



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Saxon Hill

**Kings Hill Road
Lichfield
Staffs
WS14 9DE**

Lead Inspector
David
Morgan

Announced
8 June 2005 9:00

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	Saxon Hill
Address	Kings Hill Road Lichfield Staffs WS14 9DE
Telephone number	01543 510615
Fax number	
Email address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the	Staffordshire County Council Education Department
Name of Head	Nigel Carter
Name of Head of Care	Wendy Arnfield
Age range of residential pupils	4-19 years
Date of last welfare inspection	16.11.04

Brief Description of the School:

Saxon Hill School is a co-educational special school administered by Staffordshire County Council Education Department. It is located in a suburban area approx 1 mile from Lichfield city centre.

The Sleep-Over Club is a 16-bedded unit attached to the school that offers repite care only to pupils of the school. It was purpose-built and operates Monday to Thursday nights inclusively, in term time only.

There is a dedicated team of care staff that operate independently of, but in close liaison with, the teaching and other staff. The head of care is answerable to the headteacher.

The school is part of the Councils physical disability support service that offers support to people outside the school via in-house and outreach work. The school has also been part of a special schools review that has contributed to it increasingly catering for children with more complex needs. The school has also achieved specialist status.

SUMMARY

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

The School is seeking Specialist Status, not achieved it.

The Saxon Hill School respite unit has been named the Sleepover Club by children. The school caters for a wide range of physical and mental abilities.

The inspection was undertaken over three days by two inspectors, one of whom concentrated on medical issues. The visits consisted of a preliminary visit to complete questionnaires by a sample of 5 children and make final preparations for the inspection, and a further two days of interviews and record inspection. This included being at the Sleepover Club one evening and at breakfast one morning. The lead inspector was assisted for part of the inspection by a specialist nurse inspector.

Questionnaires were also received from 8 staff and 5 families. Questionnaires were not sent to placing social workers on this occasion.

Interviews were held with the manager and deputy, care staff, head-teacher and deputy, the chair of governors and the bursar. The inspectors were comprehensively assisted by everyone they spoke to. Two children gave the inspector a guided tour of the Sleepover Club and school. Two meals were taken with staff and children.

Management had compiled a folder with comprehensive information about how they considered the school met the Standards.

This visit was brought forward so that inspectors could meet different children at a different time of year. This means that the report represents approximately 6 months since the last inspection rather than a full year. Particular attention was therefore paid to areas of practice that required development rather than those that were satisfactory; some issues were not inspected at all.

What the school does well:

The school has continued to improve the extent to which it meets the Standards. This is reflected in the low number of Standards that are not met compared to last time.

Relationships between staff and children are excellent and individual support to children could not be faulted by children, parents or the inspectors. Intimate care was felt by everyone to be a strength. Parents said that the school made all pupils feel special. Nearly all the children and parents could not think of anything they would change about the school or anything that was negative. Parents reported that their children were 'happy to stay at the Sleepover Club', that it was 'excellent' and one said there had been 'a massive improvement' in her son since he had started attending the Sleepover Club.

Individual support to staff is excellent and this contributes to an outstanding team spirit. Management at all levels is effective. In responses, all staff thought the team spirit and support was a key feature of the Sleep-over Club. One said 'we are a team and we support each other'.

Children reported that some of the best features were spending time with their friends, being away from home, talking, the atmosphere and the activities.

The team is not complacent and strives to meet challenges and changes. One example of this is in the review of overnight stays that has led to a reduction to a maximum of three nights care per child per week. This has required sensitive consultation and decision-making.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The recommendations of the last report have been comprehensively addressed and they covered a variety of issues. This represents a large amount of work by staff and improvements have been achieved in most areas of care and administration. In particular, the Staying Safe outcome has improved markedly and no areas have deteriorated.

Of particular interest is the increased role of key workers in implementing and coordinating individual children's care; improvements to the grounds of the school and to issues of privacy and space in bedrooms; and, a high level of staff training including behaviour management training (imminent at the time of inspection).

The use of the three-bedded rooms is being reduced. This will improve children's privacy.

What they could do better:

The school has effectively addressed the challenges posed by the National Minimum Standards and is now at or above minimum standards in 27 of the 30 Standards inspected this time. The next challenge is to meet all the Standards and routinely maintain and exceed all of them. The portfolio of evidence the manager already compiles will form a useful tool for evidencing how Standards are exceeded.

This report highlights a number of areas that need attention. Certain medical issues require attention promptly so that safety standards are maintained. The inspector discussed with the manager the role of targets in placement planning and indicated areas for improvement. This will help to focus input by staff. The school is discussing with the LEA ways of improving the recruitment procedure of new staff so that the standard is met and vetting reaches the standard that is expected in other childcare settings.

The design of the school has compromised care standards a little, but not to the extent that staff or children commented on it. The shortfall cannot be remedied without major capital investment and, given the respite nature of the service; if such capital were available it may be better spent on increasing capacity.

Parents who responded did not report anything they felt could be improved. Children also raised no major concerns although one felt there should be a private area to take special friends, another felt there should be more ready access to swimming, and another felt there should be more pictures. Staff were aware that the capacity of the Sleepover Club is limited and that 'it would be nice to accommodate all the children who wish to come'. They also commented that consideration should be given to providing leaver groups with more independence.

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 standard(s) 14, 15

The home's protocol for identifying and promoting physical, emotional and mental health was clear and effective. The area of administering medication had some minor shortfalls that can be easily rectified. The unit's means of addressing a child's health needs ensures that all areas of need are identified and addressed. There is close working between the unit, the school and parents to enable all relevant information to be passed on and issues arising to be addressed with much efficiency.

Children are provided with nutritious meals and can contribute to menu planning. Snacks and drinks are always available.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 14: The home had a policy and procedures document that was comprehensive and covered the receipt, recording, storage, administration and disposal of medicines. The document is a Staffordshire County Council Education Services document designed to cover services countywide which does mirror local practices happening within Saxon Hill Residential Special School. The manager has implemented the recommendations of the last report including medication audits.

The service uses some Homely Remedies as advised by parents. These remedies include gels such as Bonjela and some other over-the-counter medications. The Bonjela used in the home was seen to be unmarked, therefore with no indication as to whom it was intended for. The registered manager must ensure that the Bonjela used by the home is marked for a specific child and dated. It is important that the Bonjela is only used for a specific child and not used for others. The service also has a number of prescribed creams for the children. The creams did not have a date of opening on them during the inspection. The registered manager must ensure that the creams are dated on the day of opening and disposed of within 28 days in accordance with the Royal Pharmaceutical Guidance. The Inspector was

informed that currently none of the children self administer medication. All medicines are administered by trained staff.

The service has a set of MAR (medicine administration record) charts, which were examined and the observations made below apply to these:

- All the MAR charts examined had the relevant signature to confirm administration or an abbreviation for non-administration for specified reasons (e. g. Child at school during the day)
- The quantities of medication received from parents were confirmed in associated records.

The medication is kept in a locked trolley in the downstairs office. The registered manager confirmed that this room is kept locked at all times and has hand-washing facilities. The room housed the medication fridge and the mobile drugs trolley.

- On the day of inspection, there was no refrigerated medication.
- There was no maximum/minimum thermometer within the fridge.
- It appeared that the procedure of recording the daily temperature of the fridge was not being carried out.

Presently, the home does not store oxygen. There is, however, space for a small oxygen cylinder in a small locked metal cabinet just outside the office. The door to the small cabinet used to house the oxygen did not have a warning sign on it. It is strongly recommended that the registered manager put an alert so that all concerned parties are aware. Records seen during the inspection show that all staff administering medication have attended the medication training. Because of the time of day that this standard was assessed, the inspector was unable to observe any medication being administered.

The school nurse was spoken to in great detail. She was able to confirm that a daily handover takes place between school and the residential unit during which staff are able to handover any health difficulties encountered. The nurse made comments such as "there is good communication between the departments", and "issues are resolved quickly and effectively."

Healthcare and intimate care needs: The residential unit does not cater for children with nursing needs. In discussion with the registered manager and the school nurse, it came to light that late last year, a child with nursing needs had been admitted and had their own personal trained nurse with them. It is strongly recommended that the registered manager avoid this happening without an in depth risk assessment and consultation with the relevant authorities.

The registered manager verified that presently none of the children had pressure area care needs. The unit does however, store some ripple mattresses for when the need arises. The registered manager stated that some of the children who have difficulty turning during the night are turned. This is a form of pressure relief management. One child has a cone mattress because of his muscular dystrophy. This mattress is a pressure relieving mattress. The child who had this mattress was spoken to during the inspection stated, "I haven't slept in it yet." Records seen show that some of the children have epilepsy. The epilepsy is managed via medication. Records also show that staff are trained in administering rectal diazepam as required.

Staff training records seen show that staff are trained in first aid. The registered manager confirmed that there is a first aid trained member of staff on each shift.

Equipment: A tour of the relevant areas such as the bathroom and toilets showed that the home uses hoists, slide sheets, turn tables and banana boards. The unit has two mobile hoists, one of which is brand new. All slings and moving equipment were checked during the inspection and were seen to be well serviced and in good condition. All staff are trained in moving and handling.

The inspectors were told by children about several friends who had died in recent years because of issues arising from their disabilities. Some staff are trained counsellors and address the therapeutic needs of children in this area. This issue served to highlight the range of problems that some children face.

NMS 15: The inspector enjoyed two meals with children and staff. These were well-presented and social occasions. The food was nutritious and adapted to individual needs and the furnishings were pleasant. Menus indicated that a balanced range of meals is offered. Fresh fruit and bottled water is available at all times.

Children reported that the food was either very good or usually good. Improvements to the process have been made since the last inspection, e.g. food being served at the table. Children commented that the food was better in the Sleepover Club than in school (the head is aware of this issue which is outside the scope of this report).

Food hygiene training has been delivered to staff. Menus were displayed. Assistance was provided to children as necessary. Special dietary requirements are minimal at present.

Staff are aware of the need to maximize children's independence. A training kitchen is available in the main school.

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 standard(s) 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26, 27

Improvements have been made to the way privacy issues are addressed and further improvements are planned to bedroom doors. The management of complaints has improved too and it now meets the Standard.

Child protection procedures now exceed the Standard. There is a high level of staff understanding that reflects the work that has been undertaken in this area. The anti-bullying policy has been amended to meet the Standard.

Measures to vet new staff have been improved so that appropriate protection is afforded children. However, it is necessary for the LEA procedures regarding CRB clearances to match this Standard.

Measures to manage behaviour have been improved and now meet the Standard. Staff training in particular has improved to a satisfactory level.

Previous recommendations regarding health and safety have been met and systems now provide sufficient safety and security for children.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 3: Procedures address privacy and the privacy needs of individual children are identified on personal files.

Staff reported that they pay close attention to children's privacy when they are getting ready for bed or bathing or using the toilet. This was evidenced during the inspection. Staff try to ensure that children have their bedrooms to themselves when changing. Children are spoken to about what is happening to them and doors are always knocked on before entering. Signs on doors are used to show that someone is there.

Children reported that their privacy was completely respected. In fact many would accept lower levels of privacy in some respects because they enjoy the company of their friends so much. For example, most enjoy shared bedrooms although one said that his roommates' need for staff assistance at night disturbed his sleep.

Parents felt they could see their child in private.

Telephone privacy has been improved with the removal of activities from the area and the installation of a hood. There is now a policy on mobile phone and phone camera use that includes staff and children that prohibits the use of camera phones.

NMS 4: Staff were familiar with the complaints procedure and aimed to resolve issues at an informal level. They said that they routinely reported issues to senior staff. They were also aware of the option of reporting to CSCI as well as senior staff in the school. The log was inspected.

Children too were aware of their rights. Their interpretation of how to make a complaint varied depending on their ability but they understood the need to contact another adult. About half of those spoken to understood how to contact the inspector and this information is displayed in the school. There was information available regarding independent helplines and the phone number of the inspector.

Parents also were unanimously familiar with the complaints procedure and that it included a reference to the inspector; this is to the credit of the Sleepover Club. They all also reported that they had not had to make a complaint.

A complaints log is in place.

NMS 5: Child protection matters are overseen by the head of care and the deputy head of school; both have undergone appropriate training. Issues have recently been discussed with CSCI. The last report showed evidence of the Sleepover Club meeting this Standard. Staff training is ongoing and was verified with staff.

Since the last inspection there have been no child protection issues requiring a notification to CSCI.

Staff were familiar with procedures and the procedures themselves had been improved since the last inspection, e.g. regarding a flagging system on the files themselves. Also, the head of care receives a periodical pertaining to child protection issues in schools; this is good practice.

These practices are in addition to those in the Standards and are evidence of the Sleepover Club exceeding the Standard.

NMS 6: The headteacher has reviewed the anti-bullying policy. It is to the credit of staff that children were so aware of bullying and what to do about it. All the children reported that they are not being bullied at all.

NMS 7: Notifications. The Sleepover Club has maintained close working relationships with the inspector. This Standard was not inspected in detail on this occasion.

NMS 8: No children have been reported missing. This was considered in conversations during the inspections and was found to be a low risk because of staffing levels and security measures. Appropriate policies are understood to be in place but were not revisited this time. The log was inspected.

NMS 10: Acceptable behaviour is mainly fostered via the positive relationships mentioned above, including the celebration of achievements. This was emphasised by all concerned. The headteacher reported that as a result of students feeling valued there was minimal need for sanctions. Appropriate procedures are in place. Records and logs were inspected. Appropriate monitoring occurs. Evidence of staff signing the policy was not inspected. Every child is risk assessed and this records any issues relating to behaviour management.

Improvements have been made to the recording of sanctions as recommended by inspectors last time.

Staff reported that they tried to make sanctions applicable to the misdemeanour and this was evidenced by the records. They reported that sanctions are negotiated with young people; this is good practice. Examples

they gave of sanctions included letter to parents, sit and read a book, not being allowed to use the Play Station, and, early bedtime. Children added: missing breaks, seeing the headteacher and being told-off. All the children felt the sanctions were 'very fair' and most reported that sanctions were discussed with them individually. Some were relatively unaware of the application of sanctions because, they said, they were never naughty.

Parents told the inspectors that the Sleepover Club had informed them about its rules. It is to the credit of the Sleepover Club that parents were so clear about this issue. Some parents were less clear about the punishments the school uses and this should be revisited by the manager. Parents should also be informed if a sanction has been administered and this should be recorded on the child's file.

Children reported that they had never had to be restrained. Training (SCIP: Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention) has been attended by the manager and is booked for other staff for July 2005 and will be adapted to meet the needs of the client group. This will emphasise de-escalation techniques and teach staff appropriate physical interventions. This will be reviewed next time along with relevant policies. It is anticipated that at that time an appropriate log will have been implemented.

A prefect system is not used at present so the (potential) issue of their contribution to behaviour management is not relevant.

NMS 26: The inspector understands that a Health and Safety committee has been devised with members having delegated responsibilities. It will operate from September 2006. This will provide valuable support to the headteacher who previously held sole responsibility for implementation of health and safety matters.

Risk assessments of individual activities are completed as well of individual children's needs.

Fire safety has been addressed with young people in a planned and gradual way which is ongoing. This has now included nighttime evacuations along a planned route. Improvements have been made to the procedure and circulated to staff. Additional staff training had been arranged.

Test and drill records were inspected. It was recommended that staff attendance at drills be monitored by means of a date/name matrix so that training is kept up-to-date.

Accident records were inspected. Patterns that emerged were discussed with the manager. Senior personnel must ensure that if they identify any patterns during an audit of records it is acknowledged, e.g. by indicating in the log.

Hot and cold water checks are undertaken, including water hygiene checks. Routine descaling of shower-heads was recommended.

NMS 27: Vetting of staff and visitors was not inspected in detail on this occasion. However, the manager reported that improved procedures are in place to vet new staff including the taking-up of references; evidence was provided of references being obtained for existing staff. Passport and driving licence checks are underway.

It was also reported that representation has been made to the LEA for all staff to be CRB cleared before they start work. This will bring the school into line with the Standards whereas at present, staff can start work without a check being complete at present. This will be carried forward.

It was recommended that CRB clearance documents be shredded in line with CRB guidance.

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 standard(s) 12, 13, 22

It was considered there were strong and effective links between the school and Sleepover Club and that the latter provided direct and relevant support to children's education.

Leisure opportunities have improved further and more opportunities are planned. Children have a satisfactory range of activities both in- and outside the Club.

Individual support to children is a particular strength of the Sleepover Club. Such support is always available.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 12: Staff from the Sleepover Club and school considered there was good communication between themselves and education staff. They felt that there was routine transfer of relevant information both ways. Files reflected this. Staff attend education review meetings and contribute to reports and reported that they felt very positive about this involvement.

The Sleepover Club has ample educational items such as videos and books. Internet access is also available. See also Standard 13.

Children reported that staff assist them with homework, where appropriate, e.g. on the computer.

NMS 13: Staff and children reported that activities are ongoing and include visits to the library, youth club, cubs, park, shopping, the pictures, McDonalds, soft play, bowling, theatre. Children said that simply having fun was one of

the best things. Some reported on the sports they play including football and cricket and the new swing that is being purchased that will take a wheelchair. Others enjoy the Play Station. A driver is on duty every night.

Risk assessments are in place for certain, higher risk activities.

The Sleepover Club now has its own budget for activities. This will particularly benefit children who are at the school for a large part of the week. A League of Friends raises funds for extra activities.

There is access to broadband and one young person reported that he had his own email address. The TV has been adapted for digital programmes.

It was significant that for some children the Sleepover Club offered an opportunity to spend time with their friends that they did not have at home. One reported that it allowed him to get to know his friends better. They felt that friends from home could visit them at the Sleepover Club although the respite nature of the Sleepover Club meant this was not a regular or particularly desirable feature.

There is an impressive range of activities for both groups and individuals especially considering that the Sleepover Club is only open four nights per week.

Minibus drivers are available every night. A new bus has been obtained and offers easy wheelchair access. The manager was aware that it was undesirable to take large groups out in such vehicles as it could appear to be institutionalised. The headteacher reported that an additional vehicle was planned to further extend opportunities outside school. Children have access to children from other schools.

A protected garden is being built at the rear of the Sleepover Club that will offer children welcome outdoor space.

NMS 22: Staff reported on a variety of ways they support individual children depending on what the issues were. Examples included using charts with symbols to encourage positive behaviour, reward systems for achievements (e.g. half-termly certificates and cup presentations). Individual work also addresses personal care issues and independence skills. For older children, their preparation for leaving care is important.

Because of the highly dependent nature of the children, staff were aware of the need for private time with them so they could express any concerns. Staff also reported that they were alert to any marks on children that could indicate accidents, mistreatment or a problem with equipment.

Staff reported that some of the therapeutic methods they employ are playing music, listening to a story, aromatherapy, head massages and foot spas. Children enjoyed the soft play and bean bags, lying out of their wheelchairs and the new sensory equipment area.

Children felt their religious and cultural needs were addressed by staff to the extent that children wanted, e.g. prayers at night and the option of attending church services.

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 standard(s) 2, 9, 11, 17, 20

Consultation by staff with parents and children continues to be maintained at a high standard. The special needs of children are taken into account in this process. This is closely related to the extremely positive impression that was given regarding the relationships between staff and children.

Admissions and discharges are managed in ways that benefit children best and fully involves them and their families. This scored highly last time and was therefore inspected to a lesser extent during this inspection. It should be cross-referenced with Standard 21, Leaving Care.

Improvements have been made to care planning and the coordination of care so that satisfactory standards are now achieved. As the new system becomes established further benefits are likely to be achieved.

Contact between children and parents is facilitated and encouraged.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 2: Inspectors observed staff routinely consulting children and not taking their decisions for granted. This applied in all areas of care. Arrangements are made so that children attending on different nights are consulted equally. The

inspector understands there is a school council with student representatives. Half-termly staff and children's meetings occur (minutes were inspected).

Parents and staff felt there was effective communication between them. This occurs via informal visits and phone calls, annual review meetings, activities, newsletters, and home/school communication books for some children. The headteacher reported that a 'school for parents' has been established to discuss involvement in the curriculum, use of enabling toys and other relevant issues. Staff reported that they encourage children to talk privately to any member of staff they choose; this is good practice.

All the parents who returned questionnaires reported that they had been consulted about how their child should be cared for. See also Standard 17 below. Parents reported that they feel free to visit the Sleepover Club and are made to feel welcome.

The Sleepover Club sends questionnaires to parents every half term. The manager reported that this had proved to be a great tool for confirming good practice and facilitating comments from parents. Parents of all the children in the school have been consulted about their own assessment of whether or not they need the services of the Sleepover Club. Evidence of these letters was inspected.

Children's meetings address menu planning, activities and any other issues. Children also use a listening post box to raise issues. Children reported that their choices had been taken into account when redecorating bedrooms and that some had been to Ikea to choose lockers. Communication systems for children with communication difficulties were not inspected in detail on this occasion.

An independent visitor attends every half term and can be spoken to by children.

NMS 9: Relationships between staff and young people were extremely positive; no concerns were identified. Comments from the parties concerned (see introduction, above) and also parents, as well direct observation, indicated that high standards are being maintained in this area.

Children were taught how to maintain appropriate personal boundaries with adults and other young people.

Children and staff are constantly practicing a balance between individual and group needs and wishes. Particular examples include accessing the bus where children have to be patient and tolerant of other children's needs. At meal times there is a similar balance to be made in terms of allocation of staff time.

Care and control training is planned.

Children spoke positively about their key workers but also about the staff in general. This indicates that they are able to access all staff and this was observed during the inspection. The respite nature of the service means that the Sleepover Club is able to offer a high degree of staff continuity.

This Standard is exceeded because all the elements of the Standard are met and because of the high level of acknowledgement amongst all parties.

NMS 11: *This Standard was exceeded in the last inspection and was therefore inspected in less detail this time. The fact that it scores 3 this time does not mean that standards have fallen.*

An audit of admissions has occurred and a waiting list compiled that is kept under review. At the same time the criteria for admission have been refined so that admission depends on children's (24-hour) educational needs not just their social needs. The Statement of Purpose has been reviewed and shows how admissions occur and these are usually gradual. Emergency beds are available. The maximum number of nights per week is now three.

All new admissions must attend the school. Therefore there is usually a large amount of information available to staff prior to admission. All relevant information is compiled into care plans.

The manager reported the procedures that are followed to aid the compatibility of groups. Consideration is given to factors such as age, gender and ability. This is taken very seriously.

Staff reported that families of new admissions receive an information pack. Introductory visits occur. Children said that staff told them about the rules when they were admitted. It was suggested that peer mentoring or buddying be considered as an additional means of supporting new admissions. There may also be similarities in principle between this and the increased role of sixth form students in supporting younger students (see Standard 21).

NMS 17: The format and content of Placement Plans has been improved including the recording of targets. This has helped to evidence the large amount of work that is occurring in practice and will be reviewed further next time. Plans are readily accessible to key workers. The headteacher felt that there had been an improvement in the links between the schools educational plans and the Sleepover Clubs care plans.

Children were aware of their placement plans and reported that staff had explained them to them. This indicated thorough keyworking by staff. Children also felt that staff do undertake the placement plan goals/targets as planned at review meetings.

A key worker system is in place and is being developed by the manager. Staff felt this development of their role was a positive feature of their work and gave them more responsibilities and enabled them to contribute more to children's overall care. Key workers also attend annual reviews now.

Care planning includes various other agencies depending on the needs of the child. The headteacher reported that the assistant head was coordinating interagency links and this too had improved representation of the school at reviews. Staff reported liaison with the school nurse, teachers, doctors, social workers and others. Staff also reported close contact with parents. There is also substantial networking with other schools.

NMS 20: Children and parents reported that the school facilitates contact. Some parents pointed-out that their children do not actually live at the Sleepover Club but rather stay there. There has been an improvement in privacy of the pay phone and easier access to coins for its use. Contact issues are important but no children stay longer than a maximum of three consecutive nights. Parents spoke positively about their contact with the Sleepover Clubs staff and said they can meet their children in private if they wish.

No contact restrictions are in place for any child at present.

Parents who responded did not comment at all about the recent reductions in overnight stays for some children.

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 standard(s) 16, 21, 23, 24, 25

Children are enabled to have a high degree of autonomy regarding their clothing and expenditure. However, this Standard has less relevance because children do not stay long and parents are the main carers.

Improvements have been made to the arrangements for children who leave care. It was recommended that further consideration be given to this issue.

The design of the accommodation is imperfect but would take substantial capital investment to correct. Separation of the sixth form is a priority that is being addressed. In other ways the accommodation and facilities are attractive and well kept.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 16: Children do not have to wear school uniform. They bring sufficient clothes and toiletries from home for their stay at the Sleepover Club. Children reported not needing much money at the Sleepover Club but being able to choose how they spend it.

All the children were well presented in age-appropriate clothes. The policy on jewellery has been clarified to provide greater guidance, e.g. no hooped earrings.

NMS 21: Arrangements for children leaving care were discussed in general as several sixth-form students were present during the inspection. There is a separate sixth form area for lessons. The issue of leaving the school is a matter of particular sensitivity for children and their parents because of the specialist care and education they have received and also because of the greater vulnerability of young people with disabilities. Young people reported to the inspector their awareness of how 'protected' they are at the school.

Children thought that appropriate arrangements had been made for their transfers to other places such as colleges and several spoke about where they were going. Since the last inspection, key workers have paid greater attention to all placement plan goals including those that are part of leaving care plans. This helps to provide greater coordination of preparations for independence.

Some staff felt that more could be done to prepare children for independence and this may be an area for the team to consider but it was not a matter that the inspector had sufficient information to take a position on. One way would be by increasing the roles and responsibilities of senior children in the school, as appropriate. One young person felt that greater privacy should be available to those with girl- or boyfriends. This too should be considered by the team.

Children are encouraged to handle money although they don't need much at the Sleepover Club. They reported that they can spend it as they choose.

NMS 23: The school and Sleepover Club were designed to a specification that is now out of date. This means that accommodation is unsatisfactory in terms of bedroom space; privacy; choice of communal areas; physical autonomy from the rest of the school, and storage space. The location is central with easy vehicular access to local amenities.

The school is considering with the LEA how it can best address the major difficulties it faces and has already made many improvements. There may be a balance to be achieved between maximizing the benefit to children in line with National Minimum Standards and investing scarce resources elsewhere, e.g. in expanding the service to a greater number of children. At present it may be that the incremental gain that major refurbishment would achieve does not justify the expenditure. This is supported by the facts that no children, parents or staff commented negatively on the accommodation and the accommodation provides a respite service only. It has, however, been accepted that the sixth formers should not have access to their classroom through the Sleepover Club and the headteacher is planning ways of addressing this too. Currently bids have been submitted to BBC Children in Need for a new sixth form block.

Car parking and external lighting have been substantially improved since the last inspection and have greatly added to the appearance of the school. A garden has been created and will soon be fenced. Money has been raised to provide a summerhouse and also a wheelchair swing; this is to the credit of all concerned. Decoration and refurbishment is ongoing. Wheelchair access is good in most areas. Appropriate adaptations are in place.

Access to the school is well controlled although access to the grounds cannot be completely controlled; the inspectors understand that further gates are planned. Use of listening devices was not reinspected on this occasion but the manager has commented on their usage in the Statement of Purpose.

During the inspection, children from a local school visited for joint lessons. This provides important opportunities for positive links. Staff reported that such links have increased and are a routine part of children's education.

NMS 24: The accommodation was inspected with the manager and a tour of the premises was undertaken with two young people. It was well presented, clean and free from malodour. Efforts have been made throughout to make it as homely as possible, given its rather institutional design. Children reported having direct involvement in decoration and displays as well as choice of some furniture. Personalisation was evident during the inspector's tour of the accommodation. Keyworkers display photographs of their children undertaking activities.

Bedrooms are separated into male and female areas. Wardrobes and vanity units are built-in and provide limited flexibility. The manager reported that consideration is being given to removing the fitted wardrobes in favour of portable units. This would make more space available and also improve access to bedrooms. Improvements to bedroom doors have been tried but as yet they have been unsuccessful; these efforts will continue, possibly in tandem with the removal of wardrobes which are located adjacent to doors and thereby restrict options.

Improvements have been made including the provision of privacy screens. The number of beds in the three-bedded rooms have been effectively reduced to two, except in emergencies. This is a major development.

A call system has been installed but as yet it does not extend to bedrooms. One young person thought it should be used so that children did not need to shout for staff during the night; this should be reviewed.

The mix of children who use bedrooms was not reinspected on this occasion although the manager commented on the efforts she takes to ensure compatibility. This extends beyond chronological age and takes into account the various needs of children.

NMS 25: Bathing areas were well presented and no major concerns arose. The manager reported that floor coverings are going to be replaced because of minor damage. At present this does not pose a tripping hazard and is of minimal hygiene risk. Equipment is routinely serviced. The manager has plans for further improvement to bathing facilities in due course, as one special bath is unused.

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 standard(s) 1, 18, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33

There is an up-to-date and accurate Statement of Purpose that has been made available to all parties.

Children's case files are kept safely and contain all necessary information.

Staffing levels and supervision continue to meet the Standards. A substantial amount of staff training has occurred since the last inspection that has brought staff to the correct level.

Business management has improved and there are various types of audit that monitor effectiveness.

EVIDENCE:

NMS 1: There is a clear Statement of Purpose that staff understand and that is available to other parties. All staff have a copy and it is displayed in the school. It is reviewed every year. The recent review accounted for issues raised by inspectors such as camera phones, listening devices and the use of emergency beds. It also takes into account issues arising from the changing client-group at the Sleepover Club which has higher dependency levels. A school brochure and also a parents guide are also available. Information is available in formats to help communication.

Children are provided with a booklet/guide about the Sleepover Club.

Staff felt their main functions were to support children who attended the school and to help them develop.

Parents reported positively on the respite function of the service and the opportunities it gives their children (e.g. socially and regarding life skills). They reported receiving information on a routine basis.

The school has recently been awarded a Quality Mark for Inclusion. It is working towards both Investors in People and achieving Specialist Status for Physical Disability and Sensory areas.

NMS 18: Children's case files were inspected. They contained the necessary documents and information and are kept securely. It was found that since the last inspection, children are consulted at least annually about their files and this access is then signed for; this is good practice. Amendments to files will be made if necessary. A school file is also kept.

The inspectors found evidence that current issues are cross-referenced and addressed appropriately in children files.

NMS 19: School records were not inspected in detail on this occasion.

NMS 28: Parents felt there were enough staff to properly care for their children. This is an important test of staffing levels, particularly as many children require personal assistance. Rotas showed that staff are used flexibly to meet children's needs. Staff turnover is minimal and this has substantial benefits for children. The senior team consists of the manager, deputy and senior of which the latter two tend to lead shifts.

At night waking- and sleep-in staff are on duty. Staff reported that they are alert to the needs of colleague, for example in providing personal assistance and during outings. During the inspection, it was clear that staff were acting

as a team and were pre-empting the needs of children and each other. This is good practice and evidence of a strong team.

Since the last inspection, the manager has been able to timetable all staff with one-hour non-contact time for administration. This is good practice.

The team is mainly female. A male member of teaching staff undertakes a duty every week and the headteacher visits routinely. The manager is aware that it is desirable to have a more gender-balanced team but there is little that can be done to remedy it.

NMS 29: Staff reported positively on the training courses they have attended including fire safety, child protection, and first aid. They felt the courses were very applicable and necessary. Individual and group records have been improved and are reviewed in supervision and appraisals. The manager has accounted for the specialist needs of the children attending the Sleepover Club in the staff training programme. The headteacher considered that interagency training had improved, especially from medical professionals.

A staff induction manual is in place for staff in the Sleepover Club. This is good practice. It was recommended it be dated and that it include reference to acceptable forms of behaviour management.

In order to be confident that the training programme meets the Standard, it was recommended that the manager identify on the training programme which courses meet each of the required training outcomes (Appendix 2 of the Standards). This will then be evidenced on individual files.

Staff reported that changes to procedures are copied to them and discussed in meetings. Staff were able to comment confidently on key policies such as child protection and intimate care; this is to their credit.

NVQ assessments are ongoing. Since the last inspection, four staff have spent an evening at another school as part of the professional development and then discussed their observations at a staff meeting. A member of the team spent a shift at another school shadowing staff.

NMS 30: Staff felt they received a lot of support and guidance and acted as a team to support each other. There are weekly staff meetings that cover information sharing as well as problem solving and support. Individual supervision meetings occur termly and additional support meetings are available to staff. Appraisals occur annually. All staff thought the senior team were supportive and felt this was a strength of the Sleepover Club. Staff also reported other ways they receive support including from the governors, from notices, Trade Unions and via literature posted in their pigeonholes.

There was no evidence of a lack of support even though formal supervision meetings are less than recommended in the Standard (termly rather than the recommended half-termly). The inspector considers that the additional methods of support adequately address this Standard.

Support of ancillary staff, the headteacher and specialist staff, was not inspected.

NMS 31: Not inspected.

NMS 32: Internal monitoring includes questionnaires to parents, e.g. asking if they had received a copy of the Statement of Purpose; this is good practice. Files provided evidence of monitoring by the manager. The manager also provided evidence of termly reports to the governors.

The headteacher reported that the internal structure of the school will be based in future on the requirements of Investors in People (assessment likely in 2006).

The business management of the school includes substantial efforts going into grant applications which have required an increase in the size of the admin team. The headteacher is part of a team that is looking at funding for special schools in the area. Additional funds will also be obtained if the school achieves specialist college status.

NMS 33: A visiting governor attends the school and reports in writing to governors approximately two monthly. Copy reports were provided to the inspectors. In addition, the LEA advisors undertake termly residential monitoring visits and reports as well as additional visits.

During the inspection the inspector met the visiting governor and a representative of the LEA. There was a constructive and supportive relationship between them and the head of care.

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	2
15	3

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

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

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	3
21	3
23	2
24	3
25	3

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

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.	14	1. The manager must ensure that tubes of Bonjela and such like remedies are labelled for a specific child and used only for that child. 2. The manager must ensure that prescribed and over-the-counter creams are dated on the day of opening and disposed of within 28 days. 3. The manager must obtain a maximum/minimum thermometer for the medication fridge and record temperatures on a daily basis.	8.8.05
2.	14	1. It is strongly recommended that the manager put an alert label on the oxygen cabinet so that all concerned parties are aware. 2. It is strongly recommended that the manager avoid admitting children with nursing needs (even with their own personal nurse) without an in depth risk assessment and consultation with the relevant authorities.	
3.	11	It was recommended that a buddying system be considered for new admissions.	
4.	10	Parents should be reminded about the schools policy regarding punishments. Also, they should be told if a sanction has been applied.	
5.	21	(a) Staff should consider whether more could be done to prepare children for independence and how this could be implemented. (b) Consideration should also be given to whether	

		young people should be provided with greater privacy for meeting friends.	
6.	23	Planning should continue regarding changing access to the sixth form teaching area.	
7.	24	Efforts to obtain suitable bedroom doors should continue, possibly in tandem with removal of fitted wardrobes.	
8.	24	Extending the call-system into bedrooms should be considered either completely or at least in particular cases.	
9.	25	Repairs or replacement of bathroom floor coverings is necessary.	8.9.05
10.	27	It was recommended that CRB clearance documents be shredded in line with CRB guidance.	
11.	29	It was recommended that the manager identify on the staff training programme which courses meet each of those required by the Standards	
12.	26	(a) Senior personnel should ensure that if they identify any patterns during an audit of records it is acknowledged; (b) Routine descaling of shower-heads was recommended; (c) It was recommended that staff attendance at fire drills be monitored by means of a date/name matrix	
13.	29	It was recommended the staff induction manual be dated and include reference to acceptable forms of behaviour management.	
14.			

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