

St Mary's Wrestwood Children's Trust

Inspection report for residential special school

Unique reference number	SC050390
Inspection date	11 March 2010
Inspector	Angela Gunning / Paul Taylor
Type of Inspection	Key

Address	Wrestwood Road BEXHILL-ON-SEA East Sussex TN40 2LU
Telephone number	01424 730740
Email	adm@st-marys.bexhill.sch.uk
Registered person	St Mary's Wrestwood Children's Trust
Head of care	
Head / Principal	Neil Masterton
Date of last inspection	13 November 2008

© Crown copyright 2010

Website: 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

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 Wrestwood Children's Trust is a non-maintained, mixed, special school in Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex for young people with speech, language and social communication difficulties. Many of the young people have additional areas of need including moderate learning difficulties, physical disability, hearing impairment, autistic spectrum disorder or complex medical difficulties. The Trust follows a waking curriculum whereby activities, academic learning and leisure pursuits all support each young person's learning and development. A multi-disciplinary team of staff provides cohesive care and support across the full 24 hour period, whereby each young person is supported to achieve.

Summary

This was an announced key inspection and included a three day visit to the school in March 2010. The inspection looked at outcomes for the key national minimum standards for children and young people who are educated and board in a residential special school. The visit provided the opportunity to talk with a wide range of people, such as the senior leadership group, care and education staff, nurses and governors. The inspectors met with a number of the young people over the three days. In addition, the young people, their parents and other adults completed surveys. The feedback continues to be very positive.

This inspection found that the school continues to provide an exceptional high quality care provision for the young people. The residential provision clearly supports and promotes the young people in their learning and helps them achieve their potential. The planning and support given to the young people to help them with independent living is outstanding. Staff know the young people and their individual needs very well. Each young person's needs and idiosyncrasies are well known and staff work very closely across the 24 hour curriculum to ensure they receive the support and nurturing needed. One parent said, 'staff have a profound knowledge and understanding of our sons needs and limitations.'

There is a competent and dedicated staff team who are experienced, qualified and skilled in caring appropriately for the young people. The young people confirm there are enough staff to help them in the activities they want to be involved in. Parents said, 'staff are remarkable', 'all the staff are extremely professional and dedicated', 'they are excellent and they all seem to have fun.'

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the school was asked that sanctions issued within the residences were adequately monitored. All sanctions are now regularly monitored to ensure they are appropriate, fair and consistent.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The young people's physical, psychological and emotional health needs are met to an exceptional standard. The multi professional approach to meeting each young person's specific health and

welfare needs is embedded within the ethos of the school. On site expertise is available from health professionals such as a psychologist, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and art psychotherapist. There is excellent multi-disciplinary liaison and planning carried out both within the school team and with outside agencies. Each young person has their medical history and current health needs clearly identified within their individual learning plan (ILP).

There is robust management of medication to ensure the young people's medication needs are met well. All young people have written parental consent for medical treatment. A team of nurses offer oversight and expertise in the areas of medication, first aid and treatment. The nurses monitor administration and storage of medication thoroughly and conscientiously. There are clear guidelines for the safe storage, administration and handling of medication, including controlled drugs. The school has clear guidance and training for staff to ensure they have experience and knowledge when assisting the young people to take their medication.

The school continues to achieve the healthy schools silver award status, which is proudly displayed in the school entrance. There is an outstanding and well coordinated personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. PSHE is an integral part of the 24 curriculum and is well supported by all staff. The young people confirm that they are looked after when they are unwell. The school actively promotes the importance of physical health and fitness by offering the young people an extensive range of sports and activities.

The young people continue to enjoy a healthy balanced diet that meets their needs and choices. The food offered is varied and healthy. The young people confirm they like the food both at lunchtime and in the evenings. The young people are actively involved in planning, shopping and preparing meals. They have very positive and communicative relationships with the catering staff. During the inspection one young person asked for a chocolate cake for his birthday party. The catering staff are well aware of any specific dietary needs whether these are based on religious, cultural or medical grounds. There is very proactive and collaborative working with staff in the management of those young people with special dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Young people, staff and visitors are safeguarded through robust health and safety procedures. Health and safety records are maintained to a high standard. There are comprehensive risk assessments in place for various aspects of health and safety and they are reviewed appropriately. All safety checks, such as electricity, gas, water are carried out as required. All premises and the general site have risk assessments. Risk assessments are also undertaken for all activities the young people are involved in.

There are very good measures in place to ensure the young people are safeguarded. High levels of staff awareness and support has meant that no young people have been missing. All members of staff are aware of each young person's vulnerability if they go missing. There is a clear protocol to follow if a young person is absent without permission. Robust systems ensure that any child protection concerns are addressed rigorously and promptly. There are appropriate policies and procedures to ensure all concerns are well co-ordinated. The named staff member for safeguarding plays a key part in this process and ensures that all necessary agencies are informed promptly of any issues. All members of staff receive child protection training and are aware of what to do in the event that they have concerns about a young person's welfare.

Records indicate that there are robust recruitment procedures in place to fully safeguard the young people. The young people are monitored in a safe and secure setting. There is excellent monitoring in place for all visitors to St Mary's and keypad entry for all external doors prevents inappropriate public access to the young people. There are good measures in place to respect the young people's confidentiality and privacy. Staff demonstrate respect for the young people's privacy and have a clear understanding of how to maintain confidentiality. Confidential information relating to young people is kept in appropriately secure facilities. Personal care is offered to young people in a sensitive manner and following protocols established by input from parents and other relevant professionals. This information is recorded in the young person's safeguarding intimate care (SIC) plan.

St Mary's has good arrangements in place to counter bullying and ensures where it does occur that it is well managed. Clear messages are given to young people that bullying is not accepted. There are high levels of supervision to maintain order in a nurturing way. Emphasis is placed on close supervision and support for the young people. Staff have a very good awareness of the dynamics and individual behaviours of the young people.

There is a clear and robust complaint policy and procedure that is made available to the young people and their relatives or representatives. The young people are aware of the complaints procedure. They have numerous individuals to whom they can make representation such as care staff, teaching staff, numerous therapists, senior members of staff and the trust's social worker. The young people confirm they feel able to raise their concerns and are confident that they will be listened to. Complaints are well managed. Concerns raised by young people are managed informally and co-ordinated through one person so that trends and themes can be monitored. Formal complaints are appropriately investigated, recorded and monitored by governors.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The young people's education is promoted extremely well. There is a very effective whole school approach to learning. The school is fully embracing a 24 hour curriculum whereby the care staff support each young person's individual learning needs and encourage their personal, social and educational achievement. The residential provision clearly supports and promotes the young people in their learning and helps them achieve their potential. One parent said, 'St Mary's provides a "real life" setting to practice skills e.g. shopping/money, cooking and laundry.' The residential provision provides opportunity for additional learning, such as independence and social skills. Care staff are familiar with the young people's educational needs and progress. Each young person has an individual learning plan (ILP) that clearly identifies their individual learning needs. One parent said, 'school use the ILPs to maintain a true 24 hour curriculum.' There are excellent communication arrangements between academic and care staff to share information which assists in supporting the young people during school and residential time. The young people are fully involved in setting targets and reviewing their progress. The school has an outstanding annual review process. The young people contribute and participate fully in the process and produce and deliver a power point presentation to assist in the review meeting.

The arrangements in place to provide the young people with a wide range of activities are excellent and is a strength of the school. There is an extensive programme of extra curricular

activities and the young people confirm that there is a lot to do in the evenings and weekends. One parent said that there is an, 'incredibly broad range of activities available to the students after the college day and the support they need to access them.' The school operates a successful award scheme development and accreditation network and Duke of Edinburgh Award programme. It is clear that the young people are given many opportunities to experience events and occasions which enrich and develop their progress, for example, the 'interact club' (junior rotary group), in which the young people organise events to raise money for a range of good causes. St Mary's has also been successful in the Hastings Plaza art project, where some young people now have their art work on display.

There are excellent arrangements in place to support the young people and the level of individual support offered to them is outstanding. Staff know the young people and their individual needs very well. Each young person's needs and idiosyncrasies are known and the staff work very closely across the 24 hour curriculum to ensure each young person receives the support and nurturing they need. There is very good communication arrangement between the school and residential provision. Appropriate support is given to each young person dependent on their current level of need, which is identified and planned for each day. Parents said, 'staff have a profound knowledge and understanding of our sons needs and limitations', 'the whole care team know my child, they understand his communication, his likes and dislikes and all his needs' and 'the school does well at catering for each child's individual needs and irons out any problems or difficulties quickly.'

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The young people are given many opportunities to communicate their views and make suggestions, choices and decisions. It is clear that the young people's views are listened to and considered as a contribution to the development of the school. The school council is an effective voice for the young people and they confirm they feel listened to. Weekly young people's meetings are held on all residential areas. Young people can also share their views and make decisions through their annual reviews, PSHE discussion groups and student forums. As a result of the student voice, there are DVDs and satellite television across all boarding areas, more choice on menus, more choice of weekend activities and more involvement of the young people in planning these.

A comprehensive care planning system is in place. The process is detailed and involves multi-disciplinary input to ensure the individual needs of each young person are met well. Each young person has an ILP that outlines their identified education, health and care needs and targets. These ILPs are linked to the Every Child Matters (ECM) outcome areas and are reviewed regularly. Those young people who require intimate personal care have a safeguarding intimate care (SIC) plan to ensure staff manage the young people safely, with respect and dignity.

There is appropriate support given to the young people to have contact with their family and friends. The young people have their own mobile phones and the residential accommodation have telephones and email facilities they can use.

There are excellent procedures in place to ensure that the young people join and leave the school and college in a planned and sensitive manner. A rigorous and comprehensive assessment process is carried out for each young person to ensure their needs can be met appropriately. The young people's representatives are given detailed information prior to admission. Admissions

are reviewed within four weeks. Transition planning is well coordinated and carried out effectively. A transition advisor ensures there is cohesive transition and manages the process through close liaison with parents and college staff. Excellent transition plans are put in place.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is outstanding.

The young people are provided an excellent standard of residential accommodation. There are ten houses providing residential accommodation, two of which are off site. The facilities around the campus are varied. The on site premises have a swimming pool, gymnasium, climbing wall, football pitch, art room and computer suite. The residential houses have been assessed by occupational therapists to ensure that the specific needs of the young people are met. For example, lifts are in place as are toilets and bathrooms with the necessary equipment for those who need adapted equipment. Bedrooms and communal areas are spacious and encourage appropriate social integration. The peer groups in each home are planned following a thorough assessment to ensure the residential accommodation supports each young person's development.

There is a rolling refurbishment plan to ensure that natural wear and tear is addressed. The members of staff responsible for the maintenance of the trust's premises work extremely hard to ensure that the quality of the accommodation is maintained to a high level. Monitoring systems are operated by senior members of staff to ensure that the quality and cleanliness of the accommodation is regularly reviewed and assessed. This is underpinned by comments made by governors during their visits.

The planning and support given to the young people to help them with independent living is outstanding. Staff are extremely proactive in supporting the young people to gain understanding and skills to help them prepare for independent living. Individual programs are developed to enable them to increase their independence skills at a level commensurate with their abilities. The programme includes work experience placements, where appropriate, and the development of life and independence skills. Each young person has targets in place to achieve as a means of assessing their progress and abilities. There is planned shopping and cooking with the young people on a regular basis in the residential areas. Parents' comments include, 'college gives excellent support in developing independent skills', 'staff are very good at encouraging independent living skills', they 'help develop living skills, and 'money management skills and independent travelling skills.'

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

St Mary's Westwood Children's Trust has very good systems in place to monitor the services, facilities and various aspects of care. This ensures the young people receive best practice and consistency within a service that is continually monitoring, developing and improving. There is an active board of governors who are known to staff and young people. Regular monitoring visits (some of which are unannounced) to the residential houses are carried out by governors, who write reports and give feedback to the governing body. Senior members of staff monitor various records, such as accidents, child protection, sanctions, complaints and use of physical interventions. There is excellent cross school communication which ensures a daily awareness of any significant events.

Clear information is provided to young people, their parents and representatives to ensure they are fully informed of St Mary's care principles and practice. The website provides good clear information. There is a comprehensive Statement of Purpose that clearly identifies how the school cares for the young people through the 24 hour curriculum, supported by a full multi-disciplinary team. Parents are provided with a brochure and there is a young person's guide which has been produced in pictorial and symbolic format.

High numbers of staff enable very good levels of supervision of the young people and the activities they are involved in. Individual staffing is provided for those young people identified as needing it. The young people confirm there are enough staff to help them in the activities they want to be involved in.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. There is a competent and dedicated staff team who are experienced, qualified and skilled in caring appropriately for the young people. Staff are supported very well; all staff receive formal and informal support with regular supervision and appraisal. The school has an ethos and culture of development for adults as well as young people. There is a thorough induction for all new staff, supported by an excellent staff handbook. Staff confirm that they are provided with good on-going training. Parents said, 'staff are remarkable', 'all the staff are extremely professional and dedicated' and 'they are excellent and they all seem to have fun.'

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

There are no recommendations.