



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

**RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL**

**St Catherine`s School**

**Grove Road  
Ventnor  
Isle Of Wight  
PO38 1TT**

*Lead Inspector*  
Liz Normanton

*Announced Inspection*  
27th February 2006      09:40

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
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| <b>Reader Information</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Document Purpose          | Inspection Report                                                                                                                                                                         |
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This is a report of an inspection to assess whether services are meeting the needs of people who use them. The legal basis for conducting inspections is the Care Standards Act 2000 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for this establishment are those for *Residential Special Schools*. They can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk) or obtained from The Stationery Office (TSO) PO Box 29, St Crispins, Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel: 0870 600 5522. Online ordering: [www.tso.co.uk/bookshop](http://www.tso.co.uk/bookshop)

*Every Child Matters*, outlined the government's vision for children's services and formed the basis of the Children Act 2004. It provides a framework for inspection so that children's services should be judged on their contribution to the outcomes considered essential to wellbeing in childhood and later life.

Those outcomes are:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a contribution; and
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

In response, the Commission for Social Care Inspection has re-ordered the national minimum standards for children's services under the five outcomes, for reporting purposes. A further section has been created under 'Management' to cover those issues that will potentially impact on all the outcomes above.

Copies of *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004* are available from The Stationery Office as above.

# SERVICE INFORMATION

**Name of school** St Catherine`s School

**Address** Grove Road  
Ventnor  
Isle Of Wight  
PO38 1TT

**Telephone number** 01983 852722

**Fax number** 01983 857219

**Email address** general@stcatherines.org.uk

**Provider Web address**

**Name of Governing body,  
Person or Authority  
responsible for the  
school** Mr Grenville Shipley

**Name of Head** Mr Grenville Shipley

**Name of Head of Care**

**Age range of residential  
pupils**

**Date of last welfare  
inspection**

### **Brief Description of the School:**

St Catherine's is a non-maintained residential special school approved by the DFES for the education of students aged between seven and nineteen who have needs associated with language and speech disorders. The school is situated in Ventnor. There is easy access into town with Ventnor being a short walking distance from the school campus. The residential accommodation is provided in a number of houses spread across the school campus. The children's accommodation is on the St Catherine's school site whilst accommodation for older students is spread out geographically out of the school site.

# **SUMMARY**

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Two inspectors undertook this inspection over a period of two days. The inspectors had the opportunity to meet with students from the main school and FE, both informally at mealtimes and in the boarding houses, and more formally in house meetings. In addition there were meetings with the principal, head of care, head of speech therapy, chair of governors, heads of house and the assistant bursar and the chef manager.

St Catherine's is a school where the provision of care is underpinned by strong principles of openness and respect. An experienced and well-motivated staff group meets the physical, social and emotional needs of the students. Staff spoken with described all students as individuals who have individual needs.

## **What the school does well:**

The school is lead by a strong management team, with well-defined and understood lines of accountability. This strength is reflected in the care staff team, which is well motivated and supportive. There is good communication between care therapy and education staff, which is clearly to the benefit of the students.

Relationships between students and with staff are strong, and based on mutual respect.

All staff provide positive role models for the students in their care.

The school has a positive approach to discipline and behaviour management.

St Catherine's is committed to staff training, both in-house and NVQ.

All staff are very aware of their responsibilities with regard to child protection matters.

## **What has improved since the last inspection?**

Recommendations from the last report have been appropriately addressed.

Plans in relation to the building are now firmer.

A new head of house has been appointed from outside of the school.

The provision of food has improved, with more fresh food provided, with fewer processed products. Building on this the school might consider undertaking a survey to ascertain the views of the students, and also to consider participating in the Healthy Schools Award scheme.

### **What they could do better:**

There were no areas which are not currently being developed which the inspectors felt could be improved.

Please contact the Head for advice of actions taken in response to this inspection.

The report of this inspection is available from [enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@csci.gsi.gov.uk) or by contacting your local CSCI office.

# **DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS**

## **CONTENTS**

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Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

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# Being Healthy

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted.(NMS 14)
- Children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs.(NMS 15)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

### 14 and 15

The school meets the health and welfare needs of the students.

### EVIDENCE:

There are several houses on site, which accommodate up to thirteen students. Each house has a house manager and carers are on duty twenty-four hours a day. The majority of students have single bedrooms whilst others share. There are no more than two students sharing a room, however there are spare beds in some of the double rooms to allow for day pupils to have the occasional overnight stay and for friends to sleep-over. There are sufficient toilets, bathroom/shower facilities to allow for privacy. Information on healthy eating is provided in the house kitchens and students are encouraged to be involved in preparing healthy meals/snacks.

There was evidence that the health needs of the students are promoted, generally through the promotion of activities and healthy eating, and also relating to specific individual health needs. Students' mental health needs are supported and this was evidenced through individual files and through discussion with students and staff.

Each student has a health care plan and their individual health needs are understood by care staff. Confidential medical health information is kept separately and only shared with care staff on a need to know basis. The school employs a qualified nurse. Students are taken to the sick bay if they are unwell during the school day. The school has a robust medication policy and procedure.

There is advice available on campus to older students with regards to teenage health matters. A large number of students stated that they would not use this service for drugs advice and would prefer someone from outside the school to provide this.

The school liaises with health professionals from outside the school for advice and support in the area of mental health as required.

The school keeps a written record of accidents, injuries or significant illnesses with regard to students, and parents are notified accordingly.

The inspectors spoke with the chef manager who was enthusiastic about changes she has made since the last inspection. With regard to the menus, there have been significant improvements since the last inspection. Menus have been planned following advice from a nutritionist, and more fresh foods are provided, with fewer processed foods. Feedback from students and staff was generally positive, but comments were made from both sources about portion size for the older students. This was discussed with the chef manager, who felt this was due to the size of the budget, but from observation it appeared this may be down to practice when serving up food. The menu is planned on a six-week rotational basis to ensure that there is a wide range of choice available.

Children's special dietary needs are catered for.

Individual likes and dislikes meant that some students have a limited diet, and consideration might be given to how this could be monitored.

The inspectors sat with students in St Catherine's dining hall on Monday lunchtime. One inspector noted that a student was refused a warm main meal because they had put some grated cheese on their dinner plate. It was explained to them by the kitchen assistant that they had already got some protein on their plate. The outcome was that the student had grated cheese, mashed potato and peas for lunch, which the inspector did not think was a palatable or interesting meal. The inspectors believe that there needs to be a more flexible approach from the kitchen assistants at meal times.

Bearing in mind the comments made the school might like to consider undertaking a student survey to ascertain views about the current menu and ways in which improvements might be made on the work already done.

Consideration might be given to undertaking the Healthy Schools Award.

# Staying Safe

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled.(NMS 3)
- Children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration.(NMS 4)
- The welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse.(NMS 5)
- Children are protected from bullying by others.(NMS 6)
- All significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified by the Head of the school or designated person to the appropriate authorities.(NMS 7)
- Children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return.(NMS 8)
- Children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour.(NMS 10)
- Children live in schools that provide physical safety and security.(NMS 26)
- There is careful selection and vetting of all staff, volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers.(NMS 27)

## **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

**3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 26 and 27**

St. Catherine's is a school where students feel safe.

## **EVIDENCE:**

There are procedural guidelines in place with regard to privacy and confidentiality. Care staff have access to children's records with regards to their individual care needs, which are kept safely and securely. Confidential information is kept separately and a note is posted on the file to inform staff of this. Confidential information is only shared on a need to know basis. Students confirmed through discussion that their privacy was respected. Students are able to make and receive private phone calls, send and receive letters and emails. The head of care explained that there has been a decision

reached that younger students cannot receive text messages after 8.00pm on an evening.

Bathrooms and toilets are fitted with locks, which have an override facility in case of emergency.

There is sufficient space at the school for students to meet privately with their parents and friends etc.

Students are provided with information advising them how to make a complaint. The complaints procedure is detailed in the school prospectus. The complaints log was seen; this includes details of the complaint made, and the outcome. The students spoken with were confident that their concerns would be dealt with promptly, and this was evidenced by the records.

One inspector sat in at the Monday night house meeting of the FE students, the inspector observed that this was an open forum where students were able raise issues. The head of house explained to the inspector that these are not recorded as complaints. The FE students knew the procedure for making complaints. Forms are available in the houses, which can be completed by students and posted in centrally located boxes. Completed forms are kept in a complaints log, which also details action taken. Students spoken with felt that the school took complaints seriously.

The school now has a robust child protection policy and procedure, which gives guidance to staff on what to do in the event of a disclosure being made or if they suspect a student is being abused. All staff have received training in the area of child protection. Staff spoken with were aware of their responsibilities to ensure students are protected from abuse, and to respond promptly and appropriately in the event of a potentially abusive situation.

The school has a robust anti-bullying policy and there was evidence of its effectiveness from discussion with students and following matters raised with staff and the head of care.

In discussion with students individually an inspector was told by two students that they were being bullied. The students had informed a member of staff. This was discussed with the head of care who was aware that there had been some recent incidents of bullying, and that the children involved had been listened to and were being supported, and that the issue of bullying was taken up with the bullies. It was also recognised by the head of care that the students doing the bullying also required support as they had emotional issues. The school has guidelines in place to counteract the risk of bullying and by all staff and pupils being vigilant.

The school has a positive approach to the management of behaviour. Students sign up to the rules, which are about expectations of what to do rather than

what not to do, and students spoken with and who returned questionnaires believe these to be fair. Staff were observed to provide good role models. Appropriate behaviour is positively reinforced and inappropriate behaviour is dealt with fairly and proportionately. The records demonstrate that sanctions applied are appropriate to the situation.

Students are given information with regard to the home rules prior to admission. Details of St Joseph's House Home rules were seen by the inspectors and considered to be fair. Students were observed being very well behaved in and around the school campus.

The bursar and deputy bursar are responsible for the implementation of Health and Safety within the school. Staff are made aware of the school's comprehensive policies and procedures relating to Health and Safety during induction and through ongoing training. The head of house at St Anne's confirmed that there is a system for reporting and dealing with maintenance matters that have implications for health and safety. At the FE Monday night house meeting the inspector observed the head of house advising students to raise health and safety issues.

The Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service undertook a fire audit in January 2005 and a number of works need to be carried out by the school. The bursar has consulted with an independent fire officer for advice and has developed fire plans. The school has a policy that if a fire alarm goes off there is a full evacuation of the whole school campus. It was noted by an inspector that the fire exit in St Catherine's House was blocked by wellington boots this was pointed out to the head of house who took action to remove them to enable easy access to the fire door.

The school has installed thermostats to hot water taps to ensure that temperatures do not exceed 43 degrees. Students have made a number of complaints with regards to the water being too cold and that it can take up to an hour for the bath to fill. The school can increase the temperatures but ensure that they check individual students vulnerability by undertaking risk assessments.

Recruitment records were seen for the care staff most recently employed, and this is an area which should be developed further. Although a minimum of two written references are requested, and a CRB check, these are not always back before the member of staff commences employment.

# Enjoying and Achieving

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- The school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school.(NMS 12)
- Children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities both within the school and in the local community.(NMS 13)
- Children receive individual support when they need it.(NMS 22)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

### 13 and 22

Children's educational progress is supported in the residential provision. There is an abundant choice in external activities across the whole school. Individual support is provided by the care staff.

## EVIDENCE:

Care staff support younger students to complete their homework. On Monday evening students at St Catherine's and St Joseph's did not have homework and students were observed in leisure activities.

One inspector attended the Monday night house meeting at the FE where the young adults discussed activities which they wanted to engage in on an evening and at weekends. One student had taken on the responsibility of organising badminton. Students told the inspector that they go to the gymnasium at The Heights in Sandown on a Wednesday evening.

There were photographs posted around the school evidencing children and young adults engaged in outdoor pursuits and activities. Care staff explained that activities are always on offer and the children have the choice of whether they wish to join in. A wide range of activities is on offer, which includes: football, cycling, horse riding, gym (for older students), shopping, basketball, swimming, ice-skating, darts, war hammer etc (this list is not exhaustive).

Students' individual likes and dislikes needs are detailed in their action plans.

The students are encouraged to take part in fund raising events to raise money for charities, evidence of fundraising events were seen in albums and displayed around the school. The students quite clearly enjoyed the fund raising

activities. At the time of the inspection it was international book week and additional reading material was made available for sale to the students. The inspectors saw books out on display and large portable bookshelves had been delivered to the school with books for sale.

## **Making a Positive Contribution**

### **The intended outcomes for these standards are:**

- Children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run. No child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views.(NMS 2)
- Children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect.(NMS 9)
- Children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes.(NMS 11)
- Children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school.(NMS 17)
- In accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at school.(NMS 20)

### **JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):**

#### **20**

Students are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while living away from home at the school.

#### **EVIDENCE:**

All the students maintain contact with their families and had just returned to school following the February half-term. Staff support and encourage students to maintain contact with their parents. The inspector observed young adults at the FE informing staff of who would be going home at the weekend.

One younger student told the inspector that they go home at the weekend but that there isn't enough time to spend with their family. From discussion with the head of care it was apparent that each student's family circumstances are different and some students cope better with separation than others. Parents are able to visit the school. Questionnaires received from parents indicated that overall communication between home and school was good with a small proportion having had difficulties. Students are encouraged to participate in the community. Students are able to influence the running of the school through the school council and via house meetings.

From observation and discussion it is evident that good relationships exist between staff and students.

# Achieving Economic Wellbeing

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money.(NMS 16)
- Children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living.(NMS 21)
- Children live in well designed and pleasant premises, providing sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs.(NMS 23)
- Children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use.(NMS 24)
- Children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity.(NMS 25)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

### 24

The environment creates some difficulties due to the location of the buildings on a steep hill and the mainly old buildings comprising the school. Despite the limitations of the buildings staff and students have worked hard to make the environment comfortable and homely.

## EVIDENCE:

The accommodation in St Catherine's house was warm and comfortable throughout. Some students had personalised their bedrooms whilst others had chosen to have plainer surroundings. The inspector felt that the wall colouring in some bedrooms was outdated and shared this view with the head of care and headmaster, who stated that previous students had chosen the colours. Lighting in bedrooms is provided by fluorescent tube and is harsh and looks institutionalised. In discussion with the head teacher there are plans to upgrade the houses following completion of the new accommodation annexe. Bedrooms were fitted with appropriate furnishings and all doors were fitted with locks.

First floor bedroom windows were not fitted with restrictors and the head of house in St Catherine's stated that they were aware that students do lean out of windows to talk to each other. The inspectors raised this issue with the

head teacher and head of house and were advised that risk assessments would be required in this area.

Students raised issues regarding maintenance of the FE houses, which they felt were not always dealt with promptly.

There are lounging areas in all the houses and students can receive relatives privately. Students are encouraged by care staff to do their homework and appropriate facilities are made available to do this. Laundry facilities are available in all the houses. Students at the FE raised issues with the inspector about laundering and damage to their clothing. The head of house was made aware of their concerns.

# Management

## The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- Children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils.(NMS 1)
- Children's needs, development and progress is recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions.(NMS 18)
- There are adequate records of both the staff and child groups of the school.(NMS 19)
- Children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently.(NMS 28)
- Children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs.(NMS 29)
- Children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare.(NMS 30)
- Children receive the care and services they need from competent staff.(NMS 31)
- Children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools.(NMS 32)
- The governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school.(NMS 33)

## JUDGEMENT – we looked at outcomes for the following standard(s):

### 28 and 30

Student's needs are understood and met by a well-trained and supported staff team.

### EVIDENCE:

Clear records are kept in relation to the children. Some are centrally held and the day-to-day records are kept in the houses.

The school is clearly committed to staff training. Staff meetings generally include a training element. Subjects covered include:

- Fire safety
- Child protection
- Supervision and appraisal
- Health, diet and medical needs

- Team building
- Principles of care and the legislative framework
- Working with families

There is also a commitment to NVQ training. The head of care and deputy are NVQ Assessors and Internal Verifiers, and one head of house is an assessor. At the time of the inspection the number of care staff which had achieved or were working towards qualifications were as follows:

|                                         |   |   |
|-----------------------------------------|---|---|
| NVQ IV achieved                         | - | 1 |
| NVQ III achieved                        | - | 6 |
| NVQ III undertaking<br>or registered on | - | 8 |
| Other certificates or<br>degrees        | - | 5 |

Staff spoken with and who responded to questionnaires all said they felt well supported, both by their peers and by the management team. Staff supervision is now undertaken on a regular basis.

# SCORING OF OUTCOMES

This page summarises the assessment of the extent to which the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools have been met and uses the following scale.

**4** Standard Exceeded (Commendable)      **3** Standard Met (No Shortfalls)  
**2** Standard Almost Met (Minor Shortfalls)      **1** Standard Not Met (Major Shortfalls)

“X” in the standard met box denotes standard not assessed on this occasion

“N/A” in the standard met box denotes standard not applicable

| <b>BEING HEALTHY</b> |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| <b>Standard No</b>   | <b>Score</b> |
| <b>14</b>            | 3            |
| <b>15</b>            | 3            |

| <b>STAYING SAFE</b> |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| <b>Standard No</b>  | <b>Score</b> |
| <b>3</b>            | 3            |
| <b>4</b>            | 3            |
| <b>5</b>            | 3            |
| <b>6</b>            | 3            |
| <b>7</b>            | 3            |
| <b>8</b>            | X            |
| <b>10</b>           | 3            |
| <b>26</b>           | 3            |
| <b>27</b>           | 3            |

| <b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b> |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Standard No</b>            | <b>Score</b> |
| <b>12</b>                     | X            |
| <b>13</b>                     | 3            |
| <b>22</b>                     | 3            |

| <b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b> |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Standard No</b>                    | <b>Score</b> |
| <b>2</b>                              | X            |
| <b>9</b>                              | 3            |
| <b>11</b>                             | X            |
| <b>17</b>                             | 3            |
| <b>20</b>                             | 3            |

| <b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b> |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Standard No</b>                  | <b>Score</b> |
| <b>16</b>                           | X            |
| <b>21</b>                           | X            |
| <b>23</b>                           | X            |
| <b>24</b>                           | 2            |
| <b>25</b>                           | X            |

| <b>MANAGEMENT</b>  |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| <b>Standard No</b> | <b>Score</b> |
| <b>1</b>           | X            |
| <b>18</b>          | 3            |
| <b>19</b>          | X            |
| <b>28</b>          | 3            |
| <b>29</b>          | X            |
| <b>30</b>          | 3            |
| <b>31</b>          | X            |
| <b>32</b>          | X            |
| <b>33</b>          | X            |

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection? No

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

This section sets out the actions that must be taken so that the proprietor meets the Children Act 1989, Inspection of Schools and Colleges Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards.

| No. | Standard | Recommendation | Timescale for action (Serious welfare concerns only) |
|-----|----------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------|
|     |          |                |                                                      |

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