

# Stone Bay School

Inspection report for residential special school

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC023693
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 October 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Patrick Gough
<b>Type of Inspection</b>	Key

---

<b>Address</b>	Stone Bay Special School 70 Stone Road BROADSTAIRS Kent CT10 1EB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 863421
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	Richard Edey
<b>Head of care</b>	Richard Edey
<b>Head / Principal</b>	
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	18 September 2006

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

You can obtain copies of The Children Act 2004, Every Child Matters and The National Minimum Standards for Children's Services from: The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Cripins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

Stone Bay School is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Broadstairs, near to shops and beaches, on an elevated site overlooking the sea. It is owned and managed by Kent County Council. There is ample car parking space, on-road and off-road, to the front and side of the premises. There are large, secure gardens at the rear of the school, with seaside views and which have a number of play and leisure facilities. The school provides specialised education, for children and young people aged 11 to 19 years, who exhibit communication difficulties, moderate to severe learning difficulties, challenging behaviours and Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Currently the school, uses nationally accredited schemes, including Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), to support its planning, teaching and monitoring of students' achievement. The residential accommodation is divided into four separate units, as well as a Lodge in the grounds where young people can further develop their independent living skills. Both waking night and sleeping in staff are available to care for the students each night, and the staff rota ensures that senior residential staff are available throughout most of the day.

### Summary

This was an announced key inspection. The visit was conducted to assess the school's commitment to providing good outcomes for children in relation to the National Minimum Standards and best practice. The actions recommended at the previous inspection were addressed satisfactorily. The school has included telephone contact checks with referees as part of the staff recruitment vetting process. Non teaching staff are now included in the annual appraisal system and the process has commenced with senior care staff. Participation in the NVQ training programme is mandatory for care staff and the school continues to provide excellent support for staff training. The school achieved 'healthy school' status and maintains its efforts to develop programmes and practice to help the children attain a healthy lifestyle. Further development of the behaviour management database supports an excellent safeguarding approach which, together with effective risk assessing, promotes the safety and well being of the children. The staff have a very good understanding of the children's needs, relate well to the children and work in partnership with the parents. The care planning process, based on continual assessment and review, is suitably adapted for the range of need presented by the children, and there is good use of ASDAN programmes. School management have made excellent use of the premises to provide a high quality residential living environment that is homely, comfortable and stimulating. There is strong leadership and the staff team is competently managed. The senior care staff structure, comprising the head of care and team leaders, who are qualified and have considerable residential care experience, provide the rest of the team with appropriate levels of support and guidance. The staff team are confident in their delivery of the various social care functions and ably implement the principles of the care philosophy.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### Improvements since the last inspection

The school has satisfactorily addressed the three actions recommended at the previous inspection. The recruitment process has been further strengthened by the completion of telephone enquiries following receipt of the applicants' references. A recruitment checklist

verifies when the check is complete. The school has established an annual appraisal system for non-teaching staff. This has been implemented for senior care staff initially and further implementation, to include all care staff, will follow the training of appraisers. The school continues to support staff to participate in NVQ qualifying courses. The staff respond positively to the requirement for qualification and benefit from the established link with a local training provider and on-site tutorial support.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

The school retains its healthy school status achieved in 2006 and continues to promote healthy living through healthy eating, physical activities and personal care skills input. Individual health plans, containing relevant details to guide key workers, provide staff with the necessary information to monitor health development. Many facets of the school's provision contribute to the pupils' healthy development. These include the communication facilitator and the aroma therapist, who link closely with education staff, care staff and parents. There is effective health screening and the key worker keeps a brief record of the routine medical check outcomes. The children receive daily support with their personal care and are encouraged to participate in learning new skills and managing their basic health. The personal, health and social education curriculum content supplements the practical contribution made in the residential units. The school has established positive links with external health agencies, such as child and adolescent mental health services and the community health nurse, who makes a monthly visit to the school. The catering staff work closely with residential staff to implement a healthy eating programme through the provision of high quality meals and individually prepared food to suit the children's dietary requirements. A designated senior member of staff controls the receipt of medication and disposal of unused medicines to the local pharmacy. Good medication administration, managed by properly trained team leaders and monitored by senior staff, reduces the risk of unsafe practice with children. The staff receive good guidance on health matters, through the school's policies, particularly the intimate care policy.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

The school places much importance on ensuring that the children enjoy their accommodation and have the desired personal space to spend time alone. The staff have a good awareness of each individual young person's safeguarding requirements and make allowances for more discreet supervision where appropriate. Detailed intimate care guidance informs good practice and the staff ensure that the children's dignity is maintained at all times. Whilst the majority of the children find verbal communication most difficult, the means to making known concerns, anxieties and complaints are outlined in the children's booklet and reinforced by their key worker. Other sources of help, such as access to the independent visitor and the national helpline are detailed in the documentation and the close liaison between the staff and parents is an important factor in determining how children feel about life at school. The school has an effective process in place to deal with complaints. There is a rigorous approach to safeguarding the children and the staff are vigilant at all times, given the particular vulnerability of the children in their care. There are regular training programmes, which address child protection and staff demonstrate an acute awareness of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns surrounding the child's safety. The school has established strong links with the local social service agency and the police using agreed protocols when a child goes missing. There are

effective security systems in place to prevent children accessing the school grounds and locality without the necessary adult supervision. There are clear policies on behaviour management which are designed to provide overarching guidance focusing on non-punitive measures. Individual behaviour management plans, created by a multi-disciplinary team, including the parents, highlight the precise strategies that are most effective for the child. The staff apply the principles of the behaviour management programme with skill and confidence and implement the strategies sensitively and purposefully. Any physical intervention is carefully recorded and such incidents are monitored through a database so as to identify the reason for the behaviour and the effect of the management strategies. This has led to, in many cases, a greater understanding of the child and a decrease in negative behaviour. Risk assessments are routinely conducted, kept under constant review and amended as circumstances dictate. The school is in a good location and not subject to unauthorised intrusion, however, the staff are mindful of the possible risk to the children and are reminded by senior management to be vigilant at all times. The school is successful in its efforts to maintain positive links with the immediate community and the children benefit from participating in local leisure activities. Much importance is placed upon the selection and appointment of staff with the necessary qualities and experience to care for vulnerable children. The recruitment process has been strengthened and efforts are continually made to improve it further in the interests of the children's safety and well being.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

The children benefit from consistency of approach from all staff through an established multi-disciplinary practice. There is shared information on individual education plans, care plans, behaviour management, communication programmes and therapeutic interventions. There is regular liaison between education and care staff at other times, particularly at the beginning and end of the school day. The two staff teams engage in some training together and individuals in each team play an active role in each other's settings. Programmes of support for each child includes input from the parent, the key worker, class teacher and other relevant personnel. Each child has a key worker responsible for coordinating the implementation of the care plan and ensuring that the child's needs are continually assessed and met. The staff have forged positive, meaningful relationships with the children and use their extensive skills to communicate with them and understand their needs. All the staff receive training on various communication methods and are expertly assisted in their daily interaction with the children by the communication facilitator who observes, assesses and advises on appropriate interventions. The children are made aware of other sources of support through their handbook produced, where necessary, in widget form. These include the school council and independent visitor.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

The school is justly proud of the extent to which it consults with the children and how it involves them in the running of the school. The school council is the main consultation forum, which is used effectively to ascertain children's views and communicate information to them on all matters affecting their wellbeing. All the children are represented at this forum and the representatives, through diverse communication methods, cast votes on proposals put forward for consideration to the school's senior management. Daily consultation occurs through residential unit meetings and more informally through the use of picture exchange cards and

makaton. The children express their satisfaction with the consultation exercises and this is echoed by the parents. The care planning process is well established and the staff have a good understanding of its purpose and the long lasting benefits to the children. An assessment of the child's abilities is conducted at the beginning of each year and the findings contribute to the identification of long term goals and short term targets. The head of care is planning to extend the assessment process to each term so that plans can be updated more regularly. There is good evidence gathering to support achievements and the pictorial evidence is particularly useful, providing parents with graphic examples of their child involved in practical life skills learning. There is good use of ASDAN methodology which supplements the evidence of the step by step approach to learning. There is regular contact between the staff and the parents by telephone once weekly and home/school books. This is a two-way communication system aimed at providing a full picture of the child's functioning in in the school and family setting in order to achieve a consistent approach. The parents express their satisfaction with the school's approach to information exchange with comments such as, 'communication is excellent between the school and myself via telephone and the contact book'.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

The school has striven to raise the standard of accommodation facilities so that the children experience the same comfort and homeliness that they have within their family setting. The bedrooms are decorated in a variety of colours and furnished to a high standard. The children can choose colour schemes and their parents are also heavily involved in the process, sometimes replicating, to some extent, the child's surroundings at home to reduce their anxiety. Individual staff play a prominent part in creating a pleasant living atmosphere for the children by producing high quality art work in bedrooms and communal areas reflecting favourite cartoon figures, such as, from 'jungle book', 'toy story' and 'pooh bear'. The staff demonstrate good awareness of conditions which cause distress to some children and are creative in alleviating their distress by focusing on such issues as lighting and glazing. Each residential unit has its own 'identity' and this is maintained through a good knowledge of the children's likes and dislikes, consultation with the children and their parents and, primarily, a desire to create a homely environment. The school has created more space in one residential unit through a building extension and has used the opportunity to upgrade bath, shower and toilet facilities as well as use the location features to enhance natural lighting and views from the unit for the benefit of the children.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

The school's statement of purpose provides all interested parties with the relevant information relating to the care and education of the children. It focuses, appropriately, on the range of need presented by the children and the philosophy of care implemented in practice. All services incorporated in the statement are effectively met and senior management are continually devising ways of improving practice, such as the database, which monitors behaviour management. There are sufficient staff in each residential unit, with children's needs dictating the appropriate level of staff available and their function. Where necessary, for instance, where there is a change in a child's circumstances or an increased level of risk, the staffing ratio is increased accordingly. Additional to the required level of staffing, the school continues to offer a number of young adults an 'apprenticeship' so that they can gain the relevant experience and attain the appropriate qualification to aspire to permanent positions on the staff team.

Currently there are four apprentices, who have each completed NVQ Level 2 qualification, and they play an important role in supporting the permanent team members. There are two team leaders in each residential unit to ensure that there is continuity of leadership. The children receive daily information about staff on duty, and are informed of any changes, through 'communication boards'. The staff receive regular formal supervision and informal support as required. Staff confirm that the formal supervision meetings are purposeful and the introduction of a staff appraisal process contributes to better performance management and professional progression. Other support mechanisms, include weekly team meetings, team leader meetings and effective senior-on call advice. The current head of care has been in post since September 2007. The school has managed this appointment extremely well, facilitating a six month handover period involving the previous head of care. This ensured that there was minimal disruption to the team and consequently to the children, whilst maintaining continuity of leadership and management. The head of care gives effective leadership to an experienced and committed staff team. Workloads are well organised and the staff rosters allow for handovers, weekly meetings and regular training. The school places much importance on training relevant to the needs of the children as well as NVQ qualification. There are a number of qualified NVQ assessors on the staff team and a designated member of staff is responsible for providing individual and group support, as required, to the staff and apprentices participating on NVQ qualifying courses. Team leaders are responsible for monitoring the care practice in their own units, particularly the implementation of care plans. The monitoring process is overseen by the head of care who checks and signs behaviour management records. A member of the governing body visits the school each term to inspect the care practice and prepares a report, a summary of which is sent to parents. The head teacher and the senior management team are also actively involved in the monitoring process and have a thorough knowledge of each child's needs and how the care practice contributes to meeting those needs.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
----------	--------	----------

### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):



## Annex

## Annex A

### National Minimum Standards for residential special school

#### 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)

**Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.**

#### 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 (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (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 and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

**Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### 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 within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

**Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.**

#### 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 at school (NMS 20)

**Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.**

## **Achieving economic well-being**

**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, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- 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)

**Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.**

## **Organisation**

**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 are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of 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)

**Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.**