

# Moor House School & College

Moor House School, Mill Lane, OXTED, Surrey, RH8 9AQ

## Inspection dates

30/11/2015 to 02/12/2015

### **The overall experiences and progress of children and young people is Outstanding.**

The quality of care and support is outstanding.

How well children and young people are protected is outstanding.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers is outstanding.

## Summary of key findings

### **The residential provision is outstanding because**

- Residential pupils thrive at this school and college and thoroughly enjoy living in the residential provision.
- Close collaborative working involving multi-disciplinary teams based on site ensures that each residential pupil has a detailed and bespoke package of care and support.
- An ingrained culture of safeguarding and promoting each residential pupil's safety ensures that their wellbeing is promoted and nurtured to an excellent standard.
- Robust monitoring by both internal managers and external visitors ensures that the high standards of conduct and care are rigorously assessed.
- The residential staff and their colleagues who work in the school and college are ambitious for the residential pupils and assist them to develop to their potential.
- All members of staff reflect on their practice and welcome feedback, training and appraisal as a means to improve their performance and quality of care.
- One minor shortfall identified during this inspection was related to an administrative error and has had no impact on the wellbeing of the residential pupils.

## **Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools**

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the central record of sanctions is consistently completed. (NMS 13.8)

## Information about this inspection

The school was given four hours' notice of the inspection. Meetings were held with the Head Teacher, Head of Residential Care, residential staff, therapists, health care staff, catering staff, a governor, residential pupils, health and safety staff and staff in charge of recruitment. Two evenings were spent in the residential accommodation observing staff and residential pupils' interactions and activities. The inspectors joined boarders for three meals in different parts of the school and college.

## Inspection team

Paul Taylor

Lead social care inspector

Kevin Whatley

Social care inspector

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

Moor House School and College is a co-educational, non-maintained residential and day special school. There are currently 120 pupils on roll between the ages of 7 and 19, of which 66 are residential pupils. All pupils have speech and language impairments of varying severity. Accommodation is provided in three boarding areas for school residential pupils and three separate areas for college residential pupils who are over 16 years of age.

## Inspection Judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Progress for residential pupils, especially when bearing in mind their starting points, is impressive. They develop their confidence, understanding and ability to communicate to an excellent standard and this lends itself to enhancing their academic progress. One parent wrote 'without this specialist school experience he would not be looking forward to going to university'.

Progress is evidenced in detail by the different disciplines who work closely and collaboratively. For example, videos are made at different points in the residential pupils' time at the school and college and these show an excellent story of how their communication skills and confidence develops over time.

Feedback from parents and residential pupils is overwhelmingly positive and gives a very clear impression of how the school has had a life changing impact. 'Could not have achieved so much without all the love, care and support' is a comment from one parent. Another reported 'the integrated package of care that our son has received has enabled him to thrive in Moor House School. His team have shown excellent understanding of his complex needs and have targeted areas to enable him to make progress.'

Detailed and robust monitoring of practice, records and staff performance instils a culture of excellence and reflection, with a view to improving outcomes for residential pupils. Use of research and implementation of findings in areas such as e-safety ensures that young people are protected and supported conscientiously and with vigour. Rigorous self-assessment and ambitious development plans ensure that there is no complacency and a constant drive to improve.

The staff team is highly committed, well trained and motivated to provide excellent care. All members of staff receive regular supervision and appraisals which ensure they are competent and able in their roles.

Leaders and managers liaise closely with stakeholders. On occasion they have strongly advocated on behalf of residential pupils and their families with external agencies to ensure that they receive the support they need, especially in the community. There is a passion to support the residential pupils and to improve their life chances and success.

All National Minimum Standards are met or exceeded.

### The quality of care and support

Detailed multi-disciplinary assessments mean that each residential pupil has a bespoke high quality plan which reflects their individual needs. These plans inform practice so that each residential pupil is treated as a unique and valued member of the community. Close collaborative reviews by the multi-disciplinary team means that residential pupils' needs are constantly considered. As a result of the high standard of insight and support provided by the staff, residential pupils are able to develop their resilience, social skills and confidence to an excellent degree.

The residential areas are of a high standard and residential pupils are proud of their living spaces. They personalise their living areas and this encourages them to invest in their

environment and to respect where they live. All areas are comfortable and very well maintained.

Residential pupils take part in a wide range of enriching activities. Emphasis is placed on activities which enable them to develop their social and communication skills, this broadens their friendship circles. 'There's lots to do and I love being with my friends' said one residential pupil. Facilities on site include a swimming pool and large sports hall, these are particularly popular and well used. This supports the emphasis on healthy living, developing co-ordination and confidence.

Residential pupils' health is promoted to an excellent standard. Any specific medical needs are known and met and members of staff receive additional training if required. For example, if residential pupils need additional support in managing conditions such as diabetes and epilepsy. Residential pupils' emotional health and wellbeing is given high priority and supported to a particularly high standard. Specialist and readily available support from therapists based on site is provided where needed. This ensures that residential pupils are cared for in a nurturing environment where they can reflect upon their emotions and experiences.

Multi-disciplinary meetings involving care, education and therapy staff examine and consider the progress of every residential pupil. As a result thorough plans of support are prepared and delivered in a seamless fashion. All residential pupils are aware of their plans and targets and understand what they are working towards and why. Success in achieving these targets is celebrated by everyone in the community.

Unanimous positive feedback regarding the quality of food was received from residential pupils during the inspection. They enjoy the food on offer, which is healthy and varied. Special dietary needs are catered for, as are specific cultural preferences. Meals are well-ordered, sociable occasions with residential pupils seen to be enjoying each other's company and being helpful and considerate.

Residential pupils' views are valued and promoted. They have a number of avenues they can use to voice their opinions and feelings. These include regular sessions with key workers, meeting with independent visitors and being able to have their peers speak for them in forums for this purpose. 'It's like being a member of parliament' said a residential pupil who is a member of the residential pupil forum 'Rez Sez'. As a result of their input, the residential pupils are able to influence areas such as menus, décor and activity choice. 'Yes they do listen to me, I can talk to anyone really' said a residential pupil.

Close contact is kept with residential pupils' parents and this ensures that they informed about anything relating to their child. Residential pupils' report that they can contact home without any difficulties using their mobile telephones or landlines if needed.

## **How well children and young people are protected**

Residential pupils are unanimous in reporting that they feel safe living at the school.

Safeguarding permeates the culture with residential pupils having their well-being promoted to the highest levels. Approaches to child protection are robust and far reaching, thus ensuring not only the safety of residential pupils but also challenging the actions of other agencies to fulfil their statutory duties. In a number of instances this has led to greater urgency in providing external support and intervention. Clear lines of responsibility are in place which include appropriate involvement and scrutiny from Governors. Staff are well trained to recognise concerns, this ensures the anxieties, fears or disclosures of residential pupils are taken seriously and acted upon. Effective working with local safeguarding children's boards and the police

ensures matters are addressed in line with agreed local and national protocols.

The way in which the school promotes safeguarding awareness is excellent. All staff are trained in child protection irrespective of their roles. This approach has been extended to include construction managers in charge of building the new residential provision. Such a move is above and beyond what is required and is further evidence of how seriously the well-being of residential pupils is considered.

No residential pupils mentioned bullying as a concern. Mutual respect and understanding is a central guiding principle of the school. Residential pupils knew who they can contact should they have concerns. There are posters displaying details of internal and external independent advocacy services in numerous locations around the residential areas and school and college. The atmosphere is entirely inclusive with residential pupils having considerable regard and understanding for each other. The level of genuine appreciation and kindness shone out across the school. For instance, residential pupils swiftly helping to clean up water after it was accidentally knocked over during lunch and had spilled on another young person. The response was unprompted and is indicative of the ethos of the school and college.

No residential pupils have gone missing since the last inspection. Clear arrangements are in place should this occur and these are robust. Residential pupils are not held back from developing their levels of independence. The school and college balance the need to keep residential pupils safe and help them learn how to become safer in public. A rigorous assessment process supports residential pupils to take appropriate risks to experience their local surroundings alongside acknowledging their vulnerabilities. This approach has enabled them to make significant strides in improving their awareness of potential risks and in doing so gain invaluable independence skills.

Residential pupils are helped to improve their ability to keep safe. For example, by engaging in internet safety awareness and discussing the risks of exploitation. This stimulates healthy debate, brings difficult topics to the fore and allows residential pupils to explore the realities of modern day life in a safe, supportive and open way. As a consequence they are more able to recognise inappropriate relationships, potential dangers and become safer.

Residential pupils benefit considerably from living in an environment where appropriately high standards of behaviour are promoted as the norm. Comprehensive care plans assess areas of concern and guide staff in how meet their complex needs. These are developed with expert input and are reviewed as part of the schools multi-disciplinary approach. The strength of relationships between staff and residential pupils enable them to explore their feelings, attitudes and behaviours safely. This results in significant improvements in their coping mechanisms. The use of restraint is extremely rare and sanctions seldom imposed. Behaviour seen during the inspection was exemplary.

The health and safety of residential pupils is paramount. Expert advice and guidance informs risk assessment and planning. A conscientious programme of servicing and repair ensures equipment and appliances are maintained in safe working order. The approach to fire safety is comprehensive and involves gaining regular advice and assessment from experts. Residential pupils know what to do in the event of a fire and evacuation drills take place regularly. All residential pupils who need additional support in the event of an evacuation have a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) and this is known to staff and the residential pupil.

### **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. It is strongly led by

a very experienced management team who embed a culture of high standards and ambition for residential pupils to succeed. Close collaborative working ensures that all residential pupils make great strides. A strong sense of community and shared ethos means that staff are consistent in providing excellent support.

All members of staff have their performance appraised and receive regular supervision. This process is supported by varied training which enables staff to develop skills which benefit all residential pupils. The staff team is highly committed and motivated. Reflection on practice is an embedded part of the culture. Any complaint, concern or incident is examined thoroughly in an open and transparent manner and learning from these is valued and welcomed.

There is close scrutiny of practice and examination of whether residential pupils are making progress. Detailed individual analysis and review of each residential pupil means that their welfare is constantly held in mind. Any issues are swiftly and effectively addressed. As a result, residential pupils thrive.

Oversight from senior members of staff is underpinned by rigorous monitoring from an independent visitor and school governors. Thorough reports by the independent visitor include the views of all stakeholders such as residential pupils and parents. They also outline any shortcomings and areas to be addressed. The Head of Residential Care then completes action plans which show how shortfalls have been rectified. This ensures thorough examination of practice and prompt accountability and action by senior members of staff.

The management team has a clear development plan in place for the residential provision and this is scrutinised by Governors to make sure that targets identified in the plan, such as training in the 'Prevent' duty, have been achieved.

Records are extensive and detailed, they are completed to a high standard. One minor administrative error meant that the central record of sanctions had not been completed consistently. However, all the necessary information was held elsewhere and there was no impact on residential pupils' wellbeing.

Leaders communicate closely with any stakeholders including placing authorities, safeguarding agencies, mental health services and parents. This ensures a fluid exchange of information and often means that the school is driving wider services to provide the support needed when residential pupils are at home.

All National Minimum Standards are met or exceeded.

## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and residential pupils are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

| Judgement            | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Outstanding          | A school where the experiences and progress of children and residential pupils consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and residential pupils are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced. |
| Good                 | A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and residential pupils are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Requires improvement | A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and residential pupils's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and residential pupils are not yet good.                                                                                                                           |
| Inadequate           | A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and residential pupils are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.                                                                                                                                           |

## School details

|                                            |          |
|--------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 125454   |
| <b>Social care unique reference number</b> | SC013926 |
| <b>DfE registration number</b>             | 936/7007 |

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

|                                             |                            |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                       | Residential Special School |
| <b>Number of boarders on roll</b>           | 120                        |
| <b>Gender of boarders</b>                   | Mixed                      |
| <b>Age range of boarders</b>                | 7 to19                     |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                          | Helen Middleton            |
| <b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b> | 15/10/2014                 |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                     | 01883 712271               |
| <b>Email address</b>                        | info@moorhouseschool.co.uk |

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