

St Edward's School

St. Edwards 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, there were 31 day pupils and 14 residential pupils. Residential pupils are accommodated in two residential areas.

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, workshops and a horticultural area, and provides a range of sport and leisure opportunities. The school has a governing body that meets regularly and plays an active part in the school's operation. 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.

The previous inspection of the school's residential provision took place in January 2017.

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 November 2017

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: 11 January 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- Young people make outstanding progress in their emotional, social and physical well-being. They are learning positive strategies which enable them to manage and self-regulate their behaviour, anxieties and emotions.
- Staff support, plan and prepare pupils to transition into and out of the school. Young people have the opportunity to stay overnight and visit the school prior to formally joining the school.
- The spiritual approach followed by the school is one of its strengths. The focus is 'to make good informed choices', and this is shared with young people in a way that they engage in, identify with and understand.
- Residential staff offer a wide variety of diverse activities, providing opportunities and experiences that are new and exciting. This enables young people to develop new skills that enhance their future life chances and confidence, and improve their self-esteem.
- The reward system is a strength of the school, and the whole school community celebrates each young person's achievements. Young people engage in and commit to achieving their best, with each aiming to succeed beyond expectations.
- A diverse staff team provides advice and encouragement every day, enabling young people to reflect on their identity and morals while developing self-worth and confidence.
- Staff maintain regular contact with families, ensuring that families and others are fully involved in every aspect of each young person's education and care. The open and honest relationships with families are a strength of the school.
- The coordinated and collective approach that staff follow ensures that young people transition positively between education and care. The approach is seamless, consistent and clear, supporting young people to develop a clear understanding of boundaries and expectations.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- The quality of safeguarding records needs to be improved.
- Not all forms of supervision are recorded with sufficient detail about discussion topics, staff development and review of practice.

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

Recommendations

- Records and evidence for safeguarding concerns should provide a clearer and more concise evidence trail from instigation to outcome.
- Staff supervision records should evidence the effectiveness of the support that staff receive.
- All agreed approaches and plans for young people should be properly detailed within their records.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Young people who reside at the school have made outstanding progress since their arrival. Those who have arrived recently have settled in very well. They enjoy very supportive, open and honest relationships with staff. They make exceptional progress, developing skills that enable them to regulate and manage their behaviour, anxiety and emotions. Young people benefit from attending the school, and achieve well while they are there.

Each young person develops good knowledge and understanding about risk, relationships and life opportunities. This enables them to make informed choices that benefit their future life choices. The 'thought of the day' provides education and guidance through the use of positive role models and information about morals and good decision-making.

Staff support young people to address their physical and emotional health needs through referrals to specialist services, when required. Young people are helped to access a wide variety of therapeutic services. These therapies are also incorporated into young people's daily routines and timetables. Young people say they have developed positive strategies that help them to manage their needs, anxiety, anger and daily challenges.

Staff develop exceptional relationships with young people; this enables young people to talk about and share their worries, anxieties and concerns. Young people report feeling safe and secure, with each young person stating that they have a favoured person who helps them.

Young people develop positive self-esteem and confidence as they explore and discover their individual abilities and skills. They all aspire to achieve their best. They also reflect on the poor choices they have made, and aspire to make different choices next time. They each learn to respect others, and to treat each other with kindness. When a young person is unkind, staff are quick to intervene and to guide young people to be more thoughtful in the way they treat each other.

All the young person value the education, opportunities and experiences that are available to them. They are very polite, and exhibit the essential characteristics that are required for them to form positive relationships into adulthood, and in their chosen careers. Young people greet staff with a handshake or a hug. Staff support young people well to attend education, with some staff making the daily trip to school with young people. Staff provide encouragement, support and assistance for young people to explore post-school opportunities, including college courses and other forms of vocational education. Young people develop essential life skills through daily basic household chores such as changing their beds or preparing

simple meals.

Staff provide structure, routine and a consistent approach to each day. They offer a full and diverse programme of on and off-site activities. There is something for each young person. Staff focus on developing each individual's hobbies, interests and natural abilities. The activities include board games, swimming, fitness, mini-motors, sailing, outward-bound activities, snowboarding, fishing, art, gardening, design and technology, and movies.

Staff update and review young people's plans and assessments regularly, as required. Plans detail up-to-date, practical and essential information and advice for staff, including objectives and targets. A clear multi-disciplinary approach to young people's care and support is in place. Staff formulate individual plans to support young people. They secure the engagement of families and others to ensure a collective and achievable approach. For one young person, this bespoke response is not specifically recorded in their plan. Staff maintain regular contact with families, keeping them well informed of the progress and challenges that each young person experiences.

Young people are fully involved in all decisions about care, education, activities, food, decoration and the residential facilities. They use a variety of systems to make their voices heard. The 'independent listener' visits the school weekly, creating regular opportunities for young people to talk. Young people also have the listener's contact details so they can get in touch at any time they wish. There is a comments box, weekly house group meetings and an active school council. Each young person's views are gathered prior to their review.

Boarding areas are well presented, with a relaxed, comfortable and cosy feel. Each young person appears to value this, and says that residential areas feel like home.

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

A robust culture and approach to safeguarding is clearly evident in the school. Staff demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding about risk factors, and what is required to manage and minimise these. The training, information and education provided to staff and young people support this approach, and promote the culture and ethos of the school.

Young people enjoy excellent relationships with a variety of staff, in that each young person can identify who they would speak to if they were worried. The stable, consistent and knowledgeable staff contribute to a coherent approach to managing risk and safeguarding concerns. Staff have worked with each other for many years, but are not complacent about the safety and well-being of young people. Staff critically evaluate others' practice through a 'whole team' approach.

Safeguarding concerns are reported, referred, explored and investigated as required. One concern did not meet the threshold for involvement of the designated officer, but staff referred the matter for advice and guidance. Records include relevant actions and outcomes, but do not explicitly explain the rationale and reasons for this. Staff have improved their involvement and collaboration with placing authorities when children are subject to a child protection plan. Plans for these children include risks and objectives and other relevant information. Designated safeguarding leads attend all reviews and core group meetings, and engage well in this process. This effective approach to risk management and joint working has a positive impact on young people and their outcomes. Designated safeguarding leads complete and update their own training, as required.

Young people report that bullying in the school is minimal, and when incidents occur staff are quick to intervene and resolve their worries. Young people are encouraged to 'repair and rebuild' with peers following incidents. Young people can speak to a variety of staff, or use the comments box if they feel unable to ask for help. Due to the close, sensitive and flexible supervision of young people, staff are able to identify and intervene in situations swiftly.

Staff implement clear boundaries for the expected behaviour of young people. Young people feel that these boundaries are fair, and that they help them to learn and understand what is required of them. Young people engage in and sign up to the reward system. They state that they love earning amazing opportunities and treats, and feel that this gives them something to focus on and aim for. The approach to behaviour management is consistent across the school and care staff. A number of young people have received fixed-term school exclusions as a result of their challenging behaviour. These young people are supported well by the care staff, who work closely with the school staff to prevent exclusions, help young people to reflect on their behaviour and support them back into school. Of the small number of young people who are permanently excluded, a significant number are supported to apply to be readmitted to the school.

Staff follow behaviour support plans and use a wide variety of de-escalation strategies. Staff are insightful about each young person's triggers for negative behaviour. Through positive relationships with young people, staff swiftly intervene and effectively de-escalate a variety of difficulties and challenges. On occasions when staff are not successful, physical intervention may be used. Trained staff use the school's preferred approach. Records detail a clear record of antecedent, action, and post-incident behaviour, including the intervention and how long it was used for. Managers regularly review, monitor and evaluate all records and interventions. Young people are all offered a post-incident debrief. Managers are reviewing the way in which this is offered because young people often initially refuse the debrief, later accepting this when it is offered by a member of staff whom they know and trust.

Episodes of young people going missing are well managed through a collaborative and coordinated approach. Staff actively try to locate young people, and request the support of additional agencies as appropriate.

Staff apply a robust approach to risk management, including when planning the exciting and adventurous activities that young people engage in.

The environment is well maintained, well managed and well presented, with all required checks completed in expected timescales.

Safer recruitment processes and procedures are followed, and records meet the expected and required standard.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are ambitious, and have high expectations and aspirations for young people, staff and the school. They encourage and motivate young people to achieve the best they can. The ethos of the school is a strength, with all staff and young people signed up to and fully engaged in it.

Leaders are involved in forums and professional groups which explore and develop the quality of service in other similar provisions. They share findings and lessons learned with staff, and explore and review their own practice and interventions accordingly.

Leaders have a clear understanding and knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and they have clear plans in place to address any areas for development. They implement development plans to address and improve areas of weakness. Leaders have positively changed many areas since the previous inspection, including improving the quality of the boarding houses and creating a nurturing education area.

Staff have very good and effective relationships with parents, stakeholders, professionals and voluntary organisations. This collaborative approach is evident in young people's plans, and the strategies used by staff. Staff and young people are actively involved in local community-based charities, raising money and arranging events and activities for those in their community.

The well-established and experienced care staff team encourages and supports each young person to develop, and to achieve their full potential. Care staff ensure excellent communication with education staff throughout the day, sharing information where appropriate. The whole team is consistent and clear with young people about boundaries, routines and expectations. The team meets daily to review each young person, and arrange more detailed discussions and reviews when needed. Plans and strategies for young people are reviewed and amended to meet needs.

Staff benefit from regular supervision, but records do not evidence the full extent of these discussions. Staff meet daily to review, reflect and debrief about the previous

24-hour period. They are appropriately qualified, and take part in a wide variety of good-quality training specific to their role. The appraisal and performance management process is under review and, due to this, reviews have been delayed. New review dates have been set. Leaders have begun to implement a plan to bring the whole school community in line, with a common process and system. Staff say that they are encouraged to develop key areas of interest and skill, to help them to develop as professionals.

Governors robustly and critically review and scrutinise all required aspects of care. They have reviewed and updated policies and procedures as appropriate.

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: Larry Bartel

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Inspector

Amanda Maxwell, social care inspector



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