

Education and residential inspection summary for Stone Bay School

70 Stone Road, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 1EB

Inspection dates: 27 to 29 February 2024

Outcome

The education overall effectiveness judgement is: Good

The judgement for the experiences and progress of students in the residential provision is: Good

What is it like to attend this school?

- Pupils enjoy their time at Stone Bay. Older pupils who have attended for longer periods of time are very proud of their school and their friends. Those who are new are welcomed and settle well because of the care and support available. Parents and carers appreciate the carefully planned transition arrangements for children joining Reception.
- Pupils generally behave well here. Staff use positive strategies when pupils need additional support and are skilled at heading off serious problems before they arise. The student council told the lead inspector that they feel safe in school, although sometimes the noise made by others can be distracting. They found it difficult to identify anything that they want to improve. However, their list of positives was long, including horse riding, the school's animal and horticultural area, and swimming trips.
- Despite pupils' complex needs, staff expect the best from all. New curriculum pathways have been introduced. Aspirations have been raised. While the long-term impact of this is not yet clear, staff's work to prepare pupils for life after school is more focused. As a result, older pupils in particular have a greater sense of independence and both their confidence and their desire to achieve are growing.

The inspectors made **two recommendations** to help the school improve, linked to activity choices to support learning in classrooms and, on occasion, teachers not identifying precisely enough the small steps in learning they want pupils to make.

The school **meets all of the independent school standards**.

What is it like to stay at this school?

- Children make good progress. They are cared for by staff who are very passionate about supporting children to be as independent as they can and who are very nurturing in their approach. One child has continued to develop more verbal communication, having previously had none. Other children are enjoying a wider range of activities than they have been able to in the past, including in the community.
- Children have warm and trusting relationships with staff. These relationships are the foundation for the progress that children are making. Staff are skilled in understanding their individual, and sometimes nuanced, methods of communication. This enables children's voices to be heard, and their views and needs to be known. As a result, children improve their ability to communicate.
- Staff are guided to deliver good-quality care by plans that are clear, up to date and shared across settings. Leaders have ensured that these processes are more streamlined and effective since the last inspection.
- Children's health needs are managed sensitively by staff, who support children to successfully access the health services that they need. Some of the children who previously struggled with treatment have recently allowed their dentist to carry out important examinations. Staff are appropriately trained to support children with their medication; however, some medication was not appropriately labelled with the dates when it was opened.
- Professionals feel well informed and report good relationships with leaders. They have confidence in staff's ability to care for children and keep them safe from harm. Parents speak passionately about the care and nurture that their children receive. They are clear about the progress that their children have made, with one parent stating that their son was 'a different child'.
- The accommodation for children has had some significant redecoration since the last inspection, and leaders have sought the views of children to support with this process. Children can personalise their own bedrooms, and there are plans to further enhance this by asking children to choose some of the colour schemes in their bedrooms. However, some areas are quite worn, and some furnishings need replacing. Managers have already developed plans for this work to be carried out.
- When children come to join the residential provision, this is carefully planned in partnership with families and social workers. Children are prepared appropriately, according to their individual needs. When children leave the provision, this is equally well managed, and staff work with children and their new setting to help make sure that the move is successful.

The school **meets all the national minimum standards**.

The inspectors made **four recommendations** to help the school improve, relating to physical interventions, medication, and ensuring that safeguarding policies identify arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable adults.

- View the full inspection report for the education provision:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/25/119056>
- View the full inspection report for the residential provision:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/10/Sc023693>



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