



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

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

Doucecroft School

163 High Street

Kelvedon

Colchester

Essex

C05 9JA

19th and 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.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Name of School

Doucecroft School

Address

163 High Street, Kelvedon, Colchester, Essex, CO5 9JA

Tel No:

01376 570060

Fax No:

01376 570060

Email Address:

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

Essex Autistic Society

Name of Head

Ms Kathy Cranmer

NCSC Classification

Residential Special School

Type of school

Residential Special School

Date of last boarding welfare inspection:

05/11/02

Date of Inspection Visit	19 th & 20 th January 2004		ID Code
Time of Inspection Visit	11:00 am		
Name of NCSC Inspector	1	Jenny Elliott	076559
Name of NCSC Inspector	2	Jamie O'Keefe	155894
Name of NCSC Inspector	3		
Name of NCSC Inspector	4		
Name of Boarding Sector Specialist Inspector (if applicable):			
Name of Lay Assessor (if applicable) 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.			
Name of Specialist (e.g. Interpreter/Signer) (if applicable)			
Name of Establishment Representative at the time of inspection	Kathy Cranmer, Head		

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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 Doucecroft 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

Doucecroft School is an independent special school, owned and operated by the Essex Autistic Society, catering for children and young people with autism coupled with varying degrees of learning difficulty.

At the time of the inspection the school was providing places for 21 boarding pupils aged between 8 and 19 years.

The main school is located in a large building, which has been extensively converted for its current use. Boarding pupils were accommodated on the first floor. The ground floor comprises classroom areas, kitchen and dining facilities and offices. There is an enclosed garden. New premises have been identified for the main school, which is planned to open in September 2005.

The School's Further Education Department is situated within easy walking distance of the main school site. Accommodation is provided in single rooms. There is a large garden and an outbuilding that had been converted into a recreation room for pupils.

The school is situated in the village of Kelvedon, with a number of community facilities nearby and convenient access to public transport and main road and rail links.

PART A SUMMARY OF INSPECTION FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL IN BOARDING WELFARE

Staff demonstrated a commitment to the school and pupils. They described a supportive working environment and a good level of supervision amongst care staff.

The school has good systems for communicating with parents, parents spoke highly of this in questionnaires. Communication between care and teaching staff was also good.

The premises were generally well maintained. The main school is an old building and any work identified as being required by inspectors was minor.

There was evidence that a 24 hour curriculum was working in practice in the school. This was particularly evident in the FE department through the development of independent living skills.

The school had completed and/or progressed most of the recommended actions from the previous report. Managers, staff, pupils and governors were open and helpful throughout the inspection process.

WHAT THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO BETTER IN BOARDING WELFARE

The school should review and clarify roles and responsibilities of the senior management team, and ensure that this group receive appropriate supervision.

The school had developed a number of policies since the last report. A number of these require ratification by the governing body, others need to be fully implemented with training where necessary.

The school should ensure that ancillary staff receive supervision and training commensurate with their roles.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS ON BOARDING WELFARE

The environment across both parts of the school was supportive and caring. Staff consistently demonstrated a commitment to pupils and the ethos of the school. There was a sense of continuing improvement in the governance, management and child care practices within the school.

The views expressed by placing officers and staff were positive.

4	RS8	The school's written procedures for action to be taken when a child is absent from the school without consent should include all of the items specified in NMS 8.3.	14/07/2003
5	RS10	Visits to the school made under Standard 33 should include reading records and making written comment on the use of sanctions and physical intervention.	14/06/2003
6	RS14	The school's written guidance on health promotion should address all of the topics specified in NMS14.4.	14/08/2003
7	RS14	The school should have a written health plan, or other documentation, addressing all of the required areas, for each pupil. NMS 14.6.	14/08/2003
8	RS27	The school should ensure that there is documentary evidence to demonstrate that all elements of the staff recruitment process have been carried out in line with NMS 27.2.	14/06/03
9	RS28	The school should develop a written staffing policy in line with NMS 28.2.	14/07/2003
10	RS29	Staff should be provided with programmes of training covering the areas specified in Appendix 2 to the National minimum Standards.	14/08/2003
11	RS30	Written guidance on all the topics specified in Appendix 3 to the National Minimum Standards should be available for staff.	14/08/03
12	RS32	The school's monitoring system for records should be developed in line with the requirements of NMS 32.2.	14/07/2003
13	RS32	The Head teacher should carry out, and record in writing, an annual review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for boarding pupils, in line with the requirements of NMS 32.4.	14/08/2003

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	RS1	The Statement of Purpose should include the names and relevant professional qualifications of staff. This requirement has been brought forward from the last inspection.	31/07/04
2	RS2	The school must ensure that routines do not infringe on the individual rights and choices of pupils.	31/05/04
3	RS3	The school must ensure that policies and procedures developed to promote the privacy of pupils are carried out in practice.	31/05/04
4	RS4	The school should ensure that the complaints policy and procedural guidance includes all the areas specified in NMS 4.3 and that, following this development, training in the new procedures is provided for staff in line with the expectations of NMS 4.4. This requirement has been brought forward from the last inspection.	31/05/04
5	RS5	The school's child protection policy and procedural guidance should be developed to include the items specified in NMS 5.4 and NMS 5.5. Training in the new procedures should then be provided for staff in line with NMS 5.8. This requirement has been brought forward from the last inspection.	30/06/04

6	RS8	The school's written procedures for action to be taken when a child is absent from the school without consent should include all of the items specified in NMS 8.3. This requirement has been brought forward from the last inspection.	30/06/04
7	RS33 RS10	Visits to the school made under Standard 33 should include reading records and making written comment on the use of sanctions and physical intervention. This requirement has been brought forward from the last inspection.	30/06/04
8	RS11	The school should review their procedures for students moving from the main school to the FE department to ensure that their needs, and the needs of other students, can be met.	31/07/04
9	RS14	The school's written guidance on health promotion should address all of the topics specified in NMS 14.4. This requirement has been brought forward from the last inspection.	30/06/04
10	RS14	The school should have a written health plan, or other documentation, addressing all of the required areas, for each pupil. NMS 14.6. This requirement has been brought forward from the last inspection.	31/05/04
11	RS14	The school must be clear about how it can meet the planned and emergency health needs of all pupils.	31/05/04
12	RS15	The school should take into account stated preferences of pupils in respect of food and drink.	31/05/04
13	RS15	The school must ensure that food is stored safely.	31/05/04
14	RS19	The school must include gender and qualifications of staff in the employees register.	30/06/04
15	RS26 RS23	The school must ensure that security precautions do not adversely affect other considerations in respect of the safety and well being of pupils.	31/05/04
16	RS24 RS23	The school must ensure that standards of decoration are maintained across both parts of the school.	31/07/04
17	RS27	The school should ensure that there is documentary evidence to demonstrate that all elements of the staff recruitment process have been carried out in line with NMS 27.2. This requirement has been brought forward from the last inspection.	31/05/04

18	RS28	The school should develop a written staffing policy in line with NMS 28.2. This requirement has been brought forward from the last inspection.	30/06/04
19	RS29	Staff should be provided with programmes of training covering the areas specified in Appendix 2 to the National Minimum Standards. This requirement has been brought forward from the last inspection.	31/07/04
20	RS31 RS30	The school should ensure that supervision is in place for all staff.	30/06/04
21	RS30	Written guidance on all the topics specified in Appendix 3 to the National Minimum Standards should be available for staff. This requirement has been brought forward from the last inspection.	31/07/04
22	RS32 RS31	The school should review and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team to ensure it delivers the best possible care.	31/07/04

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	RS18	The school should consider how it can monitor content and quality of information held in respect of each pupil.

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	YES
• Independent Person	NO
• Chair of Governors	YES

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

Date of Inspection	19/01/04
Time of Inspection	11:00
Duration Of Inspection (hrs.)	35.5
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?	2
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Inspectors clarified with the head the various formats that could be presented as a statement of purpose. The majority of this information was available within the schools prospectus and existing policy documents. The school had still to provide staff details with the Statement of Purpose.

The school had drafted a basic information booklet for new pupils. The booklet was designed to provide information in various formats. Including photographs and pictures for individual children. For example their classroom, the mode of transport to be used for each child, and a named individual (with photograph) a child can contact if unhappy. Inspectors were advised that this would be used for new students.

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?	2
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The school had developed guidance for staff entitled 'Staff guidance on consulting with and involving pupils/students and their families and other significant persons.' The guidance covered the exchange of information between home and school and the divulging of sensitive information. It did not address techniques and tools used by the school to support pupils making decisions about their daily lives. Parents responding through questionnaires said they felt properly informed about their child's time at school and consulted about decisions. Statutory reviews were in place in respect of the education and care provided to pupils. Notes from reviews indicated that pupils, parents and significant others were invited to those meetings.

Many of the pupils at the school did not communicate verbally. It was apparent from discussion and observation, that staff were aware of behaviours used by pupils to communicate their feelings or choices. Communication methods were clearly described in care plans on files inspected. Where choices in respect of food were noted on services users files, these were not always respected (see standard 15).

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?**

2

The school had taken a number of steps to improve the policy and guidance in place to protect pupils. The guidance referred to above (standard 2) makes reference to the need to protect information about children, and restricts the sharing of information to parents or significant carers. The school had also drafted guidance about 'Access to Case Records by Staff and Others.' This had yet to be ratified by the governing body. The guidance seeks to maintain confidentiality through the storage and use of information held. The guidance described, in general terms, how information is disseminated from the senior management team to staff members. The school had developed guidance in respect of the 'Educational use of photography/video', in recognition of the value of communicating with pupils through these mediums, but also recognising the need to maintain privacy and dignity. The guidance outlines the context within which the taking of photographs would be appropriate, how such information should be stored securely, and the limits to the use of CCTV cameras inside school premises. A policy regarding the searching of pupil's rooms had also been devised. The policy described the reasons why a search may be necessary, the way a search should be undertaken and the recording of such action. The paper describing students right of access to daily records describes the reasons why the sharing of this information needs to be managed, and which members of staff would be responsible for this, but not the steps students need to take to access the information.

A range of policies/guidance seen during the inspection referred to the right of pupils to have time alone and in private.

A pre-arranged discussion between a pupil and inspectors during the inspection was interrupted by a member of staff. The school should ensure that supervision of children does not intrude inappropriately or in a way that unnecessarily embarrasses children as required in standard 3.9.

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?**

2

The information provided to pupils and main carers had not been updated from the previous inspection.

Seven out of the nine parents who completed questionnaires reported having received information about how to make a complaint to the school. Evidence on one service users file demonstrated that a copy of the complaints policy had been sent to parents. None of the respondents reported ever having had to make a complaint to the school. The schools records stated that the last complaint had been received in November 2002.

As already described, staff were seen to observe behaviour as a reflection of a pupil's satisfaction. Daily records of behaviour were maintained enabling patterns of behaviour to be identified if appropriate.

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

Number of above complaints substantiated:

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

Number of above complaints substantiated:

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?

2

The school had updated its child protection policy in December 2003. This did not address all the points listed under Appendix 1 of the National Minimum Standards, for example that staff may contact the Commission directly if they feel practices at the school put children at risk of abuse or serious harm.

The new child protection policy had been forwarded to social services, and their comments were awaited.

Staff reported through questionnaires that they had received Child Protection training as part of their induction programme and updates during inset training days.

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.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

Staff were seen to address inappropriate behaviour and praise positive verbal communication/helpful behaviour of students.

The school had an anti-bullying policy in place. Staff had a good knowledge of the policy.

Inspectors were unable to communicate with many of the students at the school to ascertain whether or not they had been bullied. Three students completed questionnaires, one reported being bullied sometimes and two never being bullied.

Bullying was not raised as an issue by parents or placing officers.

Percentage of pupils reporting never or hardly ever being bullied

X %

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.

Key Findings and Evidence**Standard met?**

3

The school advised that there had been no significant incidents in the past 12 months. Records inspected supported this.

Placing officers and parents generally reported a good level of communication with the school. Two of the thirteen officers completing questionnaires said they were not notified of significant events affecting a child.

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

- **conduct by member of staff indicating unsuitability to work with children**
- **serious harm to a child**
- **serious illness or accident of a child**
- **serious incident requiring police to be called**

0

0

0

0

Standard 8 (8.1 - 8.9)		
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.		
Key Findings and Evidence	Standard met?	2
<p>The missing child policy had been reviewed since the last inspection. This now contained all information required by the standard except the requirement to advise the LEA of absences of more than 3 hours. Incident reports were seen in respect of pupils who had left school premises without permission. On both occasions staff were immediately aware of the situation and had followed pupils to ensure their safe return. External doors at main buildings on both sites were kept locked at all times, although it was acknowledged that not all pupils required this. Following one incident a decision had been made by the governing body to lock a door at the FE unit. Staff expressed concern about this to inspectors. During the inspection pupils from the FE unit went to a youth club in a neighbouring town. A risk assessment was seen that identified named staff with the key responsibility for each pupil.</p>		
Number of recorded incidents of a child running away from the school over the past 12 months:		0

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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Inspectors observed staff and children interacting in a number of settings, including meal-times, evening activities, morning routines and generally about the school during the day. All of the interaction observed was supportive and professional. Staff were seen to praise good behaviour and deal with less acceptable behaviour in a firm, calm manner.

Completed questionnaires were received from thirteen parents. All parents described this aspect of care as positive. Comments included ‘..staff all know and understand my son’s needs’ and ‘The staff are caring and understanding.’

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?

2

As previously stated, staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour and were seen to respond firmly and calmly to unacceptable behaviour. Staff were seen to provide students with opportunities to meet targets in this area and provided encouragement and praise when targets were met.

One student was seen to have a high level of supervision throughout the inspection. They were kept away from other students and needed constant reminding and physical intervention to keep behaviour within acceptable limits.

Staff reported through questionnaires that they had taken part in SCAPE training to help them deal appropriately with challenging behaviour.

All parents and placing officers responding to questions in this area said they felt the rules and punishments in force at the school were fair.

The revised draft behaviour management policy referred to at the last inspection had not yet been finalised or agreed by the governing body.

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?	2
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There was a clear admissions policy for students coming to the school. The policy includes gathering information from a variety of sources and visiting the child in their own home.

This was not used for students moving between the main school and further education department. This left the FE manager out of the decision-making loop in respect of those children. There was evidence of a planned transition between the two parts of the school for one student. This student had visited on eleven occasions over a three-month period, visiting at different times of the day and with a known member of staff from the main school.

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 inspector was advised that the deputy head and head of care had jointly worked on a 24 hour curriculum document, identifying how the residential and educational provisions could support each other. The manifestation of this was not always clear in behaviour management programmes and individual targets sampled during the inspection. However, observation of a maths lesson demonstrated practical application of learning through a shopping trip. A new governor with specific responsibility for the curriculum had been appointed.

Care staff were seen to ensure students were ready for the school day and to support students experiencing difficulties accessing the educational element of the school. A number of teaching staff also worked during the evening residential time.

On Monday mornings at the school all residential staff on duty meet with teaching staff for a weekly staff meeting. Sometimes all staff meet together, at other times groups based on class or upper and lower school basis meet to discuss specific issues. The inspector was advised that 24hour curriculum meetings are held to update care staff who were not working in the morning.

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

Parents reported positively about the care provided by the school. Two parents commented particularly on the out of school activities accessible to students. 'They give ... much stimulation, and outings i.e. to social clubs, bowling etc..' 'Children have a varied week and after school activities to keep them occupied.'

During the inspection students from the FE department went to a youth club in a nearby town. Activities at the club included arts and crafts, basketball, TV and pool. The pupils were observed to enjoy the evening, staff were seen actively engaging in sessions with students.

Service user files referred to activities such as junior and senior youth club, dancing at the school, visiting the local library, walks, visits to parks and a circus.

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
<p>Health needs were recorded in a number of places in children's records. None of the records sampled contained a document covering all of the points listed under 14.6.</p> <p>Medication was distributed by team leaders. Individual medical consent forms did not include consent for the administration of first aid. One service users' file contained information from a parent stating that no medical aid was to be given due to allergic reactions. There was no corresponding risk assessment or contingency plan in place to cover the possibility of the need for emergency aid.</p> <p>The school were formulating a series of lesson plans around sex education.</p> <p>There was evidence on files to demonstrate communication between staff and parents on various health and hygiene issues, including weight control and nail trimming.</p>		

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?	1
<p>Inspectors shared a number of meals with students and staff. The atmosphere at all mealtimes was well-managed, orderly and social.</p> <p>The meals available were balanced. Fruit was available as a desert at mid-day. Staff were observed encouraging students to select a balanced range of foods. Vegetarian options were available at meals within the FE department, but no other options provided. Students advised inspectors that if they did not want the meal on offer they had to advise staff the previous day. At one lunch-time two students were not eating their meal. One student clearly stated a number of times that they did not like the meal on offer and only had rice. It was noted that this meal was included on their file notes as a clear dislike. Staff said they were aware of the dislike, however they felt the children should be encouraged to sample the dinner. The school must ensure that it does not routinely or unnecessarily diminish any child's independence or opportunity to make everyday choices as required under standard 2.6, and that pupils needs and wishes are taken into account (standard 15.1). One student at the FE department was not able to participate in communal meals because of their challenging behaviour.</p> <p>Students at the FE department took turns helping in the kitchen at meal times.</p> <p>The inspector was shown around the food storage area and observed various jars containing perishable food products which had been opened for use, but not restored within a temperature controlled environment such as a refrigerator.</p>		

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 school accommodates children with autism. To meet some of the specific challenges this can bring the school operates a structured day. Students are offered choices within this commensurate with their understanding.

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

The school use the student's statement of education needs, individual management programmes and care plan to inform the provision of care and a 24 hour curriculum. As previously stated, these did not include all health needs in a coherent manner. The school did not operate a key-worker system. There was evidence in the files inspected that these plans had been reviewed in line with statutory requirements. The schools own internal care reviews were not always regularly held.

One service user said that they were able to attend their review and were able to have their opinions listened to, and acted upon. There was a copy of the pupils views on file to support this.

New care staff were required to observe the routine of each child before they can carry out the task themselves. Tasks are then carried out under the supervision of a senior or experienced member of staff before working on an individual basis with a child to ensure care practice was in line with their care plan. Sheets signing off observations were seen to evidence this.

The recently produced New Pupil Booklet will include the name of a member of staff a pupil can contact if they are unhappy with anything.

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

At a meeting with inspectors, students from the FE department confirmed that they were aware records about them were held by staff and that if they asked staff they would tell them what was in them.

A policy entitled 'Students right of access to day books and home/school books' had been written in December 2003. This aims to promote students right to access information, but also protect confidentiality amongst their peer group. The policy requires dissemination of such information to be handled by a senior member of the school staff. The policy should be extended to include all information held by the school. Consideration should also be given to how information likely to cause anxiety is recorded.

The range of service users case files sampled included a few pieces of information filed in the wrong students files. The school should develop a monitoring system to review the content and quality of information held.

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?**

2

The records inspected were generally kept in line with the requirements of this standard, however the school should include staff gender and qualifications on the register of staff.

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

None of the children boarding at the time of the inspection were subject to restrictions on contact with family or friends. All children went home at weekends. The school enabled one pupil to maintain contact with a parent they did not usually see at the weekend.

All of the parents completing information in respect of visiting the school said they were encouraged to visit, and made to feel welcome by the school.

A payphone and cordless phone was available for students to use in the FE department. One student said that some students 'had special days when they could use the 'phone'.

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?**

9

At the time of inspection the school was not accommodating any looked after children who would be leaving care on leaving the school.

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 ratio of staff to pupils allowed a good level of support to be provided to students, within and outside class time. Staff spoken to and observed during the inspection demonstrated a good understanding of the needs and communication methods of individual children.

Placing officers and parents responded positively to the extent that individual needs were met.

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 main school is an old building with teaching areas on the ground floor and residential accommodation on the first floor. The main school had limited outdoor space, all of which was a hard surface. The school had locks to all external doors and high handles/locks to playground gates to protect children from leaving the building and prevent access to the school by unauthorised persons. The school was visited by a fire officer on 16th January. The officer raised significant concerns in respect of locks on the final exit doors of the building. A meeting between the fire officer and school was scheduled for 30th January 2004. Office and parking space was very limited. A drainpipe to the front of the building was damaged causing rust staining to the building wall. The décor in a number of areas within the building looked tired.

The FE department benefited from more generous shared space and was generally well maintained. The external appearance of this part of the school was also well maintained.

CCTV cameras were installed to monitor children leaving bedrooms and using corridors at night.

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?	2
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As stated in standard 23, a small number of areas at the main school were in need of decoration / general maintenance. Other than this the school was bright and residential areas homely. Furnishings seen were in a good state of repair.

Staff sleep-in rooms were located close to children’s sleeping areas.

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
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There were sufficient baths, showers and toilets for students. There were separate facilities for adults and visitors.

One of the shower and toilet rooms had been specifically adapted to meet the needs of one service user.

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

In a letter received shortly after the inspection the fire officer raised significant concerns about the locking of external doors. The school were due to meet with the fire officer to discuss this. Discussions with an FE student demonstrated an understanding of the evacuation procedure from teaching and residential areas. Pictorial representations of the fire evacuation procedure were displayed. Fire extinguishers had been inspected in April 2003. Anglia Water had inspected the premises in May 2003 and left a report requiring action, records evidencing that this had been undertaken were held at the main school site. A gas safety warning notice had been left at both sites in August 2003 relating to the height of an external flue. The health and safety officer at the school advised that this was related to safety regulations that came into force since the flues were fitted. There was no evidence to confirm that remedial action was not a requirement. Staff at the FE department were not always clear about the status of maintenance issues as records were not complete.

Inspectors observed that a main fuse box, upstairs in the FE department had been left open.

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?

2

The school were in the process of developing their existing recruitment records. Records belonging to a newly recruited member of staff were inspected. There were some gaps noted, including proof of ID and verbal confirmation of references. There was also evidence that the school had taken steps to ensure other recruitment checks were robust, such as seeking references from more than one source.

Offers of employment were made subject to satisfactory CRB checks, references and probation period.

The new records provide space for explanations of gaps in employment to be recorded.

Total number of care staff:

28

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?

2

The school had a staffing arrangements policy. It did not state the number of staff required to be on duty at different times of day and night or the management arrangements, although 'on-call contact' lists were displayed at both sites. Records for a new member of staff working through their induction evidenced that they were surplus to rostered staff.

During the inspection the levels of staffing were adequate to meet the needs of children, including the need for one student to have 1:1 support. One member of staff described the level of continuous supervision and support required by this student as exhausting.

One parent reported on a questionnaire that they thought there were times when staffing was stretched, the other twelve parents who responded, said they thought there were enough staff at the school.

Risk assessments were seen for trips out identifying particular staff as responsible for named students.

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?

2

The school had a variety of books and videos that were made available to staff to update their training. Staff spoken with, expressed a feeling of being supported where needed by their colleagues and line management.

One staff member spoke of the comprehensive induction process and ongoing support received from the school, another member of staff described very little support or process of induction until they requested it.

Three NVQ assessors were employed by the school.

Ancillary staff did not appear to have access to training, including child protection training.

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?

2

Staff generally described a supportive peer group and management team. One member of staff confirmed they had monthly supervision with their line manager. Records for a new member of staff showed regular contact with a senior member of staff working through the school's induction programme.

There was no supervision in place for the senior management team. Ancillary staff said they had not received any formal supervisions.

Guidance available to staff did not cover all of the topics specified under Appendix 3 of the National Minimum Standards.

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?

2

The school was removed from special measures in January 2003. Ofsted reported that the head and senior management team managed the school well, but that roles and responsibilities of the senior management team needed to be more clearly defined. This was found to be the case at this inspection. The senior management team did not receive supervision and there were examples of lack of clarity in respect of responsibility and information between the FE department and main school. A strong governing body was supporting the school and hoped to access external consultants to address this area.

The head of care at the school is a qualified social worker. The senior management team had substantial relevant experience.

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?

2

The situation described in the headline standard had not arisen.

The roles and responsibilities of the senior management team at the school is an issue that requires clarifying, and impacts on the monitoring of information required by this standard.

The head had not carried out and reported on a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision.

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?

2

There had been a significant change in the make up of the governing body since the school was put into special measures. The process of enrolling governors includes training to understand their role and core aspects of school management and child protection.

The governors carried out unannounced and pre-arranged visits to the school at different times of the day and evening. Reports of visits are sent to the head and chair of governors within two weeks of a visit. These were seen by the inspector, they identified issues that required attention by the head. The governing body must develop the monitoring of records including physical intervention and sanctions.

PART C

LAY ASSESSOR'S SUMMARY

(where applicable)

[Empty box for Lay Assessor's Summary]

Lay Assessor _____ **Signature** _____

Date _____

Lead Inspector Jenny Elliott **Signature** _____

Second Inspector Jamie O'Keefe **Signature** _____

Locality Manager Paul Brewster **Signature** _____

Date 26 July 2004

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 19th and 20th January 2004 and any factual inaccuracies:

Please limit your comments to one side of A4 if possible

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

Amendments to the report were necessary

YES

Comments were received from the provider

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

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 26th May 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 Doucecroft School 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 Doucecroft School 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.

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