

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/or mental health difficulties.

The school offers weekly boarding during term time only. Children are referred to the school from a variety of placing authorities across the country. The school is registered for up to 77 residential children. At the time of the inspection, 76 children were on roll at the school but only three were using the residential provision.

The school is operated by 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 inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 January 2024

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: 17 January 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Strong and meaningful relationships between staff and children are key to the children's progress. Children benefit from spending quality time with a small, highly skilled and stable staff team. The staff provide a nurturing and welcoming approach. Children consistently make excellent progress, even those who have only stayed in the provision for a short period.

Since the last inspection, the residential provision has moved location within the school. The new accommodation is furnished to an excellent standard. The children are immensely proud of the accommodation. They really like their bedrooms and have personalised them to create a homely environment. The new accommodation is a well-designed space which allows children to relax, spend time together and play.

Children are engaging well in education. Children who have previously struggled to attend education now attend regularly. One child travels long distances to get to school and, if necessary, staff drive long distances to collect him. This means that his attendance at school is excellent. Staff continue to offer long-distance support to children over the weekends when they are with their families.

The children get on well and describe their relationships with each other as 'like brothers'. There have been no reported incidents of bullying in the residential provision. The school's anti-bullying programme has been recently reviewed and considers children's individual learning needs. The staff use a restorative approach to resolve conflicts and disagreements; this helps children to develop socially and emotionally.

Children access a broad and exciting range of activities. The activities provide opportunities for children that they would not otherwise have. Staff encourage children to develop their interests and talents. Children enjoy going to the theatre, motorbike riding, taking care of animals, playing sports and going to the cinema.

The school's multi-agency department, known as 'The Bridge', provides a genuinely holistic approach to children's care. This department is made up of the special educational needs coordinator, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and psychology. The meticulous assessments and well-informed interventions are highly effective in underpinning the care provided in the residential provision and they improve children's experiences and progress. This support has helped children to feel safer, sleep better and eat more healthy foods.

Children are provided with specialist support to learn to carry out independence skills, such as cooking, in preparation to leave for college. For one child, this has enabled him to overcome significant barriers and he can now cook a full breakfast.

Children's health needs are well met. The medical officer spends time with them after the school day and is knowledgeable about their individual needs. The excellent relationships that have developed have helped children who have been worried about attending health appointments to attend and to get the treatment they need. The storage and handling of medication are well organised and safe.

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

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has excellent oversight of safeguarding concerns. They identify and tackle emerging safeguarding themes for the children. Each concern is clearly recorded, and prompt actions are taken to keep children safe. The DSL is skilled at working with external agencies. Information is shared promptly and, when needed, the DSL strongly advocates for children to ensure that all necessary support is in place. The DSL works closely alongside parents to ensure that children are increasingly safe when at home.

Staff understand the children very well and are highly skilled in understanding their behaviours. Staff are acutely aware of each child's vulnerabilities and the risks that they face. Children's care is outlined in individual passports which provide personalised guidance to enable staff to deliver consistently effective care. Staff frequently help children to identify their emotions and communicate their feelings. Each child's day is structured around this process and there are arrangements built in to create activities and space for each child to help them to stay calm and focused. The approach taken by staff is intrinsically linked to the school's model of care and well embedded into practice. As a result, children feel understood, safe and well cared for.

Staff are highly knowledgeable about safeguarding. The DSL explores their knowledge on subjects to identify further training. Safeguarding is a key element of staff development. They are confident in raising concerns about children and know how to escalate those concerns.

Staff understand how to support children to keep safe online. Leaders have implemented new electronic systems on the school's internet and when concerns around social media arise outside of school, the DSL supports parents to reduce risks for children.

A designated estates manager has impressive systems in place for the oversight of health and safety. He is highly organised and ensures that the children live in a safe and well-maintained environment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders have extremely high aspirations for children. They strongly advocate to ensure that children reach their potential to succeed, and they are committed to improving children's outcomes. This ethos is instilled across the school and

residential provision. Children benefit enormously from this and have developed improved self-belief, confidence and feelings of self-worth as a result.

Senior leaders are visible figures in the children's lives. They work in the residential provision or visit regularly. They know the children well and are aware of the progress they make. They ensure that high standards of care are maintained.

There is a strong drive for improvement and innovation, and leaders understand the strengths and areas for service development well. They continually make improvements with the best interests of the children at heart. Children's views are valued and are central to the development of the provision. The independent visitor's reports provide constructive challenge and are used effectively by leaders to further improve practice.

Leaders invest strongly in staff development. Staff access further training and development to aid their careers. They also access courses that develop their skills and improve the quality of care for children. For example, staff are undertaking management training in children's residential care. Staff receive regular supervision, which supports their development. However, some supervision records are missing from staff files.

Governors are highly knowledgeable and share the leaders' ambitions for excellence. They visit the residential provision regularly and speak to children and staff. Governors have excellent oversight, and they provide a high level of scrutiny of the residential provision. Children's views are considered by the board, and they use the independent visitor's reports effectively. The governors have high expectations of the senior leadership team and are very effective in holding them to account.

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

Point for improvement

- Leaders and managers should keep an up-to-date record of staff supervision.

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: SC012014

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mr G Maher

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector

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