

# St Mary's Wrestwood Children's Trust

Inspection report for residential special school

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC050390
<b>Inspection date</b>	13/07/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Gaynor Moorey / Diane Thackrah
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Social Care Inspection

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<b>Head/ Principal</b>	Simon Rogers
<b>Nominated person</b>	Simon Rogers
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	16/06/2011

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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

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 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**

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

This purpose of this announced full inspection was to undertake a full review of all the key national minimum standards for residential special schools.

The school continues to provide an outstanding standard of care through the work undertaken by the senior management team, teaching staff, therapists and the experienced care staff team. The young people are safe at the school and this is maintained by comprehensive and clear guidance, policies and procedures. The school provides the young people with excellent emotional support and encourages the young people with their education and interests. The school ensures that comprehensive information is available to enable reviews to take place. The young people have contact with family and friends while at school and are given many opportunities to express their opinions and make choices about their lives. The school is maintained to an exceptional level, providing a homely environment for the young people to stay in. The staff are supported by an experienced head of residential services and comprehensive systems that include supervision and training. The school is extensively monitored by the senior management team and the governing body in order to provide the children with a well run, safe and enjoyable environment to learn in.

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

There were no recommendations arising from the last inspection.

## **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils have comprehensive health information which details current health needs so staff are aware of what treatment young people need to promote their well-being. Training is provided for staff to ensure they have experience and knowledge when assisting the pupils to take their medication. The senior nurse and the medical team are in charge of the medication, first aid and treatment within the school. The medical staff are available to the young people or on call in an emergency. These systems are robust, cohesive and forward thinking in safeguarding the pupil's health. All of the pupils have consent for all forms of medical treatment. Young people told the inspectors they felt that someone would always look after them at the school.

Young people said and indicated they enjoyed the food and that having lots choices at meal times was good. Kitchen staff are aware of the young people's needs, and design and work through a menu across each half term which is varied and offers a range of meals of dietary value and imaginative multicultural design. Catering news provided in the spring 2011 newsletter details that in January the school had an Ethiopian Culture Day where everyone tried Ethiopian food. Pupils benefit from a professionally run kitchen which has reached the highest levels of health and safety awards and ensures the young people receive meals and snacks so they flourish and have energy for their busy lives. One parent said 'staff work very hard to accommodate my son's needs watching what he eats and being aware of his problems'. Young people said and indicated they are able to communicate to staff in the kitchen about requests for menu changes and have been listened to. Pupils eat within the dining room and are served food from a cafeteria type system; it is a sociable and well organised event.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils' confidentiality is respected in the school. Young people confirmed they have privacy and space while in the residential houses and that personal care needs are undertaken with dignity. Contact with home can take different forms due to the range of communication skills the pupils have but staff try to give young people privacy where possible. Young people's personal information is stored securely.

Young people communicated they would know how to complain and how they could act upon this if they needed to. The school have a forward thinking system which reaches the young people's levels of communication. This looks at being bullied, inappropriate touch and name calling and what the pupils should do in case this happens. Parents and carers have access to the complaints system which is in the parents' handbook. Complaints seen had been dealt with appropriately and within the correct timescales.

Pupils are protected at the school and any investigation, either internal or external, is

given the same level of comprehensive and effective attention in order to ensure the well-being of the children. Staff follow any internal incident proactively; investigations are thorough and outcomes are forward thinking to try to avoid further issues. The school has also provided all staff with updated child protection training. Children communicated they felt safe at the school and that staff look after them.

Staff support young people with any problems they may have, whether they be minor or serious. Staff work with the young people around all areas of what bullying is, but due to the complex needs and perceptions it is hard for all of the young people to understand the concepts around bullying. The school runs an anti bullying week with appropriate activities and have recently been working on cyber bullying. The pupils at both the school and college indicated there was very little bullying. Young people rarely go missing from the school and if they do the school has a clear procedure in place to deal with any incidents that may occur.

The school responds sensitively to any issues and concerns around the need for restraint. A small team of people are trained in restraint techniques due to the very low level of need of restraint being used. The school works very hard to not use any physical holding preferring to use techniques such as de-escalation set around knowing the complex needs of the young people. Young people do receive sanctions as part of behaviour management; this is managed carefully and on an individual basis due to the perception and understanding of each individual.

Pupils' well-being at the school is protected; there are numerous comprehensive up-to-date risk assessments in place which cover activities, school trips and all areas of the premises and buildings. Pupils understand the fire safety drills and have reminders on the landings and practice full evacuations. Fire drills also clearly take into account any young person with a physical disability.

Pupils are safe at the school as appropriate checks are carried out on staff before they start work at the school. The school does not check the reason for staff leaving their last employment. The school has a clear system in place for checking visitors in and out

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

The provision is outstanding.

There are strong arrangements for ensuring that young people are well supported to reach their full potential in education. Excellent communication between care and educational staff helps to ensure that young people receive consistency in their care. There are strong arrangements for multi-disciplinary working which ensures that all staff involved in young people's care understand their individual learning needs and encourage their personal, social and educational achievement. All young people have an individual education plan to support their progress. Care staff play a significant role in the implementation and review of these plans. One parent said 'sometimes staff have suggested solutions to issues that I did not expect to work, to my surprise they have been a great success and shown me what my child is capable of.' There

are also effective arrangements for ensuring that young people and their parents are able to contribute to the reviewing system.

Young people benefit from an extensive programme of extra curricular activities. They are supported to enjoy and achieve through their attendance at a wide range of clubs and activities both arranged by the school and in the community. This includes attendance at scouts, young Rotarians, a wide range of sporting classes and 'eco club'. Young people's experiences and development are strongly promoted by their involvement in these activities. One parent said 'the school promise a whole 24 hour experience not only do they carry it through successfully, they go beyond'. Rest and relaxation is also seen as important and staff are proactive in ensuring that young people benefit from this.

Young people benefit from an exceptionally high level of individual support when they need it. Staff are employed in high numbers and have wide ranging skills and qualifications that help to promote young people's well-being. They are well aware of young people's individual needs as these are closely monitored. The personal support that young people receive contributes considerably in supporting young people to make achievements in their preparation for independent living. Young people feel supported and know that there are people to turn to for support if this is needed. Staff are sensitive to the needs of young people who may be experiencing homesickness. One young person said that staff had comforted them when they had been homesick and this made them feel better.

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

The provision is outstanding.

There are outstanding arrangements in place for supporting young people to make decisions about their lives and influence the way that the school is run. These measures play a strong role in helping young people to feel valued and in raising their confidence. There is a school council and a student forum. These are run regularly and professionally and young people say they are an effective resource for getting their views across and making positive changes. Young people are able to give many examples of changes being made following their requests through the school council and student form. These include the changing of the school lunch menu, changing the time the dentist visits the school and the production of a talent show. The views of young people are highly valued in relation to the annual review of their care and the twice yearly review of their individual education plan. This helps to ensure that care is provided in a way that promotes young people's welfare.

There is a comprehensive care planning system which supports the provision of outstanding care for young people. This includes obtaining detailed information about young people's needs prior to admission. There is a multi-disciplinary approach to the planning and review of young people's care and this is effective in ensuring that young people's needs are well met. Each young person has an individual educational development plan that details their needs and goals in relation to their social and educational development. Young people with personal care needs also

have a safeguarding intimate care plan. This helps to ensure that young people benefit from care that promotes their well-being, safety and promotes their dignity.

Staff are highly committed to ensuring that young people are admitted to and leave the school in a planned and sensitive way. Structured arrangements are in place for introducing young people to the school such as visits with their parents and overnight stays. Comprehensive information is provided in both written and pictorial formats. These measures help young people to know what to expect from the school. Dedicated staff members are available to provide excellent support for moving on. This includes support to seek out future education and care. A rigorous process of assessment and planning occurs to support young people to make a successful transition from the school to college. There are good arrangements in place for ensuring that young people can maintain constructive contact with their families. Most do this with their own mobile telephones and some also use Skype. Staff are proactive in keeping parents informed about young people's progress as they send weekly e-mails detailing educational and social progress.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

Young people benefit from living in excellent, well designed accommodation that has sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs. Health and safety is taken extremely seriously as regular safety checks are made in each of the houses. Houses are well maintained and provide a homely environment for young people to enjoy. There is a rolling programme of refurbishment, redecoration and improvement. Young people also benefit from excellent on-site leisure facilities including a swimming pool, climbing wall, gymnasium, football pitch, tennis courts and large, well maintained grounds. Each of the houses has been assessed by an occupational therapist to ensure that young people's individual needs will be met. A sensitive and respectful approach is taken in relation to the use of electronic monitoring devices which strongly promotes young people's dignity. Such measures are used as a last resort and in to promotion of safe care with the full agreement of all relevant stakeholders.

Outstanding arrangements are in place for supporting young people in their preparation for independence. Staff play a proactive role in supporting young people to develop skills for adulthood and this is embedded in everyday life in the school. Young people have clear targets which they are well supported to work towards. Young people are given excellent opportunities to develop skills such as shopping and food preparation as part of their every day living experiences in the school. Each young person undertakes training in the school's independent travel scheme. This helps them develop the skills needed for independent travel whilst recognising individuality. Young people benefit from being involved in a wide range of community based activities and this fully supports their transition into adulthood. The work experience programme helps young people to gain skills and confidence in working in a wide range of work based settings.



## Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school meets the children's needs through training and learning for both children and staff, health and welfare issues, and protection from racism and discrimination.

The pupils and their families and carers can access a variety of information linked to the Statement of Purpose including the young people's guide and the parents' and carers' handbook. The guidance offers a clear picture of the school, its ethos and its daily routines. The staff can access up-to-date policies and procedures which have been produced to guide them in practice to safeguard the pupils. Monitoring of the records and files throughout the school ensures consistent practice when looking after the pupils.

The overall management of the school is excellent and the senior management team implements positive changes and improvement of existing systems to ensure pupils receive the best possible education and care while in placement. The residential side of the school now has a raised profile with the new head of residential services and plays a part of introducing new developments supporting pupils and their progress through the school to increase a full rounded experience for each individual child.

The care staff team comprises a group of people of varying ages, cultures and gender mix, all of whom bring skills and knowledge to the school and offer the children a wealth of experiences and care. One parent said 'overall the school has made a tremendous difference to our child's development especially her self confidence and the residential team have made a huge contribution.' The team is supported by the head of residential services and clear systems of supervision and training that are in place. The staff said they feel supported and happy with the extensive training they are offered. Staff are able to use this training to increase the positive time the pupils spend at the school.

The school has a comprehensive system in place for the monitoring of practice and safety issues to ensure the well-being of the pupils. The senior management team work hard to implement constant change and development.

## 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 recruitment practices cover the reason for the applicant leaving their last employment. (NMS 27.2 viii)