

Muntham House School

Inspection report for Residential Special School

Unique reference number	SC014636
Inspection date	17/03/2011
Inspector	Liz Driver
Type of inspection	Key

Setting address	Muntham House School, Barns Green, HORSHAM, West Sussex, RH13 0NJ
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Registered person	Muntham House School Trust
Head/ Principal	Richard Boyle
Nominated person	Richard Boyle
Date of last inspection	24/03/2010

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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 outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

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

The school is a non-maintained residential special school for pupils aged between eight and 18 years. It is a designated school for pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties who may in addition have Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (AD(H)D). All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The school buildings are set in extensive grounds. Accommodation is located in the main building and in a separate building for the sixth form. There are numerous outdoor areas for the pupils to enjoy activities.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

At this announced full inspection, all key standards relating to residential special schools were inspected.

Young people receive outstanding care and support at the setting. The protection and safeguarding of each individual young person is the highest priority for the school. The school is managed by an experienced and strong senior management team who continue to develop and implement innovative practice. Developments prior to, and since, the last inspection have seen excellent outcomes for young people. Young people are encouraged to eat healthily and take regular exercise. A significant decrease in behaviours that require physical intervention has been seen as a positive change for young people. Young people have access to a wealth of support through the engage team of therapists and the family inclusion team. The school is maintained to a good level with an on going programme of redecoration and refurbishment. Health and safety checks take place although some fire doors are not kept closed. The staff are supported by an experienced head of care and excellent systems that include supervision and training and the overall monitoring of the school. Staff recruitment is robust although recording of telephone verification for references is not consistent.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the school was asked to ensure the duration of the physical interventions were recorded. This has been addressed.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Each pupil's emotional and physical well-being is promoted to an excellent standard. Pupils receive a healthy, varied and nutritious diet. The school has recently achieved a healthy status award. The catering staff are well aware of any specific dietary needs and whether these are based on religious, cultural or medical grounds. Appropriate storage and cooking methods are implemented in accordance with individual beliefs. The pupils are offered a choice of menus and have the opportunity to enjoy foods from a variety of different cultural backgrounds. They also have the opportunity to prepare and cook different foods in their living areas and as part of developing their independence and life skills. They can voice their opinions about the food and their preferences in formal settings, such as the school council, and informally with tutors and care staff.

The last environmental health inspection was carried out in September 2010 and its recommendations have been addressed in full. All staff who prepare and cook food receive training in food and hygiene. During the inspection each individual boarding house was competing in a cooking competition which the pupils and staff found very enjoyable.

All systems around pupils health needs are comprehensive. Each pupil has a comprehensive package of care in place which addresses their health needs in a detailed and thorough manner. Staff are trained to provide first aid and to give medicines. Medication administration is robustly monitored on a daily basis with the principal very well informed of practices. All of the pupils have written consent for medical treatment. Medical appointments are available to the young people with health care professionals. Specialist health input is arranged for pupils when it is required. The setting's surgery is manned by two competent and appropriately trained members of staff who liaise very closely with all staff across the setting. Since the last inspection the sick room had been redecorated and refurbished and is of a very good standard.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

There is a clear policy and guidance for the staff to follow in relation to ensuring that the confidentiality and privacy of the pupils is protected. Pupils said they feel they have privacy within their living accommodation and can make telephone calls confidentially. Staff are aware of the importance of privacy and know with whom they can share sensitive information. All confidential information is kept securely stored.

Processes and procedures for pupils, staff, professionals, families and carers to make a complaint are robust and readily available for all to access. Pupils are confident in expressing their opinions. The pupils felt their worries and issues were dealt with

fairly by the staff and raised no concerns about this during the inspection process. The pupils have a wide range of adults they can speak to including key workers, therapists, education staff, the head of care and the principal; all operate an open door policy. The vast majority of complaints are dealt with at an informal level including contact with the family inclusion (FIT) team. However, when pupils have chosen to complain formally, the process is well documented and either investigated internally or externally. There have been no serious complaints made since the last inspection.

Safeguarding pupils is a priority at this setting and covers every aspect of the pupils lives. The school has clear guidance for the staff to follow if they have concerns about a pupil's welfare. The guidance works alongside the local area child protection and safeguarding procedures. The school has very good working relationships with the local authority designated officers for child protection. There are two designated members of staff with responsibility for child protection and safeguarding; one being the principal. Staff are very well informed of the internal procedures to take if an allegation is made or they have concerns. All members of staff are offered regular training to ensure that they are aware of their obligations. The principal keeps thorough, detailed and well-organised records of any child protection concerns.

The school operates a policy of zero tolerance towards bullying and the pupils are made aware of the guidance on admission. Staff are very committed and competent in addressing a range of bullying behaviours including racism. Pupils stated that recent incidents of bullying have decreased significantly. The school has a victim support group run by the on-site team of therapists who work in the 'engage' unit. The focus is on restorative justice between the perpetrator and victim. Results have been impressive with changes in behaviours seen across the school for individual pupils. The pupils are risk assessed for any potential issues related to bullying behaviour. Clear examples of how incidents are appropriately dealt with were seen during the inspection and discussed with the therapists.

The staff team are very aware of each pupil's vulnerability and level of risk should they go missing. Pen pictures are kept in each pupil's key-work file together with a photograph. This ensures that the information is readily available to the police should a pupil go missing. The school maintains very good relationships with the local police and villagers should this situation arise.

The setting's behaviour policy clearly identifies young people's responsibility in addressing their actions, language, success and tasks. Staff respond positively to acceptable behaviour with positive behaviour encouraged and rewarded when it is achieved. Pupils can earn points throughout the day and this is rewarded for example by being able to have activities off the school's site. Pupils are also rewarded for achieving targets identified in their key-work sessions. Staff work very hard to improve conduct and behaviour around the school and the atmosphere appeared to be focused and calm. Pupils are very well informed of consequences of poor behaviour. All sanctions used are permissible. The school operates a system whereby records of incidents of challenging behaviour are assessed and collated with a view to analysing them and thereby identifying critical times and triggers. This in

turn informs strategies for the staff team to develop in order to minimise incidents.

The number of physical interventions carried out has decreased since the last inspection, mainly due to the introduction of 'the wheel'; a system which sets individual targets with strategies for both education and welfare purposes and incorporates behaviour. The data gained as a result enables staff to work to strategies and to measure their effectiveness. Results have been excellent with a real increase in de-escalation methods seen. The wheel also enables staff to develop their practice further. Its main ability is to identify progress and regression of, for example challenging behaviours and then to be able to address progress or regression appropriately. All staff receive training in the use of physical restraint. The school has a clear recording system for the use of all restraint which includes feedback from the young people.

Areas of potential risk for the pupils are assessed and the young people are safeguarded where possible from harm. The school has documentation related to risk-assessing activities, holidays, fire risk and the environment. Records demonstrate that the school's fire alarm system is tested regularly and evacuation exercises carried out. The school ensures the pupils are aware of the fire procedure and each young person has a bundle bag to ensure they have clothing if the alarm were to go off at night. Clear systems are in place and checks could be seen from outside agencies and from the school's monitoring systems. Staff, who are also trained fire marshals coordinate fire procedures for their designated areas. The last fire and rescue service inspection was carried out in November 2011 with no recommendations made. Fire doors in the residential areas are not always kept closed, as seen during this inspection.

The recruitment process operated by the school is robust and thorough. Records were seen for all new staff at the school and clearly all records were in place before they started their employment. Records are not always clear in their recordings of telephone verification for references.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils benefit from committed and trained staff whose main focus is on improving pupils educational achievements and addressing their welfare needs. The school's holistic approach ensures that all members of staff liaise closely with each other to ensure support is thoroughly and robustly prepared. This approach ensures that pupils receive outstanding levels of individual support. Comprehensive, detailed and thorough care plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that support is sensitively and consistently delivered. The young people are supported by the staff in the boarding areas to prepare for the school day. Developments since the last inspection have been the continued success of the outcome wheel which is being shared with other residential special school provisions. The outcome wheel covers education and welfare and is a tool that has been designed to capture data quickly and easily for

monitoring and recording progress within the areas of classroom conformity, task orientation and areas of the every child matters outcomes.

Close liaison between teaching and care staff ensures that targets for each pupil are known across the setting. This ensures that the pupils can be supported and assessed regularly and progress can be monitored and supported. Pupils are involved in setting targets and reviewing their own progress in meetings with their tutor and key worker. The targets set are relevant to the pupil and encompass areas including behaviour management. By encouraging pupil input the school has ensured that they have an investment and say in the process. Since the last inspection a designated unit has been opened; housing the engage team of therapists. Engage is a commendable resource that is already showing excellent results for pupils across the school. It is therapeutic and effectiveness based and tailored to meet individual needs. It positively encourages all adults involved in young people's lives to engage in their care and education. The introduction of the wheel has enabled staff and young people to see real changes in meeting their individual targets. The wheel enables young people, staff and parents to see at a glance areas of progression and regression with strategies used that are effective. The setting, especially the engage team have close links with local schools and provide support to them. Some young people at the setting have successfully re-integrated into mainstream school with high levels of support.

There is an separate unit for extended education which caters for young people between 16 years and 18 years old. This unit has a dedicated team of staff who provide high levels of positive support to individual young people at local colleges and schools. There are very clear expectations of behaviour for this unit. Young people enjoy living in separate flats with added support provided by the staff.

The school has an excellent activities programme which supports and enables students to attend activities on site and in the community. Young people enjoy activities such as football coaching, driving theory sessions, cycling and swimming. It is clear that the young people are given opportunities to experience events and occasions which enrich and develop their progress.

The level of individual support offered to the students is outstanding. Each student's needs and idiosyncrasies are known and the staff work very closely across the curriculum to ensure that they receive the support and nurturing they need.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There are many avenues for young people to express their views and opinions about the school and their lives. Staff regularly consult young people about all aspects of their lives within boarding. Consultation takes place individually and collectively. The school council is seen as a positive forum by pupils and has shown to be an effective force with real changes made as a result of suggestions and ideas. Informal meetings and discussions often take place within the boarding houses and during

mealtimes. Pupils are also able to meet with teachers, the therapists, key workers and to address issues in tutor groups or meetings in their living areas. Pupils are also able to approach senior members of staff who are present in the school, both during the day and in the evening. It is clear that the pupils are confident in expressing their opinions about how they are being cared for and that they feel their point of view is listened to and respected.

The school caters for pupils who have complex and at times, very challenging needs. The admission process and assessment is detailed and very carefully planned. The multi-disciplinary approach operated by the school ensures that care staff, teachers, the family inclusion team (FIT) and other relevant professionals such as counsellors, therapists and psychologists combine to assess each pupil, and to decide if the school can meet their needs. Each pupil is assessed and individual packages are planned so that each pupil can achieve to their potential and above.

Once pupils reach Year 11 the 24 hour curriculum operated by the school prepares the pupils to develop their life skills and to prepare for independence or further education. The extended education unit for young people between the ages of 16 and 18 provides structure and support of an excellent standard which assists and enables pupils to develop life skills and achieve successful placements at college and work experience.

The process of admissions, discharges and ongoing assessments and monitoring of progress is of an outstanding quality. These areas are the main focus for the family inclusion team who develop close working relationships with families and young people to ensure the best possible outcomes.

Pupils are able to contact families and loved ones by using their own mobile telephones or by using the school telephone. Parents are welcome to visit and all pupils return home regularly to parents or guardians at weekends.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

The pupils at the school enjoy the benefits of a beautiful country setting and space in the grounds to play and undertake activities. The school also has excellent facilities which include the sports hall, football and rugby pitches. The members of staff responsible for the maintenance of the school premises work extremely hard to ensure that the quality of the premises is maintained to an good level. The school is a large building and there is a rolling refurbishment plan to ensure that natural wear and tear is addressed. Newly redecorated and refurbished accommodation is of a very good standard and provides young people with improved facilities. Other accommodation is due to be upgraded in line with the schools improvement plan. There is a central register for any maintenance issues to be logged and these are addressed in a timely manner by the maintenance team.

The pupils who stay within the school live on floors which are spilt into family

groups. Family groups consist of a mixture of age groups. Due to the size of the floors the pupils can spend time with age appropriate peer groups. The lounges and communal areas are homely and comfortable. The floors have kitchens where the pupils can eat supper on specific evenings and practice independence skills. Pupils are able to personalise their rooms and dormitory areas with posters and pictures and have sufficient storage space for their clothing and belongings.

The pupils have sufficient bathrooms and toilets facilities and staff have appropriate accommodation when sleeping in.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Staff ensure through practice and guidance that the rights of the pupils are met and they do not face racism or discriminatory abuse. The pupils have their cultural needs met by individualised care planning and review processes which highlight and guide staff to meet the wishes of the pupils themselves.

The school has a variety of information linked to the Statement of Purpose including the pupils' guide to living on the floors and the induction book used by the family inclusion team. The guidance offers a clear picture of the school, its ethos and its daily routines. Alongside the Statement of Purpose the school has up-to-date comprehensive policies and procedures. The school has its own website.

The senior management of the school is strong and highly effective. The school continues to function to an excellent standard and is committed to developing practices further. Recent innovative practices have seen other residential special schools keen to engage with this school. As a result of developing practices and the commitment of the staff team the day to day management of pupils has improved. Staff said they feel supported by those around them; the head of care and the principal.

The care team comprises experienced staff and new staff who have been employed since the last inspection. The team are supported by the head of care and clear systems of supervision and training that are in place. The staff said they feel supported and happy with the extensive training they are offered. The school has clear lines of mandatory training such as first aid, safeguarding children, health and safety and behaviour management. All staff undertake training in accordance with the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) recommendations.

The school has an overall comprehensive system in place for the monitoring of practice and safety issues. There is a governor who visits once every half term. Other governors regularly visit the setting and spend time on the residential units.

The school has a strong management team and this is reflected throughout the whole of the school. Staff said they felt part of the school and could contribute to the

school's development. The school continues to develop its practices further with innovative processes.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Compliance with national minimum standards

The school meets all the national minimum standards, with the exception of any listed below. To ensure that the school meets the national minimum standards the school needs to...

- ensure the school has direct contact by telephone with each referee to verify the references of people wishing to work at the school (NMS 27.2)
- ensure all fire doors are kept closed; in accordance with the fire regulations. (NMS 26)