

# St Edwards School

Melchet Court  
Sherfield English  
ROMSEY  
Hampshire  
SO51 6ZR

## Inspection dates

3 December 2014 to 5 December 2014

## Overall effectiveness

**Good** **2**

Outcomes

Outstanding 1

Quality

Good 2

Safety

Outstanding 1

Leadership and management

Good 2

## Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Pupils make excellent progress in their education. They access their timetable and gain multiple certificates and qualifications.
- Pupils enjoy solid, trusting relationships with staff. They are able to form attachments and look up to their positive role models.
- The leadership and management of the residential provision are good. Residential students are cared for by a consistent and enthusiastic team. Staff are well supported by senior staff and have access to varied training opportunities.
- The whole-school approach to meeting the needs of residential pupils is seamless. Staff across the school work and liaise effectively with specialists employed by the school, external professionals, parents and carers. Joint working across the school ensures that all students have access to high-quality care and new life experiences.
- Arrangements for health promotion are excellent. Staff have reciprocal relationships with other health professionals and close liaison with parents to ensure that individual health needs are met. Training in specialist medical equipment and medication administration enables staff to care for residential pupils in a safe and professional manner. Residential pupils enjoy a range of freshly made healthy meals, including a variety of fresh produce. All pupils engage in socially and emotionally stimulating activities such as snowboarding, cooking and swimming in the onsite pool.
- Residential pupils develop tolerance and respect for each other, which is role-modelled by staff. Residential pupils develop through working towards the joint objectives agreed by residential, therapeutic and education staff. As a result,

children become more confident and their behaviour improves.

### **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 inspection was announced via telephone to the head of school on the morning of the first day. On arrival, an initial meeting was held with the headteacher, deputy and head of care. The inspector held discussions with residential care staff, the catering manager, the grounds and maintenance manager, teaching and classroom staff, the therapeutic lead, the matron and a governor. All residential areas were visited during the inspection, and the inspector observed activities with residential pupils in addition to having group and individual discussions with them. The inspector held a discussion with the local authority designated officer prior to inspection. The inspector met with a social worker, independent reviewing officer, parent and external therapist visiting the school. A range of documents and records were also examined during the inspection.

#### **Inspection team**

Lead inspector

Jennifer Christopher

## **Full report**

### **Information about this school**

St Edwards is a day and residential special school that provides care and education for boys aged between nine and 18 years who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school is registered for up to 77 pupils. At the time of the inspection, there were 27 day and 21 residential pupils. Residential pupils are accommodated in three age-related residential areas.

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 only during term-time 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 February 2014.

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

- Introduce a system to record the content of night staff supervision sessions that are taking place, and ensure that night staff have their practice appraised at least annually.
  
- Review the equality and diversity and bullying policies to ensure that they reflect all necessary issues.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Pupils gain increased self-esteem and confidence through their residential experience and learning to stay away from the family home. Residential pupils consistently make positive comments about their stays, the support from staff and each other, and the wide range of activities they have access to.

Pupils enjoy positive relationships with each other and residential areas are mostly calm. Pupils who have attended the school for longer periods of time have developed personal skills and increasing self-regulation of behaviour. Therefore, when other residential pupils become excitable or angry, their peers support them to become calm and work through their issues or differences. As a result, the residential areas are mostly relaxing spaces where peers recognise and accept each other's differences.

Residential pupils benefit from warm and nurturing relationships with a consistent staff team. Staff and pupils are harmonious, with no obvious distinction between staff areas and pupil areas. They join in all activities together and there is no awkwardness in sitting with any of the adults who work at the school.

Pupils refer to the residential area as 'theirs'. They talk openly of their rooms and their belongings. Pupils make a positive contribution to their residential experience through engaging in a redecoration programme for some areas. They have personalised their rooms with photographs, pictures and soft furnishings of their choice. In addition, many residential pupils participate in events benefiting the wider community, such as fundraising and a living museum project, with displays in schools and community events.

Behaviour is very good, given the difficulties that many of the residential pupils present. Highly effective aggression and anger management sessions with the therapeutic team have greatly improved individuals' behaviour and responses to anxiety or stressful situations. Residential staff complement therapeutic approaches through positive reinforcement and bespoke behaviour management planning.

Residential pupils engage in a wide range of physically and emotionally stimulating activities in both the school grounds and the community. Activities include snowboarding, mini-moto racing, and arts and crafts. Younger pupils benefit through imaginative play in a specially designated area. As a result, they improve their solo play and stimulate their imagination, which many have missed in their formative years.

During their stays, residential pupils gain essential life skills for independence and adulthood. They are actively encouraged to make snacks and tidy their rooms, while having the opportunity to socialise, share and play. Pupils were observed to be respectful of others, including helping them with tasks they find difficult and thoughtfully reminding them of appropriate language and behaviour. The residential provision encourages positive next steps to other residential provisions or independent living.

## Quality of residential provision and care

**Good**

The quality of care for residential pupils is good. The school and residential area have a warm and welcoming feeling, and pupils are a credit to the school. Staff provide thoughtful pastoral care and are considerate to those who struggle with being away from their families. Staff are always available, and pupils identify many adults within the school who they can go to with any issues or concerns. Residential pupils benefit from an extensive variety of activities. Staff support individuals with great enthusiasm to ensure that all succeed in developing their new-found skills.

Residential pupils are actively encouraged to share their views on the residential provision and school in general through a variety of platforms. Individual sessions, group meetings and the student council have effected change in the activities available to pupils and decoration of bedrooms. For example, two bedrooms have been remodelled with a motorbike and safari theme, and new furnishings have been chosen for many areas.

Individual care plans are reflective of individual skills and agreed needs. Targets are clear and attainable, and plans mostly link to behaviour management plans. They provide staff with a clear basis of how to support individual pupils. Equality and diversity do not form a basis to plans, although there are no known shortfalls in this area. The equality and diversity policy was updated during the inspection to reflect implicitly sexuality and sexual orientation.

Arrangements for healthcare are strong and the matron has excellent links with the local GP surgery and specialist healthcare professionals. Individualised health-care plans are available for all pupils who have specialist needs and, where necessary, staff are trained in appropriate medical procedures. Residential pupils are supported by the matron to attend hospital outpatient appointments. She is proactive in gaining specialist services for individuals, as required. Systems for the storage and administration of medication are robust. All staff have first aid training to respond in the event of an emergency.

Meals provided for residential pupils are of an excellent quality. Individuals comment positively about the food and recognise that they have enjoyed items they previously would not have tried. Specific dietary needs are catered for thoughtfully, ensuring that all have a balanced and healthy menu with no processed foods.

The residential accommodation is maintained to a high standard in most areas. The development plan to modernise and redecorate those areas that still require attention is ongoing and action is being taken to ensure that some areas are updated during the forthcoming school holidays. Robust arrangements are in place to store personal items safely.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

## **Outstanding**

Residential pupils consistently report that they feel safe and secure while accessing the residential provision. All can identify staff who they would go to if they were worried or upset.

Safety is central to all practice within the school, and staff recognise individual vulnerabilities and respond proactively to alleviate any issues. Staff are confident in the procedures to follow should they be concerned for a student's welfare or emotional well-being. Designated senior staff take responsibility for child protection and all have undertaken appropriate training. The school works effectively with the local safeguarding children's board, swiftly addressing any safeguarding incidents or concerns. Records of investigations are clear and provide an excellent audit trail, ensuring that procedures have been followed.

Bullying is not tolerated within the school, and residential pupils do not identify it as a concern. All pupils recognise that staff intervene if joking goes beyond 'banter'. There is an excellent anti-bullying programme currently being implemented by the therapeutic team, and displays around the school promote the anti-bullying ethos.

Proactive behaviour management plans result in a minimal use of restraint. The recording pro forma was amended during the inspection to ensure that it will henceforth explicitly reflect why ground holds have been used, in given circumstances. Residential pupils and staff understand school rules. The consequences for not adhering to rules are consistently applied. Pupils develop skills to recognise when they are becoming angry or upset, and utilise strategies to manage these instances, such as time out.

Residential pupils are scanned with a metal-detecting security wand when they arrive from home and at the end of their stay, and this helps to ensure that no weapons are brought on site.

Residential pupils have not gone missing from the school. Those who leave the building usually take time out in the extensive grounds, and staff remain in sight at all times. Staff are confident in processes that they would follow should they be unable to locate a pupil.

Residential pupils are protected from adverse risk or harm through extremely robust checks and procedures. The recently appointed site manager is in the process of reviewing all risk assessments and procedures to confirm that they are in line with current guidance and legislation. Individual residential pupil risk assessments allow pupils to engage in age-appropriate activities reflective of their abilities. Risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel.

Staff recruitment and vetting is extremely thorough and key personnel have attended safer recruitment training. Additional checks are conducted on staff who have lived or worked in other countries.

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

**Good**

The leadership and management of the residential provision are good. The residential management team has been in post for a substantial period and its members are experienced in their roles. They have a very strong understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and are constantly seeking ways in which to improve residential pupils' experiences. Regular reports from the independent visitor provide sufficient challenge and insight into practice. Governors actively seek the views of pupils through regular visits.

The staff team is stable, with many individual staff being in post for several years. All benefit from an excellent training package and feel that they have the skills they require to complete their roles to a high standard. Staff are listened to and feel supported by the senior team through formal and informal meetings and discussion, supervision and appraisals. Records of night staff supervision do not reflect the level of support they receive, nor have they had their performance appraised annually. Staff with specific responsibilities keep abreast of developments in their area. They ensure that the school and residential provision remains compliant and up to date with change, locally and nationally.

The residential provision is held in high regard throughout the school and is recognised as integral to developing individual pupils' personal and social skills. Pupils are proud of their accommodation and feel 'lucky' to stay overnight. Reflective practice and joint working with all staff within the school ensure that residential pupils' positive experiences continue. Staff are enthusiastic in their drive to meet the diverse needs of individual pupils and for them to reach their potential during their stays.

Residential pupils' views are integral to the development of the service. Additionally, the views of parents, carers and relevant partner agencies inform change within the school. A social worker and independent reviewing officer were incredibly complimentary of the school and support a specified pupil had benefited from. A parent commented that the school was 'one of the best' and 'wished all schools were like this'. Any complaints are responded to promptly and sensitively, recognising the complainant's frustration or distress.

## 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>	116584
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC012014
<b>DfE registration number</b>	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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Residential Special School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	18
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Male
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	nine to 18
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Lawrence Bartel
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	8 to 10 February 2014

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