



*Making Social Care  
Better for People*

# inspection report

## RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

**St Mary`s School**

**Wrestwood Road  
Bexhill-on-Sea  
East Sussex  
TN40 2LU**

*Lead Inspector*  
**Paul Taylor**

*Announced Inspection*  
**29th November 2005      10:00**

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

Reader Information	
Document Purpose	Inspection Report
Author	CSCI
Audience	General Public
Further copies from	0870 240 7535 (telephone order line)
Copyright	This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI
Internet address	<a href="http://www.csci.org.uk">www.csci.org.uk</a>

This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

# SERVICE INFORMATION

<b>Name of school</b>	St Mary`s School
<b>Address</b>	Wrestwood Road Bexhill-on-Sea East Sussex TN40 2LU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 730740
<b>Fax number</b>	01424 733575
<b>Email address</b>	neilmasterton@hotmail.com
<b>Provider Web address</b>	
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	St Mary`s Wrestwood Trust
<b>Name of Head</b>	Mr David Cassar
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Neil Masterton. (Assistant Principal Care and Nursing)
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	<b>7 years to 19 years.</b>
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	8th and 9th November 2004.

## **Brief Description of the School:**

St. Mary's is set up as St.Mary's Wrestwood Children's Trust. The charitable Trust is responsible for the school, for pupils between the ages of 7 to 16 years of age, and the college for students between the ages of 16 to 19 years of age. St. Mary's is a non-maintained mixed special school for young people who have speech, language and social communication difficulties. The school is situated in Bexhill in East Sussex. Many of the young people have additional areas of need, including moderate learning difficulties, physical disability, hearing impairment, autistic spectrum disorders and complex medical difficulties. Young people attend the school and college from all parts of the United Kingdom.

There are five boarding areas on the main school site and two boarding areas off site in the town approximately twenty minutes walk away. The two boarding areas situated off site are for college students who are developing their independence.

# SUMMARY

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

Two inspectors visited the school and college on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2005. The inspectors spent time in five different boarding areas and met with numerous members of staff and young people over the course of the inspection. Additionally, questionnaires had been completed by parents of young people at the school and college, young people, placing authority officers and members of staff.

The Inspectors also had access to the report made by Ofsted inspectors following their inspection in June this year. This report has used direct quotes from the Ofsted report.

At the time of the inspection there were 124 pupils on role of which 34 were girls who were boarding and 70 were boys who were boarding. There were 20 day pupils.

The Inspectors assessed 16 of the key National Minimum Standards. This methodology was used because in previous inspections the school has consistently performed very well and has exceeded many of the standards assessed. The school was also inspected by Ofsted in June of this year and received a very good report. The Ofsted report stated that 'St.Mary's gives pupils an outstanding education.' and that the staff 'work tirelessly to make sure that pupils are happy and self assured..'

This report should be read in conjunction with the Commission for Social Care Inspection report of the inspection carried out in November 2004.

The school and college continue to provide an excellent 24-hour package of care and support to the young people who live there.

The Trust continues to be well managed and the staff endeavour to improve the life chances and experiences of all the young people. One parent reported 'I think it is the most fantastic school which is working miracles with my son.' The inspection was very positive and the inspectors feel that St.Mary's really does make a difference in the lives of the young people that live there.

## What the school does well:

The health care of the young people is excellent and the young people's safety and welfare is paramount. The staffing levels and expertise of staff means that the young people have very good support and their needs are well known to the adults caring for them. The young people were seen to be enjoying their time at St. Mary's and everyone celebrates their achievements.

Behaviour by the pupils and students during the inspection was very good and the relationships between members of staff and the young people were positive, relaxed and respectful.

The young people have a number of different adults they can approach for support and feedback from questionnaires was overwhelmingly positive about how the Trust works with parents.

Young peoples' needs are thoroughly assessed and this enables for very good planning on how to develop young people's skills.

The staff team are very committed and reported that they are well supported by their managers.

There is a very well organised and effective management hierarchy operating in the Trust.

### **What has improved since the last inspection?**

The management of transition for the young people either from school to college or when changing living areas has been improved.

The new build facilities are of a high standard.

The memorial garden has been well designed and maintained.

The school has a new I.T. suite.

The behaviour management system is being revised.

### **What they could do better:**

Provide training to all the staff that will be responsible for carrying out staff appraisals.

Ensure that all sanctions are recorded very clearly.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection



# 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)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

14.

Health needs of all young people living at the school and college are very well monitored and assessed. The physical and emotional needs of the young people are well met and there is access to a variety of health care specialists. Health care continues across the curriculum and young people are involved in making healthy decisions commensurate with their abilities. The Trust performs very well in this standard.

## EVIDENCE:

Health needs of young people in the school and college are thoroughly assessed and monitored. The Trust has access to numerous therapists and nurses on site. Examples of therapists who have input into the young people's health plans are occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, art psychotherapist, physiotherapist, psychologist and school nurses. The Trust is visited by a G.P. as well a dentist. The care staff and facilitators can access direct advice from the specialists. A paediatrician visits three times a week and paediatric surgeon also visits the Trust twice a year.

The school nurses are key in the communication of medical issues and these are shared throughout the necessary areas via 'quads', a system whereby written communication is circulated promptly and to the necessary people. Pupils and students receive a lot of advice and guidance on healthy lifestyles on a cross curricular basis. Examples of guidance included advice on healthy eating, personal safety, teeth cleaning, and guidance on relationships. Group work is regularly used in the living areas and this often compliments work done in the classroom in subjects such as PSHE.

The young people are encouraged to participate in physical activities at least twice a week.

Young people were seen to make their own decisions regarding eating sensibly and showed good levels of awareness of why they were making these decisions. The quality of food and choice was good and varied. The Trust had sent a leaflet to parents giving advice on 'healthy tuck.'

Medication is appropriately stored and administered. The school nurses monitor medication. Some students are able to make their own medical appointments and can also re-order their prescriptions.

Accidents are monitored and recorded in the Trust efficiently and a member of staff is a First Aid trainer.

# 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 by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(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, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

3,4,5,6,10,26 and 27.

Privacy is respected and information is stored appropriately. All the young people know who they can complain to, they have a good choice of adults to whom they can approach with concerns. The staff know what to do in the event that they have child protection concerns. The staff are very aware of the vulnerability of the young people. There is a very good multi-disciplinary system for assessing young people's vulnerability and ability with regards to independent travel. Two sanctions needed to be more clearly recorded. Relationships between the members of staff and young people were very good. All the necessary safety checks were in place. Security around the Trust is good. Staff files contain the correct information. Visitors to the Trust are very well monitored.

## EVIDENCE:

Information on the young people is stored appropriately throughout the Trust. Privacy is respected and assistance with issues of personal care is sensitively addressed. Members of staff were observed to knock before entering young people's rooms.

Young people are able to receive and make telephone calls in private. There are numerous facilities around the Trust where young people can meet with parents and visitors. There was some very good feedback received in questionnaires from parents regarding this issue. One quote received was 'The staff demonstrate the school ethos when visiting.'

All young people who met with the Inspectors and all the questionnaires received from the young people said that they were aware of how they can make a complaint and to whom. Additionally the young people have access to a registered social worker who is based in the Trust. The young people identified a number of different adults they can approach if they are worried about anything. Complaints and comments made by both young people and their parents are recorded and addressed.

The Trust has systems in place to monitor and report any child protection concerns. All members of staff who met with the Inspectors were aware of what to do in the event that they might be concerned about a young person's welfare.

The staff teams who work in the Trust are very aware of how vulnerable the young people are who attend St.Mary's. There are graduated and monitored systems with multi disciplinary input which assess young people's progress and vulnerability especially in helping them gain some travel independence.

Members of staff who met the Inspectors were aware of what to do if they felt that bullying was occurring. The subject of bullying is addressed in different settings such as PSHE, group meetings and meetings with members of staff on an individual basis if that is appropriate.

The behaviour of the young people is regularly monitored. Where there are concerns input is received on a multi disciplinary basis and behaviour management plans are put in place. There is a Parent and Pupil Support Group comprised of different professionals working in the Trust and this can provide guidance and advice. Individual support strategies are put in place and these are underpinned by the staff knowledge of the young people.

The behaviour management system and positive re-enforcement system were in the process of being reviewed during the inspection.

A record of sanctions was examined. Two sanctions that had been administered had not been clearly recorded and a senior member of staff was examining the appropriateness of the timescale of one of them.

Relationships and interactions between members of staff and the young people were observed, these were relaxed, supportive and good humoured.

The Trust has an Estates Manager who monitors maintenance and safety issues on the different sites that are used by the Trust. There are systems in place to ensure that safety checks are kept up to date. Examples of checks seen were fire, gas, transport and maintenance. The Trust has a risk assessment system that is available to the staff via the Trust's intranet.

Security to the different buildings used by the Trust was good.

The staff records have been subject to an audit to ensure that they all contain the necessary information. This has been a major piece of work as the Trust employs in the region of 240 members of staff. Files examined by the Inspectors contained the necessary information which included up to date Criminal Records Bureau checks.

Visitors to the Trust are very well monitored. There is a system in the school whereby the young people can identify members of staff (and therefore 'safe' adults) by the colour of the badge they wear. Visitors have badges that change colour as time progresses, this ensures that a visitor has to be checked in again when they visit again and cannot use the same visitors badge repeatedly.

# 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 both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

12 and 22.

The Trust performs very well in these two standards. The young people's development is seen as an holistic process to be supported in all parts of their lives. Staffing is maintained at a very good level. Individual support packages are thoroughly thought out on a multi disciplinary basis. Transition to college from school or to new Living Areas is well thought out and supported. The young people have the opportunity to participate in the community and achieve well when they have the opportunity to do so.

## EVIDENCE:

There is very good liaison between the care provision, education and health provisions. This ensures that a 24 hour curriculum is operated in the Trust. One Inspector attended an Annual Review which was assessing and planning a pupils education and welfare. The meeting was well run and well organised, the pupil and his parents were central to the planning and the pupil's opinions sought both verbally and in writing. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) identify targets for young people to achieve in both their social and educational development. Additionally, the ILPs contain targets for the staff to achieve with the young people. The Trust was inspected by Ofsted in June 2005 and an observation made in the report was that 'The school provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support. Education, therapy, medical and care staff work together very closely so that pupil's needs are recognised, shared and managed exceedingly well.'

There are very good levels of support available to the young people. Individual packages of support are formulated using the different areas of expertise available on site. Staffing levels are maintained at a level whereby the young people have access to support very quickly if they need it and 1:1 staffing is provided for those young people that need it. The Inspectors saw and heard of a case where a young person in the school had been displaying very

challenging and disruptive behaviour. A multi disciplinary meeting was called and a behaviour strategy formulated. The process had worked very well and the young person has responded and progressed very positively.

The young people in the Trust are encouraged to be tolerant of each others idiosyncrasies and some young people that met with the Inspectors showed very good awareness and empathy towards their peers.

Transition arrangements for young people moving from school to college are drawn up with a multidisciplinary input. Transfers are individually assessed and planned according to the student's ability. The young people are encouraged to participate in activities and outings in the community. College students partake in work experience and attend 'taster' days at different colleges.

The Trust had won an award at the Brighton Film Festival during the week that the inspection was taking place, a football team from the Trust had won a football tournament the week previously and a number of young people from the Trust had participated in the Special Olympics held in Glasgow during the summer. Some of these young people are now recognised as National champions.

# 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 living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

2,17 and 20.

The young people have access to numerous forums and adults to whom they can give their opinions. Their needs are thoroughly assessed and there is detailed guidance in place on how each young person's needs can be met and how they can develop their skills and achievements. All the young people are able to contact their parents and there are plenty of venues in the Trust where they can meet their visitors.

## EVIDENCE:

The young people and their parents are actively involved in plans and reviews. As mentioned in Standard 12, an Inspector attended a review and participation of the young person was central to the process. The young people have numerous opportunities to comment on the way the Trust is run. Examples of these are group meetings held in the Living Areas, the school council, college forum, circle time in classes and on an individual basis with members of staff. The young people had been involved in the choice of paint in the bathrooms in one Living Area, they comment on menus and have influenced the choice of furniture.

The recent Ofsted reported that 'The school council provides pupils with valuable opportunities to influence decisions and prepares them to participate in their own communities.'



The ILPs contain detailed information, are formulated by using multi disciplinary input and are updated twice a year. Targets are set for the young people to achieve in both social and educational settings and there are targets set for the staff to achieve with the young people.

As mentioned in Standard 3, the young people are able to contact their parents or guardians via telephone or email and are given help in writing letters if they need it. There are numerous areas where young people can meet with visitors.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## 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, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- 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)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

24

The boarding areas are clean and comfortable. The site has excellent facilities. The new extension had been completed to a high standard. The memorial garden had been very well re-designed and maintained and is now a welcoming quiet area that both young people and members of staff can use. Access to different areas around the site has been carefully considered for wheelchair users. On the spot advice from the occupational therapy team is available if needed.

## EVIDENCE:

The Ofsted inspection report written after the inspection in June 2005 stated that 'The quality of boarding accommodation is outstanding. The rooms are spacious, well lit and attractive. Pupils are very proud of their rooms and are given the choice whether they want to share with others.'

Inspectors on this occasion found that the premises were very clean and well maintained. The young people were able to personalise their bedrooms with pictures and posters.

There are numerous facilities on site such as a swimming pool, gymnasium, sensory room, new I.T. suite and adventure playground. There had been a new extension built since the last inspection and this had provided new class areas and a spacious music store. Additionally the 'Memorial Garden' had been re-designed and was being maintained to a high standard by the gardener

employed by the Trust. The students from the college part of the Trust had been involved in the cultivation and development of part of the grounds. The site has good access for wheel chair users and there is an over view available from the occupational therapy team on equipment issues and assessments if this is needed.

# Management

## 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 is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both 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)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

31 and 33.

There are very good levels of expertise available to all members of staff and to the young people. Staffing levels and levels of awareness are very good. Training for some members of staff responsible for appraisals is needed. There is good involvement from some governors. Practice is evaluated throughout the Trust in an effort to improve services and achieve excellence. There is no room for complacency allowed in the running and development of the school and college.

## EVIDENCE:

The mix of staff who work in the Trust have expertise and experience in many areas. This expertise is available across the site and supports the staff to meet the young people's needs. There is a comprehensive induction process for new members of staff. The Ofsted report stated 'The supervision and mentoring of new care staff is very well organised.'

Members of care staff in the school part of the Trust have regular appraisals. Appraisals for facilitators in the college part of the Trust are still developing and there is a need for those who are to be responsible for the appraisal process to receive training in that area.

The Trust has a comprehensive range of training that the staff attend, this training is provided both 'in house' and by using external providers.

Staffing levels and levels of awareness seen during the inspection were very good. Questionnaires received from parents included comments such as 'The pastoral care and welfare is excellent.' And 'We are all working together for the good of my child, he is highly valued and greatly cared about.'

Trust governors visit the school and college at least three times a year on an unannounced basis. The governors examine records and this practice reflects in the ethos of the Trust whereby there is a continual move in examining practice and looking at ways to achieve excellence.

There is a clear hierarchy in the Trust and each area has a management team which in turn liaises with the other Heads of Department so that information is shared.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

"X" in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

"N/A" in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	4
<b>15</b>	X

STAYING SAFE	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	3
<b>4</b>	3
<b>5</b>	3
<b>6</b>	4
<b>7</b>	X
<b>8</b>	X
<b>10</b>	3
<b>26</b>	3
<b>27</b>	3

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	4
<b>13</b>	x
<b>22</b>	4

MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>2</b>	4
<b>9</b>	X
<b>11</b>	X
<b>17</b>	4
<b>20</b>	3

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>16</b>	X
<b>21</b>	X
<b>23</b>	X
<b>24</b>	4
<b>25</b>	X

MANAGEMENT	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>1</b>	X
<b>18</b>	X
<b>19</b>	X
<b>28</b>	X
<b>29</b>	X
<b>30</b>	X
<b>31</b>	4
<b>32</b>	X
<b>33</b>	4

No

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

### **RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

No.	Standard	Recommendation	Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only)
1	RSS 10	That all sanctions are clearly recorded.	31/03/06
2		That all staff responsible for carrying out staff appraisals receive training in this area.	30/06/06

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

East Sussex Area Office

Ivy House

3 Ivy Terrace

Eastbourne

East Sussex

BN21 4QT

National Enquiry Line: 0845 015 0120

Email: [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk)

Web: [www.csci.org.uk](http://www.csci.org.uk)

© This report is copyright Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and may only be used in its entirety. Extracts may not be used or reproduced without the express permission of CSCI.