



*Making Social Care
Better for People*

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Broomhill Bank School

**Broomhill Road
Rusthall
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN3 0TB**

Lead Inspector
Gary Bartlett

Announced Inspection
15th March 2006 09:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

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

Reader Information	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
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Internet address	www.csci.org.uk

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	Broomhill Bank School
Address	Broomhill Road Rusthall Tunbridge Wells Kent TN3 0TB
Telephone number	01892 510440
Fax number	
Email address	marycottle@broomhill-bank.kent.sch.uk
Provider Web address	
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	KCC
Name of Head	Phil Barnett
Name of Head of Care	Sarah Clark
Age range of residential pupils	
Date of last welfare inspection	

Brief Description of the School:

Broomhill Bank School is maintained by Kent County Council and was established in 1948 as a single sex Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD) Special Needs School with boarding. The school accepts girls aged between 8 and 19 years and has a dedicated 16+ unit to assist pupils into young adulthood. The school has a strong ethos that brings together both teaching and care staff while implementing a "concept of total education and care" that extends to a 24 hour curriculum concept which enables pupils to maximise their opportunities through both the educational opportunities and onto independence. At the time of the inspection there were 84 pupils on the school roll, of which 33 were boarders.

The school has excellent relationships with parents and works together very much "in partnership" through regular contact, consultation and communication. All referrals are formalised by Kent Education Department's advisory panels.

Accommodation for pupils is arranged over three units; Amazon, FERU and Beehive. The school is located in extensive grounds that provide excellent facilities for sports and gardening / environmental activities.

The ongoing 'Review' of Special School provision within Kent is having a major impact upon the school in that the future of the 16+ unit and boarding element remain uncertain. Given the findings of the previous, and this years' inspection, which, once again found improvements upon the very good standards of last year, the Inspectors were very disappointed to hear that this proposal continues.

SUMMARY

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

This announced inspection was conducted by Gary Bartlett and Debbie Sullivan, Regulatory Inspectors, over two days. This included an early morning and an evening so that the routines and activities of the residential units could be observed.

Time was spent with children, the Head of Care, Deputy Head of Care and members of the administration, ancillary, care and teaching staff. The parent of a pupil was also spoken with. Most parts of the residential buildings and some records were inspected.

A number of questionnaires were received prior to the inspection. 23 questionnaires were returned by pupils and indicated they particularly liked the activities and felt safe and well supported at the school. The 16+ unit was also highlighted as a valued facility. Statements made included:

- "There is nice staff here and I like being with the rest of the girls"
- "I love this school."

3 questionnaires were returned by staff and indicated they were committed to promoting the development, health and welfare of the pupils.

15 questionnaires were returned by parents. They recorded a high regard for the work of the school with concerns being around the possible loss of the boarding provision.

Numerous positive comments were made and included:

- "Exemplary care with appropriate targets set."
- "I have peace of mind knowing (my daughter) is safe and cared for."
- "The time my daughter has spent at Broomhill Bank School has been a happy and fulfilling experience."
- "High standard of appropriate education and residential provision. Excellent communication. Appropriate individual programmes. Understanding of client group".
- "Best thing: "Care and individual attention. Staff know my child well."
- Best thing: "The ethos and holistic approach of the school and the staff towards the young people in their care."

Throughout the inspection staff were helpful and willing to engage in the process. The pupils were keen to offer their views and presented as confident, secure in their relationships with staff, enthusiastic and very well behaved.

What the school does well:

The school provided a comprehensive, individually tailored package of care to pupils, which recognised the unique needs of each individual. The residential units offered a safe environment in which to develop independence skills, both 'socially' and 'practically'. In effect, a valuable stepping-stone for life after school.

Every member of staff, including teachers, care and ancillary received appropriate training, supervision and guidance, which placed the welfare of the children as paramount.

Parents were treated as a valued resource and actively encouraged to visit and participate in the life of the school.

Whilst risk assessment processes ensured continued 'safety', pupils were supported to take calculated risks in order to give them the opportunities to learn from mistakes, in line with the principles of 'ordinary living'.

The school did not "rest on its laurels". Even where National Minimum Standards had been exceeded in previous inspection reports, the staff continually reviewed policies and practices to achieve excellence.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There was continuous self-review and questioning. Further progress had been made in "healthy living" and environmental awareness for the pupils. Pupils medical files had been updated and standardised. Much work had been done in developing the recording/monitoring systems for medicines. The 16+ flat kitchen/dining area and sleep-in facilities had been improved. The hot water and heating system problems had been mostly resolved and the pupils safety promoted by the fitting of radiator covers in the residential areas. New fire alarm and emergency lighting systems had been installed. Health and safety policies and environmental risk assessments had been enhanced. Four external doors and some windows had been replaced to improve security.

What they could do better:

Given the uncertainty of the future of the boarding provision, the Inspector accepted that prioritisation of areas regarding maintenance and refurbishment would have to be carefully considered. However, some difficulties pertaining to the hot water systems within the boarding areas remained. The toilets near the dining room and the bathroom on Beehive were in need of improvement to be of an acceptable standard. The courtyard needed re-surfacing.

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

The report of this inspection is available from enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk or by contacting your local CSCI office.

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Being Healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.(NMS 14)
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.(NMS 15)

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

14 and 15

Pupils benefited from having comprehensive and clear personal health care plans.

The school placed an emphasis on healthy living and promoted good nutrition and exercise. Meals were healthy and varied with choices available.

EVIDENCE:

Each child has a written health plan. In the last year, a lot of work had been done to standardise the use of a new and comprehensive format.

There was a comprehensive medication policy. The medical room was clean and tidy. The redecoration of the room was scheduled which was a necessity in view of some worn plaster work and tiles.

Record keeping and storage of medication was good. Prescribed medication was confirmed as current before administration, changes were documented. All records were securely stored. Children were actively encouraged to be involved in their own health. Children were supported to take control of their own medication when appropriate. One child currently self-medicated and another was being prepared to do so. A revised risk assessment was being written. The school kept a range of non-prescribed medication for minor illness. There was now a central record to allow auditing to take place. Parents were able to state which remedies would be given and administration was logged in each child's record. The school also kept medication that had been supplied for individual children from home and the appropriateness of medication was confirmed prior to administration. The medical consent form had been updated to include notification that the school was happy to administer medicines provided by parents/carers following approval from the school medical officer.

Records indicated all staff members continued to be trained in First Aid. Written evidence was seen on files pertaining to parental consent for emergency procedures.

The school had applied for the "Healthy School Award".

The staff efforts to make pupils aware of the benefits of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle were commendable. The school had joined the Fair Trade Association and Young Co-operatives. The tuck shop was now selling healthy, fair trade snacks that were popular with pupils. The large number of pupils present when the tuck shop opened attested to its popularity. As well as being able to buy from the tuck shop pupils also enjoyed being able to work in it.

In respect of meals, consultation between pupils and the Catering Manager was ongoing through a "Suggestion Box" and was followed up with a newsletter produced by the Catering Manager for the pupils. The menu was varied and offered a range of healthy and vegetarian options. All special dietary requirements were communicated to the catering team, including pupils' allergies. The pupils said they generally liked the meals and had plenty to eat. Whilst it was recognised Friday was a "running down" day as there was not a tea-time sitting, pupils regretted that the "running down" in respect of deserts started on the Thursday. There was some discussion about the desirability of balancing the minimisation of waste and ensuring the pupils were offered choice equally.

Tea time was taken in a very relaxed manner with much good banter between pupils and staff but with boundaries of authority always being recognised. Breakfast on the units was of a similar vane with staff providing a good balance of discreet support and authoritative guidance when required.

As in previous years, the pupils commented on their appreciation of the catering staff and gave examples of novelty cakes being created for occasions such as birthdays.

The dining room and kitchen were clean, tidy and well equipped. It was noticed that the surface of the servery became very hot. Whilst there was a warning notice, this was obscured by people being served their meals. It was agreed that measures would be taken to further minimise the risk of burning. All catering staff continued to receive regular, updated food hygiene training.

Staying Safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.(NMS 3)
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.(NMS 4)
- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.(NMS 5)
- Children are protected from bullying by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(NMS 7)
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.(NMS 8)
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour.(NMS 10)
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.(NMS 26)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

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

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 26 and 27

The ethos of the school was to promote the safety, privacy and confidentiality of students.

Students could be sure any complaints would be taken seriously and addressed.

Students were protected from bullying and positive behaviour was promoted and rewarded.

EVIDENCE:

The school's procedural guidelines on privacy and confidentiality formed the basis of the how privacy was respected and confidentiality preserved. Such documents included guidance on knocking on bedroom doors and giving young people the choice of carer to assist with intimate personal care needs. Young people spoken with said staff respected their privacy. Written questionnaires supported that bedrooms and bathrooms afforded sufficient privacy, with the exception of the Beehive unit bathroom which was in need of upgrading. Records were stored securely, however, it was noted that some personal information about pupils was recorded collectively in the shift hand-over books. Administration staff spoken with had a very good understanding of data protection and implications of the Freedom of Information Act. The majority of young people had their own mobile phones to make calls in private and there was also a phone available for their use. Incoming calls to units were located in a private area. Mail was delivered promptly to units each morning and all individuals had lockable facilities within their bedrooms. There was a policy pertaining to the searching of a pupil's possessions / room and staff interviewed had a sound understanding of this.

The pupils' complaints procedure was concise, informative and presented in a format easily understood. All pupils spoken with knew how to make a complaint and said they would feel confident in doing so. They were fully aware of the complaints procedure and most would talk to either members of staff or the Head Teacher. It was particularly pleasing to note that a number of pupils knew that they could refer their concerns to the Governors and the Inspectors from the Commission. Sound recording mechanisms were in place and it was evident that the majority of issues raised by pupils were quickly dealt with at the informal stage, often negating full use of the procedure. It was positive to note that even such 'smaller' issues were recorded on pupils' files. All staff had received training on how to deal with complaints effectively. Commendably, the school continued the use of external speakers for the pupils which demonstrated the importance the school placed upon this area.

The school followed the Kent County Council model for dealing with matters of child protection. There was some discussion about updating the procedures so as to be clearer that child protection issues had to be notified to the Commission. There were three designated Child Protection Coordinators within the school. The mechanisms in place for staff to pass on concerns to these individuals were excellent and the system used ensured that information reached the DCPC's rapidly. The mechanism used was clearly explained to every member of staff upon joining the school. Staff training in this area was up to date. It was very positive to ascertain that all staff spoken with, including ancillary and administrative staff, possessed a sound understanding as to how and when they should communicate any concerns about pupils, no matter how 'minor' these may at first appear. The school now had a room that was solely for the use of child protection interviews, thereby ensuring these meetings were free from interruption.

Pupils had a good understanding of the school's anti-bullying policy, which was clear. Positively, they conveyed to the inspectors that staff did not tolerate bullying and dealt with reported instances swiftly. All members of the care team had received appropriate training relating to the policy and the pupils had been central to its implementation. It was clear that staff members remained sensitive as to the 'subtle' forms that could occur and most importantly, they knew pupils well and therefore understood how each individual child might perceive that she was being bullied.

There was a comprehensive procedure for unauthorised absence. Evidence was seen to demonstrate that all absences were questioned and followed up after morning registration. A clear system was in place by which the Educational Welfare Officer was to be contacted. As was found at previous inspections, there had been no such pupil absences reported over the course of the last year.

The Behaviour Management System used was divided into three areas; lower school, 16+ and residential. Staff members made judgements on what constituted "better than" or "worse than" usual behaviour for individual pupils. Rewards included "5* Activities" and this system was praised by pupils. Sanctions were used when necessary and included extra work or tasks in the school and withdrawal of privileges. Whilst one or two pupils expressed the view there should not be sanctions, they did recognise the validity of those used. The methods were approved following staff consultation and developed further at annual reviews, staff meetings management committee and student council meetings. There was a clear approved policy on physical intervention that was line with the Kent County Council policy and approved training. Positive handling incidents were regularly monitored via a child protection system and include debriefing of pupils and staff. Any instance of 'physical intervention' was appropriately recorded.

Throughout the inspection, pupils were polite, respectful of others and were clearly benefiting from a well-ordered and non-threatening environment.

Robust risk assessments were undertaken and included premises and activities. Health & Safety checks were also carried out on premises where students attended for work experience. Fire drills and equipment checks were carried out and written records of these were appropriately maintained. Observing the use of a toaster during breakfast, some pupils were very diligent in informing an Inspector of the correct action to take in the event of the fire alarms sounding. Such action transpired to be unnecessary on this occasion. A satisfactory audit had been conducted by the Fire safety Officer on 27 February 2006. Temperatures in fridges and freezers on the units were being recorded. Since the last inspection, covers had been placed over radiators in the residential units, thereby further promoting the pupils' safety. Some accident records were inspected and it was evident, from the examples seen, immediate remedial action had been taken to prevent further incidents occurring. The Site Manager was to be commended for his energetic commitment to ensuring the safety of the premises and grounds.

Some staff files were inspected, including those of recently appointed staff. The written information held with regards the recruitment procedure was excellent, detailing the selection and interviewing process and the checks made. The interview process was based upon the Warner recruitment model. Clear records evidenced the questions asked and how the applicant performed. Enhanced CRB's and a minimum of two satisfactory references were required before a member of staff, who would have access to pupils, could commence their employment. Pupils confirmed their involvement and written evidence was seen to support this practice. A member of the Administration team, who retained a particular role with regards 'recruitment', was interviewed and had a sound understanding of equal opportunities.

Enjoying and Achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.(NMS 12)
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

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

12, 13 and 22

Pupils were given access to a wide range of activities with individual support provided as required.

The residential team worked hard and effectively to support educational progress.

EVIDENCE:

As seen in previous inspections, care staff remained fully aware of the educational needs of the pupils in their care. It was very clear that the pupils benefited from the excellent working relationships between care staff and teaching staff. Communication was effective and care staff were involved or informed on all matters relating to the educational needs of their key children. Routine 'handovers' between teaching and care staff ensured pupils received an 'ongoing' and consistent approach from the professionals involved in their daily lives. Evidence was seen of the contribution by residential staff to annual reviews of the statement of special needs and in the implementation of the individual educational plans. OFSTED inspection reports praised the school for the increased GCSE results for residential students. Pupils had access to good library and computer facilities that were suitable for their needs and interests. The residential units provided facilities that were conducive to study and doing homework. Pupils spoke warmly of the assistance given by teaching and care staff in the preparation for independent living through the 24-hour curriculum and the dedicated 16+ unit.

Pupils were very clear that they saw activities, independent and group, as a particularly positive aspect of the school. Activities were commonly cited as being "one of the best things about the school". The weekly after school Youth Club known as The Arches provided pupils with an opportunity to invite boarders from another local school, hold disco's, watch films and play games. This facility was particularly popular. There were many exhibits that showed pupils attending a variety of activities such as gardening, sports or visiting places of interest. Informal activities were flexible and pupils confirmed that they could also simply "chill" and watch television after school. General discussion about activities took place at unit meetings and 'specifics' were raised formally at Student Council meetings. There was good support given to enable the girls to take part in after-school activities. Activities were planned around preferences, 'make-overs' and 'beauty nights' had been popular. The safety of the children was taken into account at all times in respect of supervised and unsupervised activities and risk assessments are made in line with KCC standards. The value of the activities made available through the school was recognised in the feedback questionnaires received from pupils' parents.

Given the valuable 'social' opportunities currently afforded through the extensive range of activities offered, the Inspectors were very disappointed at the prospect of losing these, as the future of the boarding provision remained uncertain.

Support for students remained excellent. The school had developed an ethos whereby students felt comfortable in approaching any staff member with their welfare concerns, not only their designated Key worker. Where necessary, the school provided specialist professional services for example specialist teachers, advisors from Kent County Council, and a Speech and Language Therapist. The latter had proven to be particularly successful and the school was hoping

to be able to secure more of this particular provision. There were also visits from a Physiotherapist and an Occupational Therapist as well as trained Learning Support Assistants for groups and 1:1 support. A visitor from the National Children's Homes provided additional external support for children who wished to express welfare issues and concerns. It was very positive to find that, during this fourth annual inspection visit, pupils were confidently telling the Inspectors that they knew why they were visiting. They also knew they could tell the Inspectors if they were not happy.

Making a Positive Contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.(NMS 2)
- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.(NMS 9)
- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.(NMS 11)
- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.(NMS 17)
- In accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

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

2, 9, 11, 17 and 20

Pupils enjoy positive and respectful relationships with staff, who provide ample opportunities for them to be involved in the running of the school.

Positive contact with parents is promoted and admission and leaving processes are comprehensive.

EVIDENCE:

The school placed much emphasis and was very successful in encouraging pupils to make decisions about their lives and influence the way the school was run. This was achieved through a variety of ways. Pupils could express their own opinions at Review and Planning Meetings, Student Council, Key working and career interviews. School Council representatives clearly explained the role and function of this forum. Whilst they appreciated the support received from staff members, in running this group, pupils genuinely felt that they 'owned' the agenda items discussed and took seriously their responsibilities to their peers. Suggestion boxes were placed around the school. Written documentation showed that pupils were actively involved in staff recruitment. Pupils received training in 'Empowerment' and the Speech and Language Therapist offered training to staff on communication. Student Council Training included staff and children.

Further to the findings of previous inspections, the care team continued to set and maintain safe and consistent boundaries for the children in relation to unacceptable behaviour, with greater emphasis being placed upon rewarding the positives. Expectations of behaviour were clearly understood by staff and children. Pupils were encouraged and praised for their good behaviour through the use of a behaviour management system, which was thoroughly and accurately described by the pupils interviewed. The parent questionnaires received indicated that parents were in agreement with this system and worked in partnership with the school regarding its implementation. Training in positive care and control continued to be provided and communication between pupils and staff was observed to be positive and appropriate.

All of the pupils interviewed confirmed that they had been introduced to the school, staff and other pupils prior to placement, in a way that best suited their own individual needs. Received questionnaires also supported this statement. One individual had only been at the school for a short while prior to the inspection and she confirmed that teachers, care staff and the Head Teacher had all spent individual time with her, explaining rules and answering her questions. She mentioned that other pupils had also been helpful in assisting her to settle in. The Welcome Book gave written detailed and up to date information regarding the school. The school made clear efforts to obtain all necessary information about a child prior to admission and emergency placements were very rare. Parents and carers of prospective pupils were encouraged to visit informally and planned referrals were formalised by Kent Education Department's advisory panels.

Pupils were prepared for leaving the school well in advance of planned departure dates and appropriate information and guidance was given to assist the transition. Review documentation, pupils' own involvement with their placement plans, career advice and liaison with all other associated external agencies, clearly demonstrated the school was committed to supporting a smooth and seamless transition upon both joining and moving on from the establishment.

Each pupil had a care plan and pupils confirmed they understood their contents and agreed with them. They were able to contribute to the plans contents and present their own opinions at review meetings. It was evident that review meetings were very well planned and prepared for, with one member of the teaching staff retaining a particular area of responsibility for this. Written evidence demonstrated the input of Key workers and Teachers in the preparation for review meetings and care plans were amended following any recommendations made. Pupils were encouraged to make own entries in tandem with the daily recordings made by staff and those spoken with said they had ready access to their own records. Each of the files inspected contained a detailed history, copies of assessments, targets and a resume of individual needs. Individual Educational Plans were held in order that residential staff remained fully aware of these needs.

In accordance with their wishes, children were able and encouraged to maintain contact with parents and families whilst living at the school. The school consulted regularly with children, parents and placing officers to discuss arrangements for contact and where 'legal restrictions' applied, these were made explicitly clear to all of the team, including administrative and ancillary staff. There were no restrictions for children using telephones and there were comfortable areas where children could meet with visitors in private surroundings. Parents felt comfortable and welcomed to visit their child whilst they were in school.

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.(NMS 16)
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.(NMS 21)
- Children live in well designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- Children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.(NMS 24)
- Children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity.(NMS 25)

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

16, 21, 23, 24 and 25

The school was successful in encouraging and supporting pupils to develop independence skills.

Residential accommodation was comfortable. The upgrading of a bathroom and toilet area would enhance pupils' privacy and comfort.

EVIDENCE:

The school could be commended for the manner in which care and teaching staff acted as good advocates for students preparing to leave the school. There was effective consultation with students, parents, social workers, and any relevant external agency involved in care planning. The staff understood the valuable contribution they should make to implement any Pathway or other plan for the student prior to student leaving the school. The daily life of the school provided opportunities for all students to develop skills and knowledge for their likely future living arrangements.

At age 16, some students entered the Further Education Unit that provided a valuable and valued stepping stone for 16-19 year olds to prepare for life outside of school. It was a safe environment in which mistakes could be learnt from without detrimental effect. The course covered a balance of work, leisure and life skills within a 24-hour curriculum, utilized links with further education

colleges and enabled work experience participation. The school could be justifiably proud of their achievement in setting up and refurbishing the 16+ house through their fund-raising efforts and commitment to this project.

The boarding accommodation was composed of three units, Amazon, Beehive and FERU. Additional communal space was provided on Pegasus unit. Facilities were decorated to a good standard, which created a homely and pleasant atmosphere. A great deal of effort by staff had gone into the décor and it was evident that their efforts were both noted and appreciated by students. There was adequate storage space for clothes and personal belongings. Bedrooms were shared to a maximum of four per bedroom. The sharing of rooms was not an issue for the younger age group. Pupils had personalised their individual space to varying degrees and said they liked staying at the school.

Sufficient baths, showers and toilets were provided within the residential accommodation and these were clean, hygienic and warm. Exceptions to this were the dining room toilets and bathroom on Beehive that needed upgrading. Few comments relating to privacy difficulties were reported, apart from some reference to the showers in Beehive. It was evident staff had tried to resolve this but were constrained by the layout of the facilities. Previously reported heating problems had been addressed but water pressure in some areas was still problematic.

The school provided transport for students that enabled links with the local community and where risk assessments were in operation, older pupils were encouraged to use public transport as far as was safely practicable. Security was maintained at all times with the use of door entry codes and the school was continually exploring ways in which to improve upon the security measures currently in place. Staff were observed to be vigilant in regard to unknown visitors. There were extensive grounds that included a range of facilities to assist students with their development and independence. These included greenhouses and gardening plots, beehives, a nature trail and an outdoor classroom. Through these, the students have achieved a number of prestigious awards with national recognition.

Outside school time, pupils could wear their own clothing. They could secure personal requisites and stationary while at school, and were helped to look after their own money. The stock cupboard was well prepared for emergencies. The response from parents/carers was that the school regularly communicated with them to discuss the needs of individual pupils. Indeed, a parent described how they appreciated it that their daughter's key-worker telephoned them each week to keep them apprised. All boarders had a lockable container. Money was held centrally and overseen by Team Leaders and access was monitored and recorded by care staff. Documentation pertaining to pupils' pocket money records indicated that amounts and balances were recorded and

'tracked'. Pupils were required to sign against every withdrawal as part of their budget management training.

Management

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.(NMS 1)
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.(NMS 19)
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.(NMS 28)
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.(NMS 29)
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.(NMS 30)
- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.(NMS 31)
- Children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.(NMS 32)
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.(NMS 33)

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

1, 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33

The school provided clear information to prospective pupils and others.

The school was well managed and pupils were looked after by trained and supported staff.

EVIDENCE:

Statements made in pre-inspection questionnaires completed by pupils' parents included:

- "Head Teacher always available when I arrive and welcomes me".
- "...even at whole school events the head master always makes himself known and chats."
- "I think the staff are superb, friendly, helpful".
- "Excellent staff – never had any complaints in 5 years."

- “You could not find a more dedicated team of people who work very hard to give the pupils the best environment to achieve their potential.”

The school was managed by the Head Teacher, who maintained a very close working relationship with the Head of Care and the Deputy Head of Care. The stability of these posts and as importantly, the positive working relationships, were extremely positive for the staff, who clearly benefited from being led by such a cohesive management team. In view of the uncertainty of aspects of the school, the team was again to be commended for its success in continuing to provide residential care to the highest standards at a time when morale would be expected to be low. One staff member described the Head Teacher as “quietly determined”, another said “He is the sort of Head you would go that extra mile for”.

The Head of Care possessed a Diploma in Social Work qualification. Staff benefited from a rolling programme of training that was authorised by Kent County Council. Training was assessed as being suitable to their role. Staff said that access to training was very good and described how requests for specific courses could also be obtained, if deemed to be beneficial for the pupils. Newly appointed staff were required to undertake a comprehensive induction programme that included child protection, behaviour management and the needs of a child with special education needs. NVQ training continued to progress well. Ancillary staff were included within whole school training days, in particular, child protection and those staff interviewed stated that they were treated as valuable colleagues by the teaching and boarding staff.

Robust supervision arrangements were being maintained. Staff spoke of the high quality and content of supervision meetings and it was evident that ‘appraisals’ of performance were conducted annually. Staff confirmed they had excellent and ongoing access to the Head Teacher, Head of Care, and Deputy Head of Care. This management team had a very clear vision as to the standard of practice expected of the staff team. External assistance was also available to staff, for example, by way of accessing Support Line, should they require counselling support.

Two years ago, the boarding provision changed from fortnightly to weekly and this has resulted in pupils receiving improved staffing ratios for much of the time. Whilst this was of course, advantageous, it did mean the loss of valuable weekend activities, which the pupils who have been boarding for some time, still missed. One of their parents referred to this on a questionnaire. An examination of duty rosters indicated that staffing levels continue to comply with DfES guidance and during ‘thin times’, the Head of Care or Deputy was also allocated as being ‘spare’ to provide additional staffing support, should this be required.

The Statement of Purpose described the ethos and philosophy of the school and was reviewed annually and approved by Governors and Sub -Committees. A summary of the statement was included in the Welcome Book designed for pupils. Information packs regarding the school and boarding provision were put together with the help of students. Each unit had a dedicated pack that included maps, rules, information on key workers and staff.

Pupil's individual case files contained all the relevant information as detailed in the standards. Additional information such as photograph albums, academic file and home/school contact books were located separately. Pupils spoken with confirmed that they were able to view their files and where necessary, were supported to read and have the contents explained to them.

Practice regarding the maintenance of records continued to comply with the standards. Pupil records were to a standardised format and staff had received appropriate training and guidance in order that the required documents were accurately completed up to date. Staff files were comprehensive, particularly regarding the recruitment documentation. There was a clear process as to how records pertaining to accidents, incidents and child protection concerns were to be shared amongst those who 'needed to know'. A recommendation was made to review the use of shift hand-over books in the interests of data protection and confidentiality. Key senior staff were delegated responsibilities commensurate with their own areas of experience and expertise to ensure that records were completed and maintained to very high standards. The Chair of Governors produced a written report annually and minutes of Governors meetings were made available for this inspection.

The Care Standards Officer (KCC) visited the school once every half term to conduct an unannounced inspection / audit. To date, the CSCI Office had received a copy of every report generated and additional copies of the reports were held at 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	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	4
15	4

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

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

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	3
21	4
23	3
24	3
25	3

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

No

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RS3	It is recommended the manner of recording "hand-over" information is amended to maintain confidentiality	
2	RS15	It is recommended further measures be taken to minimise the risk caused by the hot surface at the dining room servery. An action plan is to be received by CSCI by the given timescale.	28/04/06
3	RS25	It is recommended the court-yard is resurfaced to minimise trip hazards. An action plan is to be received by CSCI by the given timescale.	28/04/06
4	RS25	It is recommended the Beehive bathroom is upgraded to improve the pupils privacy and comfort. An action plan is to be received by CSCI by the given timescale.	28/04/06
5	RS25	It is recommended the toilets near the dining room are improved to provide better facilities and infection control. An action plan is to be received by CSCI by the given timescale.	28/04/06
6	RS25	It is recommended the water pressure be improved where it is problematic. An action plan is to be received by CSCI by the given timescale.	28/04/06

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