



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Cedar House School

**Kirkby Lonsdale
Carnforth
Lancashire
LA6 2HW**

Lead Inspector
Stewart Waddell

Unannounced Inspection
16th November 2006 09:30

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at www.dh.gov.uk or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Every Child Matters, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

SERVICE INFORMATION

Name of school	Cedar House School
Address	Kirkby Lonsdale Carnforth Lancashire LA6 2HW
Telephone number	015242 71181
Fax number	
Email address	schooloffice@cedarhouseadmin.co.uk
Provider Web address	www.cedarhouseschool.co.uk
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Witherslack Group of Schools
Name of Head	Ms Gillian Ridgway
Name of Head of Care	Mr Andrew Campbell
Age range of residential pupils	
Date of last welfare inspection	15/02/06

Brief Description of the School:

Cedar House is a co-educational special school for children exhibiting emotional and behavioural difficulties, and is duly registered with the Department of Education and Skills (DfES). The school caters for children aged 7 to 16 years on a day or residential basis. At the time of inspection there were 43 residential boarding pupils accommodated. The school is situated close to the centre of the market town of Kirkby Lonsdale, which is within easy travelling distance of the larger towns of Kendal and Morecambe, and the city of Lancaster.

The residential provision comprises of 5 units, four for boys and one for girls. This includes Lowgate House, a purpose built house that provides accommodation for the Junior boys. In recent years the school have added new classroom, office and playground facilities. Further expansion and renovation is planned - as part of which the school hope to provide more space for leisure activities.

Young people's views are sought in a variety of ways, including residential unit meetings, key worker sessions, specific questionnaires and school council meetings. The views of parents/carers and placing authorities are also sought regularly through review meetings, formal questionnaires and regular phone communication. The fees charged by the school range from £26,691 to £96,609.

SUMMARY

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

I made a visit to the school one week before the inspection and met with groups of young people who are resident at the school.

One other inspector was with me for part of the inspection. We spoke to several young people individually during the two days of the inspection.

The school only knew I was coming the day before the inspection.

We had meals with young people in the school dining room and in the residential units. We visited each house where young people lived.

I talked to the head of care, the head teacher, residential care staff and domestic staff. I looked at the paperwork and records the school keeps.

At the time of the inspection there were 43 young people accommodated in the school's 5 residential units – 11 girls and 32 boys.

The parents/carers of 13 young people filled in forms for me before the inspection, telling me how they thought the school looked after young people.

13 social workers that had placed young people at the school filled in forms for me before the inspection, telling me how they thought the school looked after young people.

The head teacher completed all the forms I sent to her before the inspection.

What the school does well:

Most young people told me the school was a good place to live.

Most young people told me the care staff that worked with them were mostly "good" and "tried to help them".

Most young people said the residential units where they lived were "good", and that they liked the bedrooms they had.

Most young people said the activities and trips the school did were "good".

The school made sure young people's health needs were well looked after and they got to see the doctor, dentist and optician when they needed to

Young people got good individual support if they needed it.

The care staff made sure young people attended education every day – all young people attended school on both days of the inspection. Some young people told me that they were “sitting exams”. Young people had the chance to sit GCSE’s and gain other educational certificates and awards.

Most young people we spoke to said if they had a complaint they would tell a member of staff about it. They said staff would “do something about it”

Most young people spoken to said bullying was not a problem for them at the school. They said it was “not allowed” at the school, and that staff would do something about it if you told them you were being bullied.

The school had good practices in place to make sure young people were safe from harm.

The staff had been given the proper training to do their jobs, and nearly all care staff had the proper qualifications for their job.

Staff told me they were well supported by the senior staff at the school.

The managers made sure the school was well run and the organisation that owned the school regularly visited to check the school was operating properly.

What has improved since the last inspection?

The number of care staff who had suitable qualifications for their job had increased a lot since the last inspection. Some residential units had been redecorated and re-carpeted, and new furniture put in. The school had new computer systems to help them with their record keeping. The school had improved links with other local schools and colleges, helping them to provide more educational opportunities for young people.

What they could do better:

Young people thought the suppers provided in the residential units could be better. We discussed this with the managers of the school. Some of the school’s paperwork for keeping records required small changes made.

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

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office. The summary of this inspection report can be made available in other formats on request.

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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. Young people's health needs were well met. Young people were offered a balanced, healthy diet and were encouraged towards developing healthy eating habits.

EVIDENCE:

The school had addressed all requirements and recommendations made by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) pharmacist following her visit in February 2005, ensuring the home operated policies, procedures and practices that ensured the safe administration of medication.

The school employed a qualified nurse who had responsibility for ensuring young people's health needs were addressed. Since the last inspection the school had developed Individual Health Plans for all young people resident. These plans covered all areas required under Standard 14 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. The school kept detailed health records on each young person resident. I viewed evidence that showed young people received regular height and weight checks and regular eye tests. Records of immunisations young people had received were on file. All medical, dental and optician appointments were appropriately recorded and records of accidents were maintained. Where relevant risk assessments allowed, young people were able to administer their own medication. Young people who self medicated had received specific guidance and training from the school nurse. Appropriately signed medical consent forms had been received. All young

people were offered a health assessment check at the school doctor's surgery in their first half term at school. The school nurse and senior care staff had completed four-day first-aid training courses. All other staff had received basic first-aid training. All staff with responsibility for administering medication had received appropriate training. These actions showed the school were ensuring young peoples health needs were being appropriately addressed.

The school employed an educational psychologist on a full time basis, and had the services of a member of the local Community Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) team one day per week. A speech and language therapist and a play therapist were also employed on a sessional basis, and specialist counsellors had been engaged to work with specific young people when required. All health specialists were available to provide advice, support and training to care staff if needed. These actions showed the school provided specialist support and advice for young people, and staff, when required.

The school had become actively involved with other organisations in the local area "Food Partnership" scheme. The school was registered as a training centre for this scheme. The kitchen supervisor had the responsibility for the meals provided and organising menus. She, and a teacher from the school's education department had revised and updated the school's food policies. A new "Healthy Eating" policy had been introduced in September 2006 and a "Whole School Food Policy" was being introduced in January 2007. Young people's views on the food provided were sought and taken in to account. Most young people thought the food provided at main meal times was good, but felt that their should be more variety of foods on offer at supper times in the residential units. I discussed this with senior managers during the inspection. They stated they would review this, and also produced evidence to show they had previously responded to young people's requests on this issue and the foodstuffs presently provided for suppers had been provided at young people's request. Food issues were regularly discussed at school council meetings. We dined with young people in the school dining room and on residential units. I observed breakfast and supper being taken in residential units. Meal times observed were organised social occasions and the quality of food provided was appropriate and acceptable. A vegetarian option was always available as well as salads and fruit. Young people who had specific dietary needs could be catered for. Young people were able to prepare themselves snacks and drinks on the residential units. All care staff had received appropriate basic food hygiene training. Older pupils had the opportunity to gain external accredited awards in Food Hygiene and Food Preparation. These actions showed young people were being offered a balanced, healthy diet that met their dietary needs.

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. Young people's privacy was respected. Any complaints made were appropriately addressed. The school had appropriate child protection procedures in place. Young people were fully aware of the school rules and guidelines, and rewards and sanctions systems. Bullying was not a significant issue for young people at the school. There were good health and safety procedures in place. The school operated good staff recruitment procedures.

EVIDENCE:

Young people's privacy and right to confidentiality was respected. We observed staff working in ways that gave appropriate regard to young people's privacy. All bedrooms had suitable locks on the doors and all young people had been provided with an individual locker for safe storage of any personal belongings. Each residential unit contained a payphone sited in an area that afforded privacy for users. Documentation for recording any searches of young people's possessions met the requirements of Standard 3.11 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. The school had introduced documentation for recording details of any valuable items young people brought to the school. These actions showed the school were taking reasonable measures to ensure young people's privacy and confidentiality was maintained and respected.

The pupil handbook contained a section on the school's complaints procedures, covering formal and informal procedures. The procedures adequately detailed the role of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in the complaints process and contained the telephone number of the local area office. The handbook contained a list of telephone numbers of other outside agencies available to young people. A similar list was also placed in each payphone cubicle. Young people I spoke with told me they knew how to make a complaint and would take any complaint they had to a member of staff. They said staff would address any complaints they raised. The school's documentation for recording any complaints made met with the requirements of Standard 4 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. Records viewed showed that young people had made 3 formal complaints since the last inspection. All had been appropriately addressed and full details recorded. These actions showed young people were fully aware of how to make a complaint and that they had used the procedures when necessary.

The Head of Care was the school's "Named Person" for child protection issues. He had undergone appropriate training for this role, including a four-day training course, delivered by Cumbria's Multi – Agency Trainers. All staff, including ancillary staff, had received child protection training. Staff interviewed responded appropriately to child protection scenario's put to them. The school had appropriately referred all child protection issues to the relevant agencies. Four such referrals had been made since the last inspection. Records viewed showed all four had been appropriately investigated and that the outcome in each case had been "no further action". Records viewed showed the school had been diligent in appropriately notifying relevant agencies of any significant incident. The school kept a detailed record of all such incidents referred, and a record of the outcome of any subsequent investigation, enabling monitoring of any referral from notification to outcome.

These actions showed the school had appropriate practices, policies and procedures in place to protect young people from abuse.

The school had appropriate policies and procedures in place to address issues of bullying. Senior staff regularly monitored the school records to ensure any incidents of bullying were addressed, and to identify any underlying issues. Young people I spoke with told me bullying was not a "big problem" at the school. They said staff would address any incidents of bullying if it was brought to their attention. These actions showed that any issues of bullying were appropriately addressed.

All staff had received training in the school's preferred method of physical intervention – "Team Teach", with annual refresher training given. The Head Teacher and Head of Care were senior instructors in this method and regular refresher courses were held for care and education staff. Monitoring records viewed showed there had been a continued reduction in the number of physical restraints, compared to a year ago. Staff interviewed stated they tried to avoid the use of physical restraints and would only use them if other strategies and techniques had not worked. Detailed records of all incidents of physical restraint were kept. The documentation used included a section for a "de-brief" of both young person and staff after the incident. The school operated a "grades" system to encourage young people to develop, and maintain, an acceptable level of behaviour. I viewed the "Weekly Grade Sheets" in young people's files. Young people I spoke to clearly understood the grades system and described it to me in some detail during the inspection. They also detailed the sanctions that may be applied for unacceptable behaviours. One young person told me he had been given a four day "Fixed term Exclusion" for serious, unacceptable behaviours. Records showed there had been seven "Fixed Term Exclusions" since the last inspection. One young person I spoke with told me he had received some exclusion's in his time at the school but he had returned after each one to work through issues with the school. He stated he would be leaving the school next summer as he was now 16 and said he had enjoyed his six years there. Written records of any sanctions applied were kept. The documentation the school used for recording any incidents of physical restraint, or any sanctions imposed, met with the requirements of Standard 10 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. Senior management interviewed stated the school were in the process of introducing initiatives such as "Heartmath", "Quiet Place" and the "Massage in Schools Programme" to try to create a calmer environment for young people. These actions showed the home had a good behaviour management system in place, and that the system was clearly understood by young people and staff.

The Head of Care had responsibility for overseeing health and safety issues. He had received appropriate training for this role had obtained the "Institute of Occupational Safety & Health" management award. I viewed all relevant Health and Safety documentation. A "Risk Management Safety Audit" had been carried out on 17/10/06. A weekly Health and Safety check was made and a report compiled. I viewed the last such report dated 13/11/06. Regular Health and Safety checks on all residential units and school areas were carried out. The school had encouraged young people to become involved in this and a young person assisted the Head of Care to do regular health and safety checks. The school had access to professional advice on all health & safety issues as the parent organisation had employed the services of a Health & Safety consultant on a full time basis. All relevant fire safety checks and fire drills had been carried out. Required checks on electrical equipment and installations had been carried out, as had required annual safety checks on gas installations and boilers. All appropriate risk assessments had been carried out, and were regularly reviewed and amended as necessary. Detailed individual risk assessments were carried out on all young people resident. The local Environmental Health Officer had inspected the school in May 2006 and "found everything to be satisfactory". All taps had been fitted with regulators to ensure hot water provided did not exceed 43 degrees C. These actions showed the school were taking all reasonable measures to ensure young people were kept safe and secure.

Only two new staff had been employed since the last inspection – a teacher and a part-time gardener. I viewed both their recruitment files. The files showed the school operated recruitment policies and procedures that fully met the requirements of Standard 27 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. The staff recruitment records were well maintained, with a written record of interviews kept, and details of the date of verification of references by direct contact with referees kept. All staff employed had received appropriate CRB disclosure clearance before starting work, and suitable references had been sought and received. These actions showed the school were taking all reasonable measures to ensure staff employed were suitable to be working with young people.

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, 13 & 22

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Young people's educational needs were well met. Their activity and leisure needs were well met. Young people received individual support when required.

EVIDENCE:

The school had compiled an "Individual Care and Education Plan" for each young person resident that detailed the young persons care and educational needs, and how these would be addressed. Young people had the opportunity to study for GCSE's or other accredited educational qualifications. There were suitable areas for private study if required. Care staff were allocated working hours during the classroom day to support teaching staff, and some staff from the education department worked care hour duties. All young people accommodated attended school on both days of the inspection. Some young people spoken with stated they had gained educational awards at the school. All young people in Key Stage 4 of their education had the opportunity to go on work experience placements. Such placements had included working in local garages, childcare nursery's, old folks homes, shops and hairdressers. The school had further developed links with other educational establishments and five young people had attended vocational training courses such as bricklaying

and mechanics at a local college. Some young people had been involved in environmental work in a local forest. They had performed so well they had obtained the "John Muir Award" qualification and a local weekly newspaper had ran an article highlighting their achievements. The school ran an "Enterprise Week" where young people were involved in various educational activities including running a stall at the local market. All proceeds were donated to charity. These action showed young people's educational needs were being well met.

Young people we spoke to detailed the range of activities on offer at the school, and were quite positive in their comments. All activities were appropriately risk assessed. Young people had the opportunity to join local youth groups if they wished. Young people and staff spoken to stated activities offered included cinema visits, ten-pin bowling and swimming. Leisure space at the school was quite restricted and the school had responded to this by using facilities at other schools and local public leisure facilities. During the inspection some young people attended a weeks residential training course at an army base. Some young people received guitar and drumming lessons at a local secondary school. Younger pupils in Lowgate House had been fully involved in the planning for a new playground area that had now been completed and was in use. Some young people were involved in helping staff construct a wooden, scale model of the main school building. Young people had been fully involved in organising and holding a coffee morning at the school to raise money for a cancer charity. The second day of the inspection coincided with "Children in Need" day and young people and staff were involved in various activities to raise money. Each residential unit had "X boxes", "Play stations", personal computers and computer games as well as tv, dvd and video machines. Some had pool tables available for young people's use. Staff ensured any games played, or video or dvd viewed, were age appropriate. Some staff remarked on the shortage of on-site facilities for leisure activities. Senior managers were fully aware of this and have raised it in discussions with the parent organisation in attempts to address the issue. These actions showed that young people's activity and leisure needs were being well met.

Young people were offered individual support and advice when required or requested. They had access to the services of the school's educational psychologist, a play therapist, speech and language therapist, a member of the local CAMHS team, and qualified counsellors. We observed staff giving individual support and advice to young people at various times, in various settings and situations, throughout the inspection. Comprehensive individual risk assessments had been carried out on all young people resident, and these were regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. Senior staff detailed specific individual, specialist support that was being delivered to relevant young people who required it. Staff interviewed stated that, where necessary, they received training on specific skills needed to meet a young person's needs. Each young person had an "Individual Behaviour Management Plan" compiled for them if required, which took in to account any medical concerns.

These actions showed the school were ensuring young people received individual support when necessary.

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, 9, 11, 17 & 20

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. Young people's views were sought and taken into consideration. All young people had "Individual Care and Education Plans". Young people were supported and assisted to maintain contact with their family and friends.

EVIDENCE:

Young people had various opportunities to express their views and wishes. There was evidence to show they were regularly consulted about matters that may affect their daily lives. Each residential unit held weekly residents meetings, with the minutes of each meeting recorded. Each residential unit elected a young person from their unit to be their representative on the school council, which met once per term with the Head Teacher and Head of Care. I discussed the possibility of this meeting occurring once each half-term with senior managers. The school had developed an online poll system using the

school's intranet system. It is hoped to use this system to obtain young people's views on a range of issues, using questionnaires etc and enabling young people to post comments and views on the system. Senior staff will monitor the system regularly. Young people met at least fortnightly with their key worker, and the key workers maintained regular telephone contact with parents/carers to keep them updated on young people's progress. The school had introduced a questionnaire that had been sent to all parents/carers to obtain their views on the service the school provided. I was provided with information that showed 24 parents/carers had returned completed questionnaires, with most being very positive in their responses. CSCI received 13 completed replies to questionnaires we sent to parents/carers. 11 stated they thought the staff that looked after their children were "great" and two stated the school looked after their children "quite well". These actions showed that young people had the opportunities to express their views and wishes, and that the parents/carers of young people resident were pleased with the services the school provided.

Senior staff maintained regular contact with placing authorities. 13 replies to pre-inspection questionnaires sent to placing officers were received – 11 placing officers stated the school worked with them "very well" and two said "quite well", showing placing authorities were generally pleased with the quality of service the school provided.

We observed staff working with young people at various times throughout the inspection and there were positive interactions between them. Generally, staff had established good working relationships with young people. Young people spoken to generally spoke favourably about the care staff that worked with them and the care they provided. One young person told me the school was a "decent place to be" and another said it was "the best school they had been to". Several young people made positive comments about the care they had received at the school. This showed young people resident at the school were, generally, happy with the care they received.

The school had a "Pupil Liaison Officer" who had a key role in the school's admissions policy, and in providing initial support to new pupils. A new Liaison Officer had taken over this role since the last inspection. Young people spoken to said they had visited the school before admission, and were told which residential unit they were to be accommodated in. They said they had been given information about the school before coming to live there. These actions showed young people were given relevant information about the school before coming to reside there, and that the school took measures to ensure young people arriving at the school were helped to settle in successfully.

The school compiled Individual Care and Education Plans (ICEP's) for each young person. These plans covered all areas required under Standard 17.5 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. Action plans for each young person were compiled detailing needs to be addressed, setting

targets and strategies to achieve them. Care staff used ICEP's as working tools. Keyworkers addressed needs and targets to be met with young people at their fortnightly meetings. Each young persons file contained a very detailed front sheet containing all essential information. These actions showed the school ensured all young people had care and education plans in place, and the school had taken reasonable measures to ensure they obtained all essential information about young people.

Young people were assisted and encouraged to maintain regular contact with parents/carers and friends. They were permitted to have mobile phones, subject to agreement on use, and were able to use their mobile phones to maintain contact with friends and family if they wished to. Camera phones were not permitted, nor were staff members allowed to carry camera phones whilst on duty. Key workers maintained regular contact with parents/carers to keep them informed of the individual young person's progress. Wherever possible, young people at the school had weekend home leave at least fortnightly – with some young people going home each weekend. Care staff interviewed stated that there was usually only 17 or 18 young people resident at the school on weekends during school term time. As the second day of inspection was a Friday I observed several young people preparing to leave the school to travel to their home area to spend the weekend with their families. These actions showed young people were being assisted and encouraged to maintain contact with families/carers and friends.

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. Young people were able to wear clothes of their own choosing during care hours. The home provided a good standard of accommodation for young people. All bathrooms, washing and toilet facilities had appropriate locks to ensure young people's privacy was respected.

EVIDENCE:

The school provided all school uniforms, clothing, bedding, linen, sleepwear, dressing gowns, school footwear etc. Whilst visiting the residential units I observed that some young people had brought their own duvet covers from home to use, thus personalising their bedroom areas. Young people wore their own clothing and footwear during care hours. The school had a tuck shop that was open on two nights of the week. Pocket money was provided on a weekly basis - the amount given being dependent on age and the level the young person was on in the school's grading system. Young people we spoke to fully understood the pocket money and reward systems. Records of pocket money

given were appropriately recorded with young people signing to say they had received the money. The school had introduced a "valuables" inventory for each young person resident that recorded any items of value belonging to young people. These actions showed the school were ensuring young people's personal requisite needs were being met.

The school had further developed its "Leavers Programme" for senior pupils who were in their last year at school. This programme was aimed at promoting young people's independent living skills. Both the senior boys unit and the girls unit had an independent living unit area that offered young people the opportunity to live semi-independently and develop independent living skills. The school provided a budget for young people living in these areas to purchase groceries. The school had developed the programme since the last inspection and introduced ways in which young people could gain accredited educational qualifications while working on the "Leavers Programme". This had been done to allow young people the opportunity to gain extra, accredited qualifications and encourage them to participate fully in the programme. The school's leavers programme contained twenty modules covering a wide range of issues including personal health, finance, living skills, drugs and substance awareness etc. Young people on the programme gained an accredited "AQA" certificate for each module they successfully completed. The Connexions organisation worked closely with the school – coming in to the school weekly to work with year 10 and 11 pupils as part of the "Leavers Programme". As stated, all young people in the Key Stage 4 education group had the opportunity to go on work experience placements. Some young people detailed to me placements they had been on. The school had further developed links with a local further education college and some young people from the school were attending the college to do vocational courses such as car mechanics and building trade skills. These actions showed the school were taking measures to ensure they gave young people the opportunity to develop a range of independent living skills.

The school was located close to the centre of the market town of Kirby Lonsdale and all the facilities it offered. It was also within easy travelling distance of the larger towns of Kendal and Morecambe, and the city of Lancaster. Young people were accommodated in 5 separate residential units, each with its own facilities. All female residents were accommodated in one residential unit. The four residential units catering for male residents were organised by resident's chronological age. Although slightly restricted by the physical layout of some of the buildings, the school had managed to create residential units that presented as homely living areas. Young people we spoke to were generally positive in their views about their respective residential units. The majority of the bedrooms at the school offered en suite facilities. The residential units were well maintained throughout. Since the last inspection some residential units had been redecorated and re-carpeted, with new furniture installed in communal lounge areas. There were some isolated areas that required some very minor repairs done. However, generally, the

school provided a good standard of accommodation for young people. Young people were involved in the process of ensuring accommodation standards were maintained, with a pupil representative from each unit carrying out an inspection of their unit once a term with the Head of Care. These actions showed the school were providing appropriate, suitable accommodation for young people.

Each residential unit contained sufficient bath, shower and toilet facilities for young people accommodated. All bathroom, shower and toilet areas were well decorated and well maintained. All doors on such facilities had appropriate locks to ensure privacy for young people when using them.

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, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 & 33

Quality in this outcome area is excellent. This Judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service. The school was well managed and efficiently run. The school had developed a good training programme in place for staff. Staff were well supported. The home had a settled, consistent care staff team. There was good monitoring of the home's operation by senior management and the parent organisation.

EVIDENCE:

The school's Statement of Purpose had been reviewed and updated in September 2006. The "Pupil Handbook" was a detailed and informative document that contained all relevant information. It had been amended since the last inspection, with some sections revised and updated to ensure all young people could understand the information given. The Head Teacher stated this document was being further revised, with young people involved in the revision process. These actions showed the school ensured young people were provided with relevant information about the school and its policies and procedures.

The school maintained a two-tiered filing system to hold information about pupils. The main files containing confidential information were maintained securely in a lockable steel filing cabinet, and the working files were kept in the care office where they could be accessed by all staff. We viewed a selection of young people's files, and they contained all the relevant information the school required to ensure they met the young persons needs.

Generally, the school maintained detailed records on staff and young people, and documentation viewed was of a good standard. The young people's register met with all the requirements of Schedule 2 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. These actions showed the school maintained appropriate records on young people.

Senior staff and team leaders interviewed stated that the residential unit care staff teams generally operated on a staffing ratio of one staff to every four young people accommodated. We viewed staff rota's that showed this level was being maintained and occasionally exceeded. Each duty team also had two "floating staff" members who could be directed to any residential unit who may require extra help. Each residential unit had a staff member on sleep in duty each night and two waking night staff patrolled the school throughout the night, covering all unit areas. Staff spoken to stated there was always sufficient staff on duty to meet young people's needs, and any staff absences were suitably covered. These actions showed the school ensured that the residential units were suitably staffed at all times.

The school had developed a good staff-training programme, and had good links with the parent organisations training provider. "Inset training days" for staff were held immediately prior to the beginning of school terms. Training given during the inset days in August 2006 covered Child Protection, Health & Safety and "Every Child Matters". The school had prepared a detailed document showing how the work they did with young people related to each outcome detailed under the "Every Child matters" guidance. The Head of Care assumed responsibility for the training programme for care staff, and had compiled a training grid analysis that enabled him to keep a personal training profile on

each staff member. The school had developed an NVQ training programme that all staff had access to, and presently 89% of staff held relevant NVQ qualifications. All staff recruited completed an induction-training programme that covered all required areas. Staff interviewed were positive in their comments about the training provided. They stated any specialist training required to ensure they could meet a young person's needs was provided. These actions showed the school were taking measures to ensuring they had an appropriately qualified and trained care staff team.

The school benefited from having a consistent, settled care staff team. No member of the care staff had left employment at the school in the last 18 months. These actions showed that young people received consistent care from an experienced, settled staff team.

Documentation viewed showed staff received formal supervision with the frequency and duration required under Standard 30.2 of the Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards. Staff with responsibility for supervision of other staff had received training in supervision skills. The schools format for delivering and recording supervision enabled them to ensure staff received appropriate supervision with the frequency required. Ancillary staff received appropriate formal supervision with the frequency required. All staff, including ancillary staff, received either annual appraisal or annual performance management reviews. All staff signed their supervision records and received copies of the minutes of supervision sessions. Care staff meetings and residential unit staff meetings were held regularly, and the school held full staff meetings at least once every school term. The Senior Management team met weekly, as did the Team Leaders and senior care staff. All staff we interviewed, from various departments, were positive in their comments about the support they received from senior staff and stated the Head of Care or Head Teacher were always available to them to discuss any concerns. Counselling support was available for staff if required. This showed the school were ensuring all staff were suitably supervised and supported.

The school benefited from having an experienced Senior Management team. There had been some amendments to the management structure since the last inspection. The Head of Care and a senior staff member from the education department had been promoted to "Deputy Head's". A "Strategic Management Group" had been formed, containing the Head Teacher, Deputy Head's, and the educational psychologist. The Head teacher informed me the school hoped to obtain the "Charter Mark" award. The Head of Care had the responsibility for managing the residential care department. He held appropriate NVQ 4 qualifications in childcare and management, and was also an NVQ D32/33 assessor. He had also received appropriate, formal child protection and health & safety training. Documentation and records viewed, and practice observed, showed that the school was efficiently managed and run.

Records and documentation were viewed that showed senior managers at the school regularly monitored and reviewed relevant practices. The school had developed good monitoring systems that enabled any areas of concern to be identified. There was evidence to show that senior staff had monitored all areas required under Standard 32.2 of the Residential Special School National Minimum Standards, and with the frequency demanded by the standard. The Head Teacher produced a written report on the operation of the school each term, this report being forwarded to the organisations board of directors. These reports included detailed, specific information on the monitoring of significant incidents. I viewed the last such report compiled dated July 2006. These actions showed the head teacher maintained a good overview of the school's operation.

Monitoring visits were carried out on a half-termly basis, complying with the frequency demanded by this standard. The organisations "Quality Assurance" team carried out these visits. A comprehensive report covering all required areas, was compiled and forwarded to the school. The Head Teacher was required to formulate an action plan in response to each report, addressing any issues raised in the report. I viewed the last such report made, dated 5/10/06 – and also viewed the action plan compiled by the school in response to issues raised in the report. These actions showed the parent organisation regularly monitored the operation of the school.

SCORING OF OUTCOMES

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

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

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion
 “N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
Standard No	Score
14	3
15	3

STAYING SAFE	
Standard No	Score
3	3
4	3
5	4
6	3
7	4
8	3
10	4
26	4
27	4

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
Standard No	Score
12	4
13	4
22	4

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
Standard No	Score
2	4
9	4
11	3
17	3
20	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
Standard No	Score
16	3
21	3
23	3
24	3
25	3

MANAGEMENT	
Standard No	Score
1	3
18	3
19	3
28	3
29	4
30	4
31	4
32	4
33	3

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)

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