

# St Mary's Wrestwood Children's Trust

Inspection report for residential special school

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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 Mary's is a non maintained, mixed, special school in Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex for pupils with speech, language and social communication difficulties. Many pupils have additional areas of need including moderate learning difficulties, physical disability, hearing impairment, autistic spectrum disorder or complex medical difficulties. There are approximately double the number of boys to girls. Of the 126 young people attending the school 102 are residential.

### **Summary**

This visit took place to carry out the annual inspection of the school in relation to the facilities for supporting boarders. All key standards were inspected and additionally two standards in Achieving Economic Wellbeing. There were no recommendations made at the last inspection.

The overall quality rating is good.

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

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

There were no recommendations or actions set at the last inspection.

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

The provision is good.

The Trust is pro-active in meeting the health needs of each pupil or student, understanding that the significant base line of good health underpins all other achievements and progress. In depth health assessments are carried out in the initial stages after referral and, once admitted, they are reflected on for each annual or Looked after Child (LAC) review. Each young person's health needs are known to staff and all aspects of their care are managed sensitively. Staff are consistent in their encouragement, praising each young person appropriately and individually. Through close liaison and team work between staff, the nursing team and therapists, the complex needs of the young people are met. Health promotion is an integral part of the residential experience and includes healthy living, exercise, relaxation and the teaching of specific tasks, such as hand washing to underpin infection control. Health needs that develop during the term are managed by the nursing team who inform families swiftly and advise the care staff as needed. The sick bay has been refurbished; a monitor is present for the young person's safety. Staff sit with them as necessary and parents are encouraged to take their children home, for their comfort and to stop the spread of infection. The Medical Officer conducts a twice weekly surgery at the Trust and consultants in paediatrics and orthopaedics visit during the year. Staff support the young people during external health appointments, in liaison with their families. There is close contact between staff and families, and from questionnaires returned by parents they state; 'St Mary's has been systematic and tenacious in making sure that he is monitored, keeping his hospital visits and that between home and school the corrective treatments are carried out'. The Trust directly employs thirty therapists who deliver Speech and Language therapy (SALT), physiotherapy, occupational therapy, audiology, art therapy and psychology to support the health care needs of the young people. The nurses and therapists are professionally registered and responsible for their own professional supervision. The care staff are trained in food hygiene, first aid, moving and lifting as well as medical procedures, for the protection of the young people and themselves. The school and college offer seminars to parents, some of which involve health matters; these provide

information to support their understanding of holistic development as well as a forum for discussion. Feedback from parents confirms that this is helpful and they find their contact with other parents most supportive. The Boarding Areas are maintained to ensure a good level of cleanliness, ventilation and management of resources. There has been significant investment in wet rooms, which are appropriately situated to ensure that the young people can develop self caring skills with privacy and dignity; there is appropriate staff support as they need or request it. Pictorial or widgeit information sheets assist the young people in developing improved oral hygiene and hand washing; these are appropriately placed in the Boarding Areas. The young people assist in the preparation of healthy meals and snacks, if they wish, and staff are enthusiastic in their support. Many college students prepare their own meals as part of a managed programme and plan menus and shop under the guidance of staff. There are varied and healthy meals provided in the dining room by a knowledgeable catering team. They liaise with staff and contribute their observations in a timely way. Secondary dispensing of medication takes place in the College Boarding Areas each morning and evening, so the young people are not having to travel to the main site for medication. No young person self medicates. There is training in place for Residential staff facilitated by the Nursing Team on the protocol for safe administration of medication.

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

The provision is good.

Intimate care routinely provided ensures privacy and dignity for each young person. The young people do not raise concerns about this area of their care, nor do parents in feedback surveys. Some young people have to move to another Boarding Area if they remain at the school or college over a weekend, when their Boarding Area is closed. Some are accommodated in spare assessment beds but others use young people's vacated bed space, necessitating the moving of personal possessions to accommodate them. There is no procedure in place to ensure consistency in managing this process. There are very few complaints about St Mary's School; once received they are dealt with swiftly by the Principal. However not all complaints are recorded. Parents and young people are aware of how to raise a complaint. The latter use the School Council or College Forum and Boarding Area meetings; these are minuted and show a low level of complaints with appropriate consequential actions. The school's social worker is the named person for safeguarding and is the Independent Person for the young people, a service that is frequently and successfully used by them. She manages the staff training and oversees the associated policies and procedures in regard to safeguarding. With closer links to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) the young people are protected within the school and work experience environment. The Trust employs an Art Psychotherapist and there are weekly emotional and psychological support service meetings to ensure that these needs are fully met. All external sites that the young people attend are risk assessed by providers of the service, who all receive the personal risk assessment of each young person attending. These clear communications ensure a safe experience for the young people. No young person raised bullying as a concern. Minutes of meetings identify that where staff have concerns, they are guided in how to manage them to provide a consistent approach for the young people. Similarly, appropriate procedures are in place to manage any situation where a young person may go missing. Staff are clear as to their responsibility and such situations are rare. The culture of behaviour management is to provide good role models as well as offering encouragement and praise for the young people's achievements. Skilled staff maximise achievements for each young person through well managed activities and routines. Sanctions are judged as fair by pupils and students. Parents state: 'Our son's behaviour has improved markedly and St Mary's

has taught him to be fair, kind, honest and thoughtful'. All staff contribute to maintaining the health and safety of the school to a good standard, co-ordinated by the Estates Manager. The school has robust procedures in place to recruit new staff. All criminal record bureau (CRB) checks are now on a rolling programme to meet the three year cycle; all governors have an appropriate checks in place.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The school achieved a rating of outstanding in the last education inspection in 2005. 'Pupils achieve well because they receive expert help and a broad range of experiences'. The 24 hour waking curriculum is supported by all staff, in all areas of the daily routine for each young person. Handovers are detailed and pertinent ensuring that the young people are supported by informed staff at all times. Feedback from parents is extremely positive; 'There is no doubt that my son would not have achieved the levels he has managed there, elsewhere'. Facilitators work across education and care offering a seamless provision of good quality. Care staff ensure that quality care supports each young person to attend and achieve in education. Young people received informed and individualised support suited to their needs. Many of the young people at St Mary's present with difficulties in socialising and being part of a group. Staff are skilled to engage with each young person at the level of their individual needs. Parents responding prior to the inspection said 'the outcomes due to physiotherapy input & effort have been exceptional'. Other parents comment that they are informed weekly and can telephone anytime; 'they put me in touch with outside agencies if they think that they can help me'.

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

The provision is good.

The voice of the child is evident at St Mary's. The young people happily show their activities, daily routines and residential Boarding Areas. They speak about time spent in school activities; horse riding and stable management is a favourite, and staff actively support them to work through their homework in a positive way. The 'independent travel scheme' that St Mary's use, is very structured. It supports the students in learning to safely move around the campus alone and eventually travel outside the school. They may be accompanied by staff initially, then staff observe that all tasks have been safely achieved whereby the student is able to make their own travel arrangements and safely seek help if concerned. The school council, with its elected participants, allows the young people to inform senior managers and hear how their term is progressing. House meetings inform the representatives of issues to take forward from each Boarding Area. Both meetings are minuted and available to the young people, though not in a widgeit format. Care plans in the Boarding Areas give limited information to staff to guide them to meet the needs of each young person. The health care plan, held by the nursing team, is not copied into the care plan. Following an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) review the care plan, discussed in detail at that meeting, is up dated by staff. The school reviews each young person's plan of care annually, or as necessary, and contributes to the looked after children (LAC) reviews as appropriate. Outcomes for the young people's care are good and parents feedback supports this; 'the staff are very thorough and take good care of each child as an individual'. Contact is valued by staff and facilitated as appropriate to meet the needs of each young people and their circumstances.

## **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

Not all pupils transfer to the College provision, from the school, as their admission depends on their ability to develop independent skills. The College offers three years of education from 16 to 19 years with a full timetable to meet physical, emotional and social development, educational qualifications and independence progression. Some of this provision is delivered at local Further Education (FE) colleges. College students are offered a range of activities in their leisure time that continues to encourage development of holistic skills. Independence is consistently encouraged, on and off campus, and parents confirm involvement in their young people's progress and future plans. 'The quality of boarding accommodation is outstanding', stated the Ofsted school report of 2005 and provision is constantly being evaluated to meet the needs of the resident young people. Refurbishment is in progress at present to provide better facilities in North Lodge. The Trust has made significant improvements by the provision of wet rooms with ample curtaining allowing the young people maximum privacy and permitting staff to aid if necessary. Occupational therapists have been consulted throughout the planning to ensure that the young people benefit from the building changes and that these meet legislative requirements. Notice boards in all the Boarding Areas are well presented, colourful and informative with timetables and activity plans in pictorial and widget format. The young people use the images to remind themselves, and explain to others, their daily and weekly routines and responsibilities.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

St Mary's statement of intent and supporting brochures clarify the support that all young people may expect to receive at the St Mary's, to enable them to reach their potential. A children's guide is available in text and pictures explaining the numbers of young people accommodated in each Boarding Area, their daily routine, the activities available and how these may contribute to the young person's Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) award. Staffing through the day ensures that each Boarding Area is staffed to provide support, should a boarding young person become unwell. The residential staff are also available to attend to documentation and personally contribute to multi-disciplinary meetings which are scheduled during the day. Cover at night varies in relation to age; some Boarding Areas have one waking and one sleeping staff whilst others have two staff sleeping in. Staff speak of being well supervised with new staff having weekly supervision. Some supervision is informal and not all is recorded. Appraisals are in place and being successfully managed for all staff. All residential staff are experienced and over half hold qualifications in the care of young people. The acting head of care is an assessor and able to support those candidates following Health and Social Care qualifications with a local college. The facilitators, who work across education and care, are nearly fifty percent qualified with the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3, or equivalent. Internal monitoring is addressed, but the system cannot be easily tracked. The responsibility is delegated and information collated in a number of places. Not all controlled drugs medication records are complete or a procedure in place to evidence a clear audit trail of medication balances. Similarly, not all complaints, sanctions, physical interventions are fully recorded as required by the NMS. Assumptions about accident recordings create confusion. However, since the new Head of College has been appointed an improved monitoring system is being piloted, although it does not currently capture all the required areas from the NMS. The termly visit undertaken by the Governors, or completed on their behalf, does have a

monitoring role but cannot be effective if the entries are incomplete. The frequency of recorded visits has not been six times per year from evidence seen at inspection.

## **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):

- ensure that internal monitoring can be evidenced to meet the requirements of Standard 32.2. NMS 32



## 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.**