

# Moor House School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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<b>Inspector</b>	Liz Driver

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## **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.<sup>1,2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

Moor House School is a co-educational, non-maintained residential and day special school. There are currently 75 pupils on roll between the ages of 7 and 16; of which 66 are residential pupils between the ages of 9 and 16 years. All pupils possess varying degrees of speech and language difficulties. There are two boarding houses that separate the pupils by gender. There will be a post-16 year day and residential provision commencing in September 2012. Moor House is set within large, well-maintained grounds in Oxted, Surrey. The school was last inspected in March 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	outstanding
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.

- This residential special school provides outstanding residential provision. The standard of care is exceptional and pupils enjoy the vast range of opportunities offered. The staff team are highly praised by parents and pupils. Pupils achieve targets they would not have achieved in mainstream schools. Pupils are very happy at the school and extremely complimentary about the staff and the opportunities they are encouraged and supported to access. There is a strong and successful emphasis on inclusion and participation.
- Current pupils who will stay on to access the post-16 provision are very excited and very happy to be staying at the school, as are parents. Pupils state they feel at home at the school and are happy to have the opportunity to stay there until they are 18 years of age.
- The pupils thrive within a nurturing environment which clearly focuses on their individuality. They are encouraged and do make excellent progress in many aspects of their lives. Staff work collaboratively to enable pupils to achieve, and in some cases exceed, their potential.
- The setting's robust safeguarding arrangements clearly protect pupils. There are excellent policies and procedures that work alongside local area procedures to ensure the correct practices are followed and high levels of protection. Any concerns or allegations are managed by highly experienced and knowledgeable staff who take the lead in safeguarding across the school. Pupils feel extremely safe and much protected across all areas of the school. Parents, without exception, stated they are extremely happy that the school protects and keeps their children safe.

- The staff and pupils are able to focus on individual targets as a result of comprehensive care plans. Individual needs are identified and discussed with pupils and parents with agreed targets put in place. Pupils are very aware of their individual progress and are proud of their achievements. Many pupils said they would not have achieved so highly if they were not at this setting.
- The pupils have increasing opportunities to have a say in the running of the school. This has a strong and positive impact on pupils' personal development. The excellent buddy/mentor system ensures pupils are not alone or isolated and provides another avenue for pupils to develop personal skills. Pupils praise highly the buddy/mentor system.
- The pupils enjoy engaging in a wide range of activities both on and off site. Access to local community resources is continually being developed.
- There is excellent promotion of equality and diversity. This runs throughout all care practices and documentation. All pupils are treated fairly and without prejudice.
- The school is run by a strong and effective senior management team; fully supported by a Governing body and board of Trustees. This is an ambitious school that continues to develop its practices with ever improving outcomes for pupils.
- The accommodation is subject to an ongoing programme of redecoration and refurbishing and is of a very good standard. The pupils are very happy with the accommodation and the privacy they are offered. There is a clear commitment of financial investment into the fabric of the setting.
- The school's health and safety arrangements are organised and known to pupils. Pupils are extremely well informed of fire procedures. The pupils are provided with excellent health care delivered by appropriately trained staff. Pupils enjoy excellent food delivered by an enthusiastic chef who gains feedback from pupils about areas that can be improved. Overall meals are thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils.
- The school has fully addressed the three recommendations made at the last inspection. All national minimum standards have been met at this inspection. Although the independent visitors' reports are of a good standard, they are not detailed enough to provide a full picture of the quality of the provision. Some behaviour management reports are not fully completed as a result do not always show the duration of a restraint.

## Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupil's development is outstanding. Pupils live in a highly inclusive environment where respectful relationships between staff and pupils are made. Staff are extremely sensitive to pupil's individual needs and areas of difficulties. The staff team work closely with a

wide range of professionals available on site to provide a fully integrated service for pupils. As a result pupils develop at their own pace in areas such as increased confidence, independence skills and social behaviours.

As a result of excellent practices the pupils feel safe at the setting. Parental feedback highlighted the high level of trust parents have in the school in keeping their children safe. Behaviour management is structured, clear and competently delivered by staff in an integrated manner. Weekly collaborative meetings between therapy staff, teachers and care staff ensure consistency for pupils in the delivery of behaviour management strategies. At times, when pupils feel increasingly vulnerable, staff raise the level of support on offer, that result in improved outcomes; such as pupils being able to manage their feelings better, and better understand their behaviours. The high levels of support from a wide range of professionals, including care staff, enable behaviours to be addressed and improved on. Residential pupils are respectful of their differences, support each other and receive consistent support from staff. The residential experience gives pupils the opportunity to develop independence skills at a pace they are able to manage. Participation in activities shows how much the pupils feel part of the residential community. A wide range of activities are on offer, including activities in the local community such as shopping at the local supermarket, walking to the shops independently and joining local sports clubs.

Residential pupils benefit greatly from the buddy/mentor programme that is closely supervised by an extremely committed and enthusiastic member of staff. Pupils and parents all comment on how well this works. One new pupil stated 'having a mentor is very helpful; someone I can trust.' Mentors also speak with parents prior to their child starting school to alleviate worries and fears; this works extremely well enabling pupils to settle in quicker and not feel alone or isolated. Such is the success of the programme that there has been an increase in numbers of pupils wanting to be a mentor.

Residential pupils' involvement in the school council enable them to voice suggestions and make contributions to the residential development. Being part of the school council is a huge achievement for some pupils and one they take extremely seriously. Senior management are fully supportive of the school council and make changes as a result of the council's proposals, for example new play equipment, changes to food and chosen charities. In addition pupils feel comfortable in voicing their feelings and views within the residential time to a wide range of staff including their key workers.

Residential pupils feel very happy with the health provision. Parents are also praising of the medical provision. Pupils have access to excellent sport provision that enables them to actively engage in keeping themselves fit and healthy. Pupils have a strong sense of well-being and participate in the school's personal, health and social education programme that covers areas, such as sexual health, drugs, smoking and healthy lifestyles.

Residential pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their life after school in conjunction with local authority plans and parental choices. The soon to be opened post-16 service is expected to provide a balance between independence and support.

Parents are very happy with the progress their children. They said: 'finally my child is at a school where they are actually learning and accessing the curriculum'; 'the teachers and residential staff are amazing' and 'it is exactly the right school for my child.'

## **Quality of residential provision and care**

The quality of care is outstanding. Residential pupils receive excellent pastoral provision. They benefit from the fully integrated way that care staff work with the other professionals in the school. Together staff provide an exceptional level of support that results in pupils making excellent progress for pupils. The overall result is a highly coordinated provision with appropriate and consistently high aspirations for the pupils.

The pupils and parents are praise highly the induction system for new starters. The buddy/mentor system is working extremely well with excellent outcomes where pupils settle in very quickly.

The school ensures that no pupil is deemed unable to have a voice. Support services are highly supportive of pupils being able to voice their feelings and views according to their chosen communication method. Pupil's achievements are celebrated with certificates on display throughout the residential setting.

Staff place the well-being of pupils at the centre of their practice with high standard practice consistently applied. Clear strategies, assessments and imaginative practice enable new ways to support pupils and for them to make progress in all aspects of their lives from social skills to academic achievements. Progress is clearly tracked and recorded with examples of some excellent progress seen. Pupils are informed of how they have progressed and what areas they need to focus on.

Residential pupils' care plans are detailed and show individual life stories and how pupils can be supported to make progress. Staff are highly effective at putting plans into practice and meeting pupils' needs. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in the planning and review of their care wherever possible. They are fully informed of the contents of their plans and review their targets through regular key worker sessions. Parents are regularly kept up to date about their child's progress. Parents praise the excellent communication between the school and home. Some parents felt this area could still be further improved on. Parents are very complimentary about the skills and commitment of the key workers.

The medical provision for pupils is excellent. Pupils benefit from an all round excellent care provision provided by committed and sensitive medical staff. The staff team are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver first aid; with a qualified nurse leading the team. Current arrangements for the handling of medicines are excellent. The medical team continue to develop its procedures to further develop its practice and are currently reviewing stock control systems to further enhance safe practice, and to be involved more in parent workshops on health related topics. The school continues to hold the title of 'Epilepsy Champion' awarded by a leading epilepsy specialist service. Pupils with epilepsy to be cared for by staff with excellent knowledge and able to provide high quality care.

The residential pupils enjoy the food they receive. The new catering and domestic services manager has redesigned the menu and has plans to further develop the choices on offer. Meal times are organised and calm with high levels of staff support present. Adaptations to eating utensils are readily available for those pupils who need them. Pupils with allergies and special dietary needs receive suitable food. The catering provision has been commended by a dietician. It has also gained a five star award for food hygiene from the local council. Pupils are happy with the meals and are involved in planning menus.

The residential accommodation is safe and very well maintained so pupils can feel warm and comfortable. Residential pupils live in accommodation has been upgraded since the last inspection. The change in layout of dormitories has increased pupils' privacy. Common rooms have been relocated to provide residential accommodation away from the school academic areas. Residential pupils are able to personalise their rooms and contribute to choices in the furnishings. Pupils like their accommodation and feel comfortable. They said 'I love my dorm and like having friends to share with' and 'I enjoy staying here, I can put my own posters up.' Bedroom furniture meets the specific needs of individual pupils. All areas of the boarding provision are cleaned and maintained to an excellent standard.

Residential pupils are encouraged and enabled to make contact with their families and friends. Parental feedback confirmed there are no restrictions to this and pupils stated they are happy with contact arrangements.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

The safety of pupils is outstanding. Residential pupil's safety is at the heart of everything the school provides. The school works in accordance with local child protection policies and procedures to provide enhanced protection for pupils. Pupils feel safe and parents feel their children are safe at the school.

Pupils are protected by the school's thorough recruitment procedures. Relevant staff are trained in safer recruitment standards. Residential pupils are further protected by the robust procedures for the vetting and supervision of all visitors as seen during this inspection.



Residential pupils are cared for by staff who are fully trained in child protection procedures. Staff are alert to possible concerns about pupils' safety and refer onto the Principal who takes the lead in child protection. In addition there are other senior members of staff who are trained to a standard where they can also take the lead if necessary. Procedures also include clear and robust action if any concerns are raised about the Principal. The school has excellent communication and working relationship with the local child protection agencies. Investigations into any allegations are handled fairly and quickly in line with the legislation and guidance.

Residential pupils' behaviours, which at times are challenging, are managed exceptionally well. Pupils' behaviour during this inspection was excellent; highly respectful and positive. Staff focus on supporting pupils' to calm down and manage their feelings in an appropriate way. This is highly effective and reduces the need for staff to physically restrain pupils. The restraint records contain a few minor gaps in recording the duration of some restraints. Pupils are very well informed about the sanctions for poor behaviour. Records show sanctions are very low in number and continuing to decrease. Staff are fully informed of appropriate sanctions they can give and those that are not to be applied. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for any pupils who may be missing. Staff are know what they should do if a pupil goes missing and take correct action..

The school promotes a clear and robust culture of anti-bullying. Pupils did not voice any concerns around bullying at the school. They feel comfortable in voicing worries or concerns to a variety of adults in the school and are confident they would be listened to. Staff are aware of pupils' individual behavioural triggers and they to help pupils manage their feelings.. Bullying tends to be verbal and staff are active in confronting this issue. Staff and pupils report that incidents are low which evidences staff's quick and effective intervention.

Residential pupils benefit from attending a school where health and safety matters are effectively managed and addressed. The environment is safe and subject to routine checks, including fire checks. Very regular fire evacuation drills take place and pupil's participation in evacuations is excellent. The setting is secure.

## **Leadership and management of the residential provision**

The leadership and management of the residential provision are outstanding. The senior management team places the welfare and protection of the pupils at the very heart of the school. Residential pupils are guided and supported to take full advantage of all the school has to offer. There is a strong emphasis on inclusion and participation throughout the residential provision.

The school has clear aims for the residential provision. These are written in the school's prospectus and on its website. This means that pupils and families have information about what they can expect the school to provide. These aims are

translated into practice and exceed in relation to outcomes for pupils. The school's development plans clearly highlights the ambitious plans for the future, including the post-16 provision.

There is a culture of celebrating and empowering each young person to uniquely achieve their potential. Residential pupils respond well to the supportive, nurturing environment that stimulates their personal development. They successfully engage in a wide range of activities, which contribute to their educational learning. Residential pupils benefit from a stable, committed and highly experienced team of residential care staff who are fully supported by an effective senior leadership team. The multi-disciplinary approach to care focuses on promoting the best outcomes for young people. Students are at the heart of person-centred planning that fully reflects their individuality. Residential pupils know how to and feel confident in raising a concern or complaint. All complaints are handled quickly, effectively and are very low in number.

Parents highly praise the staff providing care for their children. Staff receive specialist training related to the needs of the pupils which enables them to deliver a high quality service. The head of care is continually seeking training appropriate to the changing needs of the pupils.

Residential pupils thrive within an environment which promotes their well-being and gives them stability and happiness. There is an excellent promotion of equality and diversity which runs like a thread throughout all care practices and documentation. The service is continually evolving to meet the needs of the pupils. There is an excellent understanding and implementation of the new national minimum standards. The quality of care provided is fully reviewed by an independent visitor each half term. However, independent visitor's reports does not always include sufficient detail to enable the school to fully reflect on how best to make further improvements.

All required policies and procedures are in place and all records are stored safely and securely ensuring maximum protection of pupils' personal information.

The school has fully addressed the three recommendations made at the last inspection. Pupils' now have meaningful consultation processes in place; the school now monitors all the necessary records identified in the national minimum standards; and the school has established a separate health and safety committee.

## **National minimum standards**

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

## **What should the school do to improve further?**

- continue to develop the Independent visitors report format, in light of newly implemented national minimum standards. (NMS 20)
- remind staff to consistently record the duration of physical interventions (NMS 12.6)

**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.**



01/02/2012

Students

### **Inspection of Moor House School**

Dear Students

I really enjoyed my visit to Moor House and meeting you all. Thank you for being so friendly.

During my visit I was able to see and hear what it is like for you to be at the school. You all seem to be happy at the school and have good relationships with the staff. The staff team work very hard to make sure you are safe and happy. I was very impressed to hear how good the buddy/mentor system is and also the school council. It is important that you have a say about the school and I know the staff take your suggestions very seriously.

I saw many happy faces and heard lots of lovely things about the school from you. It is clear that you feel safe at the school and have many adults you can talk to if you are worried.

The food is very good. You are able to choose and have seconds. The new chef has lots of new ideas and is happy for you to tell him what you think about the food.

Thank you to those of you who showed me around the accommodation. I was very impressed how tidy your rooms were.

Moor House is an excellent school with lots of happy students. You all work hard and this shows in the progress you have made; even if at times it is very difficult for you.

I wish you all the very best.

Liz Driver.  
Ofsted Inspector

Yours sincerely,

Liz Driver