

St Edward's School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Address	St. Edwards School Melchet Court Sherfield English ROMSEY Hampshire SO51 6ZR
Telephone number	01794 885252
Email	
Registered person	St Edward's School
Head of care	Lawrence Bartel
Head / Principal	Lawrence Bartel
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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

St Edwards School is an independent residential special school that provides care and education for boys aged between 10-17-plus who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school is a Charitable Trust owned and managed by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton, and is located in a large country house with extensive grounds, workshops, horticultural area and provides a range of sport and leisure opportunities. The school has a governing body that meets regularly and plays an active part in the school's operation. Boys attend the school during term time only, there are regular closed weekends and all boys are weekly boarders with the flexibility of day attendance, to meet the needs of individual pupils. Boys are referred to the school from a variety of placing authorities across the country, but predominantly from the south of England.

Summary

St Edwards provides an environment for its pupils within which they feel safe and are well cared for by an experienced and committed staff group who are skilled at working with boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school provides a safe physical environment and there is excellent provision for addressing pupils' individual needs, including those related to health. Communication and collaboration is extremely good between staff across the school and provides a consistency of approach to working with pupils who receive very good individual support and enjoy positive relationships with staff. The school communicates very effectively with parents and placing authorities, and there is excellent provision for consulting with pupils, and for celebrating their achievements. The school's staff group operate very effectively as a team, and the management structure contributes to the high standard of care provided for pupils. The overall monitoring of the school's operation is extremely good, but there is ineffective monitoring of complaints.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

The school has improved in the following areas since the previous inspection: A new school website was launched in February 2007 providing easily accessible information about the school as well as details of work and activities being undertaken by pupils. School network computers have also been installed in pupils' living areas. There is improved access to the professional services of both an educational and clinical psychologist, and a newly created post provides valuable outreach support for pupils who have been suspended or who are on individually tailored attendance programmes which are also a new development. A member of staff is currently being supported in undertaking a course in 'Art Therapy' with the aim of providing one to one art sessions for pupils. There are also improved relationships with the local police who have provided a named officer and contact number for emergencies. In addition, post 16 pupils now have access to their own common room and canteen area.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

There is excellent provision at the school for identifying and addressing both the routine and specific health needs of pupils. Admission procedures provide effective gathering of information on individual pupils prior to placement, including details of health needs, and there are efficient

systems in operation for devising individual health plans when necessary. The school's matron and assistant matron hold surgeries daily and operate an on call rota which provides 24 hour cover whenever pupils are in residence at the school. The matrons have an established, and extremely good relationship with the local surgery. Excellent support is provided from the local GP's, one of whom visits the school weekly, and the nurse practitioner who provides valuable information and advice in support of the matrons. The management and administration of medication within the school is carried out efficiently and provides adequate safeguards for the welfare of pupils, with the related records maintained appropriately. The majority of staff at the school are first aid trained and there is always a suitably qualified first aid person available. The health of pupils is extremely well promoted by the school. The school's Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship programme encourages the development of a healthy and safer lifestyle for pupils and covers such topics as drug awareness, sexual health, and smoking. In addition the school's matrons run a rolling programme of health promotion with a different topic every month. The matrons have a base located within the centre of the school which is easily accessible to pupils, and which has child friendly displays and DVD's relating to health promotion. The school is very pro active in relation to smoking, suitably encouraging pupils to give up, and providing particularly good support for those who wish to. The school also provides a balanced diet, and pupils are provided with a wide range of physical activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Pupil's privacy is appropriately respected within the school and confidential information is stored suitably securely. Clear guidelines are provided for staff in relation to privacy and confidentiality and these areas are covered within the induction process for new staff. Pupils and their parents are provided with good written information in relation to the school's complaints procedures. Pupils are suitably encouraged to share their concerns with staff and are also provided with the contact details for the school's independent persons and Ofsted. A complaints log is maintained within the school and shows a low level of complaints received. This is a reflection of the positive relationships that exist between pupils and staff, whereby pupils feel able to express concerns to staff who listen and deal effectively with any problems they may have. There is 'however', ineffective monitoring of complaints. There is very good provision at the school for protecting pupils from harm, including a nominated child protection liaison officer who has had training specific to the role. Staff have received relevant child protection training and display a sound awareness and understanding of child protection and the relevant reporting procedures. Staff also have easy access to supporting policy and procedures documents. Records of child protection issues are maintained appropriately and show the school to have acted in accordance with procedures when dealing with child protection related incidents. The school has very good links with external agencies, including the police and the local children's services department. Pupils feel safe at the school and do not consider bullying to be a problem. There is an appropriate anti bullying policy in place and relevant written information is provided for pupils and their parents. Incidents of bullying do occur but pupils report them to be dealt with effectively by staff. There is extremely good information and advice provided for all pupils on the subjects of 'bullying' and 'staying safe' via the school's Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship programme. In addition, the subject of bullying is covered as part of the matrons' monthly health promotion action plan which includes posters being displayed within the school. Pupils benefit from staff who are appropriately trained and skilled in managing their behaviour. There are clear expectations of behaviour and clearly defined boundaries that pupils are made aware of, and which staff apply consistently

and in a positive manner. The approach used by staff is based upon the principles of 'reality therapy' and encourages the development of positive behaviours. Pupils are able to earn rewards for positive behaviour and the school is extremely good at celebrating pupils' achievements. There is excellent provision within the school for supporting individual pupils with anger management programmes. A dedicated and suitably qualified member of staff works with individual pupils who are able to self refer and take part on a voluntary basis only. Pupils feel the school rules to be fair and to be fairly applied by staff. The use of sanctions is appropriately recorded and includes pupils' signatures. The sanctions used are in line with the school's policy. Staff are appropriately trained in the management of challenging behaviour including the use of physical intervention techniques, and records of physical interventions are appropriately maintained. The majority of such incidents when they do occur are of short duration and pupils are routinely consulted for their views on how incidents have been managed. The overall standard of pupils' behaviour is extremely good. There is very good provision at the school for ensuring pupils enjoy a safe and secure environment. Staff are made aware of their individual responsibility in relation to health and safety and any reported hazards are dealt with appropriately. Annual audits of health and safety across the school are carried out by an external specialist company and action is taken to address any recommendations made. Effective systems are in place for managing risk, including those associated with activities undertaken by pupils, both on and off-site, and including trips overseas. The checking and testing of fire safety equipment is carried out and recorded as required, pupils know the fire evacuation procedures and regular fire drills are held. An up to date fire risk assessment is in place and the fire safety arrangements have been deemed satisfactory by the fire authority. There are appropriate arrangements in place for the security of the building both day and night, and visitors are required to sign in upon entering the building. The school does not have a comprehensive crisis contingency plan in place. The school's recruitment procedures are in accord with the National Minimum Standards and provide appropriate safeguards for the welfare of children. Staff are being recruited in line with the procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The school's care staff provide very good support for pupils in relation to their education. There is good communication and collaboration between care and education staff which pupils benefit from, and which is enhanced by some staff working in both settings. Statements of special educational need, individual education plans, and annual review reports are routinely accessible to the school's care staff, who also provide social reports for individual pupil reviews. All annual reviews are used as a means of celebrating pupils achievements and the school's practice in this area is a recognised strength. Pupils receive appropriate help with their homework and care staff also provide effective support for pupils experiencing difficulties during the school day. Computers providing access to the school's network are available within the residential accommodation, and there is good access to the school's library. Pupils benefit from very good levels of individual support within the school and its residential provision. All pupils have allocated key workers and clear and concise individual plans are devised to address identified need. Psychologists provide very good support for individual pupils, including home visits, and there is excellent provision for outreach work with pupils who are suspended or on reduced attendance programmes. Extremely good individual work is also being carried out with pupils in relation to anger management. Positive relationships between pupils and staff means that boys are able to approach a variety of staff with any concerns they may have, and there is also very good access to the schools independent person who visits the school regularly. The school

places a strong emphasis on pupils investing in the school and work hard to achieve this. The sense of community at the school is fostered successfully by 'Rainbow Days'. These are events which take place twice annually and involve groups of disabled children from the local area visiting the school with their carers and taking part in a wide range of activities, assisted and supported by pupils.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils benefit from their positive relationships with staff within the school, they are appropriately consulted, and there are frequent opportunities for them to express their views and opinions. There is a culture of pupil involvement within the school, an example of which is the 'thought for the day', an early morning gathering in the school's chapel where staff and pupils contribute collectively to provide a positive start to the day. There is also an elected school council which operates effectively in representing the views of pupils, regular year group meetings take place, pupils are routinely consulted about their individual plans, and they participate in the reviewing process. In addition, pupils are able to approach staff and feel listened to, they are able to make appropriate choices as part of their everyday lives in the school, and their parents are appropriately informed and consulted. There are clear and effective processes in place for devising, monitoring, and reviewing individual plans for pupils. Individual care plans are excellent working documents which relate clearly to the overall objectives of the placement as detailed in pupils' statements of special educational need, and additional plans are devised to address specific areas of identified need. These include social plans, behaviour plans, and action plans relating to health needs. All pupils also have statements of special educational need which are reviewed annually, and individual education plans addressing the needs identified in their statement. Pupils and their parents are routinely involved in the planning process, and participate fully in the annual review process. Individual plans are signed by pupils. There is good provision at the school for enabling pupils to maintain contact with their families and friends. Telephones are available in all residential bases and are able to be used in private. The majority of pupils also have mobile phones which they can use during the evenings. Parents describe having excellent communication with the school and being kept informed about matters concerning their children.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is not judged.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Pupils and their parents receive good written information about the school and how it operates. The information provided is presented in an accessible format and includes colourful photographs of pupils and staff undertaking a variety of activities in both educational and recreational settings. An informative handbook contains comprehensive details about all aspects of the school's day to day operation. Recent copies of the school's termly newsletter, and Ofsted inspection reports, are also routinely provided. All of the school's promotional literature and information documents are reviewed on an annual basis and are also accessible via the school's website. Pupils benefit from a consistency of staffing, provided by a staff group who operate extremely effectively as a team. Levels of staffing are excellent, providing appropriate supervision and enabling the needs of pupils to be well met. Pupils know which staff are on duty during

the day and at night, and they are cared for by both male and female staff. Sickness and absences are well covered from within the staff group and agency staff are not used. The school's overall management structure operates extremely efficiently and contributes effectively to the provision of a high standard of care to pupils. There are clear lines of accountability, staff receive excellent support through regular supervision, and are also subject to appraisal. The school's pupil services manager, and care manager, provide clear leadership for a staff group who possess considerable relevant experience, have formal qualifications applicable to the setting, and are very skilled at working with pupils at the school. There is very good provision for training and the ongoing professional development of staff. The staff rota provides appropriately protected time for staff to attend meetings and complete paperwork tasks. There are clear systems across the school for the monitoring, both internally and externally, of matters relating to the welfare of children, in accordance with the National Minimum Standards. Examples of effective monitoring include risk assessments, sanctions, physical interventions and accidents. The records of complaints 'however' are not being monitored effectively. Monitoring visits are also carried out on a regular basis by representatives of the school's governing body who play a very active role in the school's operation.

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
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Recommendations

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

- review and improve the current procedures for the monitoring of complaints. (Welfare Concern) (NMS 4)
- devise a crisis contingency plan incorporating planned responses to a range of foreseeable crises. (NMS 31)

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.