

# 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

This school is a local-authority-maintained residential special school for students aged between five and 19 years who have learning, behavioural and communication needs. A high percentage of students have an autism spectrum disorder. At the time of the inspection, there were 74 students on roll and 18 residential students. The residential provision is situated on the school site.

**Inspection dates:** 1 to 3 October 2019

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

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

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

**Date of previous inspection:** 21 November 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

Residential pupils benefit from individualised, nurturing care and support from the staff. Their positive experiences are directly related to the trusting and meaningful relationships that they form with the staff, who are dedicated to improving residential students' well-being and maximising their communication skills and their independence.

Parents have praised the progress that residential students have made in a short period. One parent commented that 'he is a changed little boy'. Another parent stated that her son is 'flourishing and has made so much progress, particularly with independence. He is now doing things he would never do'. Parents noted the benefit of the structure, routines and consistency provided by the staff in the residential provision. Parents are using the strategies implemented by the staff at home. Family life is improved as students become happier at home. Progress can be in small but very significant steps. One parent noted that her son 'is more able to wait and to share'.

Together with the staff's dedication and focus on developing students' communication skills, they are committed to finding ways for students to put forward their views. The student council is an active forum where, for example, students discuss what activities they would like to do and what equipment they would like to purchase from profits they have made from running a cafe. Despite their communication difficulties, students are positively involved in sharing ideas or concerns. Managers are responsive and act upon students' requests or explain to them why their ideas cannot be implemented. This demonstrates to students that they are listened to and their views are important, thus increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem. One-to-one key-work sessions also provide residential students with opportunities to voice any concerns.

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

Protecting residential students, and promoting their welfare and well-being, underpins all the staff's practice. All the staff take their responsibility for ensuring the safety of residential students very seriously. Led by an experienced designated safeguarding officer, a trained team of designated safeguarding officers takes appropriate action when concerns are raised. A designated safeguarding officer is available to respond to any safeguarding matter during the evenings. Systems for reporting concerns are embedded into practice. Successful partnership working between designated safeguarding officers, external safeguarding agencies and families promotes the welfare of students. The governor overseeing safeguarding is proactive in the monitoring of safeguarding systems with planned, focused and detailed questioning and scrutiny of senior leaders and their management of safeguarding within the school.

Leaders, managers and staff recognise the additional challenges of helping students, who may have speech, language and communication difficulties, to keep themselves safe. Educating the students to raise their awareness of how to keep themselves safe is a priority for the staff. Through the curriculum, students are learning about online safety. Staff are vigilant and monitor students' internet use.

The staff have detailed knowledge of each residential student and their particular difficulties and vulnerabilities. Residential students' plans are highly individualised and provide the staff with specific support strategies. Risk assessments currently focus on students' behaviour but do not take into account wider issues relating to developing students' independence skills.

Leaders, managers and the staff understand the link between students' difficult and often challenging behaviour and their need to communicate their basic needs. Utilising an innovative system for recording incidents, the behaviour lead member of staff analyses and reviews incidents of concerning behaviour. This sharp focus, together with his direct observations, helps to guide the staff in implementing more successful supportive strategies. Integral to this approach is the committed and passionate impetus from the staff to improve students' communication skills. The speech and language therapist works with students and trains staff in communication methods. As students' communication skills develop, their behaviour improves and they become more independent.

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

Leaders and managers have successfully embedded a culture in which all staff are ambitious for children to develop and improve their future life chances. Leaders and managers strive to continually improve the care and support for residential students, so that they can achieve their full potential.

All staff, including leaders and managers, know the children very well. They know them as unique individuals with specific needs and vulnerabilities. Parents spoken to were extremely positive about the support the staff provide for their children, and the open and honest communication they have with the staff.

Staff are well trained for their roles and receive effective support from managers, both informally and more formally, through supervision and appraisal. All staff work collaboratively with school staff, therapists, parents and external agencies when appropriate. Children thus benefit from a consistent approach, which parents recognise as being constructive and instrumental in advancing their children's development.

Internal monitoring is effective and enhanced by reports from a suitably experienced independent visitor. An active governing body provides an appropriate level of scrutiny, challenge and oversight of the residential provision.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Consider implementing risk assessments that take into account issues relating to developing students' independence skills.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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:** Paula Miller

**Type of school:** residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Jan Hunnam, social care inspector



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