



Champions for  
Social Care  
Improvement

# inspection report

Residential Special School (not registered as  
a Children's Home)

## **Falconer School**

Falconer Road

Bushey

Hertfordshire

WD23 3AT

20th January 2004

## Commission for Social Care Inspection

Launched in April 2004, the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) is the single inspectorate for social care in England.

The Commission combines the work formerly done by the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI), the SSI/Audit Commission Joint Review Team and the National Care Standards Commission.

### The role of CSCI is to:

- Promote improvement in social care
- Inspect all social care - for adults and children - in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Publish annual reports to Parliament on the performance of social care and on the state of the social care market
- Inspect and assess 'Value for Money' of council social services
- Hold performance statistics on social care
- Publish the 'star ratings' for council social services
- Register and inspect services against national standards
- Host the Children's Rights Director role.

## Inspection Methods & Findings

SECTION B of this report summarises key findings and evidence from this inspection. The following 4-point scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

### The 4-point scale ranges from:

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

'O' or blank in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

'9' in the 'Standard met?' box denotes standard not applicable.

'X' is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

<b>SCHOOL INFORMATION</b>
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**Name of School**

Falconer School

**Address**

Falconer Road, Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD23 3AT

**Tel No:**

0208 950 2505

**Fax No:**

0208 421 8107

**Email Address:**

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

Governing Body

**Name of Head**

Mr J S B Page

**NCSC Classification**

Residential Special School

**Type of school**

Residential Special School

**Date of last boarding welfare inspection:**

3/3/03
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<b>Date of Inspection Visit</b>	20th & 21 <sup>st</sup> January 2004		<b>ID Code</b>
<b>Time of Inspection Visit</b>	10:00 am		
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	1	Pat House	089620
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	2	Angela Dalton	
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	3		
<b>Name of NCSC Inspector</b>	4		
<b>Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):</b>	Not applicable		
<b>Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable)</b> Lay assessors are members of the public independent of the NCSC. They accompany inspectors on some inspections and bring a different perspective to the inspection process.	Not applicable		
<b>Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)</b>	Not applicable		
<b>Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection</b>	Mr. J S B Page, Head Teacher		

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## INTRODUCTION TO REPORT AND INSPECTION

Residential Special Schools are subject to inspection by the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC) to determine whether the welfare of children (i.e. those aged under 18) is adequately safeguarded and promoted while they are accommodated by the school.

Inspections assess the extent to which the school is meeting the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, published by the Secretary of State under Section 87C of the Children Act 1989, and other relevant requirements of the Children Act 1989 as amended. Residential Special Schools are not registered as children's homes unless they accommodate, or arrange accommodation for, one or more children for more than 295 days a year.

This document summarises the inspection findings of the NCSC in respect of Falconer School

The report follows the format of the National Minimum Standards and the numbering shown in the report corresponds to that of the standards.

The report will show the following:

- Inspection methods used
- Key findings and evidence
- Overall ratings in relation to the standards
- Recommended action by the school
- Advisory recommendations on boarding welfare
- Summary of the findings
- Report of the lay assessor (where relevant)
- The Head's response and proposed action plan to address findings

## INSPECTION VISITS

Inspections are undertaken in line with the agreed regulatory framework under the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children Act 1989 as amended, with additional visits as required.

The report represents the inspector's findings from the evidence found at the specified inspection dates.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL PROVISION**

Falconer School is a Secondary Special School for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school provides education for both day and boarding pupils. The boarding unit, School House, currently provides boarding facilities for six boys, from Monday to Friday, and all places were taken at the time of the inspection. The school is situated in a residential area of Bushey, which has a nearby High Street with shops, and a library within walking distance. In September 2004, work to upgrade an existing building in the school grounds will be complete, providing improved facilities. At this time there will be an increase in the number of pupils in the school, and the number of boarding places available will increase to twelve.

## **PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE**

School House provides a safe and structured environment where the children clearly have confidence that the staff will support them and help them deal with their problems. The boundaries set for the children are understood and practical, and it is commendable that the children now add their comments to the written reports of incidents and sanctions. Four questionnaires were returned to the NCSC from parents of boarders, and all made positive comments about the school.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE**

Staff and Governors at the school continue to monitor all areas of the school provision, and some of the plans are included in the inspection report. New ideas for meal planning are being formalised, and additional activities outside the school continue to be sought. Additional Health and Safety risk assessments should be considered, especially when the building work is completed.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE**

High standards of boarding welfare continue to be delivered at Falconer School, and the children spoke positively about the staff and facilities. The new facilities which will be available in September will enable the staff to implement new ideas and offer greatly improved boarding provisions, especially as these changes coincide with the recent start of NVQ training for staff.



## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS IDENTIFIED FROM THIS INSPECTION

**Action Plan: The Head is requested to provide the Commission with an Action Plan, which indicates how recommended action and any advisory recommendations are to be addressed. This action plan will be made available on request to the Area Office.**

### RECOMMENDED ACTION

Identified below are the actions recommended on issues addressed in the main body of the report in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders adequately in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools. The references below are to the relevant Standards. Non-implementation of recommended action can lead to future statutory notification of failure to safeguard and promote welfare.

No	Standard*	Recommended Action	
1	RS14	It is recommended that the school develops a policy on The Administration of Non-Prescribed Medication, and that all unopened medication is dated when opened, and totals are carried forward, to enable auditing.	31/05/04
2	RS18	It is recommended that the records of all boarders in the school contain contact details of their G.P.	31/05/04
3	RS26	It is recommended that a customised Health and Safety Statement be produced for the school, including the more extensive production of risk assessments for the use of school premises.	30/09/04

### ADVISORY RECOMMENDATIONS

Identified below are advisory recommendations on welfare matters addressed in the main body of the report and based on the National Minimum Standards, made for consideration by the school.

No	Refer to Standard*	Recommendation
1	RS23	It is recommended that the lack of indoor sports facilities or outdoor field, be reconsidered by the Local authority, in order to fully meet the needs of an increasing number of boys, of secondary school age, who have a wider than average range of needs.

2	RS26	It is recommended that training in Risk Assessments be provided for maintenance and other appropriate ancillary staff.

Note: You may refer to the relevant standard in the remainder of the report by omitting the 2-letter prefix. E.g. RS10 refers to standard 10.

**PART B****INSPECTION METHODS AND FINDINGS**

The following inspection methods were used in the production of this report

Direct Observation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Accommodation	YES
Pupil Guided Tour of Recreational Areas	YES

Checks with other Organisations

• Social Services	YES
• Fire Service	YES
• Environmental Health	YES
• DfES	YES
• School Doctor	NO
• Independent Person	NO
• Chair of Governors	YES

Tracking individual welfare arrangements	YES
Survey / individual discussions with boarders	YES
Group discussions with boarders	YES
Individual interviews with key staff	YES
Group interviews with House staff teams	YES
Staff Survey	YES
Meals taken with pupils	YES
Early morning and late evening visits	YES
Visit to Sanatorium / Sick Bay	YES
Parent Survey	YES
Placing authority survey	YES
Inspection of policy/practice documents	YES
Inspection of records	YES
Individual interview with pupil(s)	YES
Answer-phone line for pupil/staff comments	NO

Date of Inspection	20/1/04
Time of Inspection	10.00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	36
Number of Inspector Days spent on site	2

**Pre-inspection information and the Head's Self evaluation Form, provided by the school, have also been taken into account in preparing this report.**

## SCHOOL INFORMATION

**Age Range of Boarding Pupils**      **From**       **To**

### NUMBER OF BOARDERS AT TIME OF INSPECTION:

**BOYS**     

**GIRLS**     

**TOTAL**     

**Number of separate Boarding Houses**     

The following pages summarise the key findings and evidence from this inspection, together with the NCSC assessment of the extent to which standards have been met. The following scale is used to indicate the extent to which standards have been met or not met by placing the assessed level alongside the phrase "Standard met?"

The scale ranges from:

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

"0" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion.

"9" in the "Standard met" box denotes standard not applicable.

"X" is used where a percentage value or numerical value is not applicable.

## STATEMENT OF THE SCHOOL'S PURPOSE

The intended outcome for the following standard is:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.

### Standard 1 (1.1 – 1.9)

The school has a written Statement of Purpose, which accurately describes what the school sets out to do for those children it accommodates, and the manner in which care is provided. The Statement can be made up of other documents, e.g., Letter of Approved Arrangements and school prospectus, which are required to include specific information.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The school has a Statement of Purpose, which clearly sets out the overall purpose of the school, its ethos and systems. This document has been amended to include staff details, as recommended at the last inspection, and will now be updated annually and signed by the school governors, and this was last done in October 2003. The Head Teacher said that the Statement of Purpose is available at the time of the initial entrance interview, and then on request. All boarders have now been issued with a copy of The Children's Guide to School House, and the boys spoken to said they had had a meeting where this Guide was explained, and when they were asked for their opinions about it.

## CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way that the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.
- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.

### Standard 2 (2.1 – 2.9)

Children's opinions, and those of their families or significant others, are sought over key decisions which are likely to affect their daily life and their future. Feedback is given following consultations.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>Because of the stated aims of the school, there is a strict regime in place for all pupils to follow. However children are only admitted to the school if they are in agreement with the placement and its regime. A home/school agreement is therefore signed by the boys and their parents prior to entry, and boarders and their families are given copies of the Guide to School House, which sets out general boarding policies. Staff interviewed said that daily reports are also sent home with children when appropriate. The children are involved in decision making through the regular reviews of their care plans, and the pupil and their key worker together conduct the review and outcomes are recorded. Details of these care plans, and pupil involvement in them and the reviews are well documented in the Children's Guide. There is also an annual review of each child's Statement of Educational Needs, which is attended by the pupil, the key worker, family and relevant professionals. Informally there are House meetings for all boarders held every evening, where general issues and personal targets are discussed, and minutes are taken. There is a key worker system in operation, which is also explained in the Children's Guide. There is an unstructured period after school when the boys are free to choose how they spend their time, although staff do give an overview, and the inspectors observed some of the choices made. The school actively supports children who have a wide range of needs, to make choices, where possible, and to work towards independence. Currently no boarders have any special cultural or religious requirements but staff said such needs would be sensitively accommodated, and the Statement of Purpose supports this. Staff told the inspectors that they were in the process of setting up a School Council, and that boarders would be represented on this. Staff also told the inspectors that the issue of using mobile phones in school was recently raised by boarders, and that the subject was taken to a Staff Team meeting for discussion. The boarders also requested a garden which they could help cultivate, and this provision has been incorporated in the new facilities.</p>		

**Standard 3 (3.1 – 3.11)**

The school and staff respect a child's wish for privacy and confidentiality so far as is consistent with good parenting and the need to protect the child.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The school's policy on privacy and confidentiality is implicit within all systems and arrangements examined. Staff and children spoken to confirmed that privacy was respected and that boarders' bedrooms were the boys' private space, with staff maintaining a "knock and wait" policy. A written policy will be developed to include the new facilities when the school extension is completed later this year. Boarders' files are kept locked in the various units, and the Head Teacher said that information about the children is only given on a "need to know" basis. Staff spoken to were aware of the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures. It is the school's policy to bar the children from having mobile phones in the school, but any child can use the school's portable phone in private. The Head Teacher said, however that facilities, including those for telephoning and for visits in private, will be more accessible in the new building. The "Childline" phone number is attached to the phone. Letters for boarders are not opened by staff unless this is requested or there are special circumstances. The Head Teacher said that supervision of the children is always done sensitively, and that humiliation is very much not part of the school routine. Discussion with the children confirmed this is the case. None of the boarders at Falconer need assistance with mobility or personal care, but such issues are discussed by all children during lessons in the school. The searching of children is rare at Falconer, but the procedure for this is clearly set out and would be recorded. The school has an "option to handover" procedure in place, where banned materials such as cigarettes, are handed to transport staff on entering the school, in the knowledge that these will be returned on the journey home.

**Standard 4 (4.1 - 4.8)**

Children know how and feel able to complain if they are unhappy with any aspect of living in the school, and feel confident that any complaint is addressed seriously and without delay.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?****3**

The school has an official complaints policy, which is given to all parents and guardians. The Children's Guide has detailed but simplified information about making a complaint, and this is written in a reassuring manner, and includes details of the NCSC and Childline. The boys spoken to, told the inspector that there had been a meeting where complaints procedures were explained, and that they had all talked about the issues, and knew what the NCSC address was for. The Head of Care said that boys sometimes come to him with issues, and that these are all written down and that pupils would be supported to make a complaint if they wished. The teachers who spoke to the inspector said there was also a rota so that every child had a one to one discussion with the teaching staff at regular intervals, providing another area for the children to express any views or concerns.

**Number of complaints about care at the school recorded over last 12 months:**

0

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

0

**Number of complaints received by NCSC about the school over last 12 months:**

0

**Number of above complaints substantiated:**

0

## CHILD PROTECTION

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.
- Children are protected from bullying by others.
- All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the school are notified by the Head of the school to the appropriate authorities.
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded positively to on return.

### Standard 5 (5.1 - 5.12)

There are systems in place in the school which aim to prevent abuse of children and suspicions or allegations of abuse are properly responded to. These are known and understood by all staff (including junior, ancillary, volunteer and agency staff).

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The school has a named Child Protection Officer and Home Liaison Manager, and there are rigorous procedures in place covering all child protection issues. Staff confirmed that induction training covers all such procedures, and that regular updates take place for all staff. The school's written policy complies with the requirements of this Standard, and staff said they had copies of this.

Number of recorded child protection enquiries initiated by the social services department during the past 12 months:

0

**Standard 6 (6.1 - 6.5)**  
**The school has, and follows, an anti-bullying policy, with which children and staff are familiar and which is effective in practice. Where possible children in the school contribute to the development of the policy.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
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The school has an anti-bullying policy which the children and their families were involved in writing. The policy complies with the requirements of this Standard and risk assessments have been completed for times and areas of the school which provide the most problems. Control measures include having high staffing numbers on duty at break times, and keeping an anti-bullying log. The Head Teacher said the school's ethos is that bullying will happen unless measures are taken to stop it. Where pupils indicated on questionnaires, that issues of bullying had happened, the inspectors discussed the comments with the boys. In all cases the boys felt any issues had been managed by staff and felt supported by them.

<b>Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>%</b>
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**Standard 7 (7.1 - 7.7)**  
**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.**

<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
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The school has systems in place for notifying agencies about events relating to the protection of children, and the NCSC has received detailed reports over the year about incidents regarding boarders in the school. It is commendable that copies of such reports have all contained the written comments by the child involved in the incident. The Head Teacher said there continues to be concern by staff in the school about the Local Authority response to referrals from the school, although it is hoped these matters are now being addressed.

**NUMBER OF THE FOLLOWING NOTIFIED TO NCSC DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS:**

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| • <b>conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children</b> | <b>0</b> |
| • <b>serious harm to a child</b>   | <b>0</b> |
| • <b>serious illness or accident of a child</b>                                    | <b>0</b> |
| • <b>serious incident requiring police to be called</b>                            | <b>0</b> |

<b>Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)</b>		
The school takes steps to ensure that children who are absent from the school without consent are protected in line with written policy and guidance.		
<b>Key Findings and Evidence</b>	<b>Standard met?</b>	<b>3</b>
The school has written procedures for dealing with unauthorised absences from the school House. These procedures were examined and comply with the requirements of this Standard. These procedures also link into the child protection procedures and records are kept and relevant authorities are notified. During the inspection there was an incident of unauthorised absence, and all procedures were followed without hesitation, including a de-briefing session on the child's return.		
<b>Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:</b>		<b>X</b>

## CARE AND CONTROL

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff response to inappropriate behaviour.

### Standard 9 (9.1 - 9.8)

Relationships between staff and children are based on mutual respect and understanding and clear professional and personal boundaries which are effective for both the individuals and the group.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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School policies clearly define expectations of behaviour in the school, and the new Guide to School House gives written details of the rules and system for promoting good behaviour. The boys spoken to were clear about this credit and points system, and felt it was fair and appeared keen to earn their rewards. The Head Teacher said that the school uses this behaviour system, which is based around a token economy, to show the boys how they can become successful both socially and educationally. The system for gaining credits is also evidence based and so limits any suspicions of favouritism. The school has training strategies for dealing with crisis management, and has a Management of Behaviour Policy.

### Standard 10 (10.1 - 10.26)

Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour, and where the behaviour of children is regarded as unacceptable by staff, it is responded to by constructive disciplinary measures which are approved by the Head of Care.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The school has clear policies and procedures to deal with control and discipline, and the teachers spoken to said that there was a consistent approach to discipline across the school and in School House. The Deputy Head Teacher said that staff monitor policies to ensure they are working documents, and, for instance, the amnesty where boys give cigarettes to staff on entering the school, means the policy on smoking is adhered to. Staff are also introducing a "Communications Diary", which will be used by all pupils and will be completed by School House staff, tutors and families. No evidence was found of any unreasonable sanctions in operation in the school, and there are now children's comments and signatures written at the end of all reports in the Sanctions Log. There is a system operating where a "Life Space Interview" takes place after all supervision and restraint. Staff also told the inspectors that boys who abscond from school, have special targets set as a result, which directly address their particular problems. Staff have training in the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Approach, used in the school, and there was evidence of regular updates of this training.

## QUALITY OF CARE

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.
- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within school and in the local community.
- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.
- Children 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.

### Standard 11 (11.1 - 11.6)

Admission and leaving processes are planned and agreed with the child – and as appropriate, with parents and carers and placing authorities – as far as possible and handled with sensitivity and care by those concerned.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
<p>All children wishing to enter the school receive written information about its policies. There is a planned introduction to the school when children and families meet the Head Teacher and staff, and are shown around the premises. Admissions are reviewed informally in an on-going way, and a report is produced within six weeks of entry, in which the children have their comments recorded. The school completes an information file for all children, which contains all the details required by this Standard. Falconer School does not take emergency admissions. Children who will be leaving the school, begin their preparations more than a year before, where possible. Boys told the inspector that they often have additional nights at home phased in during this period, and receive careers advice from specialist teachers in the school.</p>		

**Standard 12 (12.1 - 12.7)**

Care staff and the school's residential provision and activities actively contribute to individual children's educational progress, and care staff actively support children's education, ensuring regular attendance, punctuality and a minimum of interruption during the school day.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The teachers and boarding staff who spoke to the inspectors said that liaison between all areas of the school was extremely good, and that School House staff encouraged pupils' attention to homework, and supported teaching staff in the classrooms. Care staff contribute to individual education plans, and teachers said they are kept informed of any significant issues that might arise with the children. All bedrooms have a small study area, and individual facilities will improve when the new building is operational. Children can go to the school's library when they wish.

**Standard 13 (13.1 - 13.9)**

Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The children told the inspectors about a camping trip they had enjoyed the previous summer, and five boys will soon be going on a three day residential trip, with two members of staff. The Head Teacher said that the Local Authority had recently issued its "Off-Sites Visits" Manual, and staff have attended training in its implementation. As a result of this the school has restructured its own "Off- Site Visits" Policy. Other activities which have recently taken place include craft, bikes, skates, the cinema, Quasar, bowling and various sports. Tables in the dining room also adapt to snooker tables, and the boys clearly enjoy playing football on a tarmac area outside, although the space is not ideal for games. Two of the boarders recently joined Harrow Cricket Club. The boys said they are able to choose which activities they take part in, and can use computers and watch videos, within agreed time-spans. However, the Head Teacher said that there are limited local resources, outside the school, available to the boys, and the inspectors are aware that, even when the new building is completed, there will be limited sports' facilities in the school.

**Standard 14 (14.1 - 14.25)**

The school actively promotes the health care of each child and meets any intimate care needs.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

2

The school has a written policy regarding health care needs in the school. All such needs are assessed prior to children entering the school, and needs are written into plans with details of any treatments required. There is waking night staff cover in the unit, and clear plans around bedwetting were seen by the inspectors. The inspectors saw evidence of involvement by a specialist nurse, who is now supporting the health needs of one child. Children carry their own inhalers. The school provides accredited sexual education and guidance and all care staff are trained in first-aid. Height and weight checks take place monthly, and as a result, staff recently asked the school nurse to monitor the progress of one child. Staff have also started to cross-reference details of the children's moods, medication and staff involvement, to monitor trends, and to assist any health consultants with their investigations. The children in the school continue to be registered with their own G.P.s and all prescriptions for medication come from parents or guardians. Medication is usually sent in with the boys, from home, and there is now a form which parents complete, detailing exact amounts being sent, to ensure the correct medication is received by the school. Procedures for storage, recording and the administration of medication were examined by the inspectors, and were generally sound. However the school needs to develop a policy for non-prescribed, "homely" medication, and needs to date all such medication on opening, with totals carried forward, so that amounts can be audited. (See Recommended Actions 1).

**Standard 15 (15.1 - 15.15)**

Children are provided with adequate quantities of suitably prepared wholesome and nutritious food, having regard to their needs and wishes, and have the opportunity to learn to prepare their own meals. Where appropriate special dietary needs due to health, religious persuasion, racial origin or cultural background are met, including the choice of a vegetarian meal for children who wish it.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The inspectors joined the children for some of the meals, and the boys spoken to said they enjoyed the food in the school, and felt they had enough to eat. There is always a choice of dessert or fruit offered, and the Children's Guide explains that a sandwich choice can be offered for the main meal if necessary. Fruit is now offered at supper time, and staff said this has been popular. The new building will have new kitchen facilities, and the Head of Care is planning to introduce new menus, which the boys will be involved in producing, and they will choose what to eat the week before. The boys said they can get drinks during the night if they wanted, and there is drinking water available throughout the school. Snacks and drinks are available to the children after school hours, and the inspectors saw the boys enjoying snacks on the evening of the inspection. The Environmental Health Officer has visited the school in December 2003.

**Standard 16 (16.1 - 16.7)**

Children are provided for adequately on an individual basis and encouraged to exercise their own preferences in the choice of clothing and personal requisites. Children who require assistance to choose what they wear and/or how they spend their money are provided with the assistance they need, in a way which maximises their choice.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

The children have a school uniform, but bring their own clothes to the unit for the evenings. The school keeps some supplies for the boys to purchase, but they can also go to the local shops to buy the things they need. Each child has storage in their bedrooms to keep their belongings, including lockable space. The boys can bring a limited amount of money into the school, and staff felt that larger amounts would encourage the children to purchase more sweets and snacks, and be detrimental especially to those who wanted to reduce their weight.

## CARE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT PLAN

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.
- 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.
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.
- Children receive individual support when they need it.

### Standard 17 (17.1 - 17.8)

There is a written placement plan specifying how the school will care for each boarding pupil in accordance with his or her assessed needs, the school cares for that child in accordance with that plan, monitors progress in relation to that plan, and updates that plan as necessary.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

There are written placement plans for all children in the school, and some were tracked during the inspection. All plans were detailed and reviews and monitoring, as well as Statutory Reviews were up to date and there was evidence of the school involving pupils and parents throughout. Reports and referrals to other agencies were in the records, as were copies of incident reports, with written notes by pupils. Children spoken to said they were aware of their care plans, and confirmed they had a named key worker.

### Standard 18 (18.1 - 18.5)

Each child has a permanent private and secure record of their history and progress which can, in compliance with legal requirements for safeguards, be seen by the child.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

2

The Pupil Record Forms were checked and contained all the details required to meet this Standard, except for the name and address of the pupils' individual G.P.s., which should now be included in the files of boarders. Files are kept securely in the school office, and the Head Teacher said that children are made aware that they can see their records, subject to compliance with the Data Protection Act.  
(See Recommended Actions 2).

**Standard 19 (19.1 - 19.3)**

The school maintains clear and accurate records on the staff and child groups of the school, and major events affecting the school and children resident there.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The school maintains records of children and staff in the school and these are kept securely in the office. Details of people living on the school's premise were given to the inspector, and the accident book was seen. Menus are kept in the kitchen for at least a year, and there are duty rotas and an up to date Visitors Book in operation.

**Standard 20 (20.1 - 20.6)**

Subject to their wishes, children are positively encouraged and enabled by the school to maintain contact with their parents and other family members (unless there are welfare concerns) while living at school.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

Children spoken to during the inspection confirmed that their parents are kept informed of all concerns and issues which arise during the weekly board. The boys also confirmed that they can contact their families whenever they want, outside lesson time, and can see visitors in private when they want.

**Standard 21 (21.1 - 21.2)**

Where a pupil is in care and will be leaving care on leaving the school, the school agrees with the young person's responsible authority what contribution it should make to implement any Pathway or other plan for the pupil before the pupil leaves school. These arrangements are in line with that young person's needs, and the school implements its contribution where feasible from at least a year before the pupil is expected to leave care or move to independent living. The school works with any Personal Advisor for the child.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

Boys who spoke to the inspectors said they start planning for leaving the school, at least a year before that date. There are Transition Plans for boys who are leaving, and planning includes a phased return to living at home, skills training for independent living, and support from staff in practical arrangements. The teaching staff said that lessons include careers training and a citizenship programme, as well as cleanliness and sex education.

**Standard 22 (22.1 - 22.13)**

All children are given individualised support in line with their needs and wishes, and children identified as having particular support needs, or particular problems, receive help, guidance and support when needed or requested.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

The boys spoken to confirmed they are able to speak to their teachers or key workers at any time they need to, and receive support and advice when it is required. Currently there are no children in the unit for whom English is not their first language, or who have communication difficulties. The Head Teacher said that referrals made to the Children Schools and Families Service continue to have a slow response, although it is hoped that the situation is improving. Evidence was seen of children being referred for specialist help and there is one individual health programme being implemented at present.

## PREMISES

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children live in well designed, pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.
- Children live in accommodation that is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.
- Children are able to carry out their ablutions in privacy and with dignity.
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.

### Standard 23 (23.1 - 23.9)

The school is located, designed and of a size and layout that is in keeping with its Statement of Purpose. It serves the needs of the children and provides the sort of environment most helpful to each child's development, and is sufficient for the number of children.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
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The planned completion date for the new school premises is September 2004, and this will provide greatly improved facilities for the children. There has been an ongoing safety issue concerning the playground area, where the boys play sport, and where cars are also parked. This area will also be improved by September, as the new space will allow some mobile classrooms, in the playground area, to be removed, and allow for the separation of play space and car parking. The new building has the approval of the relevant building and safety services, and a visit from Environmental Health has been requested. The Fire Officer has checked evacuation arrangements at the school, and the limited CCTV security on the premises is being up graded to coincide with the new building. All the main doors have special locks, which the boys and staff have entry access to. The layout of the school prevents the admission of children with physical disabilities, and this is made clear in the school's Statement of Purpose. However, although September will see great improvements in school facilities, there will still be no indoor or grassed sports area for the boys and this remains a shortfall. (See Advisory Recommendations 1).

### Standard 24 (24.1 - 24.19)

The school provides adequate good quality and well-maintained accommodation for boarding pupils, which is consistent with their needs.

Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	3
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The residential unit in the school provides single bedrooms for all pupils, and, in the new building the accommodation offered will be greatly improved as seen from the plans examined during the inspection. However current accommodation does provide the basic requirements of this Standard, including lockable storage for all boarders, and study areas in bedrooms.

**Standard 25 (25.1 - 25.7)**

The school has sufficient baths, showers and toilets, all of good standard and suitable to meet the needs of the children. The school has appropriate changing and washing facilities for incontinent children where necessary.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

Present bathroom and toilet facilities are adequate to meet the requirements of this standard, but are in need of upgrading and the new facilities will be welcomed by the boys. The children said that there was hot water available for baths and showers, and no concerns were expressed about the washing facilities.

**Standard 26 (26.1 - 26.10)**

Positive steps are taken to keep children, staff and visitors safe from risk from fire and other hazards, in accordance with Health and Safety and Fire legislation and guidance.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

2

There are some general risk assessments in place for the school and the Local Authority completes an annual Health and Safety audit. The maintenance manager completes the school's PAT tests, and there is a quarterly site visit completed by the manager and the Head Teacher. Evidence of maintenance and safety checks were seen during the inspection, and were in order. The school kitchen has recently been refurbished, and an outside company is now contracted to regularly service all kitchen equipment. Transport staff are responsible for vehicle maintenance, and all such staff have CRB checks and have licences to drive a minibus. The school does however need a written Health and Safety Statement, and this should be completed, together with more extensive risk assessments, including those for children using kitchen equipment, when the building work is completed. It is also recommended that training in Risk Assessment is provided for maintenance and other appropriate staff. (See Recommended Actions 3 & Advisory Recommendations 2).

## STAFFING

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- There are careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.

Standard 27 (27.1 - 27.9)

Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those employed on a contractual/sessional basis) and volunteers who work with the children in the school includes checks through the Criminal Records Bureau checking system (at Standard or Enhanced level as appropriate to their role in the school), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a satisfactory recruitment process recorded in writing.

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

3

All staff who work at the school have enhanced police checks in place before starting employment. These checks are made and kept by the Local Authority, but clearance is confirmed to the school in writing by the Authority. The school's recruitment procedure was checked during the inspection and a new tick sheet has been produced to ensure that all the elements required by this Standard are in place prior to staff appointment. There is currently no one living on the school's premises other than staff employed by the school. There are no Gap students at the school and no guardians arranged by the school.

**Total number of care staff:**

5

**Number of care staff who left in last 12 months:**

X

**Standard 28 (28.1 - 28.13)**

The school is staffed at all times of the day and night, at or above the minimum level specified under standard 28.2. Records of staff actually working in the school demonstrate achievement of this staffing level.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The school has a written statement about minimum staff numbers who must be on duty, and there has recently been an increase in staff numbers. This increase has enabled the staffing structure to be re-organised, so that there are enough staff to cover one absence without additional staff being brought in. There are always two or three staff on duty in the day and at least three after 3p.m. There is one night supervisor employed at present, and this number will increase in the new building with its increased number of boarders. In September there will also be more Residential Social Workers employed, and more ancillary staff. Children spoken to felt there were adequate numbers of staff on duty.

**Standard 29 (29.1 - 29.6)**

Staff receive training and development opportunities that equip them with the skills required to meet the needs of the children and the purpose of the school.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

There is an induction programme in place for all new staff, which includes guidance on Child Protection. Staff said induction also includes training in policies and procedures, and was very thorough. All staff have completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, and NVQ training for staff started on January 5<sup>th</sup>, with three staff members studying for NVQ 3, and the Head of Care undertaking the NVQ Assessor's Course. The Head of Care and other staff members recently had risk assessment training and have fed information back to the school.

**Standard 30 (30.1 - 30.13)**

All staff, including domestic staff and the Head of the school, are properly accountable and supported.

**Key Findings and Evidence****Standard met?**

3

The newest members of staff who spoke to the inspectors, confirmed that they have formal supervision with the Head Teacher every two weeks. They also said they have induction training with the Head Teacher every week and weekly meetings with School House staff, and felt well supported. More experienced staff now have formal supervision twice each term, and annual appraisal targets have been approved for all staff. Staff members told the inspectors that, as well as formal supervision, group sessions were regularly held with professional family therapists, and that these were very useful. The Head Teacher has performance management reviews with two of the governors and outside assessors, and there is regular liaison between the head of School and the Governors. A new post of Training Liaison Manager is being set up in the school, and this new staff member will be establishing new processes for Performance Management.

## ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The intended outcomes for the following set of standards are:

- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.
- Children enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.

### Standard 31 (31.1 - 31.17)

The school is organised, managed and staffed in a manner that delivers the best possible childcare.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The Head of Care has 3 years experience in a residential setting, and has started NVQ training, along with other staff members. The school is working towards the target of 80% of care staff trained to NVQ level 3 by 2005. Staff rotas comply with the requirements of this Standard, including time allowed for formal supervision.

Percentage of care staff with relevant NVQ or equivalent child care qualification:

X %

### Standard 32 (32.1 - 32.5)

The National Care Standards Commission is informed within 24 hours if a receiver, liquidator or trustee in bankruptcy becomes responsible for the school. Such persons on becoming responsible for the school have ensured that the school continues to be managed on a day to day basis by a Head who meets recruitment and qualification requirements for a Head under these Standards. Such a temporary Head must make sure that the operation of the school meets the requirements of these standards in relation to the day to day running of the school.

#### Key Findings and Evidence

#### Standard met?

3

The Head Teacher monitors the records as listed in this Standard, both termly and half-termly, and reviews of staff appraisals are being established. The Head Teacher reports to the Governors three times each year, and a formal report is now produced annually. There are plans in place for responses to crises, and extensive planning is currently taking place in preparation for the changes which the school will shortly see.

**Standard 33 (33.1 - 33.7)**

**The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body receive a written report on the conduct of the school from a person visiting the school on their behalf every half term.**

**Key Findings and Evidence**

**Standard met?**

**3**

The school has a named Governor, responsible for visiting and monitoring activities in the school. This governor was present during the inspection, and confirmed her visits to the school, which take place at least half-termly, and are often unannounced. Written reports of these visits are now produced, and will be made available for future inspections. There is a Governors' Meeting planned for February, where issues of Quality Assurance and monitoring will be discussed.

**PART C**

**LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY**

**(where applicable)**

Not applicable.

**Lay Assessor** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Lead Inspector: Pat House</b>	<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Second Inspector: Angela Dalton</b>	<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Locality Manager: Cathry Bramham</b>	<b>Signature:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	

**PART D****HEAD'S RESPONSE****D.1 Head's comments/confirmation relating to the content and accuracy of the report for the above inspection.**

We would welcome comments on the content of this report relating to the Inspection conducted on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

Head's response is available on request from the Hertfordshire Area Office.

**Action taken by the NCSC in response to Head's comments:**

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

YES

Head's comments/factual amendments were incorporated into the final inspection report

YES

Head's comments are available on file at the Area Office but have not been incorporated into the final inspection report. The inspector believes the report to be factually accurate

**Note:**

In instances where there is a major difference of view between the Inspector and the Head both views will be made available on request to the Area Office.

**D.2 Please provide the Commission with a written Action Plan by 13<sup>th</sup> April 2004 , which indicates how recommended actions and advisory recommendations are to be addressed and stating a clear timescale for completion. This will be kept on file and made available on request.**

**Status of the Head's Action Plan at time of publication of the final inspection report:**

Action plan was required

YES

Action plan was received at the point of publication

YES

Action plan covers all the statutory requirements in a timely fashion

YES

Action plan did not cover all the statutory requirements and required further discussion

Provider has declined to provide an action plan

Other: <enter details here>

**D.3 HEAD'S AGREEMENT**

**Head's statement of agreement/comments: Please complete the relevant section that applies.**

**D.3.1 I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) and that I agree with the recommended actions made and will seek to comply with these.**

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Designation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Or**

**D.3.2 I \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ am unable to confirm that the contents of this report are a fair and accurate representation of the facts relating to the inspection conducted on the above date(s) for the following reasons:**

**Print Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Designation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Note: In instance where there is a profound difference of view between the Inspector and the Head both views will be reported. Please attach any extra pages, as applicable.