

Stone Bay School

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

Inspection dates	17/03/2014 to 19/03/2014	
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

- Overall, the residential provision is well organised and the quality of provision and care has made a positive impact on the lives of the residential pupils. Parents say that within a short period of starting at the school, their children achieve milestones they never thought possible. They all agree that their children enjoy attending the school.
- The safety of residential pupils is given a high priority. Policies and procedures are well understood by staff and consistently implemented in practice which reduces the risk of harm to residential pupils. There is a clear emphasis on delivering child-focused care and the needs of residential pupils are at the centre of practice. Residential pupils are cared for well and make excellent progress in their personal development because staff are trained, experienced and competent in their role.
- A school restructure in the light of changes to the school's funding formula, is impacting on the morale of the staff. Staff are mindful that their uncertainties should not impact on the care residential pupils receive and maintain a professional and child-centred approach. They know the needs of residential pupils well and deliver highly personalised care that meets the needs of individual residential pupils extremely well.
- All residential pupils benefit from the arrangements in place to attend to their health, education and leisure needs. They progress socially, educationally and emotionally as a result of the implementation of comprehensive, personalised care plans and a structured, well-thought-out programme of activities. Parental responses demonstrate high levels of satisfaction.
- All national minimum standards are met but some recommendations have been made regarding how the service can improve further. The school has already confirmed its intention to incorporate these areas into practice.

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 two hours notice of this inspection. Discussions 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 observed. Pre-inspection surveys were taken into account as were the school's own consultation documents. No responses were provided to Ofsted's 'Parent view' survey during the inspection.

Inspection team

Barbara Davies

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 of whom 33 are boarders and the remainder day pupils.

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, most of which are within the main school building.

The school was last inspected in March 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ensure that observations about practice, alongside any action taken, are noted within monitoring reports.
- ensure that a record of medication administered is recorded on the file of the young person concerned as well as in the school's records of medication.
- ensure that there is consistent practice in that all staff have at least one supervision each term and a yearly appraisal.
- ensure that a risk assessment is completed of each area of the school, alongside those that are currently completed, in respect of areas that are known to present specific risks.
- review the way that evening meals are organised to provide students with more choice and opportunities to acquire independence skills.
- ensure that placement plans contain clearly measurable targets against which progress can be monitored.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Good

The outcomes for residential pupils are good. Residential pupils have positive relationships with staff who are encouraging and supportive in their approach. Residential pupils feel safe and relaxed within the boarding community because their needs are identified, thoroughly known and understood by staff and met through the provision of highly personalised care. High staffing levels enable staff to be responsive and flexible in their response to residential pupils and to give them choice in the activities they pursue.

Residential pupils make good progress because staff are attentive to their needs, help them learn new skills and organise a programme of activities which residential pupils enjoy. Through their participation in activities, residential pupils become more confident and learn how to socialise appropriately with their peers. Residential pupils develop self-esteem because their achievements are recognised and celebrated by staff.

Staff help boarders to understand the standards of behaviour expected and as a result behaviour is mostly good and demonstrates improvement from previous placements. Residential pupils are supervised well by staff who display an inclusive and reasoning approach. Consequently, residential pupils are well engaged in life within the boarding houses and adhere mostly to the boundaries set. Most conflict between residential pupils is resolved effectively through early intervention and resolution by staff.

Bullying is not reported by residential pupils although by the very nature of some of the diagnoses of residential pupils, staff are aware of the potential for residential pupils to lack empathy for others. They are alert and responsive to warning signs. Sanctions and restraint records show little evidence of repeat behaviour by residential pupils; this demonstrates that any measures imposed by staff are successful in helping residential pupils to become more tolerant of each other and to develop more socially acceptable behaviour.

The health needs of residential pupils are well met. Arrangements for attending to specific health needs and medication are robust because of the training that staff receive. Records kept accurately reflect the medication administered to residential pupils and show that medication is administered at the frequency specified but it is not currently practice for a record to be kept on the young person's file as well as in the school's record. A residential pupil, or someone acting on their behalf, would therefore not automatically have access to the information should they request access to the young person's file.

Residential pupils say they enjoy boarding at the school and parents all either agree or strongly agree that this is the case. Good transition planning means that residential pupils are prepared well for a move home, to further education or to another care or education provider. Anxieties are reduced by preparing residential pupils well in advance of any proposed move, wherever possible.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

The quality of the residential provision is good. Communal areas and bedrooms are decorated and furnished to a high standard and provide an environment in which residential pupils feel comfortable. Furnishings are of high quality and are robust enough to meet the demands of the students. Residential pupils are particularly proud of their bedrooms because they have a choice in how they are decorated and furnished. There is good recognition of the needs of individual pupils in this regard and some bedrooms contain little personalisation in response to these.

Pre-admission assessments and care plans are comprehensive and inform staff about the needs of each young person and how best to meet them. Staff across the disciplines work consistently and effectively to implement the strategies outlined and because of this parents all agree or strongly agree that the school meets the needs of residential pupils. While there is regular review and updating of placement plans in recognition of changes in behaviour, the lack of measurable targets means that progress is not clearly evidenced within these documents.

Residential pupils are familiarised well with their environment, routines and expectations because of a comprehensive and well-thought-out induction process which is tailored to meet individual needs. This includes the opportunity for introductory visits to take place in their own home and within the school environment. An example of exemplary practice is the welcome pack residential pupils receive which is tailored to address their individual circumstances, such as providing pictures of their class mates and fellow boarders by way of introduction.

Residential pupils receive good pastoral support with care staff providing high levels of supervision, guidance and positive reinforcement. There are clear and effective systems for the sharing of information between the residential setting and the school, for instance, within the daily briefings. Boarders develop socially, educationally and emotionally because of the common understanding that all staff have of their needs and because of the consistent and well co-ordinated approach between disciplines to meet them.

Residential pupils feel included and valued because staff give them choices and communicate with them using their preferred communication style. Staff offer choice and facilitate discussions by using a range of speech and communication aids through which residential pupils are able to influence the activities they do, the food they eat and items that are bought for the boarding houses. The school council and questionnaires for residential pupils provide the opportunity to influence wider school practice as well as boarding practice.

Alongside a programme of activities, facilities within boarding houses and within the school environment provide boarders with a broad range of varied and stimulating recreational opportunities. Participation by residential pupils in organised activities is good. As in other areas, there is good recognition and a positive response to the informal requests residential pupils make. Those preferring to participate in activities of their own choosing are facilitated to do so, such as applying make up and walking independently to town and to the shops. This helps residential pupils to become more self-sufficient and resilient and to develop independence skills.

Not all residential pupils are satisfied with the standard of food provided. Meals are healthy, nutritious and well-balanced and because of this good health is maintained. However, the arrangements for the evening meal are institutionalised with meals being transported to boarding houses in 'hot boxes' and served from them. The arrangements do not promote the independence of residential pupils or offer sufficient choice of meal. The school has agreed to review this arrangement and is already considering alternative options.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

The school's policies, procedures and practice safeguard the welfare of residential pupils and residential pupils say they feel safe when boarding. All residential staff strongly agree or agree that children are safe in the school.

Behaviour is generally well managed because of high staffing levels and the training that staff receive. Staff mostly engage residential pupils well and use de-escalation techniques to good effect. Physical restraints, when used, tend to be low level and of short duration, such as escorting a young person away from a situation. Occasional incidents have resulted in injury to staff. In these cases, the school conducts a thorough internal investigation and analysis of the

event in order that lessons can be learnt and measures taken to safeguard against the repetition of such an incident with risk assessments being updated promptly.

Similarly, bullying is tackled effectively. Staff are alert to the potential for bullying. There are few incidents of bullying because of good staffing levels, the early identification of issues and effective intervention by staff. All staff agree or strongly agree that behaviour is well managed and most agree that bullying is well managed.

Residential pupils do not go missing and the procedure has recently been updated to be consistent with the most recent guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE). Staff are familiar with the action they should take should a residential pupil go missing.

The school's arrangements for maintaining the physical safety of the environment are extremely well organised and robustly executed in practice. For instance the electrical, water, mechanical and fire appliances are regularly maintained and tested for safety. Written risk assessments are in place for areas within the school, such as the outdoor play area, where residential pupils may come to harm. In these instances the precautions taken by the school to safeguard pupils are clearly evident. Written risk assessments are currently not in place for each room within residential accommodation. This has not impacted on the safety of residential pupils as, although not recorded, regular safety checks of these areas take place and no hazards were observed.

The school's recruitment procedure is robust and consistently applied in practice. Staff do not commence working in the school before their suitability to work with children has been assessed.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The leadership and management of the residential provision is good. Boarding is perceived as making a valuable contribution to the school and in helping residential pupils to progress in their personal development. An organisational review of the provision is having an impact on staff morale and on the stability of the staff team with some staff having recently left the school. The situation is well understood by the senior managers and by governors who are managing the situation well by keeping staff well informed and keeping staffing arrangements under constant review. Because of the dedication and commitment of staff in delivering a high quality service, front-line care delivery has not been affected.

The school remains committed to its task and committed to the continual improvement and development of its service. Good progress has been made in addressing the advisory recommendations made at the previous inspection. A comprehensive report is now regularly provided to the governors about the contribution the residential setting makes to the school; staff supervision is better embedded in the school's practice and the school's practices are more transparent as some of the key policies and procedures have been included on the school website. Parents all either agree or strongly agree that the school is well managed.

Care is well organised and careful consideration is given to the matching of residential pupils within boarding houses. The diverse needs of residential pupils are understood well and staffing arrangements are mostly organised well in recognition of these. A recent change to week-end arrangements involving the moving of some residential pupils to another house has been recognised as not being in the best interests of the young people and is not going to be repeated. Boarding routines are well-established in each of the houses and are clearly communicated to all staff who have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Staff are well experienced, qualified and competent in their role as a result of the school's induction and training programme. Because of this, residential pupils receive good support and care when they need it.

Practice is regularly monitored and evaluated for effectiveness with action being taken in response to any trends or risks identified. However, minor shortfalls noted within records, such as the use of the phrase 'restriction of liberty' to inaccurately describe a sanction given, are not routinely reported or commented on within the monitoring processes. This has not impacted on residential pupils as it is inappropriate terminology; the actual sanction given was appropriate in nature. However, failure to report means that it is not possible to see how the school has addressed the issue.

Staff supervision is better organised and takes place more regularly than was the case at the previous inspection. However, there are inconsistencies in the frequency of staff supervision across the boarding houses. Some staff receive regular supervision while others do not. Despite this all staff feel that they are well supported in their role by managers and by each other.

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	33
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 19
Headteacher	Mr Adrian Mount- Acting Headteacher
Date of previous boarding inspection	19/03/2013
Telephone number	01843 863421
Email address	AMount@stone-bay.kent.sch.uk

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