

# St Edward's School

St Edward's School, Melchet Court, Sherfield English, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 6ZR  
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

St Edward's School is a day and residential special school that provides care and education for boys aged between nine and 18 years who experience social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The school is registered for up to 77 pupils. At the time of the inspection, a total of 44 pupils included seven residential pupils. Residential pupils are accommodated in a single residential area.

The school is a non-profit-making charitable trust which is managed on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton. It is located in a large country house, with extensive grounds providing a range of sport and leisure opportunities, workshops and a horticultural area. The provision is for weekly boarding during term time only. Pupils are referred to the school from a variety of placing authorities across the country.

**Inspection dates:** 2 to 4 October 2018

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

**Date of previous inspection:** 21 November 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- Pupils are making excellent progress from their starting points, in a school culture within which individual success is celebrated.
- Precise planning for pupils' arrival and departure from the school ensures that transitions are managed according to individual needs and result in success.
- Pupils spoke positively about the opportunities that they are afforded in their journey through the school. They understand the benefit of the enrichments that they enjoy.
- A cohesive staff team works collaboratively to ensure that the care, education and therapeutic services are delivered consistently with a 'one school' approach. Staff have a shared understanding of the young people's needs and work consistently to ensure that expectations and boundaries are familiarly understood.
- A diverse staff team delivers thought-provoking messages through the daily assembly. Staff share their own experiences and link these to ideals that are familiar to the young people, to encourage the young people to make informed choices.
- A stable team of long-serving staff have developed trusting relationships with the pupils, based on mutual respect.
- Enrichment activities are excellent. Pupils can access a wide range of activities and opportunities for new experiences that encourage success and increase their potential.
- Leaders and managers are outward looking and focused on continuously improving the service. They are responsive to changes in practice and keen to enhance their knowledge and skills.

The residential special school's areas for development:

- Photographs of some pupils were outdated and did not reflect their growth and development, in particular on a child's missing from care profile.
- Elements of the website were outdated and did not work. Information in the boarding area about external services was out of date and did not contain the correct contact details.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Profiles to use when children are missing from care should contain recent photographs that accurately reflect their current appearance.
- Information on the website and displayed in the boarding area should be kept up to date and correct.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Exceptional progress is made by pupils who reside at this school. The staff are proactive and are forward thinking in their induction for new pupils. They adapt induction plans to enable pupils to build trust and confidence in the staff.

Relationships between the pupils and staff are positive, built on trust and mutual respect. Pupils make progress beyond initial expectations, and they accelerate in their learning and development.

Pupils begin the day with an opportunity for learning and reflection. Staff take it in turns to lead the morning 'thought for the day' in the chapel. The diverse staff team brings a wide range of meaningful and enlightening themes to these meetings, which focus on inspiring the pupils to make positive choices. Pupils also participate, incorporating their learning into the daily community meetings. The Catholic Christian principles underpin the school's ethos and are entwined and reflected into the actions of each person, each day.

Core values of diversity, friendship and kindness are well embedded. Pupils are accepting of individual difference and they are protective of each other.

Pupils all described trusted staff members to whom they can go for help. Relationships forged on trust, with long-serving staff, afford excellent communication. This has created a safe, secure environment in which pupils can discuss any anxieties or worries with confidence. The staff are attuned to the individuals needs of the pupils. They are skilled in managing the challenges of the day and agree effective strategies that minimise potential for concern.

Enrichment opportunities for pupils are outstanding. The vast range of diverse and stimulating activities on offer enables pupils to expand their horizons. From motocross to walks, metal detecting and sailing, there is something to engage the pupils each day. Well-organised staff take care that pupils don't become 'saturated' with one activity, encouraging them to broaden their interests. Pupils have achieved awards through enrichment activities, through which their self-esteem has grown.

Pupils are encouraged to learn life skills. They are supported to build essential skills, such as in basic household tasks of keeping their rooms tidy, taking care of their laundry, preparing meals and snacks, as well as travelling independently on public transport. One pupil said, 'They are teaching me how to take care of myself; I've learned a lot at this school.'

The whole school approach ensures that pupils are supported effectively. Daily communication across the site ensures that staff have excellent shared understanding of the plans for pupils. Frequent updates and regular assessment of needs ensure that clear objectives are familiar to all. Mapping across literacy,

occupational therapy, speech and language, and therapeutic support (known as LOST) provide a clear overview of pupil progress. Services also reach out to families to ensure transparent communication between the school and home.

Pupils are involved in decision-making and can effect change. The student council elects members each term who represent the pupils' voice. Changes have occurred as a result of these forums, demonstrating that the pupil voices are heard. The school has two independent listeners, one of whom is a weekly visitor to the school. Pupils are familiar with him and described him as well known and trusted.

The boarding area is well presented with a homely feel. Despite the size and grandeur of the building, this area has cosy spaces in which pupils can relax. Pupils' rooms are clean and well presented. Pupils are respectful of the history of the building and take pride in maintaining it. However, some displays in the boarding area and on the school website need revising, because some information is now out of date.

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

A strong safeguarding culture is underpinned by well-informed staff. They share solid knowledge and an intrinsic understanding of individual risk. Staff receive regular training and they are familiar with current safeguarding practices: they know what to report, to whom and when. Pupils confirmed that they feel safe and have trusted adults with whom they can share any worries. This helps keep pupils safe.

The designated safeguarding lead coordinates a consistent approach to safeguarding concerns. Records are clear and display the rationale for decision-making and timing of referral to the designated officer or multi-agency safeguarding hub. Positive relationships with local agencies further underpin the strong ethos of safeguarding culture that runs through this school. Safeguarding pupils is at the forefront of the staff's practice.

Each morning, staff meet to coordinate the day. Opportunities to discuss any concerns or indicators of behavioural needs are utilised effectively to make targeted plans that reduce risk. Staff are assigned to pupils to minimise the risk of unwanted behaviours before they occur. They are well trained in de-escalation techniques. Physical intervention is rare and used as an absolute last resort when all alternatives have been tried. Records are detailed and clearly show the methodology of techniques used. Staff and pupil debriefing follows all restrictive measures, with a coordinated response, including an offer to see the matron.

Learning from incidents is shared between the LOST teams, which continually update and adapt the pupils' plans. Staff have a good understanding of behaviour management. They use these plans to guide their interventions, which are commonly understood across the school. Incidents of exclusion are rare, and not implemented

lightly. The staff work hard to find ways to encourage positive behaviour, linking targets to individual incentives that encourage pupils to make the best of their time at the school. Even when exclusion is used, staff review their decisions, and may find pathways back to school for those who can make a positive change in their behaviour.

Risk management strategies are clear and well understood. Staff are committed to enabling pupils to take managed risks. They organised an outward-bound camping trip for some of the younger pupils who have more complex needs. Intricate planning and careful consideration of individual needs enabled the pupils to step outside their comfort zone, supported by experienced and capable staff.

A wide range of specialist support is available at the school. A large therapeutic team provides opportunities for support that would not exist outside the school. As well as therapeutic support, drugs and alcohol advice is available. A focus on anger management programmes provides the pupils with the skills to recognise their own triggers, and understand and control their behaviour using techniques to resolve conflict safely and effectively. Feedback from pupils using this service was 100% positive. They all reported improvements to their behaviours and insight into their circumstances as a result of the input they received.

Pupils reported that there are few instances of bullying. They confirmed that staff respond quickly to any incidents and they are supported by staff to resolve any conflicts. The therapeutic services provide group and individual sessions for any recurring themes, to educate the pupils on the impact of bullying. Pupils have a good understanding of the school rules and routines. They know how to keep themselves safe online and understand that the rules are designed to keep them safe. Pupils were observed to have positive interactions and caring intentions towards each other.

The site manager is highly valued and ensures that the environment is safe and maintained to a high standard. Extensive and detailed monitoring ensures that health and safety is prioritised, and routine servicing of equipment conducted in an efficient and timely manner.

There have been no instances of pupils going missing from the provision since the last inspection. Staff are familiar with the policies and protocols should there be a missing episode. However, one missing from care protocol for a pupil contained an outdated photo that did not accurately reflect his appearance. This was rectified by the end of the inspection.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for pupils and these are strongly threaded through their actions. Their positive, caring and dedicated approach provides pupils with excellent role models who are determined to unlock their

potential.

Effective succession planning enabled a smooth change of leadership, with the retirement of the previous headteacher over the summer. The deputy is currently in the role of acting headteacher and has continued to inspire and drive forward the team. Feedback from the staff is positive; they feel supported, included and well informed. Leaders are clear about their expectations and staff share common goals.

Governors take an active interest in the day-to-day running of the school. They attend training which gives them an insight into the behaviour management of the school. Their governance provides a robust layer of scrutiny and oversight.

The outward-looking leaders and managers ensure that they keep up to date with developments to guard against insular practice. A combination of in-house and external training provides staff with the knowledge to develop their skills in delivering bespoke care and education.

Staff come together to agree clear plans to ensure the continued development of the school and its wide-ranging services. Many of the staff are long serving, having been 'home grown'. They also flourish in the nurturing and progressive environment of the school. Regular supervision and annual appraisal ensure career development and opportunities for reflection.

## **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:** SC012014

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** post vacant

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

**Telephone number:** 01794 885 252

**Email address:** [enquiries@melchetcourt.com](mailto:enquiries@melchetcourt.com)



## **Inspectors**

Sarah Olliver, social care inspector (lead)  
Paul Taylor, social care inspector



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