



Making Social Care
Better for People

inspection report

RESIDENTIAL SPECIAL SCHOOL

Stanbridge Earls School

**Romsey
Hampshire
SO51 0ZS**

Lead Inspector
Bridgette Lowe

Announced Inspection
14th November 2005 10:00a

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

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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 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

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	Stanbridge Earls School
Address	Romsey Hampshire SO51 0ZS
Telephone number	01794 529400
Fax number	01794 511201
Email address	admin@stanbridgeearls.co.uk
Provider Web address	www.stanbridgeearls.co.uk
Name of Governing body, Person or Authority responsible for the school	Stanbridge School Limited
Name of Head	Geoff Link
Name of Head of Care	Robert Bailey
Age range of residential pupils	10-19years
Date of last welfare inspection	July 2004

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.

SUMMARY

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

The inspection took place over two days with one inspector being present. The head master, deputy head master for pastoral care, pupils, staff and governor were spoken to. Personnel files and records were viewed. Two meals were shared with the pupils, and pupils gave the inspector a tour of boarding houses. All pupils, staff parents and placing officers were surveyed. There are currently 132 pupils that board at Stanbridge Earls. The inspector observed activities and evening prep sessions.

What the school does well:

The head master spoke of having a child centred approach, where each young person is treated as an individual. Young people spoke to the inspector and their view was that the school had helped raise their self-esteem and boost their confidence. One young person said 'the best thing about the school is the family atmosphere'. A number of parents reported in questionnaires that their child's educational achievements had improved since being at the school; many pupils also spoke positively about their educational achievements. The school is proactive in protecting young people from bullying, and the pupils endorsed this. Staff support pupils to behave in an appropriate manner. Meals were healthy and nutritious and pupils are able to prepare snacks in boarding houses. The range of activities on offer allows pupils enjoyable leisure pursuits on site and off site in the local community. The school works well to ensure positive behaviour management is undertaken, promoting pupils to manage their own behaviour with staff support. The school promotes pupils health and wellbeing.

What has improved since the last inspection?

Young people spoke to the inspector and informed her that many improvements had been made in the school following the last inspection.

The school has a new management structure in place since the last inspection that parents responded to positively throughout questionnaires. The activities programme has improved since the last inspection, with all evening and weekend activities detailed in the school calendar, and the named responsible member of staff is also listed. The 6th form bar and lounge area has been refurbished and greatly improved. New furnishings have been purchased for many of the boarding houses. Effort has been made towards improving supervision of boarding pupils during evening and weekends. There are now two deputy head masters to support the headmaster that has increased the strength in management of the school. The governors now visit the school and provide half termly reports on their findings. The schools audits its medication stocks on a regular basis and now has full consent for administration of both prescribed and non-prescribed medication, from parents. The school has updated its staff handbook, policies and procedures. Although there are areas for improvement, the school has made some significant changes following the last inspection.

What they could do better:

The school needs to ensure that all boarding houses have the relevant weekly fire testing and record this in accordance with Fire Regulations and any supplementary guidance received from the Fire Authority. The school should ensure that all areas within the school, including on and off site activities are appropriately risk assessed. The school should ensure that any child protection concerns are promptly referred to Social Services and that a system is in place to notify the appropriate authorities of all significant events, although since the inspection the school has responded to this feedback and acted appropriately. The school still needs to ensure that its recruitment checks are fully undertaken, prior to members of staff starting work, unless the DfES are fully informed and approve the schools practice. Some areas of boarding provision still need to be improved, which includes redecoration and more suitable boarding accommodation for pupils boarding in the acropolis boarding house. There are development plans to build new boarding facilities next year, as confirmed by the head master and governor. The school medical centre has no isolation room. There are plans to extend the medical centre within the school, next year that could address issues of isolation of ill pupils and segregation of opposite sexes. The school needs to ensure that a health protocol and a risk assessment are in place, and one member of trained staff is on duty to administer epi pen medication to a pupil with a severe allergy. There is always a trained nurse on duty but due to the large size of the campus these extra safeguards would be needed whilst awaiting the nurse to deal with the pupils

medical needs. Information for parents and pupils relating to the Commission needs to be provided to all.

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 or by contacting your local CSCI office.

DETAILS OF INSPECTOR FINDINGS

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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):

14,15

The school is managing the lack of a suitable health centre in an appropriate manner.

Staff were aware of pupils health needs, although one member of staff needs to be trained and on duty to deal with administration of epi pen medication for a severe allergy until the nurse can be present.

Meals provided were healthy and nutritious and specific dietary needs are catered for although young people reported to the inspector they were not happy with the meals.

EVIDENCE:

The inspector met with the school nurse and viewed the arrangements for caring for pupils when ill. The sick bay has now two rooms that can be used for pupils of both sexes when ill during the day. The nurse spoke of staff being around if a pupil should need them, also a walkie talkie could be used if they needed to contact medical staff. Currently there is still no isolation room, although there is development plans to extend the medical centre to ensure that this need is met. One pupil has a specific health needs that may need invasive treatment if they become ill. At the time of inspection there was no staff other than medical staff that was trained in administering epi pen medication. Due to the extent of the grounds and the time it would take for the nurse to attend to the pupil and administer the epi pen, one member of staff should be on duty and trained in this area to ensure the pupils health needs are met. There is also a need for a health protocol and individual risk assessment in relation to this specific health need to be in place.

Consent for both prescribed and non-prescribed medication is now gained from parents. Pupils with specific health needs must be risk assessed to determine such issues as managing required medication.

The inspector shared three meals, two being with the pupils. There were a range of choices, including a vegetarian option. Menus were clearly displayed, and pupils were surveyed last year about the food. The dining area has a comments book in which pupils can air their views. Pupils commented within the questionnaires that they were not happy with the food. On inspection all pupils spoke positively about Sunday brunch, and there were varying responses to both lunch and dinner. The inspector found that the food was to a good standard, and had no cause for concern at the time of inspection. The school spoke of surveying the pupils again in relation to the food provided.

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):

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

The school respects the pupils' privacy and information is handled confidentially. If a room search is needed to protect the welfare of pupils it is carried out and recorded in an appropriate manner. The school is proactive in protecting pupils from bullying. The school should promptly notify the relevant authorities of any child protection concern or significant event. Pupils were observed, with positive support from staff, to develop appropriate behaviour. The school should ensure all high-risk activities are appropriately risk assessed and that fire equipment checks are carried out in line with Fire regulations and guidance. The schools recruitment should ensure that all relevant checks are gained prior to the member of staff starting work, including gap students and staff recruited from abroad.

EVIDENCE:

The inspector spoke to young people about privacy and how staff respect this. Staff ensure they knock before entering pupils rooms and pupils reflected that this is what happens. A policy has been written providing staff with procedural guidelines on ensuring pupils privacy and confidentiality. There is also a new policy on room searches if there is a need to do so to protect pupils. Staff were aware of the need to gain pupil consent and record any such search. Pupils reported that there were very few incidents of bullying and felt secure that staff were proactive in responding to any incidents of bullying. The school has had a whole school day educating pupils about bullying and drug awareness. Many pupils stated that they felt safer at Stanbridge Earls than previous educational placements. The school educates pupil about anti bullying within Citizenship sessions. A bullying book is in place to log any incidents of bullying.

The inspector was informed of a possible child protection concern at the time of inspection. This was discussed with the head master and the action that had been taken. The inspector advised the school that any future child protection concerns should be referred to the Child Protection Team at social services. Since the last inspection the Child Protection policy has been reviewed and updated and disseminated to all staff. Staff were aware who the schools child protection liaison officer is and the need to safeguard the pupils. The school had a sporting incident where a pupil was admitted to hospital. The school should ensure that all significant events outlined in Standard 7 should be notified to the appropriate authorities. Since the inspection the school has promptly notified the Commission of a significant event.

Pupils were observed throughout the inspection to demonstrate positive behaviour, supported by staff through positive and respectful relationships. Pupils spoke positively about the school helping them with managing their behaviour in a firm but positive way. The restraints log was viewed and there have been no restraints used within the school since the last inspection.

The school currently has no formal risk assessments in place for on and off site activities and areas outlined in Standard 26. At the time of inspection the head master notified the inspector that approval had been given to appoint a full time member of staff to ensure all risk assessments were undertaken. The school needs to risk assess this area and take any action needed. The school now uses a registered sailing club who undertake risk assessments. The school has a pro forma that includes a risk assessment when pupils go off site; these are undertaken for each outing. The windows in the upstairs common room within Agora boarding house have no restrictors and open fully. The school has just had a fire risk assessment review, the head master spoke of forwarding this To the Commission when completed; the inspector was not able to view the document on inspection.

The inspector viewed fire safety logs and spoke to staff about checks undertaken. Boarding staff were responsible for weekly testing of fire alarms within the boarding houses, these were happening on a weekly basis, and recorded appropriately, although some boarding houses had differing means of recording. All pupils were aware of the fire evacuation procedure and regular evacuations were taking place and being recorded. The staff were not aware of the need to check individual break glass call points. The inspector recommended to the head master that they review their fire checking procedures in line with Fire safety regulations and guidance.

Three personnel files were sampled, and two gap student files. The headmaster spoke to the inspector about the delay in receiving enhanced Criminal Record Bureau Checks. The school has since updated the recruitment policy stating that no member of staff should commence work until all checks are in place, the policy states that if there is a delay in receiving the checks a notification will be made to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). One member of staff appointed from abroad did not have a police check from their country of origin, and only one reference was evidenced. The school has since notified the DfES of the situation and the member of staff is working under supervision. The gap students' files did not contain certificate of good conduct from their country of origin. The school was informed of these shortfalls during inspection, and paper work was produced in relation to appointing new gap students stating clearly the checks that were required, including a certificate of good conduct.

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):

12,13,22

The school is very good at actively supporting children's educational progress. The school provides a good activity programme, although there are no formal risk assessments for these areas.

Pupils receive good 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 inspector spoke to this member of staff and viewed the learning centre. The school has small numbers of pupils per class base to ensure effective learning takes place. Parents and pupils were very positive throughout questionnaires on the school raising pupils' academic achievements. Many house parents are also teachers so there is continuity and awareness of pupils educational needs. All pupils have evening prep sessions that are supported by the house parents and teachers. The school is introducing wireless laptops into all the boarding houses for pupil use, which will be networked throughout the school. The pupils spoke favourably about this development.

The inspector observed activities whilst on inspection, which included sports and fitness and art and drama. The activities list is clearly displayed and additional evening activities such as a cinema trip or weekend activities are outlined in the school pocket diary that all pupils have. Since introducing more physical activities the staff noted to the inspector that this has had a positive impact on pupils.

The inspector met with the school counsellor who works part time. Since the last inspection there are guidelines for how pupil referrals are made to the counsellor. 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. There is an independent person whom pupils can go to, although many pupils were not aware of whom it is. The independent persons details are not clearly displayed in boarding houses. The school also has qualified Speech and Language Therapist on the staff team and provides Occupational Therapy for pupils. All pupils spoken to named a range of staff that they could go to if needed.

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

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

There is effective planning assessing and recording of pupils needs.

All pupils are supported to maintain contact with their families.

EVIDENCE:

Pupils all participate in boarding house meetings where information is given and pupils are able to air their views. The school has it's 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 feeling listened to. Pupils are able to attend and have input into the annual review and associated reports. All pupils are consulted about their termly targets. The school is proactive in supporting pupils with communication and learning difficulties. 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 individual education plans and care plans that are discussed with pupils. The headmaster spoke of the review process and Individual Educational Plans are a strength of the school.

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.

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):

24,25

The school has made improvements in most boarding houses, but the décor and furnishings in some still require attention.

The school is respectful of pupils' privacy and dignity whilst bathing or showering.

EVIDENCE:

Since the last inspection the school has purchased new furnishings for boarding accommodation and most have had redecoration. The Acropolis boarding house has not had any improvements made due to development plans to not use the accommodation once the new boarding house has been built. The Forum boarding house was being redecorated at the time of inspection. The inspector was informed the pupils' kitchen would be refurbished as units were damaged and drawers missing. The two baths that have no privacy are not being used, and pupils confirmed this. The bathroom downstairs at the Forum would not be able to be accessed if there was an emergency due to the type of lock. The inspector highlighted this to the house parent at the time of inspection. John Attlee boarding house would benefit from redecoration, the inspector was informed that was due to happen in the new year as all the boarding houses are undergoing a maintenance and redecoration programme. All maintenance problems are reported in timely manner and swiftly dealt with. Cornock Taylor boarding house was in a good decorative state of repair.

Two pupils showed the inspector around main house boarding house. They informed the inspector that downstairs showers were either cold or scalding hot. The inspector tested the showers and no warm water came through. This was immediately brought to the head masters attention. The head master responded immediately putting in alternative plans for the boys to shower and has since informed the inspector the shower temperature has been rectified.

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):

19,28,30,31,33

The staff personnel records still did not contain all the relevant checks to safeguard pupils.

The supervision level of pupils is adequate, although the school have this as an area for development.

All staff now have regular performance management and supervision meetings.

The school has a new management team that are suitably qualified and experienced. The staff team have relevant qualifications for their roles.

The governing body regularly monitor and review the welfare of the pupils in the school.

EVIDENCE:

As previously stated in this report the personnel files of some staff including gap students did not contain all the relevant checks to safeguard the pupils. This has since been managed with new policy and procedures being put in place and the Department for Education and Skills being formally notified, whilst checks are being awaited.

Since the last inspection the school has increased their supervision levels of boarding pupils in the evenings and weekends, the inspector observed staff around the campus in the evening on inspection and all young people spoke of knowing how to contact a member of staff if needed. Outside the dining hall a list is clearly displayed for pupils informing them of named staff on duty and their whereabouts. Staff spoke of the deputy headmaster for pastoral care always being available. The head master informed the inspector that supervision levels were an area the school wishes to develop. The pocket calendar for pupils names staff supervising activities and weekend outings. The inspector was informed that the performance management and supervision meetings were now taking place regularly. Staff also informed the inspector that these meetings took place.

Since the last inspection the school has a new management structure, with a new head teacher, formerly the head of care, and two new deputy head masters, one being responsible for pastoral issues within the school. Parents spoke favourably of the new structure throughout questionnaires. The governor spoke of staff morale being good and some staff spoke of communication throughout the school improving. Although the deputy head of pastoral care does not have the recognised qualifications outlined in standard 31, he has a range of experience and qualifications, including attending child protection training. All staff are able to access professional development through the boarding school association. These include certificated courses on boarding welfare and issues affecting young people.

A member of the board of governors now visits the school on a half termly basis. These visits can either be announced or unannounced and welfare issues and documentation are looked at. The governor produces a written report for the school of their findings.

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

BEING HEALTHY	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
14	2
15	3

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

ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
12	4
13	3
22	3

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

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING	
<i>Standard No</i>	<i>Score</i>
16	X
21	X
23	X
24	2
25	3

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

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	RS14	Health protocol and risk assessments are in place in relation to administration of epi pen medication. Staff are appropriately trained to support a pupil and administer epi pen medication whilst awaiting the nurse.	30/01/06
2	RS24	The windows in Agora boarding house are risk assessed and any action needed taken.	30/12/05
3	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.	30/01/06
4	RS26	The school ensure that all boarding houses have the relevant weekly fire testing of equipment and record this in accordance with fire regulations and guidance. Previous recommendation timescale 30/09/04	09/12/05
5	RS27	The recruitment process includes all checks to safeguard pupils is in place prior to start starting work.	30/01/06

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