

# St Mary's school and sixth form college (part of the Talking Trust)

Wrestwood Road, BEXHILL-ON-SEA, East Sussex, TN40 2LU

## Inspection dates

10/06/2014

## Context of the inspection

This inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan. The last welfare inspection was conducted from 15 October 2013 to 17 October 2013. This is the first progress monitoring visit to the school to follow up progress since the action plan, which was evaluated on 3 March 2014.

## Summary of the progress

Standard 1 – Statement of principles and practice.

Since the last inspection, the school has fully revised the residential Statement of Purpose. It now describes clearly what the weekend care arrangements are if children stay. A children's version of the Statement of Purpose has also been produced in alternative communication techniques. As a result, the school now has a clear Statement of Purpose which children, parents and local authorities can refer to, and is followed in practice.

Standard 3 – Health and welfare plan.

The school have introduced a new health and welfare plan system called 'My plan' for each child. The plans include the views of children, their parents and key professionals. These plans also include risk assessments. These risk assessments are now individualised and are of a good standard. This means staff now have clear actions to follow in order to reduce risks when caring for children.

Standard 5 – Suitable sleeping accommodation.

Risk assessments are now completed in relation to children's sleeping arrangements, taking children's compatibility into account. Observations of all the accommodation houses confirm that fold-out beds are no longer in place. Children and staff also confirm that the practice of using temporary beds stopped with immediate effect after the last inspection. This means children are afforded equality of opportunity with regards to weekend care arrangements.

Standard 6 – Health and safety.

All action points following the external health and safety audit in 2013 have been completed. A new health and safety policy was implemented in January 2014. Staff received health and safety update training at an inset day in January 2014 to reinforce this new policy. Staff spoken to show greater awareness of health and safety responsibilities. Portable appliance testing now covers all electrical goods across the school sites. Random checks within the residential houses confirmed this is working in practice. Parents have also been notified about the importance of portable appliance

testing via a letter. Actions taken by the school to address the previous health and safety shortfalls are both comprehensive and effective. This enhances children's safety.

#### Standard 13 – Leadership and management.

Improved internal monitoring systems have enhanced development in the quality of service provision in key areas within the residential provision. These include recruitment records, children's health and welfare plans, health and safety, and risk assessments. This increases children's overall safety and their residential experience.

#### Standard 14 – Staff recruitment.

There is a new on-line single central register now in place. This now ensures all necessary checks are completed on agency staff prior to them working at the school. The employment agencies provide the school with basic recruitment information, and the school carries out further checks. Records highlight whether staff require working visas and these visas are verified. Employment agencies used, are accredited with the United Kingdom Border Agency to ensure a staff member's right to work in the United Kingdom. Overall, there are good, clear systems now in place to demonstrate agency staff have been safely recruited. This enhances children's safety.

#### Standard 15 – Staff deployment and supervision of children.

Agency staff now receive a good induction prior to their first shift at the school. This includes key safe caring topics such as health and safety, child protection, emergency medication and food safety. This benefits children as they are cared for by temporary staff who have a consistent level of basic training. Records sampled show that agency staff do not lead shifts. Rotas seen and discussions with staff confirm that there is always sufficient number of staff on duty. Positively, some agency staff previously used are now employed by the school on a permanent basis. There is an active recruitment programme in place. Changes made to the training of agency staff, and the increase in staffing levels at key times mean that children are now cared for by sufficient levels of competent staff.

#### Standard 19 – Staff supervision, training and support.

Since the last inspection, an internal audit of staff skills demonstrated that 70% of care staff hold the level 3 diploma or equivalent. As a result of the audit, staff without the diploma have been placed on the induction standards or a suitable diploma course. Now 99% of staff either hold or are completing the qualification. This means children are now being cared for by staff who hold the required minimum childcare qualification, or who are actively completing a relevant course.

Staff spoken to confirm they now receive termly supervision and that it is of a good standard. A new supervision format is in place and in use. This format includes discussions about child protection, complaints and health and safety. Supervision forms also record any actions required by the supervisor or supervisee. This provides consistency within staff performance management. A new appraisal format is still being developed. The senior leadership team confirm the emphasis has been on ensuring the supervision system is embedded. The new appraisal system is planned for implementation from September 2014. This is a reasonable timescale. Nurses receive clinical supervision at least every half term from the nurse manager and records now confirm this. Children are now cared for by staff who have regular performance management. This ensures consistency in the quality of care given and offers staff effective support and guidance.

#### Standard 22 – Records.

The school now maintains a record of residential staff rotas which have been actually worked. These documents are now retained for evaluation and monitoring by senior management. The records sampled show that staffing levels within the residential provision are now sufficient and safe. This ensures children have safe levels of staff to care for them, both during the daytime and at night.

The school has made good progress and now meets all national minimum standards.

### **National minimum standards**

**The school has made good progress and now meets all the national minimum standards for residential special schools.**

## Inspection team

Anna Williams

Lead social care inspector

Liz Driver

Social care inspector

## Information about this school

St Mary's school and college is a non-maintained mixed residential special school for 129 children aged between 7 – 19 years. Pupils attend the college from 16 years onwards, into adulthood. There are currently 104 residential pupils. The residential accommodation is provided in eight houses, five of which are on the main school site and three are located within the nearby local community. The school is situated in Bexhill-On-Sea and caters for children with severe and complex speech, language and communication disabilities. Pupils may also have additional physical and medical difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, autism, epilepsy, acquired brain injury and hearing impairments. The residential provision had its last full inspection on 15 October 2013.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133653
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC050390
<b>DfE registration number</b>	845/7000

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.

The inspection was conducted to monitor the progress the school has made since the previous inspection.

<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>	Ms Gail Pilling
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	15/10/2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01424 730740
<b>Email address</b>	admin@stmarysbexhill.org

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