

# Littlegreen School

Inspection report for residential special school

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

## The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## **Service information**

### **Brief description of the service**

Littlegreen School is a West Sussex County Council Local Education Authority Special School for boys with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Littlegreen School provides negotiated, flexible boarding provision in order to support and promote the boys' social and emotional growth and the school's behaviour management programme. Boarding is provided in the form of flexible 'sleep-overs'. Full time boarding is not provided. Littlegreen School is situated in the rural area north of the village of Compton, approximately 11 miles from Chichester. The school is set in extensive and superb grounds, providing a vast amount of space for play and education purposes. The main school building is a large country mansion. Some of the facilities are housed in out buildings. The boarding accommodation is on the first floor of the main school building.

### **Summary**

This key announced inspection took place over a period of two days. It was conducted by one inspector. Prior to this inspection, a pre inspection meeting took place with the headteacher and one of the assistant headteachers. The inspector took the opportunity of meeting with groups of boys including the school council and observing a variety of activities and lessons. In addition, interviews took place with a range of staff. A tour of the premises was carried out and a wide selection of records were examined. The outcomes of this inspection demonstrates the strengths of this school for a number of reasons. The boys benefit from the quality of the school curriculum. The boys speak extremely highly about the quality of the staff team and the levels of support they receive at all times. The approach to providing flexible boarding enables the boys to integrate with peers and develop the skills which are fundamental to their learning. This includes social skills and independence skills. The boys thrive as a result of the provision of extra curricular activities available to them. This include college based courses and other community based activities. The school's behavioural management system is inclusive. These systems include preventative strategies which are implemented effectively. Staff are highly skilled and trained in managing complex matters in a nurturing and well supervised environment. Leadership and management is outstanding. The boys and staff are fully supported with input from a well qualified and experienced senior management team and an established governing body. Parents and external professionals who completed surveys gave very clear examples of how the school does well in meeting the needs of individual boys.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

There were no recommendations made at the previous inspection. The school is very proactive with regards to reviewing outcomes for the boys. Business management and monitoring systems are effective.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is outstanding.

The school actively promotes the health needs of each boy. This is achieved in a number of ways and includes effective communication with parents and significant others such as community nurses assigned to the school and external professional bodies such as CAMHS

(child and adolescent mental health services). The boys benefit from the roles and expertise of key staff who provide an invaluable service for keeping abreast of current practice and addressing individual needs. This includes input from a school governor who is also a practising GP, the school's pastoral manager, an assistant headteacher with pastoral responsibilities and the school nurse who works part time and does sleeping in duties. Health related records are maintained to a very high standard. There are robust procedures in place for ensuring that health policies and procedures are reviewed periodically by the governing body. A recent review of the policies and procedures included the input from an independent professional. The methodology used for engaging the boys and consulting with their parents on health topics is highly innovative. For example, specific health topics are incorporated in the PSHE (personal social and health education) curriculum. Plans are in place for community nurses to provide an informal clinic with parents at coffee mornings. Opportunities are available for selected boys to attend first aid training. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid. Procedures are in place for the safe receipt, storage, administration and recording of medications. Representatives of the school council are of the opinion that they are doing so well as a result of the school understanding their individual needs. This includes their general health and well being. All boys enjoy a very healthy and nutritious diet. Meals are freshly prepared. The quality of meals are balanced, well presented and appetising. As a result of listening to the boys a weekly menu is now displayed. Meals are served in very pleasant surroundings. Young people benefit from the supervision and interaction with staff during meal times. One parent indicated via a survey that the school does exceptionally well with regards to the quality of food and providing for individual diets. The opportunities for engaging pupils in lessons on food technology are exemplary. For example, the boys take part in one-off specialist food and cookery lessons.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is outstanding.

There are effective procedures in place for ensuring that the boys' privacy is respected at all times. For example, two single bedrooms are provided for boys who do not wish to share a twin room. In addition, parental consent is obtained for boys to share a twin bedroom. The boys are excited about the provision of dressing gowns purchased by the school. The school is proactive with regards to improving on existing facilities for maximising privacy in all aspects of school life. Currently, a changing area is being created near the lockers on the ground floor. This will benefit the boys at various times throughout the day particularly when taking part in sporting activities. Policies and procedures relating to privacy and confidentiality are kept up to date. There are very creative ways in place for ensuring that boys know how to make a complaint or express their views. This includes the accessibility of information leaflets titled 'formal right to complain' and 'I'm speaking up for myself'. All boys have access to a free telephone service and childline phone cards. Parents who completed surveys confirmed that they are aware of the complaints procedure but pleased with the quality of the service provided by the school. Boys advise that they are fully aware of the procedures to be followed if they are unhappy or have concerns. This includes the use of complaints forms which are accessible throughout the school. The boys are safeguarded and protected through the effective implementation of child protection policies and procedures. There are robust procedures in place for ensuring that all concerns relating to the care and welfare of boys are managed promptly and efficiently. This includes matters which are not related to the school. The school has been awarded healthy status in recognition for work undertaken to protect the boys. Records relating to the care and protection of the boys are maintained to an exceptional level, for example, the quality and implementation of policies and procedural guidance are subject to vigorous scrutiny. Records

relating to individual boys are written to a high standard and stored confidentially. Staff are kept abreast of current practice through regular training. The implementation of safe caring procedures are well managed by two senior staff who are designated child protection officers. All boys benefit from the high levels of supervision and preventative measures in place to ensure their safety at all times. Strategies are in place for ensuring that all boys are fully aware of the schools anti-bullying policy. Excellent opportunities are in place for raising awareness with the boys on the consequences of bullying. Members of the school council are very aware of their role and in setting examples with other boys regarding acceptable behaviours. The school does exceedingly well in providing a safe and nurturing environment. Recent projects include awareness on cyber bullying and creating 'zoned' areas in the playground. The school's 'no blame' approach is successful with the boys. The efficiency of the school's behavioural management programme is unquestionable with regards to promoting positive behaviours. The school has won a prize in the county-wide safer place competition for the third consecutive year. This is indicative of the quality of work undertaken in the school as a whole to maintain a safe environment. The high staff ratios ensures that all boys are accounted for at all times. Procedures are in place in the event of a boy being absent without authority. Currently, this is not an issue. The quality of the behavioural management system is exceptional. The whole school approach towards supporting individuals is consistent and wide ranging. All boys are supported and respected as individuals. As a result, they respond positively towards their individual development plans. The boys are delighted with the support they receive. For example, one boy is of the opinion that the school has helped him to develop the confidence and social skills which now enables him to participate more fully in the life of the school. Several boys are of the opinion that this school has helped them to work through behaviours because their needs are understood. Parents are extremely positive about behavioural management systems. For example, one parent indicates that the school has enabled their son to grow from a sad and lonely boy into a happy, confident and most well behaved boy. The boys have great respect for the rewards and stars system. They also believe that sanctions are fair. Young people, staff and visitors are safeguarded through robust health and safety procedures. Fire safety procedures are stringent. This includes a range of fire drills, routine servicing of fire appliances and a comprehensive fire risk assessment. General health and safety risk assessment are kept up to date for ensuring the safety of staff and the boys at all times. Health and safety records are maintained to an exceptionally high standard. This includes evidence of tests and checks for key procedures such as water safety, the swimming pool, electrical appliances and records required under COSHH (control of substances hazardous to health). There are two staff responsible for the day to day maintenance of the school. Suitable health and safety training is provided for both staff. Recruitment procedures are thorough. These procedures are enhanced by ensuring that staff attend updated training on recruitment and selection procedures. The staff team is well established and stable. Staff vacancies are rare. The boys benefit immensely from the continuity of the staff team.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

The school does exceedingly well in maintaining an inclusive approach to supporting the boys' education. Teaching and care staff have dual roles for working with the boys at different times of the day including the two boarding evenings. Evening activities are purposeful and wide ranging. The curriculum is effective to the boys' learning and well being. For example, one boy speaks happily about the activities provided by the school which helps to develop his social skills. Another boy describes the staff team as being brilliant because care and teaching staff

are consistent in their approach and support. The boys appreciate the benefits of the homework club which is available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. This activity is very well resourced with at least three staff present for supporting the boys. Members of the care staff are actively involved in the boys' education. This promotes outstanding results with regards to consistency. In particular for those boys who may require higher levels of support. The school operates two 'Additional Needs Support Units' during the day. Care staff provide assistance in these and other classrooms when required. All boys are given individualised support in line with their assessed needs and wishes. The quality of support is unquestionable. The boys who make up the school council are proud of their achievements. They describe the school as being 'the best' for enabling them to develop the skills required to be elected for the school council. The school council is confident that they are listened to. They believe that the school is well managed. They also have strong views about the size of each class which provides a proper base for individual learning. There are excellent examples of how the school provides opportunities for the boys to learn from each other. For example, an established buddy scheme is in place, results of the stars and awards system is displayed, school assemblies and circle time are inclusive and engaging and robust reporting systems ensures that all staff are familiar with the welfare and needs of all boys on a daily basis. Professional levels of support includes the effectiveness of communication between the school and parents via the pastoral manager and links with community based professionals.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

The school continues to promote excellent opportunities for consulting with the boys. The school council is respected for their input and representation of the whole school. A school council policy is in place. Minutes of school council meetings are comprehensive. The boys are pleased with changes made to the environment as a result of being listened to. For example, a section of the garden is now known as the 'quiet garden' for peaceful break time conversations. This area is fitted with seating and a table. There are very creative methods in place for encouraging boys to make a positive contribution and taking part in activities which contributes to their well being and learning. Future plans include opportunities for the boys to become more involved in community based activities. The implementation of a booklet titled 'An introduction to Little Green School' has greatly enhanced the admissions process. The booklet is interactive. It includes key features about the school and key information about the individual boy. This is an excellent example of how the school promotes inclusion and involvement of the boys during their initial stages of settling in. Transitional work undertaken with individual boys with regards to boarding is exceptional. Each plan is tailored to suit the needs of the boy and his family. The process for staying away from home is carefully planned and implemented at a pace which is suitable for each boy. The work undertaken to engage the boys in independence training and preparing them for moving on is impressive. This includes involvement in college integration programmes, travelling training, safety awareness, health and safety training such as fire safety and cookery courses at a local college. Significant work is undertaken with key professionals such as connexions. Contact and support is maintained with some boys once they have moved on. The boys' files are very well maintained. Dedicated care plans are not in place as boarding is extremely flexible and ad hoc. However, sufficient information is obtained and recorded in relevant documents to ensure that the boys' needs are met on overnight stays. An interactive electronic communication system is well maintained for ensuring that any important information relating to individual boys is known throughout the school. There are robust systems in place for maintaining contact with parents. The pastoral manager continues to provide a

strong link between the school and parents. One parent who completed a survey describes the communication between the school and home as being excellent. Opportunities are available for boys to make contact with parents during overnight stays. However this is rare. The boys are always keen to participate in community and charitable events. There are strong links with a school in France. Yearly visits alternate between each of the schools. The boys enjoy trips to local places of interest. They are also encouraged to learn about key festivals and international events including those identified through a multi faith calendar.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

The boys thoroughly enjoy the style of boarding which is extremely flexible and unique. This provision is offered twice weekly. This provision is highly valued by the boys and their parents. The booking system gives the boys a sense of ownership and encourages purposeful decision making. The boys feel safe and protected as a result of the flexible approach to boarding. For example, boys can change their minds after making a booking. However, this is rare. A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to improve the boarding facilities. This includes complete redecoration, replacement floor coverings, curtains, furniture, replacement beds and bedding. Bedrooms are more homely in appearance and well presented. Sufficient showers, baths and toilets are provided. Other parts of the school have been upgraded to improve facilities for learning. Refurbishment work is still underway. All parts of the school are well maintained and cleaned to a very high standard. Restricted areas are clearly marked. For example, areas where maintenance work is taking place. Outdoor space and provisions are a contributing factor to the boys' learning and well being. The play ground situated to the rear of the school is spacious, well supervised and provides ample space for ball games and general exercise. The boys are delighted with the new friendship chair and the prospect of having a dedicated conservation area. This project will be led by a team of volunteers from a local bank.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

An up to date school prospectus is in place. This clearly sets out the school's principles and objectives. The information booklet given to boys on admission to the school is very well designed. It contains key information about the school, details of key procedures, important contact details and personal information. The booklet is interactive which enables each boy to make recordings of key matters as they progress through the book. The school is adequately staffed at all times. The high staff ratios and deployment of staff ensures that relationships with the boys are not disrupted. A night time register is maintained. This is always accessible for emergency procedures. Staff are described by an external professional as being enthusiastic and exceptional. All staff are familiar with their roles and responsibilities. These are demonstrated professionally at all times. The staff team includes waking night staff, sleeping in staff and at least three staff on duty during the evenings. There are excellent examples of how boys are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the boys' welfare. For example, all care staff take an active role in all the school's cross federation continuing professional development programme. There are effective management systems in place for ensuring that all staff receive formal supervisions and appraisals of their work. There are suitable arrangements in place for professional supervision of the headteacher who also has overall responsibility for managing the boarding service. The boys are supported and cared



for by a team of competent and experienced staff. All care staff have achieved the National Vocational Qualification level three in the caring for children and young people. In addition, staff have achieved other relevant professional qualifications. An extensive training programme is in place for all members of the staff team. The headteacher is suitably qualified with substantial experience. The school is managed to an exceptionally high standard. The senior management team has delegated duties with regards to curriculum management, behavioural management and pastoral care. All members of the senior management team have considerable experience of working with young people in education and care settings. There are robust business management and internal monitoring systems in place. Current systems takes into account outcomes for the boys, identifying and meeting individual targets, staff management and performance, efficiency of records and communication systems, premises and work undertaken with other schools with whom this school is federated. The school's development plan is comprehensive. This school is federated with St Anthony's School, Chichester. Both schools are monitored by a federated governing body. The governing body is well structured and consists of two resource committees serving each of the schools. The full governing body meets every term. A new federation council is now in place whose primary role is to focus on the strategic element of the federation. Members of the governing body are elected for carrying out visits as required under National Minimum Standard 33.2. A revised timetable is in place for ensuring that formal visits are carried out and recorded at least every half term. Reports indicate that boys are consulted on each visit and key records are examined. Supporting guidance for the governing body includes a governors' school visits policy, instrument of government, procedural guidance on governors' visits to schools and a confidential reporting policy.

## What must be done to secure future improvement?

### Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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### Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):