

Starhurst School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

Unique reference number for social care	SC013883
Unique reference number for education	125464
Inspection dates	21/09/2011 to 21/09/2011
Inspector	Brian Mcquoid

School address	Starhurst School, Chart Lane South, DORKING, Surrey, RH5 4DB
Telephone number	01306 883763
Email	admin@starhurst.surrey.sch.uk
Headteacher	Mr J Watson

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk



Purpose and scope of the inspection

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, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{1,2}

Information about the school

Starhurst is a maintained special school that incorporates day and residential provision for boys between 11 and 16 years of age with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school provides for up to 50 boys and has residential provision for 19. Boarding is primarily on a weekly basis but there is flexibility within this to make other arrangements to suit the needs of individual pupils. The residential accommodation consists of three separate lodges, two of which are identical in their physical provision while the other is used for senior pupils to experience independent living and to acquire independent living skills. The residential provision was last inspected on 9 November 2010.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for residential pupils	good
Quality of residential provision and care	outstanding
Residential pupils' safety	outstanding
Leadership and management of the residential provision	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision at Starhurst School is outstanding. Residential pupils enjoy the experience of boarding and make extremely good progress in their personal, social, and educational development. Their confidence and self-esteem is increased and they have positive and constructive relationships with the staff who care for them.
- Provision for safeguarding the welfare of residential pupils is outstanding. The safety and well-being of pupils is paramount with robust policies and procedures being effectively implemented by a highly skilled and well-trained staff team. Pupils feel safe within the residential provision, bullying is addressed remarkably well by the school's anti bullying co-ordinator and is not a significant problem.
- Residential pupils receive high quality care and support from a care staff team who are enthusiastic and highly committed to the work they do. They work very closely with education staff and with parents, placing authorities, and other professionals involved with pupils. Designated link workers perform a pivotal role in successfully implementing pupils' individual plans and in monitoring their progress and development.
- Leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. The professional development of staff is extremely well catered for, rigorous monitoring systems are being effectively implemented and there is a clear commitment to continuing improvement. Seeking the views of pupils is central to the development of practice and is integral to how the residential provision operates.
- Residential pupils benefit from numerous opportunities to engage in activities

they enjoy doing, as well as those which help them to acquire new skills and which benefit others within both the local and wider community. Provision for promoting equality and diversity is excellent. Pupils engage in community projects, successfully sponsor a child in Mozambique and enjoy regular 'diversity evenings' which celebrate other cultures.

- Residential pupils are actively encouraged and supported to lead healthy lifestyles and healthcare arrangements are excellent. The meals provided are of a very high quality and are thoroughly enjoyed by pupils.
- The residential accommodation is of a high standard and is being extremely well maintained. The boys are actively involved in keeping their accommodation clean and tidy. Provision for senior pupils to follow programmes of independent living are excellent and benefit pupils greatly.
- The school has made significant progress since the last inspection. The recommendations from the previous report have been successfully addressed and all of the new national minimum standards are being met.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for residential pupils at the school are good and they enjoy positive, constructive, and mutually respectful relationships with staff. Bullying is not a problem within the residential provision and pupils are successfully helped to develop tolerance and respect for others. Residential pupils enjoy the experience of boarding, they feel well cared for and make good progress in their personal and social development. They take advantage of opportunities to contribute and become involved in developments within the residential provision and in projects within the wider community. Sponsoring a child in 'Mozambique' and actively participating in a local youth community project are examples of this. Pupils feel well looked after when they are ill, they comment positively about the meals provided for them, say they have adults they can talk to about things worrying them, and that there is enough to do in their free time.

Residential pupils feel fairly treated by staff and make really good progress in relation to their behaviour. They feel 'listened to' by staff and have lots of opportunities to express their views. Their active involvement in a very wide range of activities provided helps them to develop new skills and interests, and opportunities to succeed. Arts and crafts is a specific example where photographic evidence celebrated the success of individual pupils in making cushions and soft toys. Facilities for undertaking programmes of independence within the residential provision are excellent. Older pupils enjoy spending time in dedicated accommodation where they make good progress in developing life skills which help to prepare them for independent living. Positive links with further education colleges and the Connexions service also help to prepare pupils for when they leave the school.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the residential provision and the care provided for residential pupils is outstanding. Residential pupils benefit from excellent pastoral care and there are effective arrangements for providing support to those new to the residential provision. Communication across the school is remarkably good and contributes very successfully to a coordinated approach to working with individual pupils. The links between care and academic staff are extremely good and the care team provide exceedingly good support for the personal, social and academic development of residential pupils. This includes their involvement both during and outside of the school day in activities, such as community projects, schemes of accreditation, and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. The care staff team are very experienced and skilled at working with young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. They work closely with other professionals involved with individual pupils and successfully deliver high quality care to the benefit of pupils. Innovative initiatives such as the 'Become a Dignity Champion' campaign and the recently launched 'Anti-bullying Hotline' are examples of how residential staff have a clear commitment to continuing improvement of the care provision for pupils.

Objectives for individual pupils are derived from their statements of special educational need and translated into individual education plans. Care staff provide excellent support for residential pupils in working towards identified individual targets linked to both their academic and personal development. All residential pupils have identified link workers who have clear responsibilities relating to their welfare and are able to spend individual time with them. Consulting with and involving pupils is integral to the work being carried out within the residential setting. A 'listening and responding' scheme operates very successfully with personal letters from the head of care to all requests. There is exceptionally good provision for enabling residential pupils to develop their ability to live independently. The programme being followed has been devised in consultation with pupils and is being very successfully implemented. This is one example of an extremely wide range of activities which are available to residential pupils and which successfully contribute to their personal development. Youth club, night hikes, fishing, cooking, ice skating, culturally themed food nights, arts and crafts, and swimming are other examples. In addition there is an annual enterprise scheme whereby each lodge is given a sum of money and are challenged to use it to make more money. This is ongoing and has been remarkably successful.

There is excellent provision at the school for protecting and promoting the physical, emotional, and psychological health of residential pupils. They are all registered at the local surgery with whom the school has an extremely good working relationship, and which includes excellent support from the practice nurse. Pupils are provided with good information, guidance and support relating to all of the major risks to health and care staff actively encourage them to lead healthy lifestyles. The school has excellent support in the form of a child and adolescent mental health worker who spends two days a week at the school. The person concerned works with individual pupils and their families, liaises closely with care staff, and provides training and support for the whole school staff group. The health of residential pupils is closely

monitored and there are effective systems being implemented for the management and administration of medication. All care staff receive regular training in first aid and the safe handling of medication.

Catering arrangements at the school are excellent and ensure residential pupils receive healthy and nutritious meals. Special dietary needs are well catered for, there is plenty of choice, sufficient quantity, and meals are of a very high quality. Staff involved in the preparation of meals are appropriately trained and a very recent environmental health report awarded the highest mark possible. Pupils commented positively on the meals provided for them and particularly the culturally themed food nights that take place regularly.

Accommodation for residential pupils is of a high standard, well suited for its purpose and is being extremely well maintained. All areas are very well furnished and provide a comfortable environment for pupils. Bedrooms are able to be personalised and those who share double rooms are in agreement with the arrangement. There are suitable facilities to enable organised and private study to take place and good computer access. School facilities, such as the sports hall, library, and computer room, are available during residential time. The two main lodges successfully accommodate a mixed age range and 'Phoenix' lodge is being used to accommodate two older pupils undertaking an independent living programme. The residential environment and the wider school premises provide a safe and secure environment for residential pupils. Closed circuit television cameras monitor key areas of the outside of the buildings but do not intrude on the privacy of pupils.

Residential pupils' safety

Provision for safeguarding the welfare of residential pupils is outstanding. Robust recruitment procedures are implemented by suitably trained staff and help to ensure only suitable persons are employed to work with pupils. Care staff have an acute awareness of safe working practices and are proactive in promoting and protecting the welfare of pupils. Comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures are effectively implemented and successfully contribute to ensuring pupils are safe. All staff have received high quality and up-to-date safeguarding training. Pupils feel safe within the residential provision and report that some bullying does occur, but that it is addressed very effectively by staff and is not a significant problem. Arrangements for addressing bullying are outstanding. A care staff member is the school's anti-bullying co-ordinator and ensures pupils are provided with comprehensive and up-to-date information concerning different types of bullying including cyber bullying. A recent innovative initiative has seen the launch of 'Starhurst Anti-Bullying Hotline' which enables pupils to text or email directly to the anti-bullying co-ordinator any concerns they have relating to bullying.

Care staff are highly skilled and successful in promoting positive developments in pupils' behaviour and in managing that which is challenging. Residential pupils enjoy fruitful relationships with staff and feel fairly treated by them. Sanctions are rarely used and there have been no incidents of physical interventions having been used within the residential provision since the last inspection; this is commendable. Residential pupils report that they enjoy the boarding experience. There has been only one incident of a pupil going missing since the last inspection and this was dealt with very successfully by the care staff team. The residential environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, and there is excellent provision for the management of risk. Written risk assessments are regularly reviewed and contribute extremely effectively to the protection of residential pupils. Established systems ensure all health and safety matters across the school are addressed in a systematic and rigorous fashion. Residential pupils are well aware of the fire evacuation procedures and confirm that fire drills take place regularly. All other aspects of fire safety were being carried out and recorded as required.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

Leadership and management of the school's residential provision is outstanding. The aims and objectives for residential pupils are very clearly stated and are being met extremely successfully. There is exceptionally good leadership of the residential care provision and a clear commitment to continuing improvement for the benefit of pupils. Established procedures successfully provide for effective and efficient management. The care staff team have extensive experience and are highly skilled at working with the residential pupils. They are enthusiastic about boarding and the positive developments that they see in pupils who access the provision. Links between the residential and educational provision are exceptional and care staff contribute significantly to the achievements of pupils, and to their personal and social development. Involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, community projects and schemes of accreditation are examples of this. Staffing levels enable the needs of boarders to be met at all times and there is an excellent programme of professional development which staff benefit from. They comment extremely positively about how the staff group operate as a team and the formal and informal support they receive.

Comprehensive policy and procedure documents support and promote good practice within the residential provision and are being very effectively implemented. Rigorous monitoring systems provide exceptionally well for ensuring the welfare of residential pupils and the care they receive. Independent external monitoring reports comment extremely favourably on the care provided for residential pupils. Internal monitoring is excellent and helps to ensure the needs of individual pupils continue to be addressed successfully. There is extremely good communication across the school and close working relationships with parents, placing authorities, and those professionals involved with individual pupils. A social worker commented 'excellent communication', 'great expertise in working with challenging behaviour' and 'really listen to young people'. Individual case records are being stored securely and provide a comprehensive overview of a pupil's time spent in the residential provision.

National minimum standards

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

What should the school do to improve further?

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21/09/2011

Boys,

Inspection of Starhurst School

I would like to say a big thank you for your hospitality and help during my recent inspection of the residential provision at your school. I really enjoyed my visit (especially playing football) and was very pleased to find how well you are being looked after and that you feel safe there.

I saw that you get on well with staff and you told me that they treat you fairly. They help you to stay safe, to improve your behaviour, and to learn about living on your own. You said that you enjoy boarding and I could see that you have lots of opportunities to do things that you enjoy doing. You learn about other cultures during your time in the lodges and you are to be congratulated for your ongoing efforts in sponsoring 'Pinto' in Mozambique.

You are able to talk to staff about any problems you may have and they are good at listening and providing you with the help you may need. The meals you have are fantastic and provide you with a healthy diet, which is important. You are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles and get good advice and support from staff to do so. The Lodges provide you with really good accommodation and 'well done' for keeping them in such good condition. I found the residential provision at your school to be outstanding or good in all areas and I'm sure staff will be only too pleased to share my report with you. The staff looking after you do a brilliant job and really care about you. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Mcquoid