



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

### Laleham Gap Specialist School

**Laleham  
Northdown Park  
Cliftonville  
Margate  
Kent  
CT9 2TP**

*Lead Inspector*  
Pat Gough

*Announced Inspection*  
13th November 2006      09:00

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

<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>	Laleham Gap Specialist School
<b>Address</b>	Laleham Northdown Park Cliftonville Margate Kent CT9 2TP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 221946
<b>Fax number</b>	01843 231368
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	Headteacher@laleham-gap.kent.sch.uk
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	KCC Clover House or Invicta House
<b>Name of Head</b>	Mr Keith Mileham
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Ms Helen Rogers
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	10-16 years
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	6/02/06

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

The Laleham school and Gap House School amalgamated in April 2005 and the provision is now known as Laleham Gap Residential Special School. The schools are on different sites. Gap school ceased to have residential status at the beginning of the 2006/07 school year and the Laleham site now provides care and education for pupils who have high functioning autism and/or speech and language difficulties for an age range spanning 10-16 years. The school does not normally admit children or young people who, for emotional or behavioural reasons, may inhibit the care, education and management of the majority of pupils. At present, there are 27 pupils boarding, 4 girls and 23 boys accommodated on four Wings, Northdown, Dixon, Viking and Gap. The schools, separated by a distance of five miles, are both well positioned to provide the pupils with the necessary opportunities and experiences to support their education and social development. Both schools are located in residential areas, close to local amenities and within easy reach of the seaside, especially Gap, which overlooks the Channel.

The current placement fee is £18,000.00. There is no additional charge for other services. The statement of purpose, is sent to placing authorities and inspection reports are made available. Pre admission documentation is made available for the pupil and their parent(s) prior to placement.

# SUMMARY

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

The site visit, which was announced, was conducted following a pre inspection visit and as part of the whole inspection process. It focussed on the management of the young people's behaviour, the support given for their health and education needs, their safeguarding, their living environment and their preparation for adulthood. Evidence was also sought on how staff are being supported, how training needs are being identified and being met and how the provision is being monitored to provide effective feedback and to inform the school improvement plan.

Whilst the inspection focussed on the key standards, other standards were inevitably explored and the practice was judged to be consistent with the last inspection.

The visit started on 13/11/06 at 9am and lasted for three days. During that time the inspector had individual meetings with the head teacher, head of care, head of pastoral care, senior residential staff, the three recently appointed staff, team leaders, a group of care staff and spoke with some of the children. The inspector also met with the nurse who is responsible for medical matters, to view medication administration and disposal records, and to discuss the management of medicines within the school. The inspector had lunch and an evening meal with the pupils, undertook a tour of the residential wings with three pupils, observed practice and looked at practice documentation. Throughout the visit there was discussion with the head of care and some feedback was given, whilst more detailed feedback was given at the end of the visit.

There was an impressive response to the inspection surveys with 21 completed by pupils, 13 by the staff and 10 were returned by the parents. All the pupils agreed that they are consulted and listened to and stated that the food is usually good or very good and listed a range of activities on offer within the school. There were no diversity issues and pupils indicated that they are treated fairly.

The majority of pupils stated that they have 'never' been or are 'hardly ever' bullied and two who said they sometimes experience 'name calling' or 'being elbowed' added that the staff are aware and deal with it. In reference to the showering facilities in Dixon wing one pupil stated, 'I don't like the shower room, everyone goes in there'. Another pupil stated, in recognition of the improvements that the school has made, 'I think the changes recently have been good, like the showers and bedrooms'. One of the female pupils referred to the low number of girls within the residential provision and suggested that she felt isolated, 'boring because we feel left out'. This issue was addressed with the head of care, who had already identified the issue and gave examples of ways in which it was being resolved. One pupil made specific reference to

the new learning support unit when commenting about the 'best thing about the school', 'got a place to go if you feel upset'.

The parents too, stated that they are consulted regularly on issues concerned with the school. Most parents felt that the school does 'an excellent job' and parents whose children have recently joined the school are equally impressed, commenting, 'so far we have found all the staff both education and pastoral to be excellent'. One other parent expressed a need for better communication from the school. A parent paid tribute to the safeguarding practice in the school stating, 'the staff do a fantastic job at Laleham. It's the only school my child has felt safe and happy in'. Three parents commented on the school premises, the age of the building and the need to get rid of the mobile classrooms. The head teacher confirmed that these issues will be addressed through the 'new build'.

The staff were complimentary about the level of the support they receive from senior managers, the strength of the staff team and the level of training that they receive.

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

The School continues to benefit from good management and leadership. The head teacher and the senior management team are to be commended for not only maintaining the high standards of education and care but also for their efforts to further enhance the provision. The management and the staff are highly regarded by the parents and they are fully involved in whole school practice, demonstrating a good knowledge of the pupils' needs and achievements and forging good interdisciplinary practice.

The staff were very complimentary about the level of support given by the Head of Care, who has considerable experience in her role and has been a constant source of support and guidance. The care staff team structure has been strengthened through the creation of another deputy post and the residential wing teams continue to receive strong leadership from committed team leaders.

There is good support for staff development and training. The school has demonstrated a commitment to supporting the staff with NVQ training, other core training and specialist input. The new school improvement plan has identified the need to further develop staff expertise in educating and caring for pupils with complex needs.

A major strength of the school is its approach to the protection of the pupils, the preventative measures it implements and its continued desire to improve practice related to behaviour management and safeguarding. The positive

approach to pastoral care is evident in all facets of the school's work and the many examples of short and long term successes testify to its effectiveness. An ECM audit is in progress providing evidence of the numerous cross curricular activities that support the achievement of a safe nurturing environment for pupils and 'a happy school'.

The medical practice continues to be of a very high quality and plays a crucial part in maintaining the physical and mental health of the young people and promoting healthy living. The quality of the meals that are provided is also of a very high quality and supports the national initiatives relating to healthy eating with an abundance of fresh fruit available for the pupils and a reduction of salt and ketchup and chocolate. There is a variety of content in the menu, sufficient quantity, and the pupils were observed to eat well and enjoyed the food. The catering team strive to provide for the many complex individual requirements.

The school participates in the national TryAngle Awards Scheme designed to recognise the efforts and achievements of young people and supports pupils to engage in the programme. They have achieved considerable success at local area and county level with the real impact of success evident in the pupils' personal and social development.

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

The introduction of a well resourced, separate learning support unit has provided an invaluable source of support for the pupils, and for staff who might at times struggle to maintain the proper level of support to a group of pupils if a pupil within the group requires individual attention or a change of environment. Whilst the school has always provided a level of 'out of class' support, the new unit, which has designated staff, one with specific responsibility for looked after children, has a variety of different uses, fulfilling a variety of different needs and is a safe unthreatening environment. This is now a significant asset and complements the approach to behaviour management and pastoral care.

All staff have completed management of behaviour training which focussed on the positive handling approach. The success of this approach is evident through the low incidence of physical restraints recorded since the last inspection

There have been improvements to school security through the installation of gates at the school entrance and the access to the school sites from the public



right of way through the 'alleyway'. Following comments made by the pupils through the anti-bullying survey and also expressions of concern by the staff, the use of cctv has been extended to monitor the school grounds.

Some significant improvements have been made to the residential wings, particularly Dixon wing.

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

Given the decision to delay the new build the school should proceed, as planned, with the refurbishment of the bathing and shower facilities in Dixon wing

The approach to preparing pupils for adult life will be enhanced through the creation of an environment where pupils can practice their learnt life skills and simulate independent living with the benefit of support if necessary. The school should therefore support the establishment of such a provision in Dixon wing whilst ensuring that female pupils are given equal opportunities to develop their independence skills.

The school should further enhance its recording of information by achieving consistency in what information is stored in each personnel file.

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. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

# **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)

## The Commission considers Standard 14 the key standard to be inspected.

## 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.

The practical service, advice and support given to the pupils and the staff through the medical centre is excellent.

The school's participation in national initiatives relating to healthy eating and healthy living has enhanced the care and guidance given to the children

## EVIDENCE:

The school's nurse who has specific responsibility for monitoring the pupil's health needs and coordinating their medical care, has established very good working relationships with the staff and maintains regular contact with community health resources. The nurse recently attended child and adolescent mental health service training and stated that she found it helpful particularly where it related to the completion of referral notices. The nurse plays a significant pastoral role, being conscious of the impact of school life on the mental health of the child, and attends the weekly pastoral team meeting. The regular liaison between the medical centre and the other school departments continues to play an important part in the successful implementation of policy and procedural guidance on child health matters.

The medical centre is properly resourced and has an adjoining facility for children to rest if they feel ill. The records of medicine administration were appropriately signed and dated and all the protocols relating to administration, storage and disposal are in place and being implemented. The nurse liaises closely with the occupational therapist and the speech and language therapist. The required medication administration training is provided on site and the nurse supplements the training with regular checks on the proficiency of staff to apply it in practice. A sufficient number of staff have received the 'appointed person' first aid training. Therapy is provided according to individual need. Good practice guides have been produced on responding to and assisting younger pupils with intimate care issues such as bathing and daily or nocturnal enuresis.

The pupils were unanimous in their appreciation of the catering within the school. There is a range of good quality meals provided, with a choice of a hot meal or salad bar for lunch and dinner. The breakfast menu had a range of cereals, porridge, toast, juice, yoghurts and fruit croissants. There is adequate variety in the content of the menus including a selection of meat and vegetables and there was no repetition within a four-week menu list. Two mealtimes were observed where meals were found to be qualitative in content and there was ample quantity for the pupils to have 'seconds'. The mealtime itself was orderly and enjoyable with a member of staff on each table encouraging conversation and appropriate table manners. The importance of healthy eating has a high profile and parents have been asked for their support in assisting the school implement the guidance in practice. Healthier options are always considered with a reduction in the use of chocolate-based products and a reduction in the salt content and the use of 'ketchup', in line with the DfES requirements for school lunches. There is large quantity of fresh fruit provided for each wing on a weekly basis.

The head of care and the catering manager stated that where possible the school works closely with parents particularly if their child has a specific food allergy or where there are other concerns about their eating habits. They gave an example of how one child will only eat food if it is prepared and cooked as it at home and how the catering staff, with the necessary detailed information from the child's parent, now produce his meals in the same form at school. Other examples of how vegetarian issues are addressed were given. All catering staff have received the relevant food handling training. The head of care spoke of an initiative currently being considered which would address the needs of the older pupils, some of which find the lighter evening meal option insufficient.

## **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)

**The Commission considers Standards 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

3,4,5,6,8,10,26,27

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The complaints process and other forums provide the pupils with the opportunity to express their view and opinions.

There is an anti-bullying policy to keep pupils safe and the reporting procedures of the school ensure that any incidents are notified to the appropriate people and action is taken as required.

The pupils are provided with a high level of quality care, which respects their privacy, provides them with a secure living environment, good behaviour management structures and protection from possible causes of abuse and harm.

## **EVIDENCE:**

There is good procedural guidance on privacy and confidentiality matters and observation of practice, as well as discussions with the staff and pupils, confirmed that daily practice reflects that guidance. The pupils have access to a telephone on each residential wing telephone numbers of various help lines are positioned close to the phone. There is space for parents and their child to meet in private. Each pupil has a lockable storage space for valuables. It was noted that bedroom doors are not locked and pupils can easily access each other's bedroom. However the pupils, who accompanied the inspector on the tour of the residential wings commented on the high degree of trust among the pupils, the respect that the staff have for their privacy and the absence of pilfering. The pupils' files and confidential documents are stored securely. There are a variety of policies governing confidentiality such as 'search' procedures and the importance of recording the activity and the care of pupils' pocket money.

Pupils confirmed that they can choose to approach any member of staff if they wish to discuss an issue and there are procedures in place to inform the children on the different ways they can register a complaint. There are regular visits by the representative of the NCH independent complaints and representation service and the pupils can e-mail the service direct if they wish to. There is a format in widget form on 'rights and the right to complain'

and posters on 'what do I do if I am not happy about something'. Two complaints, registered by pupils, were properly dealt with by the school.

There is a comprehensive child protection policy, reviewed in January 2006, that is consistent with the local Area Child Protection Committee's procedures. There is also a code of conduct, which staff have to sign that includes how to respond to a concern or disclosure and what procedure should be followed following an allegation against a member of staff. The school was able to demonstrate, through written records, how it applied the code following a recent incident. Regular training on child protection is provided by the head of care. There is a good staff presence and effective interaction, which supports the principles outlined in the policy. A 'visitors book' is held on each residential wing.

The excellent response, in 2005, to the national initiative on bullying in schools is due to be repeated this year with a focus on 'bystanders' and their responsibilities. The school is planning to devote one day, spread over the remainder of the academic year, to each of the five outcomes in 'Every Child Matters' when they will focus on a theme reflecting the 'outcome'. This exercise highlights the school's innovative approach to national policy and the way it attempts to portray important issues, affecting young people, in a very practical way. One pupil stated that there is 'very little bullying here' and that view was supported by the majority of pupils who completed inspection surveys. Two pupils referred to 'name calling' but indicated that the staff are aware and deal with it. Senior staff reiterated their resolve to keep bullying to a minimum through effective supervision and discussion.

There is a 'missing children' document, which outlines the action, which should be taken if an incident occurs. There have been no incidents of unauthorised absence from the school premises. There are good systems in place to monitor pupil attendance managed by a member of the administration team. If a pupil fails to attend without telephone or written authorisation, the school notifies the parents. Following a lack of contact or persistent non-attendance the school requests a meeting with the parents and failing that, there is a referral to the education welfare service. Positive responses in the surveys, completed by parents, reflect the school's assertion that it has formed an effective partnership with parents through good communication.

The discipline and behaviour policy was reviewed and amended in June 2006 and closely follows KCC guidelines. The beliefs and principles are clearly aligned to 'Every Child matters' outcomes with the focus of behaviour management on prevention and a proactive approach by the staff. The guidance given to the staff gives importance to the living and working environment, resources, staffing, realistic expectations and consistency of approach. The policy states very clearly those sanctions that are prohibited and promotes positive behaviour through a reward system. School rules are

kept to a minimum and remain simple and clear. Rewards cannot be lost through negative behaviour. There are examples of possible 'serious incident' and the necessary action which should be taken should one arise.

The behaviour policy is supported by a policy on the use of restrictive physical intervention. The staff are trained in the use of approved physical intervention methods and the head of care stated that half of the day's training given this year focussed on positive behaviour approaches designed to obviate the need for restraint practice. All serious incidents, sanctions and physical interventions are recorded in a bound and numbered book. Three incidents have been recorded since the previous inspection. The content of the records confirm that the appropriate procedure was followed by the school in each case. The applied sanctions were appropriate and both the sanctions and the physical interventions were easily cross referenced with the original incident. Four physical interventions occurred since the last inspection and the necessary level of detail was included on the written record. The records were monitored and signed by the deputy head teacher and the independent visitor.

The school has introduced adequate security measures on the site to protect the children and the staff and continue to explore ways of improving it further. External close circuit television coverage has been extended and gates have been installed at the front entrance and exit as well as on both sides of the 'alleyway'. All health and safety checks are routinely conducted. An electrical installation test and check was completed on 17/10/06 and a portable appliance test certificate of inspection issued on 27/07/06. Three fire drills were conducted in September '06, one in October and one in November. Some of the drills were during the evening. During the inspection visit, the senior management team demonstrated their competence in dealing with a crisis when a water leak on an upper floor temporarily took the main kitchen out of service. Alternative arrangements were rapidly put in place with the safety of pupils and staff given top priority.

A new service manager, recently appointed, has refined the recruitment package, which covers the process from application to appointment. A new induction programme is currently being produced. Four staff files were inspected and found to contain all the required information although there were inconsistencies in the level of information stored in each file. The necessary checks were conducted, references received and telephone enquiries made to verify the references. Newly appointed staff stated that they found it to be a rigorous recruitment process.



# 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)

## The Commission considers Standards 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.

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

12,22

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The school provides a stable environment for the children through consistent work practices and appropriate levels of support and continues to look at developing resources and strategies, which will further enhance the provision.

### EVIDENCE:

The pastoral team with representatives from the care, education, therapist and medical departments meets on a weekly basis and disseminates information to relevant staff. Care staff have received additional training to support the pupils with their specific learning needs. Good links were evidenced in individual education plans and care plans covering school study, relationships, emotional and mental health development as well the development of social skills. There is daily contact between classroom-based staff and care staff and excellent relationships exist between the Gap residential wing staff and the primary school on the Gap site. The head teacher commented on a proposal to establish a formal consultation exercise between care staff and teachers based on the parent consultation evening

model. It is planned that this will take place during an INSET day. The school is continually exploring ways to enhance interdisciplinary communication.

There is a good staff/pupil ratio in each residential wing. Each pupil has a key worker. The transfer of the two residential pupils, previously accommodated on the Gap site was preceded by thorough preparation and much thought. Similar consideration was given to the transfer of staff. The pupils stated that they feel supported by the staff and that they can approach any member of staff for assistance. Dedicated support from the school's therapists, who whilst working on a 1:1 basis with pupils, they also deliver individual programmes through the education and care staff. Evidence was seen in pupil's files of speech and language therapy contracts involving the pupil and their key worker. The nurse is engaged in positive mental health work with some of the year 10/11 female pupils advising on relaxation techniques, particularly for those pupils who might be preparing for exams or transition.

A major source of support to pupils and indirectly to the staff is the introduction and development of a new learning support unit. The unit, which is fully resourced and adequately staffed at all times throughout the school day until five o'clock, supports pupils who experience difficulty within the classroom or some other activity and who otherwise might be subject to more conventional behavioural intervention. Observation of the practice in the unit confirmed the statements of staff and many pupils that it is an especially important source of support for pupils who present challenging behaviour or might need a period of time out/1:1 attention so that they can re-engage in group learning situations.

A number of pupils are supported to engage in the 'TryAngle' awards scheme and one young person in particular has achieved considerable success earning the award at county level for his musical accomplishment.

# 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)

**The Commission considers Standards 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.**

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

2,17,20

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The meaningful consultation and relationships that exist between the staff and the pupils are having a positive impact on their lives. The school offers a supportive and caring atmosphere in which the young people feel secure and comfortable. The school encourages pupil's to maintain contact with families and friends.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The school's policy on 'children's rights' covers consultation and choice. The pupils, through their responses in the inspection surveys and in discussion on the visit, stated that they are consulted and that they get a response if they

make suggestions. Some pupils commented on the effectiveness of the school council, which meets each half term and has representatives from each class group and residential wing. The council is facilitated by the head of care and the head of pastoral care. There were 24 suggestions made following the meeting on 13/10/06 and they included issues such as food, activities uniform and equipment. The recommendations submitted by the council are then considered by senior management and the head of care stated that feedback is given to those that put forward the suggestion. The pupils also have representation on the catering committee and can express their views on food choices and give feedback on the quality of meals.

Each student has a care plan which is linked to the individual education plan. The plan contains essential information necessary for the key worker and any other member of staff to liaise appropriately with parents and relevant agencies. The structure of the plan has been well considered, keeping the set targets to an achievable level and covers all the required elements of the standard. The school has considerably improved the recording process in that there is now much more evidence of the implementation of the care plan targets and the achievements of the young people. The staff have worked hard to develop the recording of pupils' responses to their daily intervention and there was much written and pictorial evidence of pupils' efforts and achievements. The care plan implementation is monitored by the team leaders and the head of care. The pupils' files are neatly organised and contain individual education plan targets, therapy reports, medical information, correspondence and records of achievement.

Although the pupils return home each weekend, contact with family and friends is positively promoted. There was a written record of telephone contact between key workers and parents and evidence in the daily diary the relevant information had been shared. A 'visitors book' on each residential wing records visit activity and pupils are able to meet with their parents in private. Many parents commented on the 'welcoming' atmosphere within the school.

# 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):

16,21,24,25

Quality in this outcome area is **good**.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Pupils are able to wear clothes of their choice when in the residential wings and have access to money to meet their individual needs.

The school's location has presented security difficulties because of public access, however school management has done everything possible to address this issue. The school continually strives to improve the residential facilities within the constraints placed upon them by the age and structure of the building.

Much attention is given to preparing the pupils for transition through life skills teaching and practical experience.

## EVIDENCE:

Residential wing staff have responsibility for the safe management of the pupils' pocket money and clothing, which are supplied by the parents. Their pocket money records were properly maintained. The pupils were observed

to be appropriately dressed wearing a school uniform in class and their own clothes in their free time. Yr 11 pupils can access the shops at lunchtime and after school through a process called 'check out' and other pupils can do so under staff supervision.

The school has a positive approach to preparing young people for leaving school. This preparation commences when the child is admitted to the school through life and social learning opportunities on a daily basis. Much of this is included in the care plan and individual education plan targets. There was a record of off-site visits with groups of pupils for the purpose of engaging them in experiential learning, such as shopping, activities and other planned events. Any pupils transferring to other placements are prepared for the transition and given appropriate information and guidance to assist them. Pupils in yr 10 and 11 participate in an independent living skills programme and cover elements such as household tasks, shopping, money management, cooking, use of public transport and road safety.

The school's management have campaigned for a new school build in recognition of the failings within the present old structure. However the prospect of having to wait a further 4-5 years has prompted management to secure funding, in the interim, for a number of projects, which will if successful, improve the residential facilities. The head teacher and the head of care stated that funding has been allocated to refurbish the bathing and shower facilities in Dixon wing, which had been the subject of criticism, over a number of years, by the inspectorate, pupils, parents and the staff. It is anticipated that further funding will be made available for the refurbishment of parts of Dixon wing to create a semi-independent living environment so that the senior pupils preparing for leaving school can demonstrate their life skills ability with minimal supervision and be given support where necessary. This provision will supplement the current preparation for leaving programme.

There has been a noticeable improvement in the décor within Dixon wing, where bedrooms have been decorated by the staff according to the wishes of the pupils and in some instances through consultation with the parents. A new single shower facility has been provided in Dixon and improvements have been made to bathrooms in other residential areas. All the bedrooms are suitably furnished and the pupils have a lockable facility for money and valuables. Each wing has a kitchen, which is used to make drinks and snacks and the pupils confirmed that they use the kitchens under supervision to practise and improve their life skills. The two younger pupils, attending the primary provision on a separate site, are accommodated in Gap wing, a self contained unit, which has a double bedroom, a lounge, a kitchen, a staff room and an art and crafts/games room. The unit is nicely decorated, furnished and equipped with all the necessary resources for that age group. There is a homely feel to the unit and the staff who are responsible for their care previously worked with them when they were accommodated on the Gap school site.



# 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)

**The Commission considers Standards 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**

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



1,28,31,32

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**.

This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

There are good supervision and support systems in place, which enable the staff to assess and improve their practice. The training and professional development needs of the staff are adequately met, which ensures that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their role.

There are sufficient staff on duty at all times and this ensures that the children are provided with the necessary supervision and interaction in order to keep them safe and maintain their development.

The internal and external monitoring arrangements work effectively in order to check the welfare of pupils living at the school and inform further improvements.

#### **EVIDENCE:**

The statement of purpose consists of a mission statement detailing aims and principles and other documentation, which clearly describes what the school does, informing staff, pupils and parents of the work of the school. The school has developed a 'School Profile' outlining all aspects of school life and this is published on the internet. The head teacher has consultation meetings with parents, sharing with them the strengths of the school and areas of development.

The school has a staffing policy, which clearly states the preferred ratio of staff to pupils. There are designated teams for each residential wing with a team leader responsible for the day-to-day management of the wing. So as to provide additional staff to support individual activities and allow staff some 'non contact' time to record evidence of practice, the school appointed three staff in September 2006. The long-term absence of two permanent staff is adequately covered by these appointments and staff stated that occasional staff absence is covered internally through good cooperation between the residential wing teams. One team leader stated that on certain evenings her team has sufficient staff to support three activities. Inspection of the staff rotas and observation of supervision and practice during the visit provided evidence of the school's attention to the importance of staff/pupil supervision and relationship.

The staffing structure has been further enhanced since the last inspection with the appointment of a second deputy head of care who has considerable experience of working with younger pupils. There is a good balance within the team including qualified experienced senior staff, some long serving, and more recent appointees with a fresh and objective approach, welcomed by the school's management. The head of care is suitably qualified and has considerable childcare and management experience. Most of the staff have successfully completed their NVQ training or are currently participating. The three new staff will commence NVQ training when they have completed their induction. The residential care staff team is a cohesive one, open to new ideas and prepared to engage in new initiatives.

The head of care and, where appropriate the head teacher, monitor the relevant records indicated in standard 32. A record of the monitoring exercise, for the period dated 6/9/06 to 19/10/06, evidenced that the monitoring was conducted and included comments on the findings related to care plans, duty rosters, menus, complaints and their outcomes. Evidence was seen of the head of care's signature on daily logs. Regular monitoring and other inspection activity informs the annual school improvement plan. The 2006/07 plan is almost finalised with targets including further training to equip staff working with autistic spectrum disorder with the necessary knowledge and skills, further development school leaders' skills, knowledge and understanding of monitoring and self evaluation in order to bring about further school development and the improvement of residential bathroom and shower facilities. There will be a focus on 'Every Child Matters' outcomes with the five outcomes being highlighted to pupils, staff and parents through school assemblies, PHSE lessons and static displays. Discussion with the head of pastoral care indicated that the latter is already in progress.

The school senior management team offers excellent leadership founded on regular consultation, respect, a commitment to supporting colleagues and a focus on the principles governing 'Every Child matters'.

# 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>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	4
<b>15</b>	4

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

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

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

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

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

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.	RS24	The school should proceed with plans to improve the pupils' accommodation in the residential wings and create a facility for senior pupils of each gender to practise their independence skills prior to leaving school.	
2.	RS25	The school should refurbish the shower room in Dixon wing and provide private shower and bath facilities for the pupils.	31/03/07
3.	RS27	The school should ensure that information in personnel files is consistent with its own information storage procedures.	

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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