

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Cabin Hill school and Campbell College provide education for pupils aged three to 13 years and eleven to 18 years respectively. Both the school and the college maintain boarding departments (see appendix 1 for details) which are staffed and administered separately, but are jointly the responsibility of the Board of Governors (BOG).

1.2 The inspection of the boarding departments took place over two school days and the subsequent weekend. The inspection was conducted by a team of three inspectors, two members of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and one member of the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI).

1.3 The inspection focused on the current arrangements and procedures of the boarding departments within the school and the college; the purpose of the inspection was to assess the extent to which current provision for pastoral care, including child protection, care and welfare, and health and safety of the boarders, is effective and fit for purpose. The environmental standards of the boarding departments were not inspected. In reaching their judgements, the inspection team took account of the guidance set out in "Evaluating Pastoral Care," published by the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI), 1999, and a number of standards in the "Quality Living Standards for Services: Children who live away from home" published by the SSI.

1.4 During the inspection, the team interviewed the headmasters, the vice-masters, a number of key teaching, boarding and ancillary staff, and small groups of boarding and day pupils. In addition, visits were made to a sample of classes, and to the early morning, evening and bedtime routine activities; pupils were also observed during free time, mealtimes, and at 'prep'.

1.5 The school and the college made available relevant documents and literature, and facilitated the issuing of the questionnaires to the parents/guardians, (subsequently referred to as parents), and the pupils. The team had ready access to all areas of the boarding, teaching and general campus. The senior management teams, and all other key members of staff of the school and the college, assisted the process of inspection; their positive approach to external evaluation contributed well to the manner and the efficiency of the inspection arrangements and activity.

2. QUALITY OF THE PROVISION

2.1 CABIN HILL SCHOOL

2.1.2 A notable feature of the school, observed during the inspection, is the priority given by the headmaster, his wife and the staff to the development of a family ethos. The pupils are sensitive to one another's needs, and co-operate naturally in their work and play; they are aware of the various rules and regulations which guide their safety and well-being.

2.1.3 The headmaster and the staff make good efforts to promote a homely environment, and the care and well-being of the boarding pupils; the team found a wide range of good practice on which the school can build, and a number of areas for review and further development. The strengths of the current provision include:

- the commitment and willingness of the headmaster to bring about change in order to improve the quality of provision and the homeliness in the boarding department;
- the staff's commitment to the pupils' well-being; they know the pupils and their backgrounds well;
- the high value and respect shown to the cultural backgrounds of the pupils, and the staff's promotion of a harmonious community which celebrates ethnic and cultural diversity;
- the good relationships amongst the pupils: their open, pleasant manner and good behaviour; their sense of comradeship, and their supportive manner toward one another;
- the flexible arrangements in place to accommodate short term boarding;
- the openness of the headmaster to be available constantly to meet parents, and to respond quickly to their concerns;
- the involvement of the pupils' parents and family in a meaningful partnership with the boarding school staff;
- the willingness of the pupils to participate in the discussion groups, and the completion of the questionnaire.

2.1.4 A sound boarding policy and procedures handbook for staff details many aspects of the work governing the boarding arrangements; the handbook now needs to be tailored for publication to parents and pupils. The induction arrangements for boarders help to ensure that the headmaster has essential information to inform planning for individual needs. There would be benefit, however, in reviewing the pupils' records, and considering, where necessary, how best to co-ordinate a system of record-keeping to support the monitoring of individual pupils' care and educational needs. Provision should also ensure that the pupils have opportunities to have contact, and discuss any concerns and problems, with a person independent of the school.

2.1.5 Care routines provide the pupils with the necessary structure to give them security, and the staff are providing them with a great deal of care, protection and practical assistance. The headmaster endeavours to achieve a less institutionalised approach to the care provided; some of the arrangements require a greater degree of flexibility, for example, the staff are at times overprotective and, as a result, do not provide the pupils with appropriate encouragement and privacy to do enough for themselves at shower time, when dressing and undressing or serving at mealtimes. Personal care and the levels of risk need to be commensurate with the pupils' age, sex and level of functioning; the staff should be trained to cope sensitively with these. The evidence from practice observed during the inspection, the

pupils' questionnaires, and the findings of the discussion held with them, confirm this view, and indicate their desire for greater privacy, and opportunities to share their concerns with a sympathetic adult.

2.1.6 The main themes to emerge from the questionnaire for pupils, and the meeting with pupils who are boarding, included their concerns about lack of privacy, poor shower arrangements and washroom facilities, limited organised weekend activities, restriction of freedom, and lack of personal space. Home sickness was experienced by the majority of pupils, and many felt that if something was worrying them or if they had a problem there were few members of the school staff with whom they felt confident to talk. More than half of the pupils reported being concerned about the issue of bullying. A small number reported being bullied and feeling insensitively treated by some staff and other pupils. A number of them also expressed concern about lack of support when they needed help with their school work. On the positive side, the pupils liked studying at the school, and felt that the staff who looked after them were kind, friendly, helpful, understanding, and were not too strict.

2.1.7 In keeping with the 1999 DENI circular "Pastoral care in Schools-Child Protection", the school has a designated senior member of staff who has responsibility for child protection. All members of staff know who this person is, and are aware of the procedures to follow if they are concerned about a pupil. The headmaster has received training in child protection issues, and is presently disseminating relevant information to the staff. Suitable plans are underway to provide training to increase the staff's skills in this area, to finalise the policy to direct this provision, to identify a liaison person within the local Health and Social Services Trust, and to introduce a vetting system for staff appointments, volunteers and placements.

2.1.8 There are opportunities for informal discussions on the care of pupils in the boarding department. There would be value in setting aside specific time for the boarding staff when they could discuss, and act upon, general boarding issues, and the individual care and educational needs of the pupils.

2.1.9 The recent appointment of a teacher with responsibility for special educational needs (SEN) is a welcome development which has the potential to be exploited further to ensure that the pupils' educational needs are diagnosed effectively, and are met in a coherent and consistent manner.

2.1.10 The responses from the questionnaires for parents received to date, and from a meeting with parents, indicate that parents are very supportive of the care provided in the boarding department; in the written comments provided, there is overwhelming support for the high level of care provided by the headmaster. The negative comments received referred to the level of educational support for individual needs, and the lack of weekend activities available. The meeting with parents reflected the positive comments made in the questionnaires.

2.1.11 Although a number of strengths are evident in the school's boarding provision, certain aspects of the provision should now be addressed in order to meet more effectively the pupils' needs. These are:

- the extension of the role of the head of boarding to monitor and evaluate the current practice and procedures periodically, and to prepare an annual report for the senior management team and the board of governors on the effectiveness of its provision;
- a review of the early morning and bedtime arrangements to ensure that the quality of the pupils' life, and the care routines, are influenced by the value placed on privacy, dignity, independence and choice;
- the need to introduce a system to monitor, evaluate and improve the care practices, and to address those arrangements which have outlived their appropriateness;
- the establishment of a forum for the pupils to discuss issues which are important to them, and to hear a response to their questions or concerns, so that they feel that their views and opinions are sought and valued;
- the development of support for the educational needs of pupils who are boarding;
- the distribution to parents and pupils of the complaints policy and procedures, and of the school's policy and procedures for the promotion of pastoral care, including child protection;
- a refinement of the current system of recording, and the establishment of separate records on the key activity areas such as sanctions administered, pupils' complaints, procedures related to accidents or incidents, and the administration of the pupils' medication;
- the effective delegation of duties to ensure a shared responsibility for provision;
- an appropriate programme of training and support on care issues for relevant staff;
- the requirement, under Article 114 of the "Children (Northern Ireland) Order, 1995" to notify the local Health and Social Services Trust of arrangements to accommodate pupils in the school during holidays for a period of more than two weeks.

The headmaster recognises the need to address the issues identified in this report, and has demonstrated a willingness to improve and develop further the good practice already established in Cabin Hill.

2.2 CAMPBELL COLLEGE

2.2.1 During the inspection, it was observed that the boarding department in the college was an open and friendly community where the pupils feel at home and relaxed. The staff, in particular the head of boarding, know the pupils well, and promote successfully their care and well-being. Through the support and attention of the staff, the pupils develop greater confidence and self-esteem, and increasingly take part in decisions which affect them. In turn, the pupils relate well to one another, to the staff, and to visitors whether in the boarding department or the wider school environment. During the inspection, the pupils were open, friendly and courteous. The strengths of the current provision include:

- the hard work and dedication of the key members of staff;
- the clear and well established policy and procedures which direct the weekly and week-end boarding arrangements;
- the value placed on the pupils' right to privacy, dignity, fulfilment, independence and choice;
- the importance given to the pupils' views;
- the emphasis placed on encouragement, reassurance and support;
- the increasing priority within the curriculum to provide opportunities and experiences which foster character building;
- the willingness of the pupils to participate in the discussion groups and the questionnaire;
- the high value and respect shown to the cultural backgrounds of the pupils, and the staff's promotion of a harmonious community which celebrates ethnic and cultural diversity;
- the close relationships among the pupils, and the strong links with home and the wider community, which help the pupils gain a greater understanding and appreciation of relationships within and between groups.

2.2.2 The college has established good links with the parents, and, on all occasions, parental permission is sought for outings and attendance at events. Parents are invited formally to the college for a range of purposes, and are free to call, phone or write at any time. A well established process of induction enables new pupils and their parents to visit the college prior to admission.

2.2.3 During the inspection, discussions were held with a small group of day and boarding pupils, and separately with six boarders during the evening. In both meetings, the pupils expressed very positive comments on their experiences in the college, and all boarders considered the boarding arrangements to be fair and balanced; the boarders highlighted their well-being, the manner in which they were treated by key staff members, and their respect for the head of boarding as significant and central to their sense of collegiality and companionship.

2.2.4 The analysis of the responses to the questionnaires for boarders identified few areas of concern. The majority of those responding felt happy to talk to their parents, their tutor or a school friend if they were worried. They considered the staff who managed them to be kind, understanding, good tempered, helpful, fair and easy to talk to. No one felt that staff administered punishments unfairly, and the majority felt that prefects, and others in charge of them, administered punishment fairly also. Of those accommodated in small dormitories, a minority felt a lack of privacy, and considered the dormitories to be of poor quality. Just less than half indicated that they felt homesick at one time or another, but few felt homesick often. A very small number recorded that they had been bullied, but this was rare.

2.2.5 The college has produced helpful written documentation including a brochure for prospective pupils' parents, and a staff guide to pastoral care. The latter is a useful and substantial document which details the organisational arrangements for the smooth running of the boarding department and defines the roles of key staff; it also includes the relevant policies and procedures to be followed relating to child protection, the code of conduct for pupils, and the arrangements for the health and safety of the pupils. The college has established links with the relevant personnel of the outside agencies including the local Education and Library Board, Health and Social Services Trust, and the RUC. It will be important that these links are annually and formally reviewed, maintained and the outcomes recorded.

2.2.6 The responses of the questionnaires for parents received to date indicate that parents appreciate the care provided in the boarding department; in the written comments provided, there is overwhelming support for the care and guidance provided by the housemaster. The meeting with parents reflected the positive comments made in the questionnaires.

2.2.7 In keeping with the DENI Circular 1999/10 "Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection" the college has a designated senior member of staff who has responsibility for child protection. The headmaster and the designated member of staff have received training in child protection issues, and are presently disseminating this information to the staff. Plans are underway to provide training to increase the staff's skills in this area.

2.2.8 An audit of pastoral care provision is in progress, and it is evident from the responses and reports produced to date that this is a valuable course of action. This process will assist in clarifying further the role of the housemasters, and focus additional attention on the pupils' pastoral care, and efforts and achievements as individuals and house members. This audit would be enhanced by including the parents and the pupils in the exercise.

2.2.9 As part of the audit process, a member of staff is reviewing the personal and social education programme. This review has the potential to give the programme a higher profile throughout the college, and to support further the pupils' skills and knowledge in this area.

2.2.10 In response to the recently introduced Code of Practice for the identification and assessment of SEN, the college has appointed a member of staff, with senior management support, to prepare education plans for those pupils experiencing learning difficulties throughout the college and during 'prep'. This provision is at an early stage of development.

2.2.11 The headmaster, supported by the senior management team, provides clear direction and effective leadership, and actively encourages and supports the pastoral care provision in the college and the boarding department. Good progress has been made in developing and implementing policies and adapting traditional arrangements to support, and to up-date, the management of the pastoral care of the pupils. Levels of responsibility have been identified and allocated, and policies and clear guidance for staff are set out in the handbook, and provide a sound basis for managing change.

2.2.12 The college has many important strengths in its provision for boarding, and these reflect careful planning and well established procedures and practices. The findings of the report indicate that the following areas should be reviewed to enhance further the good practice which characterises current provision:

- the extension of the role of the head of boarding to monitor and evaluate the current practice and procedures periodically, and to prepare an annual report for the senior management team and the board of governors of the college on the effectiveness of its provision;
- the production of a guide for parents about the pastoral arrangements including the child protection arrangements;
- the publication and distribution to parents and pupils of the complaints policy and procedures;
- a refinement of the current system of recording, and the establishment of separate records on the key activity areas such as sanctions administered, pupils' complaints, accidents, incidents, and the administration of the pupils' medication;
- the requirement, under Article 114 of the "Children (Northern Ireland) Order, 1995" to notify the local Health and Social Services Trust of arrangements to accommodate children during the school holidays for a period of more than two weeks;
- the inclusion of parents and pupils in the current audit of pastoral care provision.

The school is effective in promoting the well-being of the pupils. The level of care is high and the pupils respond well to the established routines and organisational arrangements.

APPENDIX

CABIN HILL

Total number of pupils	358	
Total number of boarders	14	(4 with parents living overseas)
Number of weekly boarders	9	
Number of full time boarding	5	

CAMPBELL COLLEGE

Total number of pupils	707	
Total number of boarders	32	(11 with parents living overseas)
Number of weekly boarders	17	
Number of full time boarding	15	

**Total number of boarders
in both Cabin Hill and
Campbell College** **46**