

# St Bernard's School

St. Bernard's House, Wood Lane, LOUTH, Lincolnshire, LN11 8RS

<b>Inspection dates</b>	13/01/2014 to 15/01/2014	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
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

- Residential pupils relationships with staff and their peers are very strong. The staff provide a caring and nurturing environment where they can develop and learn. The ethos of the school is one of respect; residential pupils are treated as individuals and their views are sought and acted upon particularly in relation to the wider school and boarding experience.
- The school have good arrangements in place for residential pupils to be safe and protected from harm. Residential pupils say they enjoy staying in the residence. Staff are knowledgeable about procedures to follow if they have any concerns and give high priority to the residential pupils safety. Staff are vigilant and supervision is good so there are no concerns regarding bullying or residential pupils going missing.
- Residential pupils benefit from a multi-agency approach to health with support available from occupational therapy, a speech and language therapist and the children and adolescents mental health service (CAMHS). This is a strength and ensures there is an holistic approach to health care. In addition, staff work closely with parents to ensure changing health care needs are identified and met.
- Senior managers provide good leadership and have a clear vision for improvements and development of the residential provision to benefit boarders. This is supported by monitoring visits undertaken by a governor.
- Residential pupils are very well supported to develop independence skills. Pupils are encouraged to take as much responsibility as possible for their own self-care needs. They are supported by staff who respect residential pupil's dignity and privacy. The preparation for transition to adulthood is given high priority and is integrated into the residential experience.

**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

This inspection was completed following a short notice period of three hours. Time was spent over three days including evenings, a range of records were examined which related to the care provided and meals were taken with the pupils. Discussions were held with members of staff, the senior management team, child protection co-coordinators and the Local Authority Designated Officer. Also health professionals contributed such as CAHMS, speech and language and a transition worker. Discussions were held with individual pupils and parents.

## Inspection team

Lynne Busby

Lead social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

St Bernard's School is a maintained residential special school for 53 pupils aged 2-19 years. Three pupils currently reside at the school during the week and a further 8 at weekends. The residential accommodation is located on the school site within one of 3 buildings and on a single level. The school is located in Louth, a small country town in the rural county of Lincolnshire. The school serves a population of primarily white British young people. The school caters for pupils with complex and severe learning disabilities. The last residential inspection was carried out in March 2013.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ensure the independent visitor is regularly available for residential pupils
- continue to improve supervision and annual appraisal recording
- ensure residential pupils views are recorded such for example following residence meetings

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupils benefit from their experience in the residence and the highly individualised support they receive. Residential pupils say they like staying in the residence and being with their friends. This enriches their experience of attending the school.

Residential pupils have built strong positive trusting relationships with staff who provide consistent routines. Staff provide a nurturing environment where residential pupils make exceptional progress in developing their confidence and self-esteem. Parents say they 'appreciate the dedication of staff in providing excellent care for their children'.

Residential pupils feel listened to and are supported to make their views known. There is a range of ways for pupils to give their views. The residence has meetings and staff have discussions with residential pupils. However, these are not recorded and do not fully reflect their opinions. There is school council where representatives can contribute the views from the residence. Staff are skilled in communicating with the residential pupils ensuring their wishes and feelings are listened to. Health professionals say 'staff value the importance of communication and use an accessible format to seek pupils views'.

There is excellent multi agency-working particular in relation to residential pupils health needs. Specialist services such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and CAMHS are available and work closely with the school. This ensures residential pupils health needs are quickly assessed and met. All professionals say that there is good communication and they are impressed with the standard of care.

Residential pupils are involved in charity events such as filling christmas boxes for other children. This helps them develop an understanding of others and valuing and respecting difference. Residential pupils are expected to undertake tasks depending on their ability such as washing, dressing and brushing their hair. This helps develop skills for life.

The approach to developing independence is an integral part of the residential experience. Residential pupils are encouraged to take as much responsibility as possible for their personal care and staff support them well. The school has a positive investment in the transition to adulthood with excellent support for the residential pupils and families. The transition worker supports pupils in finding work placements and colleges. This gives residential pupils valuable opportunities to find placements and attend further education.

### Quality of residential provision and care

### Good

The quality of the residential provision is good. Pupil's introduction to the residence is planned and all necessary information about the residential pupil's needs are sought. This helps staff plan and prepare for residential pupils stay and helps them feel settled.

The placement planning for residential pupils is good. Plans outline residential pupils needs and are highly individualised and incorporate daily routines which promotes consistent care. There are risk assessments which clearly identify specific areas of need such as epilepsy. These are regularly updated which reflect the changing needs of the residential pupil. Plans include religious and cultural needs and are positively addressed by staff. The plans are completed with parents and include residential pupils views. Residential pupils have formed relaxed and trusting relationships with the staff. Staff recognise residential pupils uniqueness and provide care in line with their needs.

Education and residential staff work closely together with good communication which ensures there is a seamless transition between the two. This is particularly valuable in supporting residential pupils to meet their learning targets through individualised activities.

Residential pupils benefit from a wide range of activities that they like to participate in such as swimming, bowling and trips in the wider community. Residential pupils also have opportunities to experience different food, religion, music and cultures. These activities enhance boarding pupils life experiences and builds confidence and promotes friendships. Parents say that their children have 'built up a stronger rapport with peers which have developed their socialisation skills and helped develop friendships'.

Pupils health needs are well met. Residential pupils are provided with well-balanced meals and they are encouraged to make healthy choices. Special dietary needs are catered for. They also enjoy being fully involved in cooking and baking and staff say 'there is a sense of accomplishment when residential pupils have helped shop, prepare and cook meals'. There are effective health care arrangements in place to help maintain their physical, emotional and psychological health. Staff work closely with parents to ensure they are up-to-date with health needs. Medication is administered and stored safely and provides an accountable system.

Residential pupils needs are well met in the accommodation provided. There is an improvement programme in place for the development of the residence which includes additional bedrooms. All residential pupils have their own room and can bring things in from home to personalise their space during their stay. There is communal space including a lounge and large dining room where residential pupils can relax.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

**Good**

The school makes good provision for safeguarding residential pupils. Residential pupils are happy and settled and feel safe and secure in the residence. Parents say their children are kept safe. Staff are trained in safeguarding and have a clear understanding of the procedures to follow should they have any concerns. Safeguarding practices are strong and there is good communication with the Local Authority Designated Officer who will offer guidance and advice if required. The child protection procedures have been updated and include signs and indicators of abuse and are available to staff. There is no bullying in the residence although at times pupils do argue which is part of group living but staff offer good supervision and residential pupils are diverted to other activities.

Residential pupils never go missing but staff have a good understanding of their vulnerability, especially when out on trips. Staff are aware of the procedure to follow and there are clear protocols in place.

Residential pupils benefit from a consistent approach to managing behaviour. Staff have a sound understanding of residential pupils differing needs. Staff are trained in behaviour management techniques and this includes restraint. However, this is rarely used and the residence previously had a safe space which was used for calming residential pupils but this now been removed. Currently the residential pupils do not require any physical interventions and sanctions are rarely used as alternative strategies are used to promote positive behaviour. The recording of sanctions and restraints has been updated and include the type of hold used from and the views of pupils are recorded. This ensures records are robust and gives pupils an opportunity to give their opinions.

Residential pupils have varying needs and some have limited awareness of danger and staff ensure the environment is safe. There are risk assessments in place that identify possible

hazards. As a consequence staff are alerted to how risks may be minimised. Fire checks and evacuations are regularly undertaken and the residential pupils clearly know the procedures should this occur.

Residential pupils are protected through the safer recruitment practices which are in place. The school carries out recruitment checks and this includes verification of references before staff start. There is good practice in place for checking and supervising visitors to the school.

### **Leadership and management of the residential provision Good**

The management and organisation of the school and residence is good. The executive head teacher has a clear development plan to improve the school which has realistic targets. The residence is well run and staff are committed to making improvements and maximising opportunities for residential pupils to develop and progress. Residential staff are working closely with teaching staff to provide a 24-hour curriculum.

Residential pupils needs are met through the provision of sufficient staff who are qualified and experienced. Staff have good opportunities to attend training for core areas such as child protection, first aid and behaviour management. However, staff have requested specialist training such as autism. This has been arranged in the training programme. This ensures they have up-to-date skills and knowledge to meet individual needs. Staff are supported through supervision and the head of care is reviewing the recording of these and annual appraisals. These improvements are to provide staff with opportunities to discuss and reflect practice issues and record how well staff support residential pupils.

The school has strong links with partnership agencies particularly with health and care professionals. There is good communication with parents who say 'we have every faith in the staff and they keep us well informed'.

Equality and Diversity is good. Parents say that staff are 'respectful of the children and they promote their identity'. Staff ensure there are no barriers for residential pupils to participate in activities both within the school and the wider community. This enhances opportunities to broaden experiences. Residential pupils views are sought and their views are taken seriously and used in the development of the school. There is an independent advocate who visits the school but these visits are sporadic. Consequently, residential pupils do not have an opportunity to have regular contact so they can raise concerns if they wish.

The school has a good range of information including a Statement of Purpose which provides stakeholders with information about the aims and purpose of the school and residence. Policies and procedures are updated and shared with staff.

The school is visited by a designated governor as part of the quality monitoring process and a report is produced. The report identifies areas for improvement and these are acted upon by the head teacher. The school have addressed all requirements from the previous inspection and good practice has been sustained.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	120761
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC065118
<b>DfE registration number</b>	925/7025

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Leanda Mason
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	14/03/2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01507 603 776
<b>Email address</b>	stbernards@lwf.lincs.sch.uk

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