

Limpsfield Grange School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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Inspector	Paula Lahey

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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

Limpsfield Grange School is a maintained day and residential special school catering for girls between the ages of 11 and 16. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and may present as emotionally, educationally or physically vulnerable. Residential accommodation is available from Monday to Thursday. Currently 31 pupils access boarding, some of these are on a shared basis as there are 24 available beds. The school is situated within the residential area of Oxted, Surrey. The school was last inspected in 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	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.

- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is outstanding. The provision has a highly effective impact on developing pupils' personal and social development and independent life skills, and achieves consistently outstanding outcomes for their learning, well-being and safety.
- There are many examples of excellence which are worth disseminating beyond this provision. For example, the development of residential pupils' independence and life skills through the innovative 'Rainbow' programme and Duke of Edinburgh scheme. They develop self-esteem, confidence in their abilities and are enabled to learn the skills they need for adult life.
- There is excellent promotion of equality and personalisation. This runs throughout all care practice and documentation. Each pupil is highly valued, treated fairly and is supported to reach their full potential; consequently they are thriving in this school.
- The school is an inclusive and very caring community where differences and individuality is respected. Pupils display genuine care, consideration and courtesy for each other, resulting in very good relationships and a feeling of safety and security.
- The positive approach to behaviour management has helped develop pupils' personal control, empathy and anger management, consequently pupils behaviour is very good. They report especially liking the 'on the spot' rewards and the 'raffle ladder' and reflect how these incentives have helped them to develop positive behaviour.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements are excellent. Staff recognise the diverse

and vulnerable needs of pupils and are diligent in ensuring they are protected. Pupils communicate that they feel safe and secure in the school and residence; this is supported by the excellent relationships they have with members of staff and each other. Experienced and knowledgeable senior staff take the lead for child protection areas.

- The residential provision is very well organised and managed. This is strengthened with a stable and experienced care team who demonstrate enthusiasm and passion for their work and aim high for each pupil. This is a positive child-centred environment.
- This ambitious school meets all the national minimum standards and since the last inspection has made excellent progress to embed outstanding practice. Additionally, the staff team have developed a number of initiatives which have improved the quality of care and outcomes for pupils. Examples include: enhancing pupils involvement in their care planning through the use of innovative personal diaries, establishing the use of data systems in the residential provision to track pupils progress and welfare, and developing staff skills by carrying out formal observations of their practice.
- There were no recommendations made in respect of the residential provision at the last integrated inspection. Following this inspection two areas for improvement have been identified in order to develop the quality of provision further. These relate to documenting all pupil records in an individual format and providing pupils and staff with up-to-date food hygiene training.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. The innovative work and quality of care provided in the residence plays a significant role in developing positive outcomes and achievements for residential pupils. They have all made exceptional progress towards meeting their individual aims of the placement, especially in relation to independence, confidence and personal development.

Pupils can describe progress they have made since starting at the school and feel that this is due to the excellent support and guidance they receive. Parents confirm this. Residential pupils say they have developed self-esteem and confidence by doing the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and the wide range of activities. They have improved their behaviour at home by learning how to stick to boundaries at school. They have made and kept friends by learning how to relate and interact with others, and are prepared for future life by learning independence and self help skills such as personal organisation, cooking and using public transport. Their physical fitness has improved and they reflect on now being able to do a full hour of aerobic exercise each week rather than minutes when they first started. Pupils feel they have better control over their emotions and are more able to appropriately manage their anxieties and worries. Pupils feel genuine affiliation with each other and describe the benefits of being with other people who have similar needs and staff who understand them. One

parent states, 'my daughter's confidence has grown a huge amount, she has made friends that are consistently nice to her and seem genuinely pleased to see her'.

Educational progress and independence has developed. They complete homework and individual reading to staff every evening. The school feel this has impacted positively on pupil literacy and communication levels and are in the process of formally assessing this. Pupils are very well prepared for adult life. All are learning to develop their self-help, personal presentation and independent travel skills through the 'Rainbow' life skills programme. They have achieved good scores in numeracy assessments particularly in relation to using and handling money. Pupils take responsibility for devising and evaluating the termly activity programmes. This results in enthusiastic engagement in new experiences, developing hobbies and interests and enjoying their social time. They keep each other up to date with activities through publishing their own weekly newsletter.

Pupils feel proud to attend the school. They could not speak more highly of the school and residence. A large number of them describe the residential experience as, 'being one big happy family' and, 'having lots of sisters who you get on with and who look out for you'. While they do miss their families, they really enjoy staying in the residence due to all the friends they have made. Pupils effectively use the regular residential forum meetings to suggest ideas for improvements to the provision. They have recently negotiated additional free choice time, later bedtimes and different snacks. They enjoy excellent relationships with each other and the staff team. Pupils describe the staff as older sisters who they feel genuinely care for them and are concerned with their development.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the residential provision and care is outstanding. Pupils are at the heart of innovative person-centred planning, which fully reflects their individuality. They feel empowered by writing their own care plans and recording their daily progress in personal diaries. These practices have helped them to develop an understanding of their own needs and confidence in determining when and how they want support and assistance. They keep their care plans up-to-date by working in partnership with key workers.

The staff team are experienced, skilled and very child focused. The partnership working between care, education, specialist support staff and families provide the pupils with excellent pastoral care. Staff have a very comprehensive understanding of individual needs and strengths and ensure that admission, care planning and transition are personalised. Pupils who are new to the school are provided with additional support from the family link worker. Parents say this service has helped them as much as their child to settle into the school and residence. Pupils' health and dietary needs are fully met. They have excellent support for medical needs and when they are poorly or injured. Well trained staff enable the safe administration of medication, first aid treatment and management of specialist conditions. They closely

monitor pupils' psychological health and the pastoral support team provide individual sessions for children, family support and staff consultation.

There are high aspirations for pupils. The whole staff team provide an exceptional level of individualised support and realistic target setting which ensures pupils achieve and participate both at school and within the residence. They have developed greater independence skills, improved their physical health, gained confidence, and achieved recognised attainments within the 'Rainbow' programme and Duke of Edinburgh scheme. They are learning life skills and are developing meal preparation and cooking skills. Care staff demonstrate good understanding of food safety however, they have not completed up-to-date food hygiene training.

Pupils are enabled to engage in a wide range of stimulating and exciting activities both on site and away from the school. Staff describe involvement in community activities as being an integral part of developing social skills and independence. Pupils have recently enjoyed trips to the ballet and theatre, weekly swimming, badminton, dry slope skiing and dance sessions, and camping expeditions. The school and residence have devised a number of incentives and opportunities for achievements and positive behaviour to be recognised and rewarded. These include 'on the spot' rewards; raffle opportunities; trips outs; pupil of the week; team points, praise in assembly; award ceremonies and celebration events. This has resulted in pupils who feel valued and motivated to engage in positive behaviour.

The residential accommodation is comfortable, homely and well maintained. Pupils respect their environment and have personalised their bedrooms and communal areas with art work, photographs and favourite colours. There are plentiful resources including a large selection of games, books, magazines, toys and computer equipment. The tennis court, swimming pool, trim trail and grounds are all well utilised by pupils during their stay. Families cannot speak more highly of the school. Parents say, 'the residential facilities and care staff are excellent. They provide a very warm, friendly home like atmosphere with a good range of activities which aids my daughter's development of life skills.'

Residential pupils' safety

Pupils' safety is outstanding. Safeguarding continues to have a high priority within the school. Staff are very aware of their responsibilities and effectively implement policies, procedures and risk assessments in practice.

Pupils are protected by the school's robust recruitment systems and monitoring of visitors to the site. All staff and governors have completed training in safeguarding and are provided with regular refreshers which keep them up to date with current procedures. Staff are alert to pupils' vulnerabilities and closely monitor their welfare. They appropriately share any arising concerns with one of the four experienced and suitably trained senior staff. An annual safeguarding self-assessment is undertaken and the managers have started to gather and analyse data about welfare needs.

Pupils say they feel secure and their well-being is assured in all areas of the school. All staff take responsibility for teaching and guiding pupils to make safe choices and manage risk effectively. Consequently they develop a very good awareness of personal safety and understand how to protect themselves in a variety of situations. Examples include; e-safety, anti-bullying; understanding and maintaining good health, and promptly sharing worries or concerns and when travelling in the community.

Staff promote an open approach to complaints and successfully support pupils to make their views known. They make good use of the effective 'can I help' system and also use their personal diaries to alert staff to times when they may feel anxious or unwell but are unsure how to communicate this verbally. Staff have devised a variety of child friendly resources such as anxiety charts and 'emotion stickers' to help them express how they may be feeling. Staff are also skilled at interpreting non-verbal communication and provide excellent pastoral support. Pupils all speak positively about key workers and additionally can identify external agencies they can go to should they wish. Parents say: 'My daughter has grown so much; she has gained in maturity, independence and confidence. It has transformed her so much so quickly,' and, 'my daughter loves the school and is very happy. The staff have amazed me so much.'

The school successfully implements a positive behaviour management policy. There is effective use of de-escalation, clear boundaries and expectations, role modelling, development of social communication, rewards and regular recognition of achievements. Pupils display an empathy and understanding of each other's differences and do not identify bullying or discrimination as problems within the school or residence. Staff are well-trained in an approved behaviour intervention method. Physical interventions are used infrequently and only when absolutely necessary to ensure safety. Risk assessments, policies and procedures are in place to support the maintenance of a safe environment. Where issues are identified these are attended to promptly. Regular safety and servicing checks are undertaken and regular fire drills take place at different times. Pupils are familiar with fire evacuation procedures and are given regular reminders of health and safety matters affecting them.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

Leadership and management of the residential provision is outstanding. The extremely well organised and managed residential provision is an integral and highly valued part of the school community. There are clear aims and objectives for the school and residence. These are successfully translated into practice and are exceeded in many ways, especially in relation to outcomes for pupils.

This school has substantial strengths and a sustained record of delivering outstanding performance and driving forward improvement. The school has developed effective internal quality monitoring systems, including the recent

introduction of gathering and analysing data on pupil's welfare and progress in the residential provision. There is accurate and insightful evaluation of performance. Where areas for improvement emerge the school recognises and manages them well. All staff contribute to internal reviews and development planning to ensure that there is a shared ownership regarding improving the school.

The senior care team are committed to improving the quality of residential provision and are highly effective at achieving this. Since the last inspection they have successfully devised, established and embedded a number of initiatives which have contributed to progress. Pupils, parents and educational staff agree with this and accurately reflect the positive impact boarding has on developing learning, independence and personal development. Residential records are comprehensive, detailed and contribute to an understanding of each pupils journey through the school. However, records of daily discussions about pupils' needs are currently documented in a central handover file. This could make it difficult to easily track trends and patterns and monitor pupil progress.

Pupils benefit from a well-trained, suitably qualified, experienced and stable care team. Morale within the team is good and they feel well supported by each other and more formal systems such as team meetings, supervision, comprehensive policies and training. This year the senior care team have implemented a supervision contract and staff observation programme. Staff make effective use of these systems to reflect on their practice and work with pupils. A parent said, 'the care staff really do seem to care, the whole team is approachable and professional'. Staff have established and maintained excellent relationships with families. Parents feel very well supported by the school, welcomed and listened to by all staff. Families' views are sought through regular surveys and the recent development of family workshop meetings.

Pupils' views are actively sought, highly valued and play an important role in the development of the residence and school. Senior leaders consult with them through surveys, school council and the residential forum before any changes are made. Residential pupils have contributed to the design of the school logo and the 'trim trail', an outdoor fitness trail. They contributed towards the school development plan, evaluated current activities, reviewed policies and suggested how budgets could be spent. The school council spoke proudly of their contribution in supporting governors in recently recruiting a new headteacher.

National minimum standards

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

What should the school do to improve further?

- Ensure that daily handover notes about individual pupils are recorded separately.
- Provide pupils and staff with up-to-date food hygiene training.

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.



19/03/2012

Dear pupils

Inspection of Limpsfield Grange School

It was a pleasure to meet you at the recent Ofsted inspection of the residential provision.

I feel the residential provision provides you with excellent opportunities and experiences. You have all made significant progress and should be especially proud of your achievements in reading, developing independence skills and learning how to make and keep friends.

You all told me that the best things about staying in the residence are spending time with your friends and joining in with a wide range of activities. I was pleased to be able to join you for badminton, homework, zumba, snacks and chats and rainbow life skills. All of these activities are helping you to develop self confidence, social interaction and communication skills and be able to learn skills you will need as an adult. I hope you also enjoyed the Easter disco and master chef evening.

I was really impressed with the new personal diaries and was pleased to see how involved you all were in recording your achievements, daily progress and thoughts about your stay. You are also active participants in the residential forum and school council and also provide staff with your views on activities, meals and the environment. All these contributions are valued by the staff and you have helped to improve the residential provision and the school community.

I have asked the staff to consider a different way of documenting some records they keep to make them easier to track your individual progress. I have also suggested that you and the staff do a food hygiene course which will help you with further understanding safe cooking and food preparation.

Thank you for completing the surveys - your comments really helped me to understand what you like about staying at school and how safe you feel. I was also pleased to hear from your families - they are very proud of you and feel you have all made excellent progress since joining this school.

best wishes and good luck for the future

Paula Lahey

Yours sincerely,

Paula Lahey