

Stone Bay School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119056
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339333
Inspection dates	24–25 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Lynne Kauffman

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	58
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mick Taylor
Headteacher	Richard Edey
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2007
School address	70 Stone Road Broadstairs CT10 1EB
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Boarding provision**Social care Unique Reference Number**

SCO23693

Social care inspector

Lucy Ansell

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors and one social care inspector who looked at the residential provision. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed 16 teachers and their learning support assistants. This included two lessons taken by communication facilitators, with inspectors spending the majority of their time looking at learning. Meetings were held with governors, parent groups, staff, visiting professionals and students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its procedures for safeguarding children, records of students' progress and 16 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- exploring the confidence of management at all levels in the school's vision for the future, in relation to succession planning and the impact of Building Schools for the Future
- checking that new additions to the assessment strategies are understood, implemented and monitored across the school
- establishing how well the previous inspection issues have been addressed
- identifying the parents' role as partners in their child's progress towards independent living
- reviewing the school's structured approach to teaching and learning and the impact of behaviour management on students' progress and development.

Information about the school

Stone Bay is a maintained community residential and day special school. Students have increasingly complex special educational needs such as communication difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, severe to moderate learning difficulties and very challenging behaviour. All students have a statement of special educational needs. Numbers of minority ethnic groups are small. Sixteen students work in the further education department and there are seven looked after students.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Stone Bay School is a good school. It has unique approaches to staff development and uses a wide range of communication aids. These two features ensure its young people enter their future with confidence and social skills to aid their independence and happiness.

Staff are recruited from all areas of the community. They often join the school with special creative skills, for example floristry, construction skills and professional attributes, such as having been a registrar. Senior staff are skilled in talent-spotting and this supports those aspiring professionals with particular potential. Through their training and subsequent gaining of qualifications they are prepared to enter the teaching profession. This is what makes this school unique. Staff have a total commitment to the students and their continuing professional development ensures they are up-to-date with the latest techniques to support students. Staff explained 'we would not want to leave because the school is such a positive place to work and we feel we are making a difference to students and their families'. Parents undoubtedly agree. Their questionnaire responses and the face-to-face interviews with groups of parents could only praise, and pay tribute to the teaching that has prompted such good progress for their children.

In classrooms, the seamless work between teachers, learning support assistants, communication facilitators and therapists ensures each pupil has good individual support. Meticulous behaviour management plans remove the barriers that had prevented students from learning in their previous settings. Successful techniques that calm students, measure intervention, to ensure other pupil's learning is not disturbed and then, reintegrate the calmed students back into class, works well and learning for all improves. The 'red files' track students' records of achievement from the moment they enter the school. Records sum up progress at key times throughout the year but lack more detailed records of students' step-by-step progress on a daily basis.

Governors are a good team. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They often use outside agencies to observe and monitor the school's work and ensure that feedback to the governing body occurs. However there are key areas where they have not evaluated the reports by the specialists and have been left with incomplete records. This was identified at the start of the inspection and efforts were made to rectify the situation. The safeguarding policy and procedures are now in place and requirements are met. The governors are involved with the Building Schools for the Future bid which they feel will revolutionise the development of the school. Management is innovative and makes clear the well-evidenced judgements' through its recently updated self-evaluation form. Middle managers would like a forum

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where they could ensure curriculum links are continually debated; this is a desirable development.

The curriculum focuses on communication as a key area of development for its students, if they are to lead as near as possible independent lives. Cross-curricular links are vibrant but there is no audit to ensure teachers capitalize on salient links across the curriculum. However the sixth form curriculum is outstanding because of work-related learning and links with students' future aspirations for training and supported employment. For example, exquisite painting in the style of Jackson Pollack and well-crafted planters made in design and technology are good quality products, often sold at school events such as the Christmas bazaar. Excellent care, guidance and support underpin the systems in the school.

The previous inspection in 2007 identified two issues to improve. These have been followed up assiduously. In addition the school strives to develop a closer liaison with parents and care staff to ensure a wrap-around service that meets the needs of all. All-in-all outcomes, provision and leadership and management show the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fine tune the small steps for students' learning on a daily basis to ensure a tighter focus on progress during the summer term 2010 by:
 - continuing to use the new assessment system to produce comparative data
 - ensuring all staff are trained to keep a running record of progress in lessons
 - aiming to give students more opportunity to self-assess.
- Ensure the good cross-curricular work happening across the school is audited to identify successes and gaps in provision in preparation for the revised curriculum planning for September 2010.
- Strengthen middle managers' management skills during 2010 by:
 - introducing a forum for middle managers
 - distributing responsibility among the group.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

All students are assessed once they have settled into the school after a term. Records show they make good progress from that starting point. Most reach or exceed their targets. In lessons, students show a tangible sense of enjoyment. In some cases, where communication is a focus, they develop their language and social skills by working together, often facilitated by their key worker. Students concentrate well; they make small, steady steps to achieving greater independence, especially when activities relate to real life experiences. Mathematics bingo, for example, boosts learning and is fun. Good behaviour management makes a significant impact on students' progress. Students try their best; some students with limited verbal skills can communicate well

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through innovative technology. The close link between boarding staff and teachers and through the use of the handover link books ensures work started at school is followed up after school; there is a similar arrangement for day students.

Students love their school and are clearly well engaged with the school's ethos of fairness, equality and independence. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is made real through the design of classrooms, for example where a social and kitchen area enables meals to be made and shared. Most students have a positive self-belief leading to them being more confident in communicating with others. All students try to have a healthy lifestyle. They know fruit and vegetables are good for them but do not like the textures of some vegetables. However, they know they have choices. Exercise is an important part of the '24 hours curriculum' including good cardiovascular and motivational activities. The crazy golf course, designed by students, shows their enthusiasm and ingenuity for developing new games and sports.

Open membership of the school council is an example of the school's inclusion policy. Students play an active part in school improvements, they are involved in the Building Schools for the Future bid and they support charities such as 'love in a box' providing presents for children at Christmas. Attendance is good. The school's systems take account of health issues and family difficulties. The school community is strong, although reaching the wider United Kingdom and global community is more difficult to establish; there are new links with South Africa. Work place skills are developed well through good social development and communication activities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Staff expectations are high and students generally rise to the appropriate challenges set for them. Accurate target-setting and the focus on learning is improving teachers' planning to meet complex needs. This has improved since the previous inspection report. Of the 16 lessons seen, teaching in all was at least good and some was outstanding. Behavioural difficulties for students on the autistic spectrum or with additional complex needs do not interrupt their own learning and progress, or that of others. Teachers use behaviour management strategies well, making behaviour outstanding overall. All staff know their roles and responsibility; they do not wait to be directed by the teacher but understand exactly what action to take where a student has a problem. The very detailed behaviour profiles and strategies help to calm students, reduce tension and reintegrate the student back into the classroom, as soon as possible. In lessons, students show a tangible sense of enjoyment. In some cases, where communication is a focus, they develop their language and social skills by working together, often facilitated by their key worker. Assessments at the end of a module of work are accurate and detailed. However, smaller steps of progress are not regularly recorded in an ongoing style to ensure 'golden nuggets' of instant progress are recorded before they are forgotten.

The imaginative curriculum offers balance and breadth in themed programmes that focus on developing independence, social skills and communication. The curriculum interweaves communication skills into most lessons. Picture exchange, signing and symbols are used consistently to ensure all students have full access to the curriculum. Basic skills including information and communication technology are taught well. Understanding is improved by applying skills in realistic situations. For example, science was truly experimental when students took an active part in work on the properties of rocks.

The start of the day, where students greet each other and the staff, is a powerful opportunity for social skills to be practised. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are integrated and students have relevant, age-appropriate sessions on topics such as sex education and other challenges for teenagers. Teachers make very effective use of the interactive whiteboards to encourage students to take a lead in lessons and build up their confidence. In many lessons, there is a lively feeling of fun and competition as students play the matching and posting games to test out their recall and progress.

Students receive outstanding individual care and support from all staff. The school

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makes excellent use of a wide range of additional support, for example music therapists and communication facilitators. Students are empowered to overcome the challenge of their particular learning need. Parents and carers described how the school has changed their lives and the lives of their children. So many students have struggled in other settings - they have been rejected or failed to attend. Once they join Stone Bay things change! School becomes life-enriching rather than a point where students feel a failure. Students with previous behaviour or attendance problems are transformed; they develop a positive attitude to their learning. They thrive and are well prepared to look forward with confidence to their futures as adults.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is passionate about providing the very best education for students who have so often been failed by the education system. His drive and ambition has seized upon the diverse qualities of the staff, challenging them to give the most vibrant learning experiences to all students. For example, the apprenticeship scheme shows the school is successfully 'growing its own specialised workforce' to deal effectively with the severe and complex needs of Stone Bay's students. Many staff who have joined the school as volunteers or learning support assistants have been coached, trained and gained qualifications to prepare them to take on the professional role of teachers, residential team leaders or school managers.

The school has excellent partnerships with local schools; staff expertise is shared. Senior managers lead by example through seamless, coherent, positive teamwork. Middle managers are similarly enthusiastic and dedicated, but do not yet have a forum where they can capitalise on the strengths they collectively bring to the school.

Governors are a good team. They support and challenge the senior leadership team as 'critical friends'. They are very proud of their school and the high level of expertise of the staff. Governors are fully aware of the strengths and areas where the school needs to improve. Statutory requirements, including those regarding equality of opportunity, are met.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to promoting community cohesion. The school uses its local area well as an outdoor classroom, visiting shops, the library and places of local interest. Recently, a link with South Africa has been developed through a religious education topic. Evaluation of the impact of these positive initiatives is largely

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informal but effective. The school's financial systems have been assessed and they meet requirements and show good value for money

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Stone Bay gives excellent opportunities for sixth form students to develop as young adults. Students in the sixth form are given the tools to help them into independent adult life. Achievement is good. If appropriate, students study an ASDAN moving on course. Teaching and learning is exciting and engages students in active learning. Their progress is tracked through their ASDAN files and success is celebrated with certificates and commendations. Students' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. The enterprise curriculum provides outstanding work-related learning; students run a vegetable box scheme, produce items such as pottery for garden ornaments and weaving to be sold at school events. This is backed up by a stunning approach to careers education from the careers service; here, pictures and signing are used to help students explore their future aspirations. The excellent consolidation of signing and symbols in sixth form, underpinned by the work of communication facilitators, ensures students have confidence in using a range of strategies for responding to questions and conversation. Well-organised and excellent monitoring of sixth form work ensures rigour in all aspects of a student's '24-hour curriculum'. Close links with boarding enables students to personalise their rooms with items made in school. Excellent organisation and management creates empathy and drive to help students reach their potential.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Boarding provision

Boarders' health is positively promoted. Individual student health plans are comprehensive and relate to all aspects of health care provision. Access to external medical professionals is facilitated and supported by the care team. The school promptly relays any dietary, medication or health information to boarding and catering staff to ensure that all relevant information is shared. Parental consent for first aid, emergency treatment and homely remedies is in place. Senior staff are trained in first aid and medication administration. Medication administration records are accurate and up-to-date and medication is securely stored. However, the school does not keep the required written records for recording and administration of controlled medication in a bound and numbered book; this is not good practice as the monitoring and audit systems are not as robust as required to safeguard staff and young people.

Boarders have a system to raise complaints or concerns which is appropriate to their understanding. Clear procedures and systems that are in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are used effectively by staff to ensure children are kept safe. All staff are trained in safeguarding and care staff have a good understanding of their roles in keeping children safe.

A strength of the school is behaviour management; all of the students have complex and demanding behaviours which are managed extremely well. Positive behaviour is reinforced through lots of praise and rewards. Staff have formal training in the management of behaviour and compile and follow comprehensive behaviour plans to ensure they respond appropriately. Positive steps are taken to keep young people and staff in the home safe through regular reviews and updates of environmental and fire risk assessments. Health and safety around the school is well managed. Young people are protected by sound staff recruitment and selection procedures.

The boarders value the quality and variety of outstanding activities and leisure pursuits which are on offer. There is excellent provision both on the school site and also by accessing the resources of the wider community. As a result, boarders can access high quality activities, many of which are aimed at promoting their independence and personal growth. Staff know the boarders well and are clear about their individual needs. Support for the boarders provided by the high staffing levels results in invaluable support for all students when they need it.

Students are given lots of opportunities to express their opinions and they have the

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means to communicate so any issues or concerns they may have can be addressed through either the school council or house meetings. Boarders' views and opinions are valued and are used to effect change around the school and residential areas.

Excellent relationships exist between school staff and the parents and carers of students. Regular reports and telephone contact help to promote working in partnership, which is of importance for the continued well-being of the boarders. Parents state: 'The school goes over and above in caring for our children.' Boarders benefit from plans of care that contain very detailed assessments, and help to meet their needs in a comprehensive manner, which determines the best outcomes for them. There is good recording, with clear target setting and reviews completed in a timely fashion with the involvement of both education and care staff.

Boarders have pleasant and well-maintained living units. Each unit has its own unique identity forged by the individual young people and the staff working within them. The rooms are all personalised and individual to the boarders and the communal areas are homely and comfortable.

The site is very secure and all play equipment and spaces to play are sited conveniently in the middle of the school. The location of the school so close to the seaside offers additional benefits to the students.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All differences and individuality are valued, and there is genuine respect for all people. The students' guide is available in pictorial format and is individually tailored for each student.

The boarders are looked after by staff who are an experienced, cohesive team. The team is able to meet the boarders' needs in a consistent manner. The care staff team is recognised for the warm, caring and homely environment achieved within all the units. Staff commented that they have very good access to training and development. Staff across all disciplines of the school state the school is inclusive, with all staff seen as valuable and having something to contribute. Regular staff meetings take place and boarding staff are receiving supervision on a regular basis. However, a recommendation to ensure staff receive annual appraisals to promote and monitor their development opportunities has been made.

The school benefits from a senior management team which offers stability, efficiency and clear leadership. The organisation of boarding is very good and there is regular monitoring of records. Any deficits picked up by any member of the staff team are dealt with immediately. The Regulation 33 reports are comprehensive and robust and provide useful guidance. The school has an active governing body which works effectively for the benefit of the school.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care

- ensure the administration of controlled drugs is recorded in a bound and numbered book (NMS 16.6)
- ensure staff receive annual appraisals starting in 2010. (NMS 30.6)

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This is the grade for the boarding provision

The effectiveness of the boarding provision	2
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Views of parents and carers

Family members were positively emotional about the impact of Stone Bay on their children's development. Parents, carers and family members explained that their children have developed in leaps and bounds and now actually like school. The appointment of a family liaison worker has provided a key point of contact that has given parents additional confidence. Courses are planned to help parents support their child at home, for example workshops on Makaton signing. Parent questionnaires were full of positive responses and praise for the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stone Bay School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	75	9	56	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	56	2	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	75	8	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	87	5	31	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	100	6	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	81	5	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	68	7	43	1	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	75	7	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	100	3	18	1	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	81	6	37	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	75	8	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	100	3	18	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	100	3	18	1	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



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26 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Stone Bay School, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1EB

We would like to thank you all so much for making us so welcome in your school. Stone Bay is in a lovely setting and you are so lucky to be near the beach. We really enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing your good work on the walls, and particularly enjoyed having lunch with you on Wednesday.

We think you and your staff work extremely hard and you have a good school with many fantastic facilities including boarding. We loved the art work and personality pictures that decorated your rooms. We have heard that you have had a chance to be part of the new school Building Schools for the Future development - that will be very exciting to help to plan the new school. I know lots of you have good ideas already.

We would like to leave your staff some ideas about what might make school and boarding even better.

- We would like your teachers to make a note every time you make an achievement and for you to start to assess your own work, just as the students do in the sixth form.
- We would also like them to track your cross-curricular work to make sure no topics are missed.
- In the care part of your school the staff must provide a proper cabinet for controlled medicines.

We hope these suggestions will help to make Stone Bay even better than it is now.

I hope that the staff may be able to make this letter into symbols so that you are all able to read it.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Kauffman

Lead inspector

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