

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Description

Stanbridge Earls is an independent, co-educational boarding School which educates pupils in the age range 10 – 19. Current pupils number 195, of whom 35 are day pupils and 28% possess Statements of Special Educational Needs. Situated on a 52 acre rural site, 2 miles north of Romsey in Hampshire, Stanbridge Earls School occupies an ancient (Grade 2* listed) manor house and surrounding buildings which were previously central to a much larger estate.

Governance

The School is governed by a volunteer Governing Body of approximately 15 individuals who are elected by that Body. All the Governors have a great interest in the School and bring with them a range of experiences from education, business, finance, law and public service. The Governing Body formally meets with the Headmaster, as a 'Council', once a term, receiving reports from the Governors' Education, Finance and Executive Committees which also meet on a termly basis. The Executive Committee includes members of the Senior Management Team (SMT). This committee checks and carries out some of the duties of inspection required by Ofsted since April 2007. Governors are welcome to the School at other times and will support Open Days and other key events, as appropriate. The School is a member of the Governing Body's Association (GBA). The Governors will co-opt members of staff etc. as and when appropriate.

The School is registered with the Charities Commission.

Management

The School is managed by the SMT comprising the Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster – Pastoral who is Head of Care and is also the Designated Person for Child Protection, Deputy Headmaster – Curriculum, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), Bursar and Facilities Manager. The SMT meet on a weekly basis.

The School is a member of the Boarding Schools' Association (BSA), it is a CReSTeD (SPS) School, is a Corporate Supporting Member of the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) and the Headmaster is a member of The Society of Headmasters and Headmistresses of Independent Schools (SHMIS).

History

The School was established in 1952 as a charitable trust which educated pupils for whom the 'normal' mainstream boarding independent School may not have been appropriate, with the emphasis on developing the pupils' artistic/creative talents whilst providing a normal academic education. Many of the School's earliest pupils undoubtedly had undiagnosed specific learning difficulties and/or were fragile and vulnerable children who required a level of support and care found in a small and specialist boarding School. The School continues to take a number of pupils who have not coped in mainstream education due to bullying etc.; these pupils thrive.

Specialisation in Special Educational Needs (SEN)

In 1966, the School established its own 1:1 literacy unit, called the Accelerated Learning Centre (ALC). In 1980 an equivalent unit for maths skills, the Maths Learning Centre (MLC) was set up to support children with learning difficulties, and in the intervening years the School has developed an international reputation for educating pupils with a range of difficulties including Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia and mild Asperger's Syndrome. In general these difficulties can be broadly described within the category of Development and Hyperkinetic Disorders. The School can help some pupils with Speech & Language Difficulties but it does not provide a 'Whole School' approach to language difficulty. The School can also help some pupils with a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) where it is professionally believed that the School can help without the education of others being adversely affected. The School's Admissions Policy places a clear emphasis on thorough investigation of all documentation (Educational Psychologist's reports etc.), which will highlight a pupil's difficulties prior to a place being offered. The School will also, occasionally, accept pupils with medical problems,

physical disabilities, or those who are fragile and vulnerable and who require considerable support and encouragement in a nurturing environment. The School does not accept children who are diagnosed as primarily being Emotionally & Behaviourally Disturbed (EBD), present significant behavioural problems, have a diagnosis of psychiatric difficulties, have Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) or have exceptionally low Intelligence Quotients etc. In each case the School must believe that it can meet the needs of the individual without the education of the majority being put at risk. See the separate Admissions Policy for further information.

There is a strong ethos of praise within the School reinforcing the School motto 'Building confidence; achieving success'. Staff are encouraged to recognise and celebrate the achievements of its pupils, at all levels. Prime aims of all staff are to develop pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. There is a system of House points, Copies, Commendations and Certificates of Excellence, all of which contribute towards a termly Inter-House competition for the Moxon Cup. There is also an Inter-House sports competition and Colours, badges and ties are awarded for excellence in sport, academics, music, drama etc.

Discipline

Discipline can best be described as being 'firm and fair'. The School is a tolerant and ultimately forgiving community but it recognises that pupils must know where the boundaries of acceptable behaviour lie and what the consequences of poor behaviour are. A Rewards and Sanctions policy exists and pupils are regularly reminded of its contents. Bullying, smoking, alcohol and drug use, theft etc. are all regarded as serious breaches of the School Code of Conduct and the School will always respond firmly and fairly in such cases.

There is a well documented and regularly reviewed Complaints Procedure, made known to pupils, parents and staff alike.

Teaching Staff

All teaching staff have appropriate professional qualifications and undergo specialist British Dyslexia Association training. They are responsible to their Heads of Department, the Deputy Headmaster – Curriculum and ultimately the Headmaster. All 1:1 teachers in the Accelerated Learning Centre and the Maths Learning Centre have appropriate qualifications to support pupils with Specific Learning Difficulties. All carers are initially responsible to the Deputy Headmaster – Pastoral, as Head of Care and Designated Person responsible for Child Protection. Pastoral staff are expected to gain certification through the Boarding Schools Association professional development scheme.

The School does not consider itself to be a 'Special' School; rather it sees itself as a 'Specialist' School, providing a mainstream boarding education for children with specific learning difficulties. The School does not provide 24 hour-a-day supervision typical of most 'Special' Schools. Instead pupils enjoy an acceptable degree of freedom and trust to enjoy the grounds, the supervision being discreet and at times distant. Whilst the numbers of girls are fewer than the numbers of boys, the female: male staff ratio is high and the School can justifiably claim to be truly co-educational with equality of opportunity for all pupils.

There are four formal Staff meetings per term at which pupils are discussed and ideas exchanged.

Curriculum

The School seeks to provide an appropriate education through the boarding experience. Classes are small, normally numbering between 6 – 12 pupils per set. The number of teaching staff is high, currently numbering 60 and they are supported in class by Learning Support Assistants, some of whom are experienced and qualified adults and others who are GAP students on a year's secondment to the School. Most pupils will follow an appropriate and differentiated curriculum to GCSE level, sitting 6 – 7 GCSE's in year 11. In the Sixth Form a programme of GCSE re-sits, vGCSE, Applied and traditional A-level subjects are available. At both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form the more academic subjects sit comfortably beside the more practical, creative and vocational subjects. Art, Cisco, Design Technology, Information Technology, Leisure and Tourism and the Performing Arts, in particular, are popular areas of both study and leisure for pupils. It is the aim of the School to

provide a rich and varied education that will prepare its pupils for life beyond Stanbridge Earls in Further or Higher Education and in the workplace, by developing individual talents and enthusiasms, leadership potential, teamwork, confidence and self-esteem. Underlying all that the School does is the ethos of recognising and developing each pupil's potential to the full.

Heads of Department (HoDs) meet twice per term; departments meet formally as called by the HoD.

Extra-curricular Activities

The School provides a rich and extensive extra-curricular programme for its pupils. Through sport, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, leadership and life skills training, pupils are encouraged to accept positions of responsibility and authority within the School community. The development of independence and life skills are central elements to the ethos of the School, especially in the Sixth Form. The School also provides a range of adventurous activities in term time and in the vacations including team sports, skiing, snowboarding and World Challenge Expeditions; further developing self-confidence and independence.

In addition to an academic education the School seeks to provide a varied programme of supervised lunchtime, post-School and evening activities for its pupils. The boarding environment provides an opportunity for children to learn to live together, to develop their social skills and abilities to cooperate and develop an understanding of what it is to be part of a community; developing a sense of spirit.

Parental Involvement

Parents are invited to Parent/Teacher meetings twice a year and receive two full written reports a year. Parents are also invited to the campus whenever they wish to visit and can share their concerns directly with their pupil's Housemaster/mistress, Headmaster (or any other member of staff) if they so wish. Special meetings can be called, as and when necessary, to discuss individual pupil's needs. Each Statemented pupil has an Annual Review meeting to which key staff, parents, Local Authority (LA) representatives, Connexions Advisers etc. are invited.

The Friends of Stanbridge (Friends) Parents' Association is recently reinvigorated and seeking to increase its involvement in School life.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is the prime responsibility of the Deputy Headmaster – Pastoral, who is 'Head of Care'.

The School operates a multi-layered pastoral system that supports and nurtures the pupils in its care. Firstly, each pupil has a Housemaster/mistress whose prime responsibilities are for the pastoral and academic development and progress of his/her charges. The Housemaster/mistress resides on campus, knows each member of their House well and provides support and encouragement as required. Working closely with parents, guardians and LAs, the Housemaster/mistress monitors many aspects of a pupil's life at the School (discipline, friendship groups, homesickness, work, involvement in activities etc.). Regular communication with parents is essential if a pupil's placement is to be successful. Each Housemaster/mistress is supported by five House Tutors who meet their tutees on a daily basis. In addition to tutorials all pupils attend weekly House meetings, a weekly Chapel service and a whole School assembly.

Housemaster/mistresses, the Head of Girls Boarding and one of the medical staff meet with the Deputy Headmaster – Pastoral on a fortnightly basis.

Year 7 & 8 boys live in the Agora House. Year 9 boys live in B Annexe and the Cornock-Taylor's House, Year 10 boys in the Forum House, Years 11 & 14 boys live in the John Attlee House and Sixth Form boys live in New House. The girls live in Goulds House with the Head of Girls Boarding. In each case boarding accommodation is supervised by a resident Houseparent, a resident Assistant Houseparent and a non-resident daytime Matron. The House Staff, responsible to the Head of Care, are primarily responsible for the day to day

running of their boarding houses (laundry, domestic arrangements etc.) and the care of their pupils. The School does not under-estimate the vital role of the House Staff in the pastoral care of the pupils.

Houseparent meetings chaired by the Deputy Headmaster – Pastoral are held fortnightly. The majority of care staff follow BSA courses, mentored by Mrs Visser. However, the care staff also meet frequently on an informal basis. All care staff are subject to annual appraisal procedures.

There is a termly Support Staff (cleaners, maintenance, caterers, gardeners etc.) meeting with the Headmaster.

Medical support is provided by three qualified nurses who run surgeries every day, whilst the School's Medical Officer runs one weekly surgery at School. Girls are given the option of seeing a female doctor; all pupils have access to the practice in Romsey and other medical support as required. All three medical staff live within twenty minutes of the school. There is always a qualified nurse on call and all House Staff have First Aid qualifications. The School's Counsellor visits the Campus three days a week and is available to provide support to both pupils and staff alike. The School provides two Independent Listeners, one male (the Reverend Brian Taphouse) and one female (Mrs Jan Mills).

Spiritual Dimension

Stanbridge Earls is a School run on broad Christian principles. Daily year group assemblies with the Headmaster and the weekly Sunday service are of a Christian nature but pupils of all religions are encouraged to attend in the belief that the assemblies and service have something to offer all pupils. The School regards itself as being a very tolerant and supportive multi-cultural environment. It celebrates cultural diversity and efforts are made, when requested, to permit pupils to follow their own faiths. The School has strong links with the Romsey Abbey and the Reverend Brian Taphouse.

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This Statement of Purpose is available through our website or can be provided in hard copy or on audio tape by request. It is reviewed and updated annually, and is modified as necessary in order to ensure that it reasonably reflects the actual current boarding and care practice at Stanbridge Earls School.

R J Bailey
May 2011