

Stone Bay School

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

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Stone Bay School is a local authority maintained residential special school. There are currently 57 girls and boys attending, of which 19 are weekly boarders. The school caters for young people who have learning, behavioural and communication needs. A high percentage of students have autistic spectrum disorders. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. The residential accommodation provides a number of separate living areas and all bedrooms are single occupancy. All residential accommodation is located on the school site, within or attached to the main school building.

Inspection dates: 13 to 15 March 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 20 February 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Managers provide strong leadership to a stable staff team.
- The moving-in and moving-on processes are effective and result in appropriate placements and positive outcomes.
- The well-coordinated multi-disciplinary approach enhances consistency across both the school and residential settings.
- Residential pupils' safety underpins the ethos of the school.
- Increased support for residential pupils' social interaction and communication methods, together with the use of systems to track progress, improves their overall development.
- Close liaison between the education and boarding provision ensures that a 24-hour curriculum is implemented in practice.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Recording methods for management supervisions do not evidence the discussions or decision-making.
- Team meetings do not take place to enable staff to share information and knowledge in a formal setting.
- When residential pupils transfer between homes, no record is made of the reason for the decision.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Recommendations

- Record management supervision, so that the rationale for decisions made are clear.
- Record the reasons why children may move bedrooms across the residential accommodation.
- Ensure that all relevant details are contained in health plans.
- Instigate periodic residential staff meetings.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Residential pupils make good progress socially, academically and emotionally through accessing the residential provision. Close partnership working and communication between school staff and residential staff are effective. Measurable targets are identified at school and continue into the residential provision, ensuring that there is a 24-hour curriculum.

Communication is key to residential pupils' social interactions and learning. The appointment of a full-time speech and language therapist is a positive addition. She assesses pupils in the school and residential provision and devises programmes to be used across both settings to ensure consistency. A residential pupil, who recently moved into the residential provision, is being assessed regarding his ability to use symbols. He has developed close relationships with education and residential staff, which enhances the chances of successful use of this communication method.

Speech and language therapy is successful; one residential pupil has increased his use of picture exchange cards and is starting to use this communication in the home environment. Another residential pupil is increasingly able to join in group activities with his peers as a result of intervention to improve his attention skills.

Staff measure residential pupils' progress through the use of 'Performance Indicators for Value Added Targets'. This system identifies and tracks progress made by the residential pupils across a range of areas. Residential pupils can easily recognise the progress they are making, which is celebrated by staff and residential pupils alike.

There are formal and informal systems for residential pupils to have a voice in the school. The school council minutes demonstrate that pupils are listened to and their requests acted upon; pupils have been instrumental in designing the play area and sensory room, including choosing new equipment and designing these spaces. Those who do not communicate verbally are encouraged to use pictorial methods.

Residential pupils enjoy a range of timetabled activities and readily join in with organised activities, such as bowling, indoor golf and discos. Sensory play and walks in the local area are also popular. Pupils learn social skills such as sharing, turn-taking and tolerance of others. These opportunities increase residential pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

Stakeholders value the residential provision highly. A parent said, 'He is like a different child; he has a sense of humour now.' A social worker reported, 'He is making progress at the residential provision; they have a good insight into his struggles and have helped him to manage his behaviour.'

Meals are healthy and varied, and individual dietary needs are met. The accommodation is well maintained. Any repairs are swiftly reported and addressed.

Residential pupils are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms with posters and photographs. This enables them to have a sense of belonging.

Staff demonstrate high expectations for the residential pupils. They encourage those who can to become more independent. Staff generally role-model social skills and create a homely environment. Mealtimes are social events, with staff and pupils sitting together. Pupils are encouraged to practise self-care skills by clearing their plates and undertaking chores.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Excellent safeguarding is consistently implemented and is effective at keeping residential pupils safe. The school has comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures that appropriately link with the local authority's documentation. A team of designated safeguarding leads ensures that staff have trained senior managers readily available to consult. Safeguarding concerns are appropriately dealt with, and the designated officer reports good liaison between leaders and managers. A strong ethos of safety for residential pupils is evidenced by staff's knowledge and use of reporting procedures. Safeguarding messages are further reinforced by scenarios being discussed during supervisions and being circulated to staff; their responses are collated to identify any training needs.

Suitably high staffing levels ensure that residential pupils are supervised closely. The site is secure, and staff know where they are at all times. No residential pupil has gone missing since the last inspection.

Staff focus on developing residential pupils' skills in recognising danger and how to keep themselves safe. Topics covered are fire safety, road safety and safety while in the residential provision. Creative ways are used to get this message across, which make learning fun.

The school favours a positive approach to the management of residential pupils' behaviour. Residential pupils receive acknowledgement and positive praise from staff who demonstrate that they enjoy working with them. All residential pupils have behaviour management plans that are jointly agreed between the professionals, parents and carers. A multi-disciplinary approach to problem-solving, devising strategies and analysis of behaviour informs staff and enables a consistent response.

Systems are in place to analyse any patterns in challenging behaviour which necessitate the use of physical interventions. This information is analysed by leaders and managers to inform strategies to de-escalate and reduce environmental or social reasons for challenging behaviour. The frequency of physical interventions has reduced as a result. All staff have training in a recognised behaviour management technique. Leaders and managers are currently reviewing this method and looking to source an alternative technique, which will be implemented following a comprehensive training programme.

Pupils are safe from avoidable hazards through regular checks of the building and grounds, and risk assessment of external activities. Pupils engage in regular fire drills and know what action to take in the event of a fire. Fire evacuation guidance is reviewed in response to learning from fire drills. Safer recruitment processes ensure that the risk of unsuitable adults caring for residential pupils is minimised.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers are effective in recognising and acting upon identified areas of improvement. A development plan devised following the last inspection has been successful in improving the safeguarding processes. The leadership and management of the residential provision has remained stable. The residential provision is led by a suitably experienced and qualified head of care, who is supported by a committed staff team.

Staff benefit from regular supervision and annual appraisals. They report that they can approach the head of care with any concerns that they may have. Daily discussions at the end of the shift are supportive, and encourage teamwork and reflection. Formal team meetings do not take place; this is a missed opportunity to allow staff a forum to share knowledge and develop the service further. The head of care has weekly meetings with the headteacher. However, records of these meetings are not kept and the reasons for some decisions made may therefore remain obscure.

Admissions to the home are based upon information-gathering and preparation, taking into account the potential impact on other residential pupils staying there. Information gathered is not included in care plans initially to ensure that staff become more familiar with residential pupils before these documents are formulated. Risk assessments and behaviour management plans inform staff regarding how to respond to challenging behaviours or potential risks. Health plans are generally of a high standard. However, on one occasion a known food intolerance was not recorded in the residential pupil's health plan. Consistent recording of care plans and health plans would equip staff with the necessary knowledge to support the residential pupils' needs.

Handovers at the beginning and end of the day are forums to communicate to staff any significant events that have occurred during the residential pupils' school day and agree plans for the evening. Any issues can be addressed through a whole-school approach.

Liaison with external services and professionals supports residential pupils' emotional and academic development. Leaders and managers work closely with parents to address any concerns or complaints, which are rare.

Information technology is used to improve information-gathering and recording and aid leaders and managers in their analysis of incidents, progress and academic

attainment. Improvements to the system have been made to enhance the recording of restraints. However, this lacked the ability to record antecedents to the restraint and residential pupils' views. This was addressed during the inspection.

Well thought-out decisions are made with regard to the most suitable residential provision for each residential pupil. However, this reasoning is not recorded.

There are well-established systems for monitoring the quality of care being provided. Governing bodies offer appropriate challenge and support to the residential provision. An independent visitor writes a monthly report. He is a familiar face for residential pupils and ensures external scrutiny and safeguarding. Leaders and managers have high expectations and are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement in the residential provision. They are committed to continually improving the service.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC023693

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Billy McInally

Type of school: residential special school

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Inspectors

Suzy Lemmy, social care inspector (lead)
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