

Stone Bay School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

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| Inspector | Lucy Ansell |
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| Nominated person | |
| Date of last inspection | 24/02/2010 |

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

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| 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 coastal site. It is owned and managed by Kent County Council. There is space for car parking, on and off the road, to the front and side of the premises. There are large and secure gardens at the rear of the school, with 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 five 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. The staff rota ensures that senior residential staff are available throughout most of the day.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

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

This announced inspection was completed over several days by one inspector. All of the outcome groups with key standards were inspected and the previous recommendations were reviewed. The school's arrangements actively promote students' safety, protection and well-being. Young people's welfare is enhanced by the provision of well-trained staff who are professional and committed. The school works in partnership with a range of professionals in order to meet the students' needs in a comprehensive way; the placement plans are of an excellent standard to support this end. The staff are well-managed and supported by the senior management team. Four recommendations were made as a result of the inspection; to help further improve practice.

Improvements since the last inspection

The school received two recommendations at the last inspection. One of these was to ensure all controlled drugs are recorded in a bound and numbered book. This has now been put into place and ensures the correct recording method and provides further safety for staff and young people. The other recommendation to ensure all staff have annual appraisals is still being considered by Kent County Council.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff are excellent at promoting the health of the young people who board and have very good knowledge of any health needs. Excellent health plans guide staff in how to enable young people to maintain all aspects of good health. They ensure that health needs are identified and that boarders are registered with a local General Practitioner. They also work with families to ensure that young people receive regular dental and optical care as well as access to other health professionals when required. Staff ensure they provide guidance, advice and support on all aspects of being healthy and there is a focus on exercise and activities as well as nutrition and diet. There are very good arrangements made to ensure first aid is administered safely and medication is very well managed by staff who are appropriately trained. Training includes the administration of homely medications; and consents are clearly seen. The medication policy is still being updated.

The standard of catering at the school is high and the small catering team are enthusiastic about providing a choice of healthy varied meals for young people. Menus are written with consideration given to any dietary needs. Catering staff receive feedback from young people about the food provided and incorporate their views into the menu, however as they don't have direct face-to-face contact during meal times this is an area still being developed. Young people are mainly very positive about the food and confirm that there is plenty; and on the whole they like it very much.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Staff respect young people's privacy and demonstrate a clear understanding about maintaining confidentiality. Comprehensive policies, which staff follow in practice, mean they knock before entering bedrooms and follow the guidance on intimate care giving.

Staff recognise that all young people have the right to complain and that their concerns must be taken seriously, investigated and acted upon. The complaints process is well publicised and young people confirm they can talk with staff and raise concerns both formally and informally. The school employs an independent listener through Action for Children who visits monthly. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. Excellent communication with families also ensures any concerns they raise are discussed and investigated quickly.

There are robust safeguarding systems at the school for protecting all pupils. A comprehensive training programme ensures all staff in the school and boarding provision are trained in safeguarding; child protection is also included in each new staff member's induction. Staff confirm that they recognise and know how to respond

to safeguarding concerns and are familiar with the whistle-blowing procedure. The school has five designated child protection officers (DCPO), with whom any allegations of abuse or concerns are coordinated by working together in partnership. They are confident to discuss any queries with the local safeguarding team and have the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures available for reference.

There is a policy and guidance for staff to follow with regards to bullying. Pupils are clear it is not tolerated and are confident that staff will intervene. Bullying is discussed openly at school and in young people's meetings and this, with close staff supervision and support, is resulting in a low incidence. Similarly, those at risk of absences without permission are identified and excellent strategies are in place.

Behaviour is very well managed. A strong ethos of positive praise runs through the school but young people are clear of the consequences of disruptive or inappropriate behaviour. Overall the behaviour seen over several days around the sites was exemplary. Staff use the required bound books to record any physical interventions and sanctions, although these are minimal. They are trained in behaviour management and believe firmly that most situations can be resolved through de-escalation techniques. As a result, sanctions are fair and physical intervention is only used when there is a risk of harm to individuals.

Excellent steps are taken to ensure young people, staff and visitors are kept safe. Risk assessments are updated as hazards are identified and all are reviewed at least annually. Appropriate contracts are in place and very good measures are undertaken for fire safety. All staff are trained in fire awareness and fire drills are held regularly.

All visitors to the school are very well vetted and contractors involved with the setting are carefully monitored. The controlled entry system for the majority of the external doors, greatly reduces the risk of unauthorised public access. Staff involved are trained in safer recruitment processes. All the necessary information is received prior to employment and discussions with staff confirm that the required checks are made. However references are not always followed up by a telephone call.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school works on a 24 hour curriculum, which continues in the residential units to enhance development and independence skills. Educational achievement is supported by the residential staff and they promote pupil engagement and enjoyment of education. The school has two handovers a day to ensure a constant flow of information, which assists the support of all students. This is assisted by a whole team approach in identifying and setting behaviour management plans, annual reviews and targets within care plans.

The wide range of evening activities also helps contribute to the encouragement of personal and social development. The quality of life for boarders is excellent and focuses on promoting their independence, for example ensuring they are always

offered a choice for an activity within school or to go out. Appropriate and meaningful leisure activities are provided to support inclusion in the local community and promote healthy living. Activities include trips to local parks and leisure facilities, yoga, sports and leisure club, keep fit and youth club.

Care plans detail individual and specific needs of each boarder. This aspect is very carefully explored throughout the assessment process and thereafter through annual reviews. The school continues to provide a high level of individualised support and multi-agency working with specialist services in order for boarders to progress. Boarders are allocated a teacher and a key worker; however they are encouraged to develop appropriate relationships with all of their care givers.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

An active and enthusiastic school council meets regularly. This consists of good staff support and student representatives from each year group. Every member demonstrates a sound understanding of their individual and collective role. The headteacher is very keen to keep the students informed on matters concerning the school and a news letter for all is published.

Within the residential provision individual care plans are in place for each pupil. These work in tandem with developing community participation skills targets which are aimed at maximising independence. Individual pupil risk assessments are in place. There are clear behaviour management plans in place which are comprehensive and robust. All boarders have a key worker who provides individual guidance and support. Positive comments from a parent included, 'my child is making great progress', 'I get regular updates' and 'I don't know what I would of done without them.'

Goals and targets across education and life skills are set, monitored and evaluated through the annual review process and periodically in between. However the targets need to be more focused; with clear guidance of what they want to achieve. Good internal systems enable effective communication between members of the school teams. Hence, progress, issues and concerns are speedily shared to ensure appropriate action and intervention can be taken. An effective multi-disciplinary approach captures input from all disciplines of staff, the pupil and parents/carers.

Boarders are encouraged to maintain contact with parents and families whilst living at the school. The use of communication books between school and home, and school and the units is particularly valued and is of a high standard. Some pupils have their own mobile telephones which they can use outside of school time and they all have access to a telephone on their units. The young people can also use the school computers under supervision to e-mail if appropriate. The staff team also ensures telephone contact with parents on a regular basis, and there were examples seen of close valued relationships being formed.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarders live in well-designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs. Each unit has been made very homely with furnishings and décor, and the bedrooms are all individually personalised. The communal areas are homely and comfortable. Bathrooms within all the units are on a rolling programme for renovation. The site is very secure and all play equipment and spaces to play are sited conveniently in the middle of the school. The location of the school is so close to the seaside, it offers additional benefits to the students.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The school's Statement of Purpose contains the required information and a clear statement of the school's care principles for the residential students. The school also provides a personalised residential pupils' handbook. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The school works hard to ensure all pupils can achieve and they are inclusive in all situations. The boarders are encouraged to try new activities, learn about different cultures and differences. The staff team work in an anti-discriminatory manner which values individuality.

A caring and committed staff team works hard to provide positive outcomes for boarders, placing much emphasis upon the development and acquisition of independent living skills. Much positive work has been completed by staff members across the boarding and teaching departments. The boarders are looked after by a staff team who are cohesive, with experienced staff able to support the new staff. The team is able to meet the boarders' needs in a consistently high manner and is recognised for their positive approach and their aim to support the students to achieve their best. The staff rota makes it clear which member of the senior management team will be available and on call. There are excellent staffing levels both during the day and for waking and sleeping-in staff on duty.

The training matrix in place clearly shows that all training is up to date and the staff have been on a comprehensive training programme this year. New staff receive an induction and core training period. There is named individuals with specific responsibility for leading the induction process for each new member of staff. Some 90% of staff have or are working towards achieving the Level 3 National Vocational Qualification in childcare. There are procedures for staff to follow in cases of any foreseeable crisis and there is a comprehensive staff procedure manual. Systems are in place to provide regular staff supervision, however, this is not always met within the prescribed time frames.

The school benefits from a senior management team which offers stability, efficiency and clear leadership. The organisation of boarding is very good, with a supportive and effective head of care. The Regulation 33 visitor is able to provide a

comprehensive and robust report which is a benefit to the head and residential team. The monitoring systems in place are ensuring good quality assurance support systems.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure the policy and written guidance implemented in practice for administering and storing medication is kept up to date (NMS 14.17)
- ensure direct contact by the school with each referee to verify the reference (NMS 27.2)
- ensure the placement plan contributes to educational needs and attainment targets (NMS 17.5)
- ensure staff receive one to one supervision from a senior member of staff each half term (NMS 30.2)