

St Edward's School

St. Edwards School, Melchet Court, Sherfield English, ROMSEY, Hampshire, SO51 6ZR

Inspection dates 10/02/2014 to 12/02/2014

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	1
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- The residential provision is outstanding. Pupils receive high quality individualised care within a nurturing and stimulating environment. The many and varied activities they undertake during their placements at St Edwards contribute significantly to their social, educational and moral development. Outcomes for pupils are positive and they make significant progress in many aspects of their lives, including their education. The majority of pupils leave the school with qualifications that enables them to access other educational and training opportunities at college. There is a well developed safeguarding culture within the school that ensures the safety and well-being of both pupils and staff remains paramount. Staffing levels are high and good working practices ensure pupils are not subject to unnecessary risks. Young people reported they feel safe in their surroundings and in the company of all the staff. The school is not risk averse and pupils have the opportunity to engage in a wide range of exciting activities. All such activities are appropriately risk assessed and led by qualified and experienced staff. Such activities allow pupils to keep fit, acquire new skills and develop greater self-confidence. Pupils respond positively to the care and support they receive and form trusting and meaningful relationships with staff. An effective key worker system ensures each young persons progress is subject to continuous monitoring. Effective and regular liaison with parents and placing authorities contributes to placement stability. Any difficulties that arise are addressed quickly. Educational, social and therapeutic staff work extremely effectively together to produce strategies that will enable individual pupils to address the often complex social and emotional difficulties they experience. Established self-destructive and anti-social patterns of behaviour decline over time. Pupils are regularly consulted about all aspects of their lives within the school and their views make a significant contribution to the schools continuing development. Residential provision within the school is very well managed and the experienced and highly motivated care staff are responsive to the changing needs of the pupils in their care. Extremely effective quality assurance systems ensure the schools comprehensive policies and guidelines are subject to regular review and that all working practices are geared to

meeting the needs of the current residential pupils. Pupils are provided with good quality accommodation that is well decorated and appropriately furnished. They also benefit from having access to the schools extensive grounds and numerous recreational and sporting facilities. The school has, over its fifty years, established an extremely good reputation for providing high quality care and education for boys who experience behavioural and educational difficulties. It is held in high regard by parents, placing authorities and pupils past and present and is acknowledged as a leader and innovator in its field. St Edwards staff regularly lead practitioner workshops at regional Engage in their Future conferences. St Edwards hosted the 2013 conference. Although all the minimum standards for residential schools were being assessed as being met, the school is being asked to consider one point for improvement which relates to the production of more documentation to evidence the regular formal and in-formal staff supervision that currently takes place.

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

Pre-inspection planning included reference to previous educational and welfare reports, survey returns and information from the local safeguarding board. The school was notified on the first morning of the three day visit and inspectors were on-site just after mid-day. During the course of the inspection interviews were held with pupils, educational, care and therapeutic staff, the school visitor and a visiting social worker. A full tour of residential provision was undertaken and a wide range of records and documents examined relating to the care and well-being of pupils.

Inspection team

David Coulter	Lead social care inspector
Sean Tarpey	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

St Edwards is a day and residential special school that provides care and education for boys aged between 9 and 18 who experience learning difficulties associated with behavioural, emotional and social problems. The school is registered for up to 77 pupils. At the time of the inspection there were 28 day and 25 residential pupils. Residential pupils are accommodated in three age related residential units .

The school is a non-profit making charitable trust and is managed on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton. It is located in a large country house with extensive grounds, workshops, and a horticultural area and provides a range of sport and leisure opportunities. The school has a governing body that meets regularly and plays an active part in the school's operation. Pupils attend the school during term time only and the school is regularly closed at weekends. Boarding is weekly with the flexibility of an extended day for some pupils to meet their individual needs. Pupils are referred to the school from a variety of placing authorities across the country.

The previous inspection of the school's residential provision took place in July 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- introduce a system to record the formal and in-formal staff supervision sessions that are taking place.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Pupils respond positively to the individualised care and attention they receive from staff and are able to establish meaningful relationships. Pupils said that they trust staff and could approach any with a problem or concern. Special mention was made of the relationships they had formed with their key-workers. The social interaction between pupils and staff was observed to be warm and based on a concept of mutual respect. Older pupils accept the greater behavioural expectations placed on them by staff and act as positive role models for younger pupils.

Most of the pupils arrive at the school having experienced disruptions and in some cases exclusions from previous placements. Such experiences have led many to form very negative views about education and their personal abilities. New pupils often arrive with very low self esteem and established patterns of disruptive behaviours. Staff work alongside individual's to develop coping strategies that allow them to better manage their emotions and channel feelings, such as anger and frustration, in more positive terms.

Pupils live full and active lives at school and participate in a range of diverse activities that challenge them physically, socially and emotionally. Staff offer a wide range of individual and team activities. Activities take place within the school and local community. Pupils participate in a wide range of outdoor activities such as canoeing, mountain biking and motorcycling and recreational activities such as fishing and photography. Retreat days at Worth Abbey and voluntary work with physically handicapped children offer challenges of a more cerebral and emotional nature. Success in such activities, is recognised and reinforced by staff and contributes significantly to an increase in the each individual's self confidence. The learning through such activities is related and reinforced in classroom teaching.

Pupils are actively involved in the development of the school and their views are continuously sought about all aspects of their lives, formally through bodies such as the student council and informally through regular discussions with staff. The views of pupils are taken seriously by the senior management team and governors and many of their proposals are accepted and result in changes. Pupils can exercise choice over their food, how they spend their spare time and the activities they wish to participate in.

During their placements pupils make significant progress in all aspects of their physical, social, emotional and moral development. By the time they leave, the majority have achieved nationally recognised qualifications, such as GCSEs. They also benefit from better physical health and fitness, greater emotional stability and more self-confidence. By living residentially they will also have acquired a range of independent living skills that will serve them well in later life. Most pupils now progress on to further education and training. Pupils spoke extremely positively about the school. A pupil who had been in the school for just over a year commented, 'everyone made me feel welcome when I arrived. I think it is a great place to be'. Another pupil who had been at the school for over five years and was preparing to leave at the end of the academic year said, 'Attending St Edwards is the best thing that has ever happened to me'.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

The quality of residential provision is outstanding. The educational, care and cultural needs of all prospective pupils are carefully considered and detailed information is gleaned from placing authorities, former educational settings and parents before any placements are offered. Placements are only offered to those who are likely to embrace the school's ethos and benefit

from its approach. Consideration is always given to the likely impact a new placement might have on existing residential groups.

Each pupil is treated as a unique individual with their own specific care needs. The school makes excellent provision for addressing any religious and cultural needs. For example, catering staff will provide meals that ensure the cultural or religious needs of pupils will be met. A comprehensive care planning system and effective liaison between educational, care and therapeutic staff ensures that the physical, educational social and moral development of pupils is considered within an integrated framework.

While at school the health and well-being of each individual is monitored and support provided by the school nurse. Staff liaise effectively with a range of health professionals including those from specialist services, such as child and adolescent psychiatry, to ensure they have the required information to provide safe and effective care. There is excellent provision for the management and administration of both routine and emergency medications. All staff undertake first aid training and undertake specific training to equip them with the skills to carry out health related tasks.

During their placements pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles by eating wisely and taking regular exercise. Pupils are provided with health education and made aware of the health consequences that can arise through smoking and the excessive use of alcohol or drugs. Staff are pro-active in helping young people give up smoking. Pupils can access the schools many sporting and recreational facilities both during the day and in the evenings. The regular participation in such activities contributes significantly to each pupils physical and emotional well being. A dedicated team of catering staff use fresh ingredients to produce appetizing and nutritionally balanced meals. Pupils spoke in positive terms about both the quantity and quality of food on offer. Meals are social occasions and staff and pupils eat together.

Pupils are accommodated in three age-related residential units. The units are domestic in nature and each contains a kitchen and comfortably furnished communal areas. A recent redecoration and refurbishment programme has further raised standards and the school now offers spacious high quality accommodation. New beds and mattresses have been introduced throughout. The residential units were observed to be clean, tidy and exceptionally well maintained. Each unit has facilities and resources appropriate to its age group. Pupils can personalise their rooms by the introduction of posters and personal effects. There are appropriate bathroom and toileting facilities in each unit. Pupils reported that they always have access to a regular supply of hot water.

Residential pupils' safety

Outstanding

The safety and well-being of residential pupils and staff is paramount and all policies, procedures and working practices are developed within a risk assessment framework. Risk assessments are extensively used to assess the environment, activities and the behaviours of individual pupils. The school has established robust recruitment procedures and all staff are appropriately vetted. Although many of the staff live on site with their families, family members do not have any contact with the pupils. Pupils said they feel safe and secure within their residential units. While there was one reported incident of a residential pupil being reported missing, he returned just after the notification had been made. High staffing levels and effective supervision make such incidents highly unusual. There have been no child protection concerns relating to the residential provision since the last inspection. The school has established positive working relationship with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the staff team within the residential provision are highly trained in relation to safeguarding matters.

St Edwards occupies a large site in a rural location. The school sits amidst a rural landscape of

fields and woodland. It lies approximately a mile from the local county road. While pupils have access to the surrounding grounds specific areas, that contain potential hazards, are designated out of bounds. A senior member of staff has responsibility for health and safety and the site and its buildings are subject to regular health and safety checks. Although the on-site maintenance team addresses the majority of safety issues, specialist contractors are used to check and maintain fire alarm systems and equipment. There is an up to date fire risk assessment and regular fire evacuation practices are carried out at different times of the day. Security arrangements ensure restricted access to both the residential provision and the wider school site. On arrival all visitors must produce personal identification and sign in. Staff are not risk averse and pupils are encouraged to engage in exciting activities such as snow boarding, motorcycling and sailing. All activities are subject to detailed risk assessments and are run by suitably qualified and experienced staff. Participation in such activities provides opportunities for pupils to develop safe practices and develop their abilities to identify hazards and assess risk.

The school values diversity and there is an expectation that pupils will learn to respect each other and peacefully co-exist. The school has a zero tolerance of all forms of bullying or discriminatory behaviour. Staff have created a nurturing environment in which individuals can learn to both understand and channel their emotions in positive rather than negative behaviours. There are extremely positive cultures within each of the residential units and staff have an intimate knowledge of each pupil and are skilled at understanding their behaviours. Positive behaviours, such as consideration for others, are reinforced with praise and encouragement and shared with group members. For example, one pupil was observed receiving praise for helping another who was struggling with his motorcycle safety equipment. A school wide reward system provides a mechanism for each individual to assess their progress and reap the benefits of displaying positive behaviour in both classroom and residential settings. Sanctions, when used, normally consist of the withdrawal of access to a favoured recreational activity. Pupils feel the system is administered fairly.

Although staff are trained in the use of physical interventions, they are only ever used if it is felt an individual is putting themselves or others at risk. There are very few recorded incidents of physical interventions and the trend is continuing to drop. The introduction of anger management training by therapeutic staff has proved extremely successful and has provided numerous pupils with a range of alternative strategies to better manage their emotions. Strategies for managing pupils behaviours are shared with parents and in many instances contribute to an improvement in family life.

The school has a complaints procedure and all pupils are made aware of it on admission. There have been no complaints registered since the last inspection. Pupils spoken with said if they had concerns they would most likely raise them with their key-workers. All were aware of the role of the schools independent listener. Staff confirmed that the inevitable niggles associated with communal living are always addressed before they develop into major concerns or complaints.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

Leadership and management of the school's residential provision is outstanding. Residential provision occupies a prominent role within the school and residential pupils are actively engaged in all aspects of school life. The head of care is part of the school's senior management team and plays a prominent role in both daily operations and development planning. Teaching, care and therapeutic staff work closely together to provide an integrated approach that ensures the specific educational and care needs of each pupil are met. For example, a number of pupils attend the school on a flexible basis that allows them to access boarding provision as and when required. This flexibility not only provides respite for their families but also allows day pupils opportunities to engage in more after school activities. All prospective residential students and their parents are invited to visit the school, undertake a tour of the facilities and meet with staff

and pupils. Details about the specialist nature of the school's day and residential provision is provided in a number of informative publications and the schools accessible website.

The school benefits from having a stable, experienced, and well trained team of residential staff. Staff operate within designated teams that are assigned to each of the residential houses. All residential staff have access to a comprehensive range of policies and procedures that are subject to regular review and updated in response to significant accidents or incidents. High staffing levels ensure the necessary support is available for each pupil at all times. Although residential staff are well supported by their managers and receive regular formal and in-formal supervision, the existing recording system does not accurately capture the amount of supervision that is taking place.

There is a culture of training and professional development within the staff team and expectation that each individual will access the regular training opportunities that exist to increase their knowledge and skills. Staff are extremely pro-active in seeking out training that will equip them to meet the increasingly complex needs of the young people being referred. Residential staff have established good lines of communication with parents and placing agencies. The weekly progress of each pupil is relayed to their parents each Friday before they return home. A visiting social worker spoke in extremely positive terms about the willingness of staff to engage in partnership working. She was able to cite examples of how such collaboration had resulted in positive outcomes for the pupil concerned and his family.

Recommendations and points for improvement from previous inspections have always been acted upon. The school's governing body play an active part in the residential provision with a representatives carrying out monitoring visits on a monthly basis. A record is made of all such visits and evidence indicates that all recommendations are acted upon. The head provides monthly reports to the governing body on all aspects of the school including residential provision. The recent redecoration and refurbishment of all three residential houses demonstrates the staff and governors continuing commitment to the improvement of residential facilities within the school.

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	116584
Social care unique reference number	SC012014
DfE registration number	850/6032

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	
Number of boarders on roll	25
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	9 to 18
Headteacher	Mr L Bartel
Date of previous boarding inspection	11/07/2012
Telephone number	01794 885252
Email address	admin@melchetcourt.com

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