

Stone Bay School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119056
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291300
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Farrell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	37
6th form	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Stuart
Headteacher	Richard Edey
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2001
School address	70 Stone Road Broadstairs CT10 1EB
Telephone number	01843 863421
Fax number	01843 866652

Age group	11–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Stone Bay is a maintained community residential and day special school. Students have special educational needs such as communication difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder, severe to moderate learning difficulties, and very challenging behaviour. All have statements of special educational needs and attainment on entry to the school is well below national expectations. Forty-seven students, including six girls, are weekly or alternate weekend boarders. Approximately 10% of students are from ethnic minorities and five students are in local authority care.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Stone Bay is a good school, with outstanding outcomes for students' personal development and their care, guidance and support. One parent commented that it is a 'unique environment' while another reports being so pleased that her son is now 'a happy and settled boy'. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is recognised and appreciated by the dedicated and supportive staff, who say the headteacher is 'inspirational' and that 'everything is for the students'.

Care, guidance and support are excellent, with careful tracking of students' academic and personal progress and very close liaison between the good, well- managed residential provision and the school. This contributes strongly to students' outstanding personal development, including excellent spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Because procedures for health and safety are robust and constantly reviewed, students feel safe in the warm and supportive atmosphere. Because of this, students are enabled to apply themselves diligently to their work and enjoy their education. Students are aware of the need to live healthy lifestyles. They take exercise and generally eat healthily because the school encourages this through activities and lessons. Excellent links with the local community enhance learning and development, preparing students very well for their future. Students are deeply appreciative of what is done for them, one saying, 'I would like to say thank you to the school for everything'.

While students' standards are well below national expectations because of their special educational needs, their progress and achievement is good. This is because teaching is good throughout the school and teachers and teaching assistants work very closely together. They create a stimulating learning setting in which the enthusiasm of staff and the excellent attitudes of students combine to create good achievement. Communication is particularly well encouraged in early morning sessions where students eagerly participate because of the enthusiasm of staff. In other lessons, while teachers use and encourage signing and other forms of communication well in the first part of the lesson, students' progress is slower than it could be because opportunities are missed to continue and reinforce this in individual follow-up work. All pupils participate in the good, well-designed curriculum, and this leads into very well-structured lesson planning. Although the curriculum is regularly re-shaped according to the changing needs of students, occasionally the curriculum is not sufficiently well focused to ensure that activities are sufficiently matched to the specific learning needs of the students, particularly students with profound learning difficulties.

Good leadership and management throughout the school leads to a calm, orderly atmosphere in which students thrive. Students' behaviour is very well monitored and provision is modified according to the data. Similarly, their progress is tracked well and work amended accordingly. The well-trained staff and other resources are deployed excellently, giving good value for money. Governors give good support and challenge to the school and the dedicated chairperson provides very strong support. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Provision in the sixth form is good. Although students' attainments are well below national averages because of their special educational needs, they all achieve well and make good

progress in learning. Teaching and learning are good and the curriculum provides a good range of suitable activities. Accreditation through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) effectively supports learning in basic skills and developing independence. The personal development of students is outstanding and behaviour is excellent because of the staff's very skilled management. Students enjoy their activities greatly and act in a safe manner. They often prepare their own meals at midday and eat healthily. Excellent links with the local college and work placements contribute strongly to economic awareness and community participation. Support of students is outstanding both in lessons and in relation to transition to college or elsewhere on leaving the sixth form. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good and the head of sixth form, although comparatively new in post, has, with staff support, brought about recent improvements in the curriculum and teaching.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Good residential provision provides a warm, caring ethos where students feel safe and enjoy the activities and support offered. The provision makes a strong contribution to the personal development and well-being of students and they look forward with great anticipation to the wide range of evening activities, from bowling to beach activities, watching films, and working on computers. Liaison between care and teaching staff is good, ensuring consistent approaches to such important aspects as effectively managing behaviour. The hand-over process from the long-serving head of care to the new head of care is very thorough and is contributing considerably to the stability of the quality of care. The 2006 Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) report judged provision to be good. The only two minor shortfalls are being systematically tackled and good progress is being made.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all curriculum activities sufficiently match the learning needs of students.
- Ensure all opportunities are taken to encourage communication in follow-up work in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

While attainment of students is well below national expectations because of their special educational needs, they make good progress and achieve well throughout the school and sixth form because of the good curriculum provision and good teaching. This level of progress is evident for all students and groups of students, including those from ethnic minorities and with different types of special educational needs. Students in the sixth form make good progress in developing independence and life skills, which prepares them well for when they move on to college and elsewhere. Challenging targets set and reached by students also contribute to their good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students have highly positive attitudes to school, including the residential provision. A typical comment was, 'I love it here so much'. Their self-esteem is being constantly raised by the praise and appreciation of staff and other students, as in morning communication sessions when students applaud success and effort. Students' behaviour is outstanding because of the highly skilled and sensitive support they receive. Students feel safe and secure in the school and residential provision and greatly enjoy their lessons and other activities; attendance is good. They make a good contribution to the community, for example, taking part in the school's council and raising funds for the less fortunate. Students develop workplace and related skills well, engaging in group activities and participating fully in college and work-experience opportunities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teachers' planning is meticulous and teaching assistants and teachers work closely together in creating a stimulating environment in which good learning takes place. The good knowledge and understanding of pupils' special needs is reflected in the way that staff use a wide range of approaches in order to enable each child to learn to achieve. Relationships are very strong and staff, supported by high quality training, have particular skills in managing behaviour. This ensures that any occasions of challenging behaviour are forestalled or minimised effectively. In lessons generally, while signing is effectively used in the first part of the lesson led by the teacher, opportunities are missed by staff to further encourage communication in the individual work that follows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The good curriculum is regularly reshaped to be sensitive to the needs of students, with parts of schemes being reworked if students' progress is too slow. The wide range of activities that support pupils' learning includes modern foreign languages and cultural events involving the whole school. ASDAN accreditation is appropriate and the school is constantly reviewing its use to ensure that students are sufficiently stretched by it. There is a wide variety of enrichment activities for all students and these are further supplemented for residential students by other pursuits. While the well-structured curriculum generally leads to suitably pitched lesson planning, some activities do not sufficiently match the students' learning needs. As a result, opportunities are sometimes missed to enable pupils to have wider experiences. This is evident, for example, in counting and measuring, where the curriculum planning does not sufficiently guide teachers to make better use of items such as plates or spoons or practical measuring to extend students' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school has very good systems for managing behaviour, enabling staff to analyse students' behaviour and put in place effective interventions. Robust systems for tracking the academic progress of students are used very well to indicate and evaluate interventions so that students' achievements can be raised further. Health and safety and childcare procedures are given very high priority and the school is constantly self critical in seeking ways to improve. The school has excellent links with others, including parents, services, other educational institutions and workplaces which it draws on to the benefit of students, and the liaison between the teaching and residential aspects of the school is very effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The headteacher's quiet determination and unstinting pursuit of the students' best interests has ensured that the dedicated staff work as a cohesive team with a clear sense of direction. Good leadership and management at all levels throughout the school and residential provision considerably enhance provision because staff are always striving to do better. Comprehensive training is managed and developed very well and brings together all those involved with students, including parents, to constantly seek ways to improve. The school deploys staff and other resources very well, giving good value for money. The school strives well to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to succeed.

The school's self-evaluation is good and is well supported by regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and personal development. Overall, its judgements were accurate, though on occasions they were too modest in some areas and do not fully reflect all the good work that goes on. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and demonstrates a strong commitment and capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

27 May 2007

Dear Students

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

You will remember that Judi and I visited you recently to carry out an inspection of your school. I want to thank you for helping us and speaking with us during the two day we were there.

We think your school gives you a good education and there are many excellent and good things we found in your school. You said you loved it at school and you wanted to say 'thank you to the school for everything'.

Your behaviour and attitudes to school are excellent and there are lots of systems that help you develop and learn. The leadership and management in the school are good and your staff are dedicated to their work. Teaching is good and interesting, and is helped by the good curriculum, which offers you lots of different activities.

There are a couple of things the school could do even better and I have asked the staff to:

- Make sure all your curriculum work suits your learning needs
- Make sure when you are working you are always encouraged to communicate and sign.

Thank you again for all your help and every good wish for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Farrell Lead inspector