

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/or mental health difficulties. The school is registered for up to 77 pupils. At the time of the inspection, a total of 43 pupils included five residential pupils. Residential pupils are accommodated in a single residential area.

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 providing a range of sport and leisure opportunities, workshops and a horticultural area. 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.

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 June 2019

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: 2 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Arrivals at this school are well planned. Pupils come for taster days and can have short stays as part of the process. During this assessment phase, families work with the staff to mutually agree the start of boarding. As a result, pupils arriving at the school are well prepared for boarding life.

Pupils benefit as a direct result of boarding at this school. It provides a safe haven in which they thrive on the wealth of opportunities available to them. A truly whole-school approach ensures that pupils' learning and development are top priorities for all who care for them. The staff are attuned to the individual needs of the pupils. They are intuitive and nurturing in their approach. Consequently, pupils develop trusting relationships with an experienced and well-established team of staff.

Pupils make exceptional progress from their starting points. Many remain in contact with the school as adults. Some have returned to share their success stories with current pupils.

Pupils grow in self-esteem and social skills with a wide range of enrichment activities. These have been made more accessible through opportunities for cross-curricular learning, such as linking maths to motocross. This has enabled less confident pupils to participate. A pupil said, 'The staff help me to be confident, I have done things that I never thought possible.'

The staff are dynamic and forward thinking in their approach to supporting pupils. They make effective use of training from outside agencies to enhance their practice. Areas of focus have included specialist training in trauma and social communication. Excellent sharing of knowledge across the residential and education provision makes effective use of the skills of the staff.

Pupil voice is strong and effective. Recent achievements include changes to the menu and the addition of water fountains. The student council is involved in a community project planting trees, aimed at reducing their carbon footprint. This is an excellent example of cross-curricular learning.

Success is celebrated. Pupils delight in their ability to manage their behaviour and reflect on the progress that they have made. A pupil said, 'I had been out of school for two years before I arrived. Here, they have listened to me, helped me and brought me forwards.'

Staff support pupils with the move to college. They help pupils to identify courses suitable to their needs, attend open days and help them with applications. Staff follow up with pupils during the autumn semester, who are largely making progress.

How well children and young people are helped and protected:

outstanding

Pupils feel safe at this school. The strong safeguarding culture is underpinned by regular training. Staff are fully conversant in current safeguarding legislation and procedures. Pupils are developing their own safeguarding skills through learning about online safety and cyber bullying. They describe the community of the school to be safe, where any issues are resolved through 'repair and rebuild' supported by staff. Consequently, the strong safeguarding ethos encompasses pupils and staff.

Risk is effectively managed. For example, one pupil had difficulty with social media. The school was quick to respond, with specialist staff working collaboratively to reduce immediate risk. However, the new information was not swiftly added to the residential records. Physical restraint is rarely used. When it is, records are clear and have effective managerial oversight.

Health is promoted. Pupils are encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle and smoking is actively discouraged. However, the administration and recording of medication has shortfalls. Arrangements for pupils needing to transport medication were unclear. A reliance on online training failed to ensure that the practical elements of administering and recording medication were effectively assessed. There was no direct negative effect on pupils as a result of this shortfall.

Therapeutic support is extensive. Pupils can, and do, make self-referrals. This 'no barrier' approach enables pupils to explore their thoughts and feelings with the guidance and support of the therapeutic team. Feedback from pupils who have used these services is excellent. One pupil said, 'This is the best chance in your life, make the most of it, it's helped me.'

Wider network communication is effective. One parent was highly complimentary of the school and stated that, 'Staff are always available to us, even during the holidays which [is a time that] my son finds difficult.' This is a good example of the overarching support given to pupils and their families.

Exemplary monitoring and routine checks ensure that the physical environment is in excellent condition. Pupils personalise their rooms and are encouraged to grow skills for life, for example keeping their personal space clean and tidy.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Exceptionally aspiring leaders and managers demonstrate continued commitment to success. Proactive planning and continued improvement underpin their determination to develop this school.

The acting head has proved to be an inspirational leader. Feedback from staff and the wider community is unreservedly positive. Meticulous succession planning includes a significant handover period with new leaders and managers in the autumn term. Staff feel well informed of future changes in leadership and included in the continued development of the school.

Staff morale is high. Substantial training and development opportunities ensure that the workforce continues to grow and develop in response to the changing needs of the pupils. Frequent supervision and annual appraisal ensure that staff feel well supported and are clear on their individual goals as well as the main school objectives.

Governors are highly active at the school. Their frequent visits ensure that they are familiar to the pupils and staff. The vast range of expertise across the Governors is utilised during their visits. They take a special interest in their area of strength, for example one visit recently focused on safer recruitment.

The strong Catholic ethos forms the fabric of this school. Spiritual and moral values are woven seamlessly into the thought for the day and through the curriculum. These overarching principles are supporting the pupils to develop into citizens who are engaged in community activities. The student council spoke of numerous projects that demonstrated its commitment to having a positive impact on the local community.

A record is made of each pupil's 'journey through St Edwards'. Certificates of achievement and photos demonstrate clear progress. The commentary from staff brings to life the breadth of success of departing pupils. Staff at this school have unmistakably high aspirations for pupils. They give them the tools to achieve beyond their own expectations.

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

Recommendations

- Risk assessments must include the journey to and from school. They must also include any new information or learning that results from incidents.
- Review training for the safe handling and administration of medication. Consider practical assessment to ensure staff are fully competent.

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: Post vacant

Type of school: Residential Special School

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Inspectors

Sarah Olliver, social care inspector (lead)

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