

# St Edward's School

Melchet Court  
Sherfield English  
Romsey  
Hampshire  
SO51 6ZR

## Inspection dates

21 March 2016 to 23 March 2016

## Overall experiences and progress of children and young people

### Outstanding

Quality of care and support

Outstanding

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is outstanding because

- Pupils make exceptional progress in their spiritual, physical and emotional health. They are able to develop self-management competencies to regulate their emotions. Behaviour significantly improves. Pupils are highly motivated to be the best they can be.
- Pupils make excellent progress in their education. They access their timetable and gain multiple certificates and qualifications.
- Pupils enjoy solid, trusting relationships with staff. They are able to form attachments and look up to their positive role models.
- The school is not risk averse. Pupils engage in a range of meaningful and stimulating activities that would otherwise not be available to them. They develop confidence and self-esteem. They learn how to be part of a team and work effectively together as a group.
- Pupils have a voice. Staff are skilled at listening to what pupils are saying, not only through words, but through behaviour and interaction with others. Staff take swift and robust action to keep pupils emotionally healthy.
- Safeguarding practice is robust. Staff are confident in adopting strategies to reduce risk. They demonstrate a thorough knowledge of what to do in the event of any concern. The designated safeguarding lead works with other professionals to ensure the ongoing safety of pupils.

- The approach to health is excellent. Pupils enjoy a nutritious diet and plenty of exercise. Pupils with potentially life-threatening medical conditions are in safe hands. Staff know the clear protocols to be followed, agreed with health professionals, in the event of an emergency.
- The leadership and management are exceptional. They are confident and inspirational, providing role models to provide the highest possible standards of care. They know the school's strengths and have a development plan to further improve the provision. They have a presence in the wider professional community.
- An established staff team provides consistent first-class care. The staff members speak proudly of their roles and their continuing professional development. Morale is high. Care staff work closely with education and health colleagues. This is a school where all staff work together extremely well, focused on the common desire to improve outcomes for pupils and to enhance their life chances.

### Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that health care plans contain all current approaches.

## Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection with one and a half hours' notice. Inspection activities included: observation of residential practice; formal and informal discussions with a range of pupils who stay overnight; sharing mealtimes; discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, head of care and the chair of governors; residential, health and therapy staff were consulted; the independent listener was spoken to face to face; the designated safeguarding lead was consulted; contact was made with the local statutory safeguarding authority; a tour of all the accommodation and grounds was undertaken; a wide range of documentation concerning boarding was scrutinised; the responses on Parent View were considered.

## Inspection team

Lead inspector

Keith Riley

# Full report

## Information about this school

St Edwards is a day and residential special school that provides care and education for boys aged between nine and 18 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 43 pupils on the school roll, of which 18 were residential pupils. Residential pupils are accommodated in two age-related residential areas; a third area is currently being redesigned.

The school is a non-profit-making charitable trust and is managed on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton. It is located in a large country house with extensive grounds. There are a range of sports and leisure opportunities available on site. The provision is for weekly boarding, 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 December 2014.

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people

### Outstanding

Pupils make sustained progress in their spiritual, physical and emotional health. They progress from a point of oppositional or withdrawing behaviour to developing excellent social skills and responsible behaviour in groups. Pupils, who once would withdraw from others emotionally and physically, are able to stand before groups and make public presentations. Pupils are able to manage their personal care, from a starting point of severe neglect. Pupils are able to develop self-management competencies to regulate their emotions.

Of particular note is the approach to spirituality. Pupils are encouraged in various ways to reflect on the deeper meaning of life. They think about their values. An example is the daily 'thought for the day' held every morning in the chapel. Staff bring residential and day pupils together in a reflective and calm environment. They are encouraged to think of success in terms of love, tolerance, forgiveness and respect for others. There are close links with a local abbey and pupils have a further space where they are able to reflect on life. A governor commented on how pupils take this very seriously and demonstrate a tender care for others.

A particular strength of the school is the vast range of activities that are on offer within the accommodation, in the extensive grounds and in the wider community. Pupils are able to engage in a range of sports and leisure pursuits that would otherwise not be available to them. They speak most positively of their enjoyment in motor cross, snowboarding, coasteering, canoeing and fishing, by way of a few examples. Pupils are highly motivated to earn reward points for positive behaviour to gain access to more and more activities. They understand the school rules about not having access to wi-fi. They are happy to pursue other healthy interests. They build new skills, confidence and self-esteem. Pupils who have struggled with social engagement are able to participate in group activities. One pupil said, 'This is an awesome place.' Another said, 'I like it here. There is always lots to do.' A parent said, 'He loves going there. The activities are first-class.'

Pupils make excellent progress in their academic studies. Staff support them to manage their emotions so that they are ready to learn. Pupils gain multiple certificates and qualifications that enhance their future life chances. A placing social worker said, 'He has never achieved so well in a school. I am impressed with the work that he produces.'

Staff ensure that there are clear goals specific to each pupil. They continuously monitor progress to improve outcomes. This is a school that is committed to each pupil to give them every possible chance of success and to enhance their future life chances. Pupils' behaviour improves. Pupils who have Asperger's syndrome and struggle with their social skills are able to engage with others. A placing social worker said, 'He is doing really well. He is a complex boy and the school [is] sticking with him. I am impressed with the improvements in behaviour.' Another professional said, 'The school has been brilliant. They have developed strategies and techniques that work and the parents are now able to use them. The entire environment for (name of pupil) has calmed down. The school did not give up on him.' Staff are on hand to support pupils who are having difficulties.

Their approach is successful. A carer said, 'They can manage his behaviours really well. He has destroyed property in other schools and this has resulted in exclusion.'

Staff and pupils enjoy solid, trusting relationships. Pupils see the adults as significant individuals in their lives. Some pupils identify their keyworker as the primary figure who they can speak to and trust.

### **Quality of care and support**

### **Outstanding**

Staff understand the unique needs of each pupil. They treat them with dignity and respect. They get down to their level to communicate with them. Keyworkers ensure that succinct care plans inform all of the targets and strategies. They keep these under regular review so that there is ongoing progress. The work is of a standard of excellence. An example is working with a family and other professionals to make a target more achievable. Staff manage obsessions, associated with pupils on the autistic spectrum, extremely well. Pupils are able to engage in far more activities and to develop their social communication skills.

Care, education and health professionals work in a collaborative way with pupils at the centre of practice. They have clear and effective communication and are on hand to support each other. They use walkie-talkies discreetly to summon assistance if necessary. All are aware of the individual needs of each pupil and work together in a holistic fashion to secure the best possible outcomes. Of particular pride is the creation of a museum within the school, which is of national interest. Care and education staff created this with the pupils.

There is an excellent approach to health. Key staff advocate for pupils and challenge other health professionals to provide the necessary approvals to promote pupils' health, such as changes to medication doses. Pupils enjoy a varied and nutritious diet. The menu is flexible and agreed in advance with the pupils. Pupils play a key role in deciding the menu and this is flexible according to their allergies and preferences. Staff source fresh meat and vegetables that are in season. Care staff consult health staff to ensure that particular products, such as Easter eggs, are not going to have an adverse effect on individual pupils. Pupils engage enthusiastically with sports. They are happy with a break from their electronic devices to participate in activities such as weight training, running, swimming and mountain biking.

Pupils with potentially life threatening medical conditions are carefully risk assessed for their participation in activities. Protocols and healthcare plans, agreed with health professionals, clearly guide staff in what to do in the event of a health emergency. Staff use health passports as 'grab files' to quickly inform paramedics of the key issues. Staff are trained to administer emergency medication. Staff demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the emergency plans. They are diligent at implementing them in practice. In one case, the healthcare plan did not specifically state a particular dietary requirement, although this was evident in other documents and in practice, so no pupils were at risk.

Staff cater for pupils' emotional health exceptionally well. Pupils have access to the therapy team, who are on site, as well as to more specialist help through a consultant

psychotherapist who visits weekly. Therapy staff ensure that there is clear and regular communication across the school so that all are aware of the immediate and ongoing needs of the pupils. The senior management plans to develop the therapy team and facilities to meet the emerging needs of pupils placed at the school.

The accommodation is in a grade II listed building. The decor and maintenance is excellent. Key staff maintain the grandeur of the house while meeting all modern legislation and regulations. Care staff have been innovative in utilising space, such as large open corridors. They use comfortable sofas and tables with various in-house activities available, such as board games, to provide a homely and welcoming environment. Such areas have become pleasant communal areas where pupils like to gather. Pupils respect their environment and there is no damage. Key staff have clear plans to improve the facility further, such as refitting the middle school accommodation kitchen.

Staff demonstrate a motivation and enthusiasm for their role. They are continually seeking new activities for the pupils to try. Pupils are fully engaged in this process. Participation in activities enables them to learn new skills, and to build confidence and self-esteem. It distracts them away from negative behaviour. A pupil said, 'I like it here. There is always lots to do.'

Pupils have a strong, clear voice in the school. As well as the day-to-day dialogue, formal questionnaires and the complaints system, they enjoy a productive relationship with the independent listener. The independent listener visits the school extremely regularly. The pupils know him well. He is available for them and they take up the opportunity. He understands when to share information relating to safeguarding. Pupils are happy with this arrangement. The headteacher ensures that the pupils' voice informs the self-evaluation and subsequent development plan. Governors are also very active. They visit the school regularly and pupils know them equally as well. The school council is proactive and meets regularly. There are successful outcomes, such as the installation of sensor lights in the snooker room and the purchase of swimming equipment.

Staff provide an excellent quality of care, securing exceptional progress in pupils' academic and emotional well-being.

## **How well children and young people are protected**

## **Outstanding**

The senior management team have a rigorous approach to safeguarding. They consider the broader picture, such as serious case reviews and any learning that is applicable to the school. They are not complacent. They have taken action, in line with the most recent amendments to the national minimum standards, to ensure that sleeping accommodation is suitably risk assessed. They ensure that staff are up to date with the most recent training, such as in extremism and radicalisation. Governors review the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements, which is a standard agenda item at their regular meetings. Staff are confident to raise any issues that concern them. This is a school with 360-degree vision.

Pupils are safe and secure. They say that they feel confident and comfortable in the environment and trust the adults around them. Staff are confident in adopting agreed

strategies to manage behaviour and to reduce risk. They have their 'ears to the ground' and are alert to any indicators that a pupil is at risk of harm from themselves or others. Staff take swift and robust action to ensure each pupil's ongoing safety and well-being. There are no offending behaviours, misuse of substances or going missing from care issues.

Risk management is a strength of this school. Staff are not risk averse. Pupils engage in a range of stimulating and meaningful activities, some of which are high risk. Key staff underpin any such activities with a comprehensive risk assessment. They think this through carefully for each pupil. Pupils are highly motivated in their engagement with the vast range of activities. They want to behave and earn reward points so that they can access the 'high-points activities'.

Approved instructors train staff in the school's behaviour management programme. Staff understand that they only use physical intervention as a last resort to prevent harm or significant damage. On occasion, high-risk interventions are used. Staff document these extremely well. The senior management team members oversee practice with meticulous oversight. They reflect on practice and learn lessons from incidents. There is no excessive use of physical intervention.

Anti-bullying practice is an exemplar. Staff have clear responsibilities and accountability laid out in the succinct procedure. This outlines the escalating action to be taken to secure positive outcomes. Staff support pupils to reflect on their words and behaviour and to consider the impact on others. Strategies are successful. Apologies are received and pupils are reconciled. Staff and pupils have produced a magnificent non-verbal anti-bullying video. Staff have shared this with a wider audience. Other professionals have commented most positively about it, requesting permission to show it to an audience overseas.

External agencies are extremely positive about the safeguarding practice of the school. A placing social worker said the strategies and techniques identified by the staff are now being used in the home environment. This has resulted in extremely positive outcomes for the pupil and his wider family.

Staff give health and safety top priority. Key staff do a sterling job in developing and maintaining the historic building to the standards required by modern day regulations. They ensure that all necessary certification is in place to verify the safety of the environment for staff and pupils.

Staff adhere to safer recruitment practice. There have been no new staff since the last inspection. All contracted staff are subject to the same rigorous vetting.

## **Impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

## **Outstanding**

Confident and inspirational leaders provide role models and motivation to a skilled, consistent and caring team to maintain and raise standards. The headteacher shows an interest in each individual pupil. He knows them well and they know him. Pupils appreciate his open door policy. The school has a leadership team, which continually strives to challenge themselves and to challenge others to improve outcomes for pupils.

They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, developing a meaningful self-evaluation and development plan, which clearly outlines the actions they will take over the forthcoming period.

The senior leadership team has a presence in the wider professional community. They play a key role in providing leadership to national associations within their sector. They support and provide a forum for networked peer support, professional training and the sharing of good practice.

The senior leadership team welcomes scrutiny, professional challenge and dialogue. Their robust monitoring brings about improvements immediately. They make longer-term plans, such as the development of the therapy unit to meet the anticipated needs of the changing cohort of pupils. An active governing board, with a wealth of experience, plays an active role in holding the headteacher to account. They say that they have complete confidence in him, as together they shape the strategic direction of the school. Governors make unannounced visits and provide a report with recommendations. Senior leaders act upon these.

A professional and committed care team provides the backbone for support. They see the potential and not the problems in pupils, exhorting them to be the best they can be. They all have long service with the school. This provides consistency and predictability for the pupils. Staff speak in the most positive terms of their role and of their senior leaders. They have continuing professional development plans to suit the ever-changing cohort of pupils, such as training in attachment theory and autism. Line managers support staff through the supervision and appraisal process. This includes waking night staff, which fulfils the previous point of improvement made at the last inspection.

Senior leaders have been successful in developing professional relationships, such as with a local college. They have been innovative in practice, such as an arrangement to allow access to the school grounds for chainsaw training, which in turn has produced significant improvements to the environment, such as making the pond safe and creating a usable area. Pupils are now able to engage in fishing activities in close proximity to the school.

The referral and admissions process is robust. Key staff collate all necessary information and transcribe this into succinct care plans. They agree these with placing authorities and parents. Post-16 support is exceptional. Staff create individual portfolios and support young people to produce curricula vitae to give them every chance of success in a future placement. Staff provide additional support through a mentoring scheme, telephone contact and attendance at the intended placement in person, if necessary. There has been 100% success in placing pupils in further education, training or employment. Staff encourage pupils to use the robust complaints procedure if necessary. On occasion, they take conversations they have overheard and treat them as a formal complaint. They follow a rigorous investigation path, providing clear outcomes to the complainant.

Parents and professionals speak highly of the school. They say that there is excellent communication and the pupils make exceptional progress.

## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework'.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children's and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116584
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC012014
<b>DfE registration number</b>	850/6032

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

<b>Type of school</b>	Day and residential special school
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	18
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Male
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	Nine to 18
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Lawrence Bartel
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	3–5 December 2014

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