

# Sidestrand Hall School

Inspection report for residential special school

---

|                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | SC042606     |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 5 March 2008 |
| <b>Inspector</b>               | Clive Lucas  |
| <b>Type of Inspection</b>      | Key          |

---

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Address</b>                 | Sidestrand Hall School<br>Cromer Road<br>Sidestrand<br>CROMER<br>Norfolk<br>NR27 0NH |
| <b>Telephone number</b>        | 01263 578144   |
| <b>Email</b>                   |  |
| <b>Registered person</b>       | Norfolk County Council Children's Services   |
| <b>Head of care</b>            | Sarah Fee  |
| <b>Head / Principal</b>        | Sarah Fee  |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 15 January 2007  |

---

© Crown copyright 2008

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**

Sidestrand Hall School is a day and a residential special school maintained by Norfolk County Council situated on the North Norfolk coast. The school caters for children with moderate learning difficulties and associated behaviour problems aged from seven to 16 years. Set in approximately 10 acres, the site is a conservation area and includes woodland and gardens which are used by the children in their environmental science studies and accredited courses. There are places for 105 children, a maximum of 21 can board for up to four nights from Monday to Friday. The residential provision presently comprises of three separate units situated in the main school building catering for girls, boys and children with more complex needs respectively. The school aims to provide a small group living experience in a safe, supportive and sensitive environment for those children where a specific need has been identified.

### **Summary**

This inspection was announced and looked at the key National Minimum Standards and also the accommodation (Standard 24). The School provides an overall good standard of care for the children. The outcome group for Enjoying and Achieving is judged as outstanding; outcome groups for Being Healthy, Staying Safe, Positive Contribution and Organisation are judged as good. The outcome group for Economic Wellbeing is judged as satisfactory, this judgement is based solely on National Minimum Standard 24 (Accommodation) which was the only one in the group looked at during this inspection. The school has substantial strengths that benefit the children who board there. Several recommendations have been made, a number of which will require only minimal work in order to meet the National Minimum Standards. Some relate to matters identified in the previous inspection report (January 2007), although work has begun to address these it has not yet been completed.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

Following the previous inspection on 15th January 2007, recommendations were made relating to: managing soiled laundry; completion of health and placement plans; provision of guidance for staff and policies; supervision and appraisal of staff and reviewing the responsibilities of the head of care. Soiled laundry is now dealt with by the school laundry, rather than being laundered in residential kitchens. There has been liaison with the environmental health officer to ensure that waste disposal and laundry is managed in a way which does not jeopardise the health of children. Health plans and placement plans are now recorded in a way which meets the National Minimum Standards and supports staff in identifying and meeting children's individual needs. Work has taken place on written guidance for staff on privacy and confidentiality and a staffing policy, but they are not yet in place. The new staff handbook is not yet available for staff. The responsibilities of the head of care have been reviewed, but regular planned supervision and appraisal of staff is not happening. While staff care of children is of a good standard it is important to have written guidance and policies to ensure that this continues to be the case and that expectations of staff are clear. Supervision and appraisal are important to monitor and improve the quality of care that children receive.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children who board at the school live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted. Children's files contain details of contacts with dentists, opticians, hospitals and specialist health services. Children receive guidance and support through Physical, Health, Social, Citizenship and Emotional (PHSCE) lessons. When children are in boarding areas residential staff will support the work that has been done in school about healthy living. Medical issues such as dentist and routine medical matters are usually dealt with by parents, but the school will provide such support as the children need. Staff deal with children's personal hygiene and care needs sensitively. First aid boxes are kept in the boarding areas and staff are trained in first aid and handling medicines. This helps to safeguard children. Staff ensure that medication is stored safely so as to prevent children getting inappropriate access to it. They keep records of the administration of medicines and take additional precautions when handling controlled drugs. Overall the records of medicines are well kept, but a very few instances were noted when they were not fully clear, such as when prescriptions changed. The children's escorts transfer their medicines between school and home. The school insist that it is always received in the original container with prescription details (otherwise the child does not board that night). Staff keep appropriate records of accidents that children have; senior staff monitor accident and medicine records.

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

The provision is good.

Staff respect children's privacy. Children confirm that staff knock on bedroom doors and wait for a response before entering and that they have privacy when bathing or showering. Staff are aware of the potential conflicts of providing privacy and supervision of children to keep them safe. They keep information on children securely to safeguard the children's confidentiality. There is a pay telephone in each boarding area which children can use in private. Guidance for staff on privacy and confidentiality has not yet been provided as was recommended in the previous inspection report of January 2007. Some children are not familiar with a complaints procedure, although complaints leaflets are available to them and complaints information is included in the children's guide. All children who were spoken with during the inspection said that they are able to tell staff if they are unhappy about anything, so despite the lack of awareness that some of them have about a complaints procedure, they are able raise concerns. Senior staff keep records of complaints and their outcomes. The welfare of children is promoted and they are protected from abuse. Staff are trained in child protection and have easy access to child protection procedures and guidance. The head of care keeps appropriate child protection records. The school has links with the Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB) through the Children's Services Department. Children are protected from bullying, they did not report any instances of bullying during the inspection. The school does good work on preventing bullying across both education and boarding time. Any incidents of bullying are taken seriously; in persistent cases the head teacher may ask parents of the bully and the person who has been bullied into the school to discuss the problem. There have not been any instances of children leaving the school grounds without permission. Children are helped and encouraged to develop appropriate behaviour. Staff use very few sanctions, those that they do use are appropriate. Records are kept of sanctions and children are encouraged to record their view of the sanction and to sign the form. Names of staff are included in the records, but they are not always signed by staff. Children know what behaviour is expected of them. No restraints have been used in

boarding time. Children state that when they are restrained (during education time) that it is done properly. Staff are trained in managing challenging behaviour and restraint. There are positive and appropriate relationships between children and boarding staff. A 'calm room' is used during school time where children have an opportunity to calm down on their own or with a member of staff. Staff may escort children to this room using a team teach double elbow hold, but staff would stop if the child struggled so that this could not be managed. A senior member of staff is always present when children use the calm room. There is no recorded policy for the room's use. Children know what to do in the event of a fire and they take part in regular evacuation drills at different times of the day. Staff test the fire alarm system regularly. A service report on the fire alarm system dated the 11th December 2007 recommended replacing the fire alarm panel, but this had not been done at the time of the inspection and there was no date for it to be done. Some fire doors are kept open temporarily at times when children are in the boarding areas. Risk assessments and safety checks are carried out to provide a safe environment for children boarding at the school. There are recruitment procedures to help ensure that children are not looked after by unsuitable staff. The school obtains written references and these are checked by telephone; employment histories are obtained and Criminal Records Bureau checks take place. However, in one recent appointment of a member of teaching staff, a List 99 check was not obtained before they commenced work with a previous Criminal Records Bureau check, as required under Department of Children, Schools and Families guidance.

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

The provision is outstanding.

There are very good links between the education and school staff. These allow children the opportunity to benefit from consistent messages and the reinforcement of issues such as bullying and healthy eating over both education and boarding time. Boarding staff are aware of the educational needs of the children and work is done in boarding time towards educational packages, making use of the boarding environment. The chef and a dietician recently helped the boarders to cook a meal. Staff help children with their homework. Children receive very good individual support, especially at times of personal stress. Children confirm that they are able to speak to staff about any concerns or worries that they have. Guidance and support is provided by Physical, Health, Social, Citizenship and Emotional (PHSCE) lessons and there are links with outside agencies to provide additional and specialised support for children.

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

The provision is good.

Children are supported and encouraged to express their views and staff listen to them. There is a school council with pupil representatives on it. Children know who their representatives are and can ask them to raise issues. Children are consulted over issues such as menus and activities. Children have their needs assessed. Each child has a residential placement plan which outlines their needs and how they will be met. Some plans are more comprehensive than others, but all contain at least the minimum required information. Children say that staff are fun, kind and caring. The school has an independent listener who visits the school once a term; a school governor also visits once a term, alternating with the independent listener. Children do not board full time and some only board for one or two nights a week. They can telephone parents on the payphones or the school's cordless telephones and parents can telephone into the school to speak to their children. Staff maintain contact with parents and carers.

## Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

There have been historical problems with the roof leaking and although this has been rectified, it has resulted in some damage to the decoration of the boarding area. There has been a delay in addressing some of the decorating and maintenance issues due to staff illness. However, the decoration and maintenance of children's bedrooms has been prioritised and children do not identify any problems with their accommodation. All children have single bedrooms that are appropriately furnished and decorated. While some rooms may have two beds in, only one child will occupy it at any one time and each will have their own bed. Children are able to personalise their bedrooms with pictures and posters. Children can use the pay telephones in private.

## Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a school brochure that includes the school's statement of purpose, but has out of date contact details for the Commission for Social care Inspection rather than Ofsted. There is a children's guide to boarding that provides information for children in an appropriate format. Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently. There are adequate numbers of staff to look after the children and meet the school's statement of purpose. Children are well supervised during the day and are able to find a member of staff when they need one during the night. The school does not have an up to date staffing policy. Children are able to build stable and appropriate relationships with staff due to the consistency of staffing and the skills of staff. Staff have good access to informal supervision and support from the senior staff, but formal supervision is very infrequent. There is not currently a system of annual appraisals. There is not a care staff handbook as recommended at the previous inspection. The school is efficiently run, which brings benefits to the children. Monitoring by senior staff takes place regularly. Children receive care from experienced and competent staff. The head of care is experienced and working towards his NVQ Level 4. A wide range of training is provided to help staff to provide good quality and appropriate care for children. This training includes NVQ Level 3 in health and social care with a view to bringing the level of staff with this or an equivalent qualification up to the levels set out in the National Minimum Standards.

## 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):

- maintain clear record of all medication given to children (NMS 14.20)
- provide procedural guidance for staff on privacy and confidentiality (NMS 3.2)

- 
- ensure that staff sign all records of sanctions (NMS 10.9)
  - develop and record a policy on the use of the calm room which is consistent with relevant current government guidance (NMS 10.2 and 10.11)
  - ensure that action is taken to remedy any deficiency in the fire alarm system (NMS 26.6)
  - keep children, staff and visitors safe from risks of fire by ensuring that fire doors are not kept open (26.1)
  - ensure that appropriate recruitment checks take place before a member of staff begins work (NMS 27.7)
  - ensure that boarding areas are maintained to a good state of decorative repair (NMS 24.3)
  - ensure that the school brochure includes only up to date information (NMS 1.1)
  - ensure that there is an up to date staffing policy (NMS 28.2)
  - provide planned supervision for all staff working in the boarding environment (NMS 30.2)
  - provide staff with written guidance on procedures and policy that is kept up to date (NMS 30.7)
  - provide formal annual appraisals for all staff. (NMS 30.6)



## 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.**