

St Edward's School

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	850/6032
Unique Reference Number	116584
URN for social care	SC012014
Inspection number	329575
Inspection dates	9 - 10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI
Social care inspector	Angela Hunt

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005). The inspection of boarding was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.

This was a light touch educational inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding students and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection of education and boarding provision.

Information about the school

St Edward's School is an independent residential special school which provides education for boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school occupies a former manor house and adjacent buildings and is set in 180 acres of grounds, approximately four miles from Romsey in Hampshire. The school has been open since 1984 and is in the ownership of the Clifton Catholic Diocesan Trust. The school is approved by the Department for Education and Skills for up to 77 students. Currently 52 students attend, aged between 11 and 17 years and four students who are in their first year of post compulsory education. Students have a history of severely disrupted schooling and a few have not attended education for up to two years. Most are reluctant learners and a large majority experience difficulty with basic numeracy and literacy. All students have statements of special educational needs. The school offers termly boarding provision, although all students visit their home at weekends and seven students attend daily. Students attend from boroughs or counties in the south of England and their places are funded by their local authorities. There are a few students from minority ethnic backgrounds. No students are learning English as an additional language.

The school seeks to encourage the physical, intellectual, spiritual and personal development of students. Students are expected to take responsibility for their actions and become positive members of society. The school was last inspected in April 2005 and received a social care inspection in December 2007.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The overall effectiveness of the boarding provision is outstanding and the National Minimum Standards are met. The high quality of care and pastoral support provided by the staff, day and night, contributes to students developing positive attitudes towards themselves and respect for each other and the adults they work with. The good curriculum, teaching and assessment combine to ensure that students make good progress. Improvement since the last inspection has been good on most fronts and the capacity to adjust to the changing needs of students continues to be strong. The school meets all the regulations.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum offered to students is good. It is broad and balanced and adjusted to meet the interests of the students. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught including French as a modern foreign language. Social and independent skills have a high priority both as a discrete certificated course for those in Key Stage 4 and as part of a comprehensive personal, social, health and citizenship education programme (PSHCE). There is a good range of GCSE Entry Level subjects available for study, supplemented by vocational qualifications in horticulture, painting and decorating and brickwork for all students. The content of the subjects and courses is appropriate for the ages, abilities and interests of students and adheres to national guidance and the awarding bodies for vocational skills. The subject plans are used well by teachers to plan individual lessons. Literacy and numeracy have a high priority with much one to one support from support staff in lessons. The school has introduced individual 'catch-up' programmes to accelerate students' progress in reading. These programmes link well with student's education plans and their assessed needs. The school is keen to introduce regular drama into the curriculum to advance speaking and communication skills and has already explored the option of specialist teaching in this subject. The curriculum provides a good range of relevant reasons for students to write in subjects other than English. However, these opportunities are not as effective as they could be as they are not planned systematically as part of a comprehensive programme to address students' writing needs.

The range of extra-curricular activities and clubs is exceptional. Students clearly enjoy these immensely and say so in student questionnaires and conversations with inspectors. They say that the adventurous and sporting activities and visits to places such as the Somme, have greatly increased their personal confidence. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection in the development of careers education, work experience placements and college links. There is very good support from the local Connexions service and from the local authority to which students will return for their post-16 education or training. The preparation for adulthood is well supported by the PSHCE curriculum, the outreach work of the care team and at post-16 level through the BTEC course in public services and living skills.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and leads to students making good progress. They behaved well in lessons during the inspection, reflecting the excellent management of their behaviour and the immediate and effective support for those students who show signs of failing to cope in lessons. The teachers forge effective relationships with the students and judge accurately when they can provide challenge and push. Newly arrived students' reluctance to engage in lessons and learning is a significant challenge for teachers and one they overcome relatively quickly as a consequence of the fully integrated approach to settling students in to school and residence. These students respond in a positive way to the atmosphere at the school, enjoy being treated as responsible young people and appreciate that the staff are there to help them. The school has well-qualified and experienced teachers who have developed a good knowledge of their subjects. They convey their enthusiasm and teach in a lively and interesting way. The pace in lessons is good. Some teachers make better use than others of questions to check on learning. Sometimes more could be done to encourage some reluctant students to discuss and put forward their thoughts and ideas and to apply previously acquired knowledge. Teachers plan lessons with clear objectives and show in their planning what students are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson.

All students make excellent progress in personal development and become more confident as they realise that their efforts and achievements are valued by staff. Records of those who have spent significant time at the school show good progress particularly in meeting the academic targets in individual education plans. Overall academic achievements of the boys have risen year on year. In 2008 60% attained six passes at GCSE with all gaining four or more. Equally successful outcomes were secured in vocational subjects. Assessment systems are good. Students often come into school with scant records of recent achievement because they have not attended school for a long time or have a history of absence during examinations. The school carries out a range of initial assessments of academic attainment and also of barriers and aids to learning. This provides a starting point for planning work at the right level. The assessment of work is regular but setting and sharing targets with students varies between departments and not all teachers are effective in matching work to the appropriate next steps in students learning. Resources are good, and effectively used. The classrooms, practical areas and corridors are tidy, well organised for learning and celebrate the academic achievement of all the students. The displays make a good contribution to the self esteem of the young people.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school makes outstanding provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is reflected in students' visible enjoyment, confidence and positive attitude to learning. There are appropriate opportunities throughout the day for students to reflect on events and on their own achievements. There is consistent management of behaviour throughout the school, day and night and the partnerships that the school has with parents, local authority specialists and outreach staff are extremely effective in sustaining personal development. Students are

understood and valued and sensitively helped by all staff to come through difficult and sometimes distressing times. Students' good attendance at school, in relation to their past history shows dramatic improvement. Most of those who have been temporarily excluded are helped to re-engage in learning and begin to take pride in their achievements. Students' behaviour is good, and although there are times when they show anger or resentment, they also show respect for their surroundings and for the adults who work with them and visitors.

The whole ethos of the school supports the promotion of self-awareness and self-esteem. This is very well supported by the work of care staff and the specialist behaviour therapist. The students' moral development is strongly supported through modelling of respect and showing concern for others. One new student commented, 'it is more like a family here,' with others saying that they have settled in very quickly and made many friends. The behaviour plans for each student and the school's monitoring of responses to the targets set, provide good information on progress and on any problems. This enables the staff to set clear guidelines on how to respond to individual difficulties. The scope and range of purposeful activities available to students in school and as boarders builds confidence and prepares them for their future economic well being. The school tries very hard to show students how they can make a positive contribution to both the school and the outside community. High priority is given to developing the skills of relating to others positively, including the tolerance of those who may be perceived as different. Regular opportunities to meet and organise events for students with multiple and profound learning difficulties and/or disabilities contributes very well to their understanding of tolerance and diversity. The school council is active in addressing with the governors any concerns that students have about provision. The improvements made add immensely to the students' sense of well being.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding, supported by robust policies and procedures that are reviewed annually and implemented consistently across the school including the boarding provision. The safeguarding policies and procedures comply fully with the latest guidance. A single central register is in place recording that all necessary checks have been carried out. Staff are appropriately trained and well aware of child protection duties and procedures. All staff have appropriate first aid training. Appropriate records are kept of any injuries, accidents or medical needs and the required range of health and safety checks are regularly carried out. The school fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

There is a very good ratio of staff to students, who are well supervised at all times. Health, safety and enjoyment are central to the school's ethos. Staff create a happy family atmosphere that engenders a positive sense of well-being amongst the students and they exercise vigilant supervision throughout the day. Consequently, students feel safe and well cared for, and instances of bullying are rare. Students talk confidently about safety procedures and the ways they can keep themselves and

each other safe. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles, both through their healthy eating choices and their enjoyment of physical activity. Communication between education and care teams is excellent and there is a highly effective system for sharing information about students and their welfare before school starts. Rules are consistently applied and rewards honoured. This allows the individualised management of behaviour to be well received and viewed as fair by young people.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The residential provision is outstanding. The school meets all key National Minimum Standards. The school is led very effectively by a headteacher, who has a clear vision and nurtures a culture of continuous improvement, and very well supported by a cohesive team of very dedicated staff. As a result, the management structure and the effective communication across both care and education teams promote positive outcomes for young people.

Young people benefit from the high standard of pastoral care practice provided by a committed and skilled care team. The stability and continuity of staff is an additional strength and young people feel well supported at all levels. The rapport between care staff and young people, together with the communication systems and the monitoring arrangements in place, are exemplary. There are clear arrangements to ensure boarders maintain contact with their families and significant others. Contact with parents during a young person's stay in the school is in no way restricted or compromised and includes private areas to take telephone calls.

The pleasant and well maintained environment demonstrates respect for the young people and the appearance of boarding houses helps to achieve a homely atmosphere. The bedrooms are of a generous size and young people enjoy privacy in shower and toilet facilities. The boarding area is clean, well furnished and warm. Maintenance of the area is well managed. Young people like their accommodation and have good quality furniture and appliances. The physical safety and security of young people is taken very seriously. The building is well maintained with timely premises checks undertaken. A careful and thorough system of risk assessment is in place. Boarders have privacy, adequate facilities for study, and a wide range of leisure pursuits. Individualised care plans are in place and clear written information is provided so that students and their families know what to expect from the school.

Young people are protected by a clear complaints procedure which has been updated following the previous inspection and young people and their parents/carers know how to access this. There are robust systems in place for the recruitment and selection of staff and personnel records are well organised and stored securely. The vetting of staff exceeds the requirements of the National Minimum Standards. The school's written procedural guidance on child protection, combined with staff's knowledge and understanding, further protects young people.

An outstanding level of health and nutritional care is provided. Boarders' medical and health needs are clearly identified and very well met. Detailed health assessments are produced in partnership with parents. Access to primary and secondary health care is available. A high proportion of staff is trained in first aid to provide additional help to young people. Support is offered from the GP and local nurse practitioner when required. Medication is securely stored and is countersigned. Health education and advice are promoted with visual aids throughout the boarding house and medical room. Young people are encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Information is provided for boarders on health matters, such as smoking cessation, to promote healthy living and there are clear arrangements for the support of boarders who are ill.

Meals are carefully planned using locally sourced ingredients. Boarders are provided with a healthy and nutritious diet and encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. There are opportunities for young people to contribute to menu planning. Any special dietary needs are well met and children are encouraged to try foods from different cultures. The tuck shop no longer operates and is replaced by access to fresh fruit and healthy drinks.

Behavioural, social and emotional development plans address young people's progress under the every child matters outcomes. The written plans encourage young people to improve their outcomes in all areas and track progress.

Young people are encouraged to develop appropriate behaviour through a clear and fair system of rewards, incentives and sanctions. A holistic approach helps young people learn to manage their behaviour and deal with anger. A clear anti-bullying policy is in place.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school is sensitive to the religious, cultural, racial and linguistic backgrounds and beliefs of young people. The building is compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act and the admission criteria enable the school to consider placements from students of all denominations and those with no religious affiliation.

There are clear procedures to follow should a young person go missing without authority and a good knowledge amongst the care team as to what to do should this happen. Current profiles of students are prepared ready to share with appropriate authorities. Young people experience a well planned admission process.

Boarders receive outstanding support from a staff team who place a great deal of emphasis on the safety of young people within the school. Restraints and sanctions are not overused and along with other behaviour management methods, are effective in promoting an improvement in behaviour. Staff are clear about reporting procedures in relation to child protection. Young people are encouraged to take risks accompanied by full and detailed risk assessments for all activities and types of behaviour.

Excellent opportunities are in place for young people to contribute their views and influence the running of the school. Formal and informal structures are in place, linked to young people taking responsibility for their school and leading by example. The senior management team, governors and whole staff team value these contributions and respond effectively to ideas and improvements put forward. Detailed and sensitive needs assessments are carried out paying particular attention to young people's trigger points and using interview and observation as a tool.

There is effective monitoring of boarders' welfare. As well as the organisation's own internal systems of checking what goes on, regular visits are made by governors and independent persons.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

The school meets the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools and associated regulations.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- improve teaching and learning by identifying more clearly the next steps in students skills' development and consistently plan to address these in lessons
- continue to develop the curriculum so that it provides systematic opportunities to develop communication and literacy skills in all subjects

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of pupils		√		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	√			
--	---	--	--	--

The quality of boarding provision

Evaluation of boarding provision	√			
----------------------------------	---	--	--	--

School details

Name of school	St Edward's School		
DCSF number	850/6032		
Unique reference number	116584		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1984		
Age range of pupils	11-17		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 52	Girls:	Total: 52
Number of boarders	Boys: 45	Girls:	Total: 45
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 52	Girls:	Total: 52
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 12	Girls:	Total: 12
Annual fees (day pupils)	£45442		
Annual fees (boarders)	£64917		
Address of school	Melchet Court Sherfield English Romsey Hampshire SO51 6ZR		
Telephone number	01794884271		
Fax number	01794884903		
Email address	enquiries@melchetcourt.com		
Headteacher	Mr Lawrence Bartel		
Proprietor	Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton		
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI		
Dates of inspection	9 - 10 December 2008		