



Making Social Care  
Better for People

# inspection report

**RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL**

**Stanbridge Earls School**

**Romsey  
Hampshire  
SO51 0ZS**

*Lead Inspector*  
Bridgette Lowe

*Unannounced Inspection*  
4th July 2006      10:00

The Commission for Social Care Inspection aims to:

- Put the people who use social care first
- Improve services and stamp out bad practice
- Be an expert voice on social care
- Practise what we preach in our own organisation

<b>Reader Information</b>	
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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

<b>Name of school</b>	Stanbridge Earls School
<b>Address</b>	Romsey Hampshire SO51 0ZS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01794 516777
<b>Fax number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Provider Web address</b>	<a href="http://www.stanbridgeearls.co.uk">www.stanbridgeearls.co.uk</a>
<b>Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school</b>	Stanbridge School Limited Mr DJ Beeby Chairman of Governors
<b>Name of Head</b>	Mr G P Link
<b>Name of Head of Care</b>	Mr R Bailey
<b>Age range of residential pupils</b>	10-19
<b>Date of last welfare inspection</b>	14/11/05

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

Stanbridge Earls is an independent boarding and day school for boys and girls aged 10 to 19 years. The school specialises in providing education for young people with a specific learning difficulty and at the time of the inspection approximately 40% of pupils had Statements of Special Educational needs. The school is registered with the DfES as a Special School and its welfare provision for boarders is inspected annually by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The school has specialist and experienced teaching staff and high teacher to pupil ratios.

The school is located in 50 acres of beautiful landscaped grounds close to the small town of Romsey. The majority of pupils are boarders and the boarding provision is organised by year group into 10 residential units of varying size. The school has a range of fees depending on the age of the pupils and additional optional lessons.

# **SUMMARY**

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

The inspection took place over a day and a half with two inspectors. The head master, deputy head master for pastoral care, pupils and staff were spoken to. Personnel files and records were viewed. One meal was shared with pupils and the inspectors toured the grounds, two of the boarding houses and the medical centre. At the time of inspection the school had 168 pupils on the register, 136 of these were boarding pupils. The responses to pre inspection questionnaires undertaken by the headmaster, staff and parents were analysed and the inspectors examined a range of documents made available by the school.

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

The school is very good at actively supporting children's educational progress. All pupils receive a considerable amount of individual support from a range of qualified professionals. Pupils are routinely consulted about their lives and supported to communicate their views. There is comprehensive and effective planning, assessing and recording of pupils needs. Pupils' behaviour is positively managed and the school has not had to use any form of restraint since the last inspection. Pupils spoken to said that 'boarding at the school was excellent' and that they would 'recommend boarding at the school'.

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

The school has ensured that health protocols are in place for pupils with specific health needs. Staff have been trained in specific health interventions to meet the needs of pupils and in first aid. The school has started the process of risk assessing activities although this needs to be developed to include all on and off site activities. The school now has a robust recruitment process in place. Windows within the Agora boarding house have been replaced in order to safeguard pupils.

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

The school needs to devise a system to ensure that the commission is notified of any significant event and staff are clear what the process is for making notifications. The school needs to ensure that all on and off site activities are risk assessed and regularly reviewed. The school needs to ensure that weekly fire testing of alarm systems is undertaken within boarding houses consistently. This matter will be referred to DfES separately from this report. The school would benefit from formulating a process to evidence recruitment checks undertaken including telephone verification of references.

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**

Being Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Management

Scoring of Outcomes

Recommended Actions identified during the inspection

# 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

Quality in this outcome area is **good**. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The school effectively meets the health needs of the pupils.

## EVIDENCE:

The inspector met with the school nurse at the schools medical centre and looked at medication records, and storage of medication. Two young people's health needs were case tracked and information relating to their health needs was looked at. The school has obtained parental permissions for the administration prescribed and non-prescribed medicines to young people and health interventions. Currently there is still no isolation room within the health centre although there is development plans to extend the medical centre to ensure that this need is met, the school manages the situation within the current health centre. The inspector was able to view health protocols in place for pupils requiring specific health interventions. Staff informed the inspectors that they had received the training needed in this area. All staff had recently undertaken a day's first aid training. The staff and pupils were aware of the surgery opening times and could call on the medical centre staff day or night. The school nurse had recently developed a basic first aid policy. The nurse spoke of developing this policy to include full information relating to staff responsible for first aid and how the school meets the health needs of pupils. The school had recently discovered a pupil had contracted an infectious disease. The appropriate health authorities were notified and steps were put in place to safeguard pupils within the school and the individual concerned. Parents were kept fully informed of the situation. The commission should have been notified about this incident but the staff involved seemed unsure whose responsibility it was to notify the commission. The school needs to devise a system to ensure that the commission is notified of any significant event and staff are clear what the process is for making notifications.



# 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):

3,4,5,6,7,8,10,26,27

Quality in this outcome area is **adequate**. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The school respects the pupils' privacy and information is handled confidentially.

The school manages any concerns or complaints effectively.

Appropriate child protection procedures were in place and staff receive training in them.

The school is proactive in protecting pupils from bullying.

The school should ensure there is a system in place to notify the commission of any significant events.

Pupils were observed, with positive support from staff, to develop appropriate behaviour.

The school should continue to develop risk assessments undertaken of all on and off site activities.

Fire equipment checks still need to be carried out in line with Fire regulations and guidance. This has been an outstanding recommendation since 30/09/04.

The schools recruitment checks are thorough, although would be better evidenced with a checklist that evidences references have been verified by direct contact and all checks being in place, this would make procedures more robust.

## **EVIDENCE:**

The inspector spoke to boarding staff the head master, head of care, pupils and looked at two young peoples files, records of restraints, incidents, complaints and child protection concerns. All files were stored confidentially. Staff were able to inform the inspector about respecting young peoples privacy, including knocking on bedroom doors before entering. The complaints log was viewed and there have been no complaints since the last inspection. Pupils spoken to were aware of how to air concerns or make a complaint. Staff and pupil interactions were observed to be positive, treating pupils with respect. Pupils spoke of behaviours being managed firm but fair and that pupils behaviours had improved. There have been no incidents requiring staff to restrain pupils since the last inspection.

Pupils informed the inspectors that there were very few incidents of bullying and staff dealt with any bullying swiftly. One parent's questionnaire reported that the school had acted quickly and effectively after concerns arose around a bullying issue. Pupils spoke of feeling safe at the school and said boarding was 'excellent'. The school has an anti bullying day planned for the new autumn term as part of the citizen ship curriculum.

There were no current child protection concerns at the time of the inspection. Concerns that had arisen since the last inspection had been dealt with appropriately, with the responsible authorities being notified. Staff had all undertaken child protection awareness training. The head master is the designated Child Protection Liaison Officer for the school. The head of pastoral care had produced a document for the school and governors detailing the schools developments in 'safeguarding their community'. The parents'

handbook had been updated and included clear information relating to child protection.

The school has notified the commission of significant events relating to pupils health and welfare since the last inspection but failed to notify the commission of an incident detailed in the 'Being Healthy' section of this report. The school would benefit from formalising a system of reporting all significant events to the commission.

An inspector met with the member of staff responsible for health and safety at the school. The inspectors found that this was an area that the school needed to address as a priority. Since the last inspection the school has started the process of risk assessing activities. The sports teacher had undertaken risk assessments of all sporting activities. There were no formal risk assessments for off site activities. The boys spoke of being able to fish on the school lake and were aware of the dangers associated with this but the school had no risk assessment in place. There was a thorough risk assessment for fire safety, and the school trip to Africa had looked at the areas of risk although this was not produced in a risk assessment format. The school's head of pastoral care was aware of DfES guidance for risk assessments in school but the member of staff responsible for health and safety was not aware of the guidance. At the time of the inspection the pupils had been on a days outing as a reward for good behaviour. Details of pupils and staff being off site were seen but no accompanying risk assessment was in place. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) has recently inspected the school and a requirement was made of the school to prepare risk assessments for off site activities. The school has a health a safety committee that has met a few times since the last inspection. The school does not have a member of staff from the schools nurses attending.

The inspectors looked at new fire logs in boarding houses to record fire evacuations and testing of fire alarm systems. There was no guidance for staff in relation to checks needing to be undertaken and frequency of fire evacuations being practiced by boarding pupils. Boarding staff seemed unsure about undertaking testing of fire alarm call points to check the system was working, but were clear about the need to have regular fire evacuation practice with pupils. Pupils confirmed that they were clear about the evacuation procedures. It was clear from records seen and discussion with staff that consistent and regular testing of fire alarm call point was not happening. This is the third inspection by the commission where this recommendation will be made and has not yet been fully implemented. The ISI require the school from their inspection earlier in the year to train the school staff in fire prevention. The school's head master and head of care spoke of making fire call points testing in the nine boarding houses, the responsibility of one member of staff to ensure the school adheres to fire safety guidance and regulations. This matter will be referred to DfES separately from this report.

Six recruitment files were viewed including two ancillary staff. Since the last inspection the school has improved their recruitment policy and procedures to ensure they have a robust system that safeguards pupils. The school undertakes all the relevant checks although the school could not evidence that direct contact with referees had been taken in order to verify references. The head master confirmed he carried out this function and the head of pastoral care confirmed this was the case. The head master acknowledged that no written confirmation was made to evidence that contact had been made with referees.

# 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):

12,22

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The school is very good at actively supporting children's educational progress.

All pupils receive a considerable amount of individual support from a range of qualified professionals.

## EVIDENCE:

The school has an excellent provision for supporting pupils with their educational progress. There is a Special Educational needs Coordinator appointed by the school who ensures the pupils requiring extra support have specialist teaching within the two specialist learning centres. The school has small numbers of pupils per class base to ensure effective learning takes place. Parents were very positive throughout questionnaires on the school raising pupils' academic achievements as were pupils spoken to. The inspectors' viewed two pupils' files and these clearly outlined pupils' needs and achievements. Many of the boarding houses have boarding staff who are also teachers in the school and who are aware of the educational needs of pupils.

Young people receive a great deal of support for their educational needs which may include help from specialist teachers, a speech therapist or occupational therapist. The school has a counsellor who works part time. The counsellor has a diploma in counselling qualification and is undertaking the Bachelor of Arts in Counselling. The British Association in Counselling Psychotherapy also accredits the counsellor. All pupils have a personal tutor, and many of the pupils spoke of being able to go to their tutor if they needed support. House

parents have responsibility for monitoring boarders' overall progress and tutors are part of this wider school pastoral system. House parents have responsibilities for supporting young people within the boarding houses and many house parents also have housemaster responsibilities. In addition to teaching and boarding staff, many boarders turn to the nursing staff for emotional support as well as health needs. All pupils have a personal tutor, and many of the pupils spoke of being able to go to their tutor if they needed support. Pupils spoken to were very positive about the support they received from staff at Stanbridge Earls School

# 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):

2,17,20

Quality in this outcome area is **excellent**. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

Pupils are routinely consulted about their lives and supported through different means in order to be able to communicate their views.

There is comprehensive and effective planning, assessing and recording of pupils needs.

All pupils are supported to maintain contact with their families.

## EVIDENCE:

Pupils confirmed that they participate in boarding house meetings where information is given and they are able to air their views. The school has its own magazine where pupils are able to voice their opinions and achievements. House parents consult with pupils on a daily basis and pupils spoke of being able to communicate their views to a range of staff and felt listened to. Pupils are able to attend and have input into the annual review and associated reports. The school provides staff that are readers or scribes for the pupils. Laptops are available to aid communication and specific attention to detail in

supporting pupils' with dyslexia is excellent. The school has recently networked the site so pupils can use laptops within boarding houses. Pupils spoke positively about the school council being re instated in the new school term and they were clear about being consulted and putting their views forward. The pupils are able to contact family and friends and are supported to do so. Each boarding house has a payphone for pupil use with helpline clearly displayed around the school. Many pupils have their own mobile phones. Pupils are able to return home at weekends, holidays and exeats. Two pupils files were viewed and statement of special educational needs were seen as well as comprehensive annual review reports, detailing all the pupils needs.

# 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

Quality in this outcome area is **good**. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

The school has made improvements in boarding houses to bring the state of repair to a good standard.

### EVIDENCE:

Two boarding houses were visited. At the last inspection the Agora boarding house was in need of risk assessments being undertaken for the upstairs windows, as there was a risk to pupils. The windows have now been replaced and safeguards put in place. The school is to re install the redecoration and maintenance programme to all the boarding houses as this was said to need to be put on hold due to extensive work being needed to make the main house fire safe. There are plans in place to build and develop purpose built boarding houses.

# 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):

1,28,31,32

Quality in this outcome area is **good**. This judgement has been made using available evidence including a visit to this service.

There are several areas recommended for improvement however: -

The statement of the schools purpose accurately describes the schools aims for their pupils. The pupils guide is useful and informative for the pupils.

Staff were skilled and trained in caring for young people and the school maintained sufficient numbers of staff on duty to meet the needs of the pupils.

## EVIDENCE:

The school has a clear statement of purpose that accurately details the schools aim and function; this has been reviewed since the last inspection. The school has also developed a new pupils guide that is in a colourful format with photographs of staff and is particularly useful to new pupils. The small hand held document outlines the pupils first week at the school allaying their fears. The school produces a school diary, calendar and magazine that keeps pupils informed of all events.

The school was appropriately staffed at the time of inspection. The inspectors observed staff around the campus in the evening on inspection and pupils spoke of always being able to contact staff if there was a need. Staff are encouraged to attend Boarding School Association training, this also included the head boy and girl. Personnel files contained copies of staff qualifications.

The school is monitored by the head master and two deputy head masters, one being responsible for pastoral issues within the school. A school governor undertakes regular visits to monitor the schools operation. The deputy head master for pastoral care was in the process of implementing fortnightly staff briefings to discuss and review policies and procedures with staff, to ensure they were implemented consistently across the school. The school needs to ensure that the checking of fire alarm systems in boarding houses are properly monitored to ensure regular checks take place in line with fire safety guidance and regulations, as previously mentioned in this report under Staying Safe. The school also needs to ensure there are effective systems in place to notify the commission significant events, also detailed In the Staying Safe part of this report. The school needs to ensure that risk assessments are in place and there is a system for monitoring a reviewing these.

# 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>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>14</b>	3
<b>15</b>	X

<b>STAYING SAFE</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>3</b>	3
<b>4</b>	3
<b>5</b>	3
<b>6</b>	3
<b>7</b>	2
<b>8</b>	3
<b>10</b>	3
<b>26</b>	1
<b>27</b>	3

<b>ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>12</b>	4
<b>13</b>	X
<b>22</b>	4

<b>MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>2</b>	4
<b>9</b>	X
<b>11</b>	X
<b>17</b>	4
<b>20</b>	3

<b>ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING</b>	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
<b>16</b>	X
<b>21</b>	X
<b>23</b>	X
<b>24</b>	3
<b>25</b>	X

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

Yes

Are there any outstanding recommendations from the last inspection?

### 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)
1.	RS26	The school should ensure that all boarding houses have the relevant weekly fire testing of equipment and record this in accordance with fire regulations and guidance. <b>Previous recommendation timescale 30/09/04 and 09/12/05</b>	30/09/06
2.	RS26	All areas outlined in this report are suitably risk assessed. This includes on and off site activities, specific health needs of pupils and fire procedures. <b>Previous recommendation timescale 30/01/06</b>	30/11/06
3.	RS7	The school should devise a system to ensure the Commission is notified of all significant events	30/10/06
4.	RS27	The school should evidence verification of direct contact being sought on referees and all checks are undertaken.	30/10/06

## **Commission for Social Care Inspection**

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