its Investors In People and recently achieved the Healthy Schools award; they are to be commended for their dedication and the hard work that was undertaken by all staff to achieve this status. These are both excellent examples of the proactive management structure and team approach evident throughout the inspection.

The Head of Boarding is suitably qualified; undertaking additional training as necessary, as previously mentioned she is awaiting enrolment to undertake an NVQ 4 in Management. She is both knowledgeable and supportive of the needs of the girls in her care and is a strong leader to her staff team. She is actively supported by the Head of school who is a known face amongst boarders and was identified by the girls as approachable and well liked.

Weekly meetings take place between the Head of School and Boarding Staff to ensure issues of concern and recent events can be discussed in an open forum, this supports the philosophy of boarding and ensures staff are able to fully meet the needs of the girls in their care.

A supportive Board of Governors oversees the school, ensuring standard 33 visits are undertaken which are documented and give an overview of the routines and success of the boarding facility.



# 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

<b>BEING HEALTHY</b>	
<b>Standard No</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>14</b>	3
<b>15</b>	3

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

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

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

<b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>	
<b>Standard No</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>16</b>	3
<b>21</b>	3
<b>23</b>	3
<b>24</b>	3
<b>25</b>	3

<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	
<b>Standard No</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>1</b>	3
<b>18</b>	3
<b>19</b>	3
<b>28</b>	3
<b>29</b>	4
<b>30</b>	3
<b>31</b>	3
<b>32</b>	3
<b>33</b>	3

NO

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	26	The school needs to ensure all hot water taps are maintained between 43°C and 45°C.	27/03/06
2	27	The school needs to gain the CRB disclosure of the one outstanding Governor; until such time as this is received they must continue to not have any unsupervised contact with children. PREVIOUSLY MADE RECOMMENDATION.	27/03/06

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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