

Littlegreen School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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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.^{1,2}

Information about the school

Littlegreen School is a West Sussex County Council Local Education Authority Special School for boys with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. There are 58 boys on roll between the ages of seven and 16 years. 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 main school building is a large country mansion. The boarding accommodation is on the first floor of the main school building. The residential provision was last inspected in May 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	satisfactory
Outcomes for residential pupils	good
Quality of residential provision and care	good
Residential pupils' safety	good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	satisfactory

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is satisfactory.
- The school provides a sound boarding experience for residential pupils who thrive on the care and support they receive.
- Residential pupils benefit from positive relationships with members of staff who provide clear boundaries and a safe and stimulating environment.
- Diversity and individual needs are recognised in planning and caring for residential pupils, and they are accorded equality of opportunity.
- The school gives a high priority to the safety of its residential pupils through a proactive approach to bullying and by supporting pupils to keep safe when on the internet or out in the community.
- Residential pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points when joining the residential provision.
- The management of the residential provision is satisfactory. The national minimum standards which are not met all relate to the leadership of the residential provision. However, these shortfalls have minimal impact on pupil's safety and well-being and relate to documentation and management monitoring systems.
- Residential pupils speak warmly about their boarding experience and the positive progress they have made.
- The residential provision does not meet three national minimum standards.
- The school does not have a clear policy and guidance for staff to follow with

regard to pupils from a federated school who use the residential provision on a regular basis.

- The school does not have an effective system to ensure the records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored appropriately.
- Residential pupils do not have an individual permanent record of their history and progress when staying at the provision.
- To further improve, the school should ensure that the school has a written policy regarding the searching of pupils and their possessions and should ensure that the practice of secondary dispensing of medication is reviewed to reduce the risk of administration errors.
- Since the last inspection, the school has not fully addressed the previous recommendation which related to risk assessments. In addition, previous excellent practice within the residential provision has not been sustained.

Outcomes for residential pupils

The outcomes for residential pupils are good.

Residential pupils within the house enjoy positive relationships with each other. Residential pupils benefit from constructive and warm relationships with experienced and committed staff members. Staff build upon pupils' existing strengths and support them to develop new ones. A pupil commented, 'Staff here are really great and they help me.'

Residential pupils make good progress during their time as a flexible boarder. Comments from parents include, 'My son's confidence has come on in leaps and bounds, which reflects in his whole outlook on life' and 'The nights my son has stayed have helped him tremendously.'

Residential pupils' feedback is sought through the school council, individual pupil sessions with their key staff and through annual review feedback forms. As a direct result of feedback, residential pupils have seen changes take place regarding activity choices and menu planning. Therefore, they can see that their feedback has a direct, positive impact on life in the house.

Residential pupils have made good improvements to their behaviour due to their residential experience. A parent said, 'My son has learned to overcome many behavioural problems.'

Residential pupils say that they enjoy the boarding experience and that they feel happy and safe within the house. They learn independent living skills through undertaking some domestic responsibilities around the house. This means they are

supported to develop life skills and build confidence around daily living tasks which helps prepare them for adulthood.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the school's provision for residential pupils is good.

Staff work in partnership with parents and any relevant professionals to assess residential pupils' individual needs prior to accessing the house. Together they draw up personalised plans and follow a tailor-made transition into the house. New residential pupils have an individualised induction guide and the home agency liaison coordinator works with new pupils on an individual basis to ensure they settle well into the school.

Each residential pupil is allocated a key staff member, who works with the pupil on a regular basis during their time at the school. A parent commented, 'An excellent school, all staff know the boys well and understand their individual needs.'

Maintenance issues are addressed promptly so that the accommodation is well maintained. Residential pupils say that they like their bedroom space and enjoy the resources available to them within the house and in the extensive grounds, for example, the go-karts, the adventure playground and the games club. The spacious and well-resourced communal accommodation and school grounds provide ample opportunities for their personal development.

Residential pupils receive good support to lead a healthy and active lifestyle. Parents and residential staff work in partnership to promote the health of pupils. While parents retain primary responsibility for meeting their child's routine health needs, the school works successfully with local health professionals to ensure the physical and emotional well-being of all residential pupils is met. Residential pupils' medical needs are met by staff. However, established practice allows for the secondary dispensing of medication. While this has not led to administrative errors, the current system has the potential to do so.

The quality of the school's catering arrangements are good. Residential pupils benefit from an on-site catering team who prepare all the meals for the pupils. Menus demonstrate a healthy, balanced and suitably varied diet for pupils which meets their individual and specific dietary needs. Comments from residential pupils include, 'I like every meal I have at school' and 'The food here is brilliant.'

Residential pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to socialise and learn, through a good variety of after-school leisure activities. Activities include camping trips, using computers, snooker, swimming, woodland walks and football. This means that pupils have opportunities to try new experiences, meet new friends and learn new skills.

Residential pupils benefit from good pastoral support and guidance which is offered by key staff who work one-to-one with pupils in order to reach individual goals and targets. Academic staff and residential staff work closely together to ensure that the 24-hour curriculum is delivered and is effective in improving pupil outcomes. Many staff work in both the education department and in the residential provision, providing consistency for residential pupils.

Residential pupils maintain contact with their families and people who are significant to them; there are arrangements to make contact in private. Parents find that contact arrangements are effective and they are kept well informed of their child's time at the house.

Residential pupils' safety

There is good provision at the school for ensuring residential pupils are safe and protected from harm.

Child protection procedures are clear and effective and staff demonstrate good knowledge of these procedures in order to safeguard residential pupils. Staff actively encourage residential pupils to keep themselves safe when out in the community and when using the internet. Parents feel the school keeps their children safe when staying in the residential provision.

Residential pupils say that they would tell staff if they had a worry or concern and recognise that the school 'bully box' is a place where worries or anxieties can be shared anonymously. All residential staff respond proactively to any incident of bullying. Bullying is infrequent and if it does occur staff take immediate action. Staff are skilled in the promotion of good behaviour. The school has a clear points system which offers residential pupils extra privileges through positive behaviour.

Since the last inspection there have been no physical interventions within the residential provision and the use of sanctions within the house is low. No residential pupils have been reported as missing since the last inspection. Consequently, through positive behaviour management strategies and a consistent approach from staff, residential pupils are kept safe.

Residential pupils are protected by regular health and safety checks of the whole premises. Residential pupils confirm they know what to do in the event of a fire alarm or an emergency. Staff and pupils complete termly fire drills in residential time.

To safeguard the welfare of residential pupils there is robust implementation of policies and procedures relating to recruitment, so that only those deemed suitable are appointed. Visitors are checked upon arrival, sign the visitors' record and are supervised on-site as appropriate.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

The leadership and management of the residential provision is satisfactory.

Residential pupils are provided with individualised written and pictorial information about the house which summarises the Statement of Principles and Practice. However, the school does not have clear policy and guidance for staff regarding the use of the residential provision on a regular basis for overnight stays by pupils from a federated school. Staff are unsure on recording practices for the federated overnight stays. For example, it is unclear if there is a physical restraint whether this is written in the residential provision records or the federated school log. Furthermore, there is no clear monitoring system in place to check the quality of care during these arrangements. Without effective monitoring systems in place for all residential pupils who use the provision, this could lead to the quality of their care being compromised

Policies and procedures in place within the house are understood and followed by residential staff. This leads to an environment which is ordered and safe for residential pupils. However, the school does not have a written policy on searching pupils and their possessions. While residential pupils report that searches are rare, and staff describe taking appropriate action during searches; there are no written procedures for staff to follow in such circumstances. This could lead to an inconsistent or inappropriate response from staff.

Residential pupils enjoy the stability of an efficiently run house with a stable staff team. Staff are sufficient in number and all hold appropriate childcare qualifications. Staff undertake regular training, for example in safeguarding and first aid. This means residential pupils receive support from knowledgeable staff. Staff receive regular supervision and say they feel well supported by the senior management team.

The residential provision maintains a complaint's log. There has only been one entry since the last inspection which was investigated appropriately. Residential pupils know how to complain and are confident that staff would respond promptly. There are regular monitoring visits to the house and the reports highlight areas of improvement based on talking to pupils, a review of records and observations undertaken.

Individual records of residential pupils are limited in content and do not capture the good progress pupils make in the house. Good communication between residential and teaching staff allows for opportunities to discuss individual pupil's needs. While various examples are given as to how staff have supported specific pupils to make good progress there is an absence of documentation in support of the valuable work undertaken. Further to this, the school does not have an effective system to ensure records such as risk assessments and medication administration are maintained and monitored appropriately.

The senior management team demonstrate a clear commitment to meeting the needs of all residential pupils, including those relating to disability, ethnicity, faith, language, religious belief, and sexual orientation. Individual residential pupil needs are recognised in care planning documents and all residential pupils are accorded equality of opportunity.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.

- There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of residential and care provision in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff. The school's governing body or proprietor has a system to monitor care and welfare provision in the school. (NMS 13.1)
- The records specified in Appendix 2 ('Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards') are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. (NMS 13.3)
- Every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress which can be read by the child at anytime (except where the data controller is not obliged to supply the information to the child), and add personal statements or statements correcting errors. (NMS 22.1)

What should the school do to improve further?

- Ensure the practice of secondary dispensing of medication is reviewed to reduce the risk of administration errors.
- Ensure there is a written policy for staff to follow with regards to the arrangements for searching children and their possessions.

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.



30/01/2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Littlegreen School

I recently came to your school to do an inspection of the care you receive when staying in the residential house. Thank you for letting me take part in some of your activities and for letting me eat some meals with you.

I think that the school gives you satisfactory care and support in the residential house. You have a good range of activities which you can take part in both indoors and around the school grounds. You enjoy positive and warm relationships with members of the residential staff. You say that staff treat you as an individual, they know you well and listen to you. You also say that you like the accommodation and your bedroom space. Staff make sure that you are safe and help you to learn how to stay safe when in the community or on the internet.

There are some things the school needs to do better. The school has to make sure all the correct policies and records are in place for staff to complete and to follow. Staff do not write records about each of your sleepovers, so there are no records for you to look back on. Other records written by staff do not fully capture what happens when you stay at the house. It is important that records are kept of your nights at the house and what you achieve during your stay. Also, it is important that staff who give you your medicine do so in a safe way to make sure mistakes do not happen. Staff must also be given written rules about how any searches of bedrooms or of your possessions can take place.

Thanks again for letting me spend some time with you. Overall, your school's residential house is offering you satisfactory support and care and helps you make lots of progress.

Yours sincerely

Anna Williams

Yours sincerely,

Anna Williams