

St Edward's School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Mick Megee

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

In May 2011, an inspection of the residential provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the national minimum standards for children's homes, and the full report of this inspection is published separately on Ofsted's website and should be read in conjunction with this report which covers the educational registration of the school.

Information about the school

St Edward's School is an independent residential special school which provides education and care for boys who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school occupies a former manor house and adjacent buildings and is set in 180 acres of grounds, approximately four miles from Romsey in Hampshire. The school has been open since 1984 and is in the ownership of the Clifton Catholic Diocesan Trust. The school is registered for up to 77 pupils. Currently 42 pupils attend, aged between 10 and 17 years and 24 pupils are boarders. Pupils have histories of severely disrupted schooling and a few have not attended education for up to two years. Most are reluctant learners and a large majority experience difficulty with basic numeracy and literacy. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school offers day placements and weekly boarding provision. Pupils come from boroughs or counties in the South of England and their places are funded by their local authorities. The school aims 'to encourage the physical, intellectual, spiritual and personal development of pupils, by providing them with opportunities to address underlying issues and difficulties'. The school was last inspected in December 2008 and received a social care inspection in May 2011.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education which meets its aims and maintains the good standards identified at the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is good because of the good quality teaching and curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as is their behaviour. Provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding and the procedures for safeguarding meet requirements. The school meets all of the independent school regulations.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Quality of education

The school provides a good curriculum which effectively integrates academic and vocational aspects, and very successfully assists pupils to manage and moderate their varying personal difficulties. The school's detailed curriculum policies and schemes of work ensure that pupils have a coherent and continuous experience of schooling. Teachers carefully plan the curriculum in order to match each pupil's needs, capabilities and interests, as well as the requirements of their statements, including exciting opportunities both on and off the school site, for example motor biking in the school's grounds and snowboarding in the Alps. All pupils have access to all subjects of the National Curriculum and all required areas of learning.

A dedicated literacy support team effectively assists pupils with exceptionally low levels of literacy. An additional services team, including an adolescent counsellor and educational psychologist, helps pupils to address and overcome social and emotional barriers to learning. The school offers pupils in Key Stage 4 and at post-16 a number of good vocational options, including college and workshop experiences. Pupils have opportunities to develop their basic skills in communication, literacy and numeracy throughout the day, and to achieve appropriate qualifications, such as GCSE, BTEC and Entry Level certificates. All teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects.

The school interweaves effectively its programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship into all lessons and the promotion of personal development underpins the general curriculum. Residential staff and the school matron make a strong contribution to this aspect of learning. The school has good curricular links with local schools and colleges, which enable pupils to experience mainstream education and a variety of interesting vocational programmes. The strong links with another diocesan school and with Worth and Douai Abbeys form part of a programme to support pupils' personal development. Up to this year, pupils have been receiving very good careers guidance, although the local authority is currently reorganising its services and has limited what it now offers. Nevertheless, the quality is satisfactory. The school intends to appoint its own careers teacher to make up for the shortfall.

Teaching and assessment are good overall. In the lessons seen during the inspection and from the school's data, pupils make good progress and achievement is strongest in English, mathematics, physical education and in science where there are often practical learning activities. Key factors in the good teaching and learning are the very positive relationships between all adults and pupils, the small classes and high ratio of staff to pupils. Pupils learn effectively because the staff have a very good understanding of each pupil and step in quickly, giving reassurance and encouragement, if pupils become upset or disheartened. In this way, staff skilfully defuse any emerging behavioural difficulty rapidly, and pupils return speedily to productive learning.

Teachers' lesson plans are detailed in terms of the activities to be undertaken, but on a few occasions, they do not set out learning outcomes and individual learning targets precisely so that pupils have a better understanding of what they have to do to improve. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and, from the good-hearted banter and enthusiastic attitudes in lessons, pupils clearly enjoy their learning. In a few of the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching and learning were exceptionally strong because staff constantly encouraged pupils to be active and independent learners, through self-assessment and a good knowledge of the next steps they need to take.

Senior staff have recently overhauled the system to track pupils' progress and there is now a good database of the levels that pupils have reached in all subjects. Staff contribute conscientiously to this database by assessing pupils' progress regularly, maintaining detailed records, and they use this information appropriately in their lesson planning. The assessment systems operate effectively across the school and the residential accommodation.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There is a palpable sense of an orderly, calm and well-managed community and commitment by all to harmonious living and working. Staff work effectively to build enduring positive relationships with pupils and provide excellent role models of patience, tolerance and mutual respect. All pupils have had fractured experiences of education in the past, but through consistent encouragement and positive feedback, they gradually recover their resilience and gain confidence to succeed in their learning and in their personal lives.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe, there is no bullying or racism and that they trust the staff to give them sympathetic and welcome support if they have a personal difficulty or problem. Pupils help each other in lessons and older pupils step in and assist younger pupils if they see they are in difficulty. Members of the student council are respected throughout the school, and contribute good ideas on how the school can be improved.

Pupils' spiritual development is fostered very well, for example, through 'thought for the day' assemblies. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect on and to gain a clearer understanding of their own place in the wider world. The pupils speak well of their visits to Worth and Douai Abbeys, participating in 'days of reflection'. The pupils in Year 10 recently hosted a retreat day for pupils from a faith school in Salisbury.

The pupils respond generously to the needs of others beyond the school, for example, by fundraising for a variety of charities both at home and overseas. The school's 'rainbow days' enable pupils to work alongside children in the local district who experience different types of challenge. Pupils have enjoyed designing and building a sensory garden in a school for children with profound learning and physical difficulties.

Pupils have a very good understanding of different faiths, cultural differences and diversity through celebrations of non-Christian festivals such as Diwali. The history department supports the pupils in their cultural understanding very well through its 'living history project'. The department has collected or helped pupils to construct artefacts which the pupils present to children in local primary and secondary schools.

Pupils demonstrate their enjoyment of school by their mature interactions and their very good attendance. The life chances of pupils are greatly enhanced by their good development of skills they will need in later life, such as communication, literacy and numeracy.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school has a comprehensive range of procedures and practices, including checks on staff, and policies containing all the required detail to minimise the health and safety risks to pupils. Clear and effective behaviour, anti-bullying, fire and first-aid policies are all in place. There are comprehensive risk assessments and records such as those for first aid and fire drills are completed conscientiously. The child protection policy gives full, up-to-date guidance and staff, including the designated officer, have received the appropriate level of training in child protection. Staff are diligent in looking after pupils and promote the highest standards of behaviour. Consequently, pupils feel safe, act safely and instances of bullying are very rare. The school's welfare arrangements are strong, for example, through the provision of the additional support services which include anger management coaching, drugs and alcohol misuse coaching, adolescent therapeutic counselling and psychological consultation. The school encourages pupils to follow a healthy lifestyle through PSHE lessons and by providing healthy meals at lunchtime and good opportunities for frequent intensive physical exercise or sport. The school has an appropriate plan to fulfil its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All requirements are met. The school effectively implements a rigorous recruitment policy. The single central record of staff checks confirms that all appropriate checks have been made to ensure the suitability of those working with children.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school's premises and accommodation enable pupils to learn effectively in comfort and safety. Classrooms are spacious, suitably furnished, well lit, ventilated and heated. The school has an extensive range of specialist facilities including a swimming pool, science laboratory, technology workshop and music room. The extensive campus is used well for games, recreation and motor biking and to enrich learning. The premises are clean and in good decorative order.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or made available, to parents, carers and others through the school's website and prospectus. Parents and carers receive regular written reports as well as frequent formal and informal meetings to discuss their children's progress.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a clear and well-written complaints policy and procedures that fully meet all requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').³

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that teachers always make precise learning outcomes and individual learning targets in lessons clear so that pupils know what they have to do to improve.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Special		
Date school opened	1984		
Age range of pupils	11–17		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 42	Girls: 0	Total: 42
Number of boarders	Boys: 24	Girls: 0	Total: 24
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 42	Girls: 0	Total: 42
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 6	Girls: 0	Total: 6
Annual fees (day pupils)	£53,981		
Annual fees (boarders)	£67,476		
Address of school	Melchet Court. Sherfield English. Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 6ZR		
Telephone number	01794 884271		
Email address	enquiries@melchetcourt.com		
Headteacher	Mr Lawrence Bartel		
Proprietor	Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edwards School, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 6ZR

Thank you for the help you gave me when I inspected your school recently, by talking to me and filling out the questionnaires. Special thanks to the members of the student council for giving me their time and for explaining to me how pupils feel about the school.

This letter is to let you know my judgements about the school.

- The school provides you with a good education in a calm, orderly and happy community.
- Your teachers and classroom staff do a good job of helping you learn well and make good progress.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you have worked hard with the staff to get back on track with your learning.
- You are making very good progress in your personal lives and it was a pleasure to hear you talk about how much you owe to the school for getting you through a very difficult period in your lives.
- All the staff are very skilled in making sure you are kept very safe, healthy and happy.

Although the school gets most things right, I have suggested to Mr Bartel and his team that you might make even faster progress if you have a better understanding of what you have to do in lessons in order to improve. You can help out by letting your teachers know what you think you have to do to get to the next level quickly.

I enjoyed working with you this week and I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mick Megee
Lead inspector