

Stone Bay School

Stone Bay Special School, 70 Stone Road, BROADSTAIRS, Kent, CT10 1EB

Inspection dates	19/03/2013 to 21/03/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Students are provided with a good quality service and as such make good progress towards meeting their individual placement aims. Students develop their social, communication, behavioural, independence and personal skills.
- Safeguarding students is given high regard. Staff recognise the diverse and vulnerable needs of students and are diligent in ensuring they are protected. A positive approach to developing students' behaviour is effectively implemented. Staff work in partnership with external safeguarding agencies. As such students are protected and feel safe.
- There is a strong promotion of equality and personalisation. This runs throughout all care practice and interactions. Each student is highly valued, treated fairly and is supported to reach their full potential.
- There is an effective senior leadership team, governing body and staff team in place. All parties are enthusiastic, child centred and committed to continual service development. The school has made good progress to address the previous inspection recommendations and has successfully implemented additional developments as identified on an internal improvement plan.
- National minimum standards are met. Four areas of improvement have been identified as part of this inspection in order to develop the quality of provision further.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

The school was given three hours notice of this inspection. Views were sought from students, staff and parents; in addition, the inspector scrutinised policies, records and documentation. All residential accommodation was viewed, meals eaten with students, and activities, relationships and interactions were carefully observed. There were no pre-inspection surveys or parent view responses so the inspector evaluated the schools own consultation with students, families and others.

Inspection team

Paula Lahey

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Stone Bay School is a local authority maintained residential special school for up to 66 young people aged 11 to 19.

The school is situated in Broadstairs and caters for young people with learning, behavioural and communication needs; a high percentage of students have Autistic Spectrum Disorders. All students have a statement of special educational needs.

The residential accommodation is provided in six units, located on the school site.

The school was last inspected in February 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure stakeholders are provided with clear guidance on key practice issues by uploading the statement of principles and practice, child protection and complaint procedures onto the school website.
- Ensure that student records consistently provide good quality detail and description of events.
- Record evidence of management oversight of residential records and provide this regularly to the governing body.
- Embed the developments in staff supervision and appraisal to ensure regularity is implemented as planned.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Good

Outcomes for residential students are good. Students gain enormously from their residential experience and the individualised support they receive. Their happiness, security and well-being is placed at the centre of all practice and consequently students and their families feel genuinely valued and cared for. Students make good progress in developing confidence, communication and independence skills which in turn contributes to their personal development and educational progress.

Students benefit from positive relationships with all staff, including senior managers. They provide positive role models and their nurturing and caring approach forms the core basis for all work at the school. Staff demonstrate a good understanding of students individual needs and support them well. Students trust staff and feel safe in their care. As a result, they more effectively manage feelings of anxiety and gain confidence at trying new experiences.

Students are empowered to make a positive contribution to the community life of the school and beyond. Examples such as producing and selling 'veg boxes', decorating communal display boards and fundraising for national charities help students to have a greater understanding of their community and wider world. Students' views are highly valued; their contributions from regular surveys and student council meetings help to influence how the school and residence are run. Examples of changes made as a result of student views include: new football kit, water coolers in the residences and new go-karts and trikes. In addition the students were also involved in the appointment of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and student liaison manager. The student council are currently deciding on new playground equipment and a new school uniform.

Students enthusiastically enjoy a range of evening and weekend activities which contribute to their physical fitness, social skills, independence and emotional well-being. Students' feedback ensures that new activities are regularly introduced, which in turn encourages new skills and interests.

Students make good progress in developing positive behaviour. This was evident throughout the inspection and it was a pleasure to spend time with students. Good behaviour is linked to the quality of the individual work the school undertakes with the students, the culture of consideration for others and the focus on positive reinforcement.

Students develop skills that prepare them for changes in their life and becoming an adult. The personalised approach to transition planning, both into the school and onto next placements ensure that students and their families are prepared emotionally and practically. Additionally, the development of a life skills programme is supporting students to build independence skills and achieve accredited qualifications. Among other areas students are currently working on personal safety skills, making meaningful choices and developing more independent personal care.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

Students benefit from good quality of provision and effective pastoral support. Their needs are placed at the heart of practice; as such the school advocates strongly in their best interests. Student outcomes have developed further since the appointment of the student liaison manager and speech and language therapist. Multi-agency partnership working has greatly advanced and the school are now more able to secure prompt access to specialist services and provisions.

The education, residential, communication, ancillary, administrative and leadership team work collaboratively to provide a holistic approach to meeting each student's needs. As such, positive

and constructive relationships are established and maintained. Staff have a comprehensive understanding of students' individual needs and strengths and ensure that care planning arrangements and support plans are personalised.

In recent months the school has developed the role of the key worker. Residential staff are starting to spend time in the classroom observing students and working in partnership with the education teams. Additionally, students now meet on a one-to-one basis with their key worker whereby they undertake work on individual targets and goals.

The speech and communication team work alongside the residential staff to develop alternative methods of communication. As such, the staff team confidently utilise social stories, signing and picture exchange systems to effectively support students to express their needs and manage changes in their routine.

Students enjoy good health. A healthy lifestyle is promoted through lots of physical activities and the provision of a nutritious balanced diet. Special dietary needs are catered for and students are encouraged to try new foods. Meals are taken around the table and provide opportunities to enjoy a social occasion while developing choice-making skills, self-help, and independence. Students' health is closely monitored and they are provided with excellent support when they are poorly or injured. Staff are well trained to enable the safe administration of medication, first aid treatment and management of specialist conditions.

Students are able to engage in a wide range of stimulating and purposeful activities both on site and away from the school. Staff see it as vital that students access activities in the community as this helps them to develop and extend their social skills as well as gain self-confidence. Student feedback about activities is very positive.

Significant improvements have been made to the residential accommodation and school campus. There is good use of signage, photographs and colour to provide young people with objects of reference within their environment. The living units are bright, colourful and modern in décor. A number of kitchens and bathrooms have been fully refurbished. This provides students with improved access and facilities to develop their life skills and independence. The accommodation is homely and welcoming and positively benefits students.

Parents feel that their child is happy and well looked after at school and as a result, make good progress. Feedback from families include, 'everyone within the school works very hard to ensure the happiness and well-being of my child', 'creative, imaginative approaches are used in order to build on pupils' individual strengths', and 'our child has found the place to reach his potential'.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

The school is effective at ensuring there are good arrangements in place to ensure that students, staff and visitors are protected. Students communicate that they feel safe and secure in their environment; parental feedback confirms this view. Families say, 'the safety in school is excellent' and 'my son is extremely happy and feels secure at school'. This is supported by the excellent relationships students and families have with members of staff. Students can identify staff and adults they would talk to if they felt unhappy or worried. One young person said that they could go to any member of staff as 'they all listen and help us'.

Staff are alert to students' vulnerabilities and closely monitor their welfare. They appropriately share any arising concerns with one of the seven experienced and suitably trained senior staff. There is effective partnership working with external safeguarding agencies. Feedback from the local area designated officer confirms this. This year the school has supplemented the annual child protection training with an on-line safeguarding, e-safety and anti-bullying session for all

staff. As a result, staff are clear about their responsibilities and accountabilities for keeping students safe.

Behaviour management, e-safety, and anti-bullying policies have recently been reviewed. All the documents contain up-to-date information and along with regular, good quality training, provide staff with clear direction in how to promote positive behaviour. Each student has a suitably detailed behaviour support plan or guidance plan in place. These plans are of good quality and describe how to support students in a proactive way. Positive behaviour and achievement is celebrated. Students have individualised reward charts and enjoy the regular assemblies whereby they are awarded with certificates and commendations.

The staff team work with students using a positive and proactive approach. Careful vigilance and monitoring ensures that there is prompt recognition of any growing anxiety and/or distress of students. Sensitive and skilfully applied distraction and de-escalation strategies ensure that behaviours do not escalate. Students respond well to this approach and as such, there continues to be a steady decline in the use of physical intervention.

There is a proactive approach to monitoring trends and patterns of behaviour and taking action in response. A recent example has included a review of the behaviour incidents at lunchtimes. As a result, the school has implemented a more structured lunch time with good quality enrichment activities. Evidence demonstrates a reduction in the number of incidents as students are more engaged in purposeful and enjoyable activity.

Due diligence is given to ensure that only carefully checked and vetted adults are invited to become members of the staff team. Great importance is placed on checking and assessing potential candidates' honesty, integrity and inaccurate and/or incomplete applications are not considered. Recruitment practices are robust and fully meet national guidance and standards.

The environment provides a safe and secure space for students to enjoy their time at school. The requisite fire, utilities, health and safety checks are routinely undertaken by the school. This has been enhanced in recent months by the appointment of specialist safety consultants who take responsibility for fire safety and risk management. Students are clear about their responsibilities in the event of a fire alarm or emergency. One student explained that it is important not to run when the alarm sounds but to listen to staff and follow their instructions.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The leadership and management of the residential provision are good. The school and governing body have shared values and clear direction for further development of the school and residential provision.

The residential provision is an integral part of the school with aims which are successfully implemented in practice. A family who agree with this told the inspector 'the school does what it says on the tin and helps to build our child's potential'. The residential team is now acknowledged as the 'residential education' team to recognise the important role care staff have in promoting young people's development and supporting their learning. Staff are conscientious in their work and have a clear and positive view of the benefits of the residential provision to individual students.

Since the last inspection a review of policies, procedures, and written guidance has been undertaken. As a result, the school has implemented a priority completion list to ensure that these documents contain up-to-date information and are consistent with current legislation. The school is yet to upload key policies such as child protection, complaints and the statement of principles and practice, to the new school website. As a result, stakeholders may not be fully clear

about how the school implements these policies in practice.

Staff are provided with good quality induction, training, direction and support. They are supported to undertake national qualifications and make good use of development opportunities. The impact of this is evident in the level of skill they exhibit in directly supporting young people. Regular team meetings are held which enable staff to reflect on their work with students. Since the last inspection the school has commenced a formal supervision and performance management system. All residential staff have now received a supervision and appraisals are due to start.

Residential records are in place and are suitably stored and regularly updated. On occasions some daily records and log books do not consistently demonstrate sufficient detail and description of events in the student's day. The standard 20 visitor has also highlighted this issue. The school plans to undertake training for staff in effective record keeping.

Senior managers undertake reviews of systems, practice and documentation in order to identify and any trends, patterns and areas for improvement. However, the residential team do not comprehensively document this monitoring to evidence effective management oversight. This is a shortfall in recording rather than practice. The governing body visit regularly and are provided with termly reports on the school performance. Currently this document does not include comprehensive feedback on the internal monitoring of the residential provision.

The school demonstrates a commitment to continuous development through its accomplishments since the last inspection. Previous recommendations have been addressed and the school has successfully implemented developments identified from self-evaluation and the good quality standard 20 reports. Improvements to the campus have provided students with increased security and high quality living environment. Senior staff structures have been implemented and are effective in their role. Developments in pastoral support are securing improved outcomes for students.

Effective use is made of stakeholder feedback, concerns and compliments. Student and family views are valued and proactively sought. Regular satisfaction surveys, student council meetings and the recently implemented parent consultation days, are an integral and effective part of the school. Feedback has helped to shape the direction of the school and residential provision. The opportunity to reflect on performance in order to learn lessons and make positive changes is embedded within the school community.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	119056
Social care unique reference number	SC023693
DfE registration number	886/7058

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Maintained
Number of boarders on roll	35
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 19
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Dando
Date of previous boarding inspection	28/02/2012
Telephone number	01843 863421

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