

# 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 a 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' which is often determined by the boys. 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**

At this announced full inspection, all key standards were inspected. This is an outstanding service which is very resourceful and forward thinking in all respects. The resources for boys with autism and coexisting conditions are continuously expanding with extraordinary outcomes. This includes the development of the Additional Needs Support Unit and the benefits of an advanced skills teacher specialising in autism. The boys are responding exceptionally well to the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme which is a prominent feature throughout the school. The boys say they enjoy all aspects of school life. Some reflect on past experiences and are happy with the recognition, opportunities and types of support they receive at this school. Some of the key features for the boys include the 'big club', flexible sleep-over arrangements, relationships with staff, the quality of food and activities outside of the school. The boys summarise the school as being outstanding, brilliant, fun and understanding. Staff say the school has developed significantly over recent years. They encourage and support the boys' interests in equality and diversity including contributions to local and international projects.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

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

No recommendations were made at the previous inspection.

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

The provision is outstanding.

Extensive work is carried out to ensure that boys holistic health needs are met. This takes into account assessed medical needs, emotional wellbeing and any coexisting conditions. Health plans are extremely comprehensive and updated when required. Communication between staff, health professionals and parents is very effective. Boys now benefit from a drop-in health clinic which takes place every half term. This is facilitated by a nursing professional who is also instrumental in providing advice and support to parents at coffee mornings and the boys during lesson time. Robust procedures are in place for ensuring that medications are transported and stored securely. Medication administration records are kept up to date, although these are often countersigned by the boys and a bound register is not used for recording controlled drugs.

Boys enjoy a very good selection of homemade meals and say they are the best school meals ever. A range of dietary needs are catered for including religious needs, food allergies and personal preferences. Meals are served in a very sociable setting and boys enjoy chatting to staff and visitors such as school governors, particularly in the evenings. Significant improvements have been made to the kitchen and food preparation area. This includes new cooking appliances, storage facilities and redecoration throughout. Catering records are comprehensive with details of actual food consumed by boys. Catering staff keep abreast of current practice by attending relevant training in food hygiene and safety.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The arrangements for ensuring that boys' privacy is respected are consistent with policies and procedural guidance. The use of Closed Circuit Television is restricted to communal and vulnerable areas of the school only. The boys say they are pleased with privacy arrangements including showering arrangements and the choice of having their own bedrooms for sleep-overs. Support for personal and intimate care is determined during assessment and on going dialogue with parents.

The management of complaints is effective and records show that an extremely low percentage of minor queries have been received since the last inspection. The complaints procedure is available in different formats and accessible throughout the school. The boys say that they would not hesitate in talking to staff if they had any concerns. They also identify the senior management team as key people they would approach. The school council is very instrumental in raising matters on behalf of other boys.

Robust systems are in place for safeguarding boys. These are very effective in practice and include a whole school approach in addressing potential or actual issues effecting the safety or wellbeing of any boy. Boys say they feel safe at the school and this includes the set up of the environment, their friends and staffing arrangements at night. All staff are familiar with safeguarding procedures and this is enhanced through on going training and development.

The boys say that bullying is not an issue. They are pleased with the way in which the school responds to unacceptable behaviours and this includes the process for reporting concerns and incidents. The boys are engaged in external projects such as anti-bullying week and substantial work is undertaken across the school through the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programme to address this topic.

There are no issues regarding boys being absent without authority. However, written procedures are in place and known to all staff.

There are no recorded incidents of physical restraint or intervention during residential hours. Incidents usually occur during the day but these are reducing considerably as a result of the broad range of strategies used to support boys in managing their feelings and emotions more appropriately. All staff are trained to use the school's preferred method of physical intervention and the use of Closed Circuit Television supports early intervention and prevention of situations resulting in the use of restraint. Sanctions are imposed as a last resort and signed off by a member of the senior management team. Behavioural management records are comprehensive with clear evidence of work undertaken to support the boys through their behaviours. The

reward and merit systems are effective and popular with the boys. This promotes positive behaviours and these achievements are celebrated.

The management of fire and other safety procedures are consistent and records supporting practice are of good quality. This includes the frequency of fire safety checks, fire drills and other checks such as water safety and electrical appliances. Staff attend regular fire training during in-service days but the content of training is not retained to show what aspects of fire safety are covered. A comprehensive fire risk assessment is in place and this is reviewed routinely for effectiveness. Health and safety risk assessments are wide ranging and takes into account work practices and activities undertaken by the boys. The safety of the boys is unquestionable. For example, evacuation plans are devised for individual boys who find it difficult to cope in these situations and the tone of the fire alarm has been altered to make it more tolerable for the boys.

Significant work has been undertaken to update the recruitment process, which is comprehensive and compliant with the national minimum standard. Members of the senior management team have also attended training on safer recruitment. The school has been unable to implement the new process as there have not been any vacancies for some considerable time.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The education and residential remits of the school are extremely interactive. The boys benefit immensely from the staffing arrangements after school hours where they have the opportunity of undertaking extra curricular activities with teachers and care staff. Home learning has replaced homework and this provides a stronger focus on learning through projects and core subjects. Support strategies are expanding and the boys and parents now benefit from a 'home learning' clinic which is held every Wednesday. Work related projects are being identified for individual boys. This new initiative will enable the boys to undertake essential health and safety training before entering work based environments. Boys' experience of learning is creative and inspiring. This includes the recent invention of a conservation area and Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network activities which are on going.

Although the residential remit is flexible and provided for two nights per week only, the commitment and support to the boys and their families is exceptional. All staff play a key role in identifying and pursuing individualised support. The role of the pastoral manager promotes consistency between the school, families and professionals when coordinating personal or welfare matters, some of which are very complex. The school is not a therapeutic community. However, the types of support for the boys in the Additional Needs Support Unit and the expansion of the personal, health, social and sex education curriculum are excellent examples of how individual needs are met.

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

The provision is outstanding.

The boys are engaged in a broad selection of consultation processes and methods for doing so are creative and purposeful. For example, boys say they get very good results from using a system called 'I'm speaking up for myself'. They also say that staff are good listeners. The school council is highly valued and very instrumental in influencing change. Members of the

council are also committed to communicating with stakeholders and other members of the community on behalf of other boys.

Admission and discharge processes are comprehensive and managed in accordance with the needs of individual boys. Admission records are meticulous and encompasses a wide range of assessed needs. The school is proactive in planning and supporting boys when they move on including post discharge support.

Care planning processes are wide ranging and tailored in accordance with boys' assessed needs, taking into account sensitive and personal matters. These consist of a combination of individual plans, behavioural plans, boarding care plans and support plans. These are indicative of the extensive work undertaken in assessing and planning high levels of individualised care and support.

Contact with families and significant others is a top priority and managed effectively. Methods of contact and communication are diverse and effective in practice. Staff say that communication with parents is often a joy for them and the boys. For example, boys will ask staff to contact their parents to let them know when they have done well. Provisions are in place for boys to make and receive private calls with parents.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is outstanding.

The boys are pleased with recent developments to the school environment and future proposals to create a soft play area. The boys say they enjoy the choice of having their own bedroom or sharing with a friend on sleep-over nights. They also enjoy the opportunity of staying on after school for activity and club nights. They describe this as 'a real treat'. The school environment is continuously developing to support the boys' learning and development. Recent developments such as the conservation area is stimulating whilst the Additional Needs Support Unit has expanded and has become a more progressive environment according to age and ability. The redecoration of the boarding house has improved its homeliness and appearance. The school maintains excellent links with the local and wider communities. In doing so, the boys benefit immensely from the continuous support they receive.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is outstanding.

A comprehensive Statement of Purpose is in place and widely available. Boys and parents value the flexible boarding arrangements and the school's overall ethos is strongly communicated. The effectiveness of care principles and boarding provisions are evidenced through positive feedback from parents and the boys' eagerness to sleep over. Additional resources such as the school prospectus and the boys' induction pack contains a wealth of information and kept up to date.

Staffing arrangements for boarding nights are consistent and meets the needs of boys sleeping over at any one time. Staffing ratios are clear and boys know which staff are supporting them. Boys say that staffing arrangements at night helps make them feel safe. There is also good communication between the waking and sleeping-in members of staff. Boys benefit from a balanced team consisting of male and female staff.

Staff say they are very pleased with the quality of support they receive both formally and informally. Staff attend formal supervisions every half term and the headteacher is professionally supervised. Processes for supervising and monitoring staff performance are consistent and evaluative.

The boys are supported by a very experienced and qualified staff team. The headteacher who is also the head of care is suitably qualified with substantial experience. Opportunities for continuous professional development are wide ranging and consistent with the ethos of the school. For example, a Federation Coordinator is now in post and strengthening links with other schools and learning environments. The school including the residential provision also benefit from the expertise of a staff member who has qualified as an Advanced Skills Teacher specialising in autism.

The regular records relating specifically to boarding are monitored by the headteacher and delegated members of the senior management team. However, vigorous processes are in place for evaluating outcomes for boys across the school and their various involvements in school life. This is achieved in a number of ways including senior management's involvement in behaviour and disciplinary decisions and the management of records as delegated by the headteacher. The headteacher's annual report is comprehensive and includes an evaluation of boarding provisions.

The visits undertaken by the governing body are shared and reports for these visits are indicative of the high standards of care and provisions. The federation with another school is strong and continues to develop through the recent appointment of a Federation Coordinator.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The school excels in providing a vast array of learning and recreational opportunities including a recent trip to France which boys say they thoroughly enjoyed. School assemblies are integral to celebrating and learning about different affairs, cultures and nationalities. The work undertaken by the school to support national and international charities is extensive and this includes the boys' participation. Respect and attitudes towards individuality is unquestionable. Equality and diversity is systemic in all aspects of school life including the curriculum, recruitment processes, pastoral care and boys' contact with the wider community.

## 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):

- undertake a further review of the arrangements for the administration and recording of medications (nms 14)



- retain details of fire safety training undertaken with the staff team. (nms 26)