



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Holbrook Centre for Autism

**Port Way
Holbrook
Belper
Derbyshire
DE56 0TE**

Lead Inspector
Katarina Djordjevic

Key Inspection
25th September 2006 10:00

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 Holbrook Centre for Autism

Address Port Way
Holbrook
Belper
Derbyshire
DE56 0TE

Telephone number 01332 880208

Fax number 01332 781916

Email address

Provider Web address

**Name of Governing body,
Person or Authority
responsible for the
school** Derbyshire County Council

Name of Head Mr David Heald

Name of Head of Care Mrs Kelly Belcher

**Age range of residential
pupils** 5 - 19 years

**Date of last welfare
inspection** 10 January 2006

Brief Description of the School:

The Holbrook Centre for Autism is run by the Local Education Authority and provides specialist education and care for students with Autism, Severe Learning Difficulties and Challenging Behaviour aged between 5 and 19. It is situated in the small village of Holbrook.

The residential provision can be accessed by students for up to four nights a week in term time dependent on the individual's assessed needs. There are seven bedrooms and a total of 18 students use the residential facility throughout the week. There are two units, Acorn unit is on the first floor and has its own lounge, dining room, small kitchen and bathing and toilet facilities. Oak unit is situated on the second floor and has a kitchen, lounge/diner, bathroom and toilet facilities. Students have their meals, except lunch, in the units. Students also use the Further Education bungalow to have some meals and do their own laundry.

All bedrooms are single.

There is a sensory room, library and other activity rooms/areas. Students use community resources in the nearby town of Belper and the city of Derby. The school has its own transport.

At the time of this visit the school was having an extension built which will provide a further three classrooms.

SUMMARY

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

This was an announced inspection and was carried out by one Inspector over three days. Prior to this visit, time was also spent planning the visit including a review of the last inspection report, the service history, the Pre-Inspection Questionnaire and accompanying information supplied by the Head Teacher. Questionnaires from parents/carers and staff were also received and reviewed. The Inspector had a pre-inspection planning meeting with the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head Teacher and Head of Care.

The Inspector used the case tracking methodology, which involved looking at two students' care records and meeting with the students' key workers. The Inspector had tea with students and accompanied students and staff on a trip out. The Inspector also looked at health and safety records, medication records, staff recruitment, induction, training and supervision records, and Standard 33 visit reports. The Inspector met with various key personnel including the school's Cooks, the Domestic Supervisor, the school Caretaker, the Deputy Head Teacher and the Head of Care. The Inspector also received surveys/written comments from 11 of the students who were using the residential provision.

What the school does well:

Students receive a high level of care based on their individual assessed needs. This can be attributed to the skills, commitment and determination of the whole staff team who continue to work hard to improve the quality of lives of the students, enabling students to reach their full potential. There was various evidence to support this including staff's ability to meet the complex and challenging needs of students. Physical restraint is very rarely used. Staff are skilled at communicating with students and various forms of communication were used. There was evidence that students' views, needs and preferences, and behaviours were at the forefront of the planning of care provided.

The school's management team continue to provide clear leadership and direction resulting in a well motivated and highly skilled staff team.

Residential, education and ancillary staff continue to work well together with positive outcomes for the students.

Students were given excellent support to meet their communication needs. There were many examples of initiatives implemented to support students in making day to day choices/decisions and increasing their communication skills.

Students were enabled to routinely access community facilities despite the behavioural difficulties that they can present.

The catering and provision of meals were managed to a high standard.

The school offers valuable support and guidance to families and carers of the students. Feedback from parents confirmed this and parents were full of appreciation for the work and support given by the school, not only to their children but also to them as families. Comments received included 'Superb professional staff, well trained, motivated and caring'; 'the staff are wonderful'; 'they don't just do a good job, they do an excellent job'.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Significant progress has been made in meeting the recommendations from the last inspection report. 17 of the 20 recommendations made have been met and progress has been made in meeting the remaining three recommendations.

A new pager system has been provided for staff which enables staff to summon help if needed.

Changes have been made to the staffing structure in the residential provision. This includes changes in the residential management team structure and the care staff have been divided into two teams, each team working on the one unit. The Head of Care is no longer part of the shift rota and is now supernumerary giving time to carry out managerial and administrative tasks as well as spending time on each unit. Staff reported that these changes have been beneficial and provided greater consistency for the students and greater accessibility to the Head of Care.

Improvements have been made in recruitment practices including obtaining verification from the Local Authority that taxi drivers and escorts have received satisfactory CRB checks.

The environment has benefited from secondary double-glazing being fitted, self-closure devices being fitted to some doors in the residential areas, and the lighting has been improved in Acorn lounge. Regular testing of hot water temperatures are now taking place and records kept. The school is waiting for thermostatic mixer valves to be fitted.

Improvements have been made in care plans and there was evidence of care plans being reviewed and updated as and when required.

What they could do better:

The Head Teacher needs to ensure that where issues arise when recruiting new staff, adequate records need to be kept to verify discussions held with applicants including:

- When gaps in employment history are explored
- Evidence to support what strategies have been put in place to safeguard students when new staff start work prior to a satisfactory CRB check being obtained.

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

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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Achieving Economic Wellbeing

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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

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

Staff are committed to meeting students' health needs and promote a healthy life style ensuring the health needs of students are being met whilst staying in the residential unit.

Students are provided with a varied and nutritious diet and special dietary needs are being catered for, ensuring their dietary needs are being met.

EVIDENCE:

Students live with their parents/carers, who have overall responsibility for their child's health needs. Two students' care files were examined. One file contained a Health Care Plan, which gave background details of any health conditions, medication prescribed, and health visits attended. The Inspector was informed that the health questionnaire for the second student had been sent to the student's parents for completion. The students' overall Care Plan did not include all medical information. For example, one student's overall Care Plan did not state that the student had epilepsy. However, this information was in the Health Care Plan, which was kept at the back of the student's care file.

There was documentary evidence to support that staff were working closely with community health services to ensure students' needs were being met.

Improvements in the handling, storage, recording and administration of medication had been made and the recommendations completed from the previous report.

The catering and provision of meals is managed to a high standard and the school had recently received a Gold award from Derbyshire County Council for this. The cook informed the Inspector that they were now using fresh vegetables and introducing more fruit. There was good communication between catering staff and students.

Since the last inspection, students now have breakfast and tea in the residential units. The Inspector joined students in both units for tea. Students were actively encouraged to become involved in the preparation of meals. Staff showed patience in encouraging and supporting individuals with the tasks. Students were given choices about what they wanted to eat and it was evident that preferences and special dietary needs were being catered for.

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, 8, 10, 26, 27

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

Students are cared for in a safe and secure environment, therefore promoting the protection and well being of individual students.

EVIDENCE:

Confidentiality is managed well and records are kept securely. Staff worked with students in a sensitive manner ensuring privacy and dignity was maintained.

The school had its own internal complaints procedure and also the Derbyshire County Council Complaints procedure. One complaint had been received since the last inspection in January 2006 and records seen supported that this had been dealt with appropriately.

There were various ways in which students were supported to access the complaints procedure. There were posters in pictorial form in the units telling students who they could complain to. The initiative for students called 'Reflection time' had progressed well since the last inspection. 'Reflection time' gave students the opportunity to meet with their key worker to say what they did and didn't like, what made them sad or happy. The Inspector saw the 'Reflection time' books for the two students' who were being case tracked. These contained photographs of activities that students had been involved in, and some students had been supported with writing their comments. These demonstrated that staff were working hard to enable students to express their views.

Documentary evidence and discussions with staff supported that safeguarding students was a priority at the school. The Local Education Authority's Child Protection Advisor had viewed the school's Child Protection policy and made some recommendations. The Head Teacher was in the process of implementing these. All staff had received Child Protection training at the beginning of this school term. Staff who met with the Inspector were able to explain the Child Protection procedures and the school's Whistle blowing policy and were clear about their own responsibilities and accountability. Discussions with the Head Teacher and records seen confirmed there had been no Child Protection referrals since the last inspection.

The CSCI student surveys which staff had adapted to meet the needs of the students, asked if staff helped students feel safe and who they would talk to if they felt sad. Students who responded to these questions stated they felt safe and they indicated they knew who to go to if they were sad or if someone had hurt them.

The school has an Anti-Bullying policy and works in line with Derbyshire County Council's Anti-Bullying Campaign.

The school's policy on 'Absence without Authority' had been updated since the last inspection. Due to high staffing and supervision levels students have little opportunity to go missing.

Staff continue to manage challenging behaviours with skill and in a sensitive and caring manner. All staff have received TEAM TEACH (Techniques that are Effective with Anger, Aggression Management utilising Therapeutic Educational Awareness Communication Handling strategies) training. Physical intervention is rarely used. Since the last inspection staff have worked hard to manage one particular student's behaviour, which was impacting on other students. Staff have worked closely with professionals from other agencies to support the student resulting in a significant improvement in the student's behaviour and very few incidents of challenging behaviour.

Records seen and discussions with relevant personnel supported that health and safety is well managed at the school. Certificates for the servicing of equipment were in order and an Electrical Installation certificate had been obtained.

The school was waiting for thermostatic mixer valves to be fitted to all hot water outlets used by the students. Regular testing of the hot water temperatures was being undertaken and records kept

Records of fire alarm tests showed that these were being carried out weekly as required. Self-closure devices had been fitted to some of the doors in the residential units as recommended at the last inspection.

Progress has been made in the recruitment practices at the school but an inspection of a random sample of personnel files of staff employed since the last inspection identified the following issues in relation to one staff member appointed:

1. The application form did not give a full employment history and there were no records of the gaps being explored.
2. The staff member had started working at the school before a satisfactory CRB check had been received. The file did contain a copy of the staff member's most recent CRB from a previous employer, dated December 2005. There were no records in the file to state that the staff member should not work unsupervised until a satisfactory CRB had been obtained. However, discussions with the Head Teacher, Head of Care and new staff who met with the Inspector highlighted that new staff do not work unsupervised or become involved in personal care during the first three months of working at the school. This was also stated in the induction programme.

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

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Staff ensure that students are given every opportunity for enjoyment and achieving by provision of educational support and a full range of activities, enabling them to achieve and develop confidence in their skills.

EVIDENCE:

There were good communication links between education and care staff and there was evidence to support that education and care staff were working consistently with students. Residential staff now have handovers with education staff twice a day and key workers informed the Inspector that they would be attending students' Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings in the future.

Students were provided with a range of indoor and outdoor activities based on both individual needs and group needs. Students were given opportunities to learn new skills and try out new activities including accessing community activities/resources. The challenging behaviours often presented by students did not prohibit them from using community leisure facilities and staff are to be commended for this. Individual risk assessments for activities had been completed.

Discussions with staff and feedback from parents, records seen and observations made by the Inspector supported that students' were receiving a high level of individualised support based on assessed needs. Staff were skilled

in communicating with students, using alternative methods of communications where needed.

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, 17, 20

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Relationships between staff and students are based on respect and staff had an in depth knowledge of individual students ensuring their needs are met and enabling them to contribute wherever possible to their daily lives.

EVIDENCE:

The majority of students have severe communication difficulties, which potentially makes it difficult to obtain their views, opinions and choices. However, staff continue to work hard to provide different opportunities and systems to involve students wherever possible in decision making, not only in the day to day lives of students but in long term planning. Staff are highly skilled in working with students with such difficulties and have developed methods of alternative forms of communication. The Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) was used for students to communicate and exercise their choice as much as possible in daily living. The introduction of 'Reflection time' for students is another initiative, which has enabled students to express their views. The student surveys sent out by the CSCI were adapted by staff to enable students to give their comments about life at the school.

Students are supported to learn about and respect different faiths and cultures. In Oak unit there was a wall display, which the students had made about different faiths and included photographs of different places of worship they had visited, and paintings of items important to particular faiths.

Records examined, observations of practices, discussions with staff, and feedback from parents supported that excellent relationships existed between staff and students. Staff were committed to enabling students to achieve their potential and worked with patience, determination and sensitivity in trying to enable and empower students to get the best out of life.

The deployment of staff allowed for consistency and staff were tenacious in working with students to encourage and enable them to acquire skills.

Care files were well organised and indexed. Care Plans were of a high standard giving clear details of individual's needs and how to support students, which included examples of practices, and how to communicate with individuals. Students' daily routines and preferences were also included. Targets had been set from the Care Plans, which were based upon individual needs and abilities. Care Plan targets also reflected educational targets set in students' Individual Education Plans. There were systems in place for monitoring students' progress in achieving the targets. There was evidence that Care Plans were being updated as and when required. Risk assessments were also in place.

The Inspector met with both students' key workers who had an indepth knowledge of the student's needs and how to support the student.

There were good systems for communication with parents/carers. All students had Home-School Link books. Feedback from parents stated that communication from the school was good. Documentary evidence and observations confirmed that students were supported by staff to contact parents/carers where appropriate.

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, 24,

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

Staff work hard to provide a homely and pleasant environment for students to achieve as much independence as possible, within the limitations of the physical environment.

EVIDENCE:

Excellent progress has been made in enabling students to become involved in handling and managing their pocket money. Each student has a book which is used to record income and money spent. Pictures of different coins and notes are used and the Inspector observed students being involved in the process.

Improvements have been made to the environment, which includes:

- The provision of secondary glazing.
- The lounge in Acorn unit has been changed into a dining room and has had new lighting fitted. Another room in the unit has been changed into a lounge.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

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

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

1, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The management team at the school continue to provide clear direction and leadership resulting in a well-motivated staff team. The staff team are experienced and skilled in meeting the complex needs of the students, helping students to feel safe and valued.

EVIDENCE:

The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed since the last inspection. There is a Children's Guide, which has been produced in an appropriate form of communication.

Staffing levels were appropriate at the time of this inspection. The staffing difficulties being experienced at the last inspection had been resolved and staff vacancies had been filled.

Improvements had been made to the staff induction programme. The Inspector met with new staff who confirmed that they had received an induction and had felt well supported by all members of the staff team.

Staff training needs are discussed and identified in supervision and also form part of the school's Continuing Professional Development Plan. Staff confirmed that they are encouraged and supported to attend training courses. Two residential staff were due to start the NVQ Level 3 in the Caring for Children and Young People. Discussions with staff and records examined supported that a range of training had been provided and future training arranged based on the needs of individual staff and the needs of the school.

Improvements had been made in the format and recording of supervision as required in the last inspection report. There was evidence that where issues of concern were raised, these were being dealt with appropriately. Most care staff were receiving regular formal supervision and staff commented that they found supervision useful and a necessary part of their professional development. Where formal supervision sessions were not taking place, there was documentary evidence that informal chats were taking place.

All staff who met with the Inspector praised the support given to them from the management team and felt valued by them. Staff stated that members of the management team were approachable and always had/made time to listen to their views and concerns. Staff felt included in the development and day to day running of the school. The Inspector found evidence during this inspection to support their views and found a real sense of teamwork within the whole school.

The Head of Care was studying for the Registered Manager's Award. Evidence from this inspection highlighted the progress made in the professional development of the Head of Care. The change in the Head of Care's working pattern had allowed more time for specific managerial tasks. The Head of Care also had time to work on shift as an extra member of staff which provided the opportunity to observe practice and give support to staff and students where needed.

Progress has been made in monitoring and signing of records by the management team.

A representative from the Local Education Authority has continued to visit the school every half term as required by this Standard. A report has been produced for each visit. Feedback from the school's management team found these reports useful in helping to further improve the quality of care provided.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

“N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	3
15	4

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

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

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	4
21	X
23	X
24	3
25	X

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

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? YES

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.	RS14	Information regarding a student's medical/health needs should be obtained from parents/carers prior to students using the residential provision..	
2.	RS27	Details of gaps in employment should be explored and written records kept.	
3	RS30	All care staff including night staff should receive regular supervision in line with National Minimum Standards.	

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