

Limpsfield Grange School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125459
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	359892
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Kell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Unsworth
Headteacher	Lynis Williams
Date of previous school inspection	18 September 2007
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Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Inspection number	359892

Boarding provision

Social care Unique Reference Number SC010255
Social care inspector Lucy Ansell

Age group 11–16
Inspection dates 17–18 November 2010
Inspection number 359892

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors and one social care inspector. They observed 10 lessons, each taught by a different member of staff, and held meetings with staff, groups of students and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, such as assessment data, behaviour and incident logs, and development planning. The 16 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were those completed by staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The procedures for tracking and analysing students' progress and the use of this information in setting individual students' targets.
- The impact of the residential provision in supporting students' learning and personal development and in enriching their curriculum.
- The systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's behaviour management strategies.
- How effectively information and communication technology is used as a tool for teaching and learning.

Information about the school

Limpsfield Grange is a smaller-than-average special school that can admit up to 64 students. Of these, a maximum of 22 can attend as residential students during the week. Therefore, local authorities some miles away from the school place students here.

All of the students have a statement of special educational needs. It aims to meet the needs of any student who is identified as being socially, emotionally or educationally vulnerable in a mainstream setting. Therefore, students have special educational needs and/or disabilities that include specific learning difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties, sensory difficulties, physical disabilities, and behaviour, social and emotional difficulties. A minority of students also demonstrate features of autism. A very large majority of students have a White British heritage. Students arrive from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Approximately half of them are known to be eligible for free school meals.

The school has acquired a number of nationally accredited awards since the previous inspection. These include a Sportsmark, Healthy School status, an Inclusion Quality Mark and an award from the British Safety Council Health for Safety in the Workplace.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Limpsfield Grange is a good school. Outstanding residential provision makes a very important contribution to students' learning and personal development. Students are excellent ambassadors for the school. Their behaviour is excellent and they mature into respectful, courteous and communicative young people with positive views about their futures. The school's practical application of its excellent commitment to equality of opportunity results in very high-quality inclusive practice. Excellent safeguarding procedures contribute to the school's outstanding provision for the care, guidance and support of students. Consequently, they make outstanding progress in many aspects of their personal development, such as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, confidence, self-esteem and the ability to travel independently. Attendance is broadly average.

Students' attainment is low on entry. Despite this, they make good progress and achieve well. This is made possible because the school stabilises students' behaviour quickly, transforms their attitudes and successfully encourages them to take responsibility for their own actions. This foundation acts as a very effective springboard for reigniting students' enjoyment of school and a wish and willingness to learn. The school capitalises on these reformed attitudes. It provides a good-quality education. A good curriculum provides a wide range of learning opportunities. Teaching is generally good and lessons engage and interest students.

Since the previous inspection, school leaders' decisive action to raise standards has paid dividends. Effective school evaluation and good monitoring of learning prompted the need to raise the level of challenge in some lessons and to improve assessment procedures generally. Leaders have had success in both of these areas, but the work is not complete. It is still the case that not all teachers consistently give students tasks that provide the precise level of challenge that is required to accelerate learning. Much more accurate assessment information is collected regularly and tracked than previously, but its analysis lacks sharpness. Leaders do not extract as much information as they could from the data when evaluating progress or when setting targets. Nor do they check how well students perform compared with those with similar attainment levels in other schools. Leaders have a good understanding of the school and its priorities, which form the basis of the school improvement plan. Planning is strong in identifying strategies to improve outcomes for students in the short term. However, the plan does not show how the school aims to move forward by achieving long-term strategic intentions through meeting a sequence of short-term objectives. This is an ambitious school with a good capacity for sustained improvement. It is well placed to make the necessary changes to develop further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Analyse, interpret and use assessment data more effectively in order to:
 - set more precise individual targets
 - measure the value that the school adds to students' learning by comparing their progress with that made by students with similar attainment levels elsewhere.
- Disseminate best classroom practice by ensuring that all staff routinely match learning activities to students' capabilities and prior learning in order to promote independent learning.
- Make school improvement planning more effective by identifying milestones and checkpoints that enable leaders to routinely monitor and evaluate the school's progress towards achieving longer-term strategic priorities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment on entry to the school is low because students' learning difficulties have had a significant and adverse effect on their education and have frequently disrupted their schooling to a large extent. Despite this, attitudes to learning are transformed because students' enjoyment of school increases as they experience success. Students gain new skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate. All groups achieve equally well. Students make good progress in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills especially in terms of how these are applied in real life situations. A small minority manage to acquire GCSE grades A* to C in some subjects, such as English, art, textiles and religious education. The residential provision makes a very good contribution in this respect through its life skills programme, which includes budgeting and buying goods in the local community. Students achieve well in other ways too, such as their successes in getting the Duke of Edinburgh Award and qualifications in first aid and workplace safety.

The residential provision is also a very important contributor to the outstanding progress that students make in their personal growth and development. They make excellent improvement in developing social awareness and in appreciating the impact of their actions on others. They speak confidently and knowledgeably about how they can stay safe and remain healthy. The excellent progress made in each of these aspects alerts them to minimising risk and how to respond in potentially difficult or dangerous situations. Students confirm that they are well prepared for leaving school. They have the entry requirements demanded by courses and the ability to transfer and sustain their self-confidence in a new situation. Students are willing contributors to the school community. They take on responsibilities, like helping to prepare for the School in Bloom competition, and they also maintain the school's profile in the wider community, such as through involvement in the Surrey Special Schools' Carol Service at Guildford Cathedral.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good, with pockets of outstanding practice in some subjects. Students' good rate of learning is underpinned by excellent relationships between students and adults. Very high-quality interactions encourage and challenge students to attempt tasks that are generally, but not always, set at a level that provides just the right level of difficulty to encourage independent learning. Staff have appropriate subject knowledge and they make suitable use of information and communication technology to support learning. Students' very positive attitudes contribute greatly to the pace of learning, and staff are skilled at refocusing them on the few occasions when their attention wanders.

The school provides a good range of learning activities and opportunities, many of which promote students' spiritual and cultural development, including their understanding of cultures and beliefs other than their own. The broad and balanced curriculum that all students follow in Years 7 to 9 becomes more personalised and work-related in Key Stage 4. Students are given options, including the chance to study environmental land-based science as a GCSE course at a local school, and college links and work experience contribute greatly to the school's vocational programme. Community resources and facilities are used well to enrich the curriculum and to give students the opportunity to practise and apply skills learned in class. A variety of after-school clubs are open to all students, although boarders benefit additionally from the quality and variety of activities and leisure pursuits to which they have access.

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Staff provide a very safe and caring environment. Students' welfare and emotional well-being is at the heart of everything that the school does and staff liaise very effectively with colleagues from other agencies to achieve this. Very robust staff recruitment measures, child protection procedures and thorough risk assessments ensure students' safety on- and off-site. Students' transition into and out of school is managed sensitively and carefully. Ongoing guidance is very effective in helping students to manage their anger and frustrations and to channel their energy more productively. Staff also support students' work well by using assessment to work with them in identifying how they can improve the standard of their work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders have successfully secured good improvement through well-organised self-evaluation procedures that gather accurate information about provision and pupil outcomes. Teaching and learning have improved and students' academic progress and personal development is now more closely monitored and tracked. Consequently, behaviour has improved and students' progress is accelerating, with all staff committed to further improvement. However, assessment data is not interrogated in sufficient depth. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is newly formed and so it has had little opportunity to make a significant impact on school development. It fulfils its statutory obligations well, including formal monitoring of the residential units and of the excellent safeguarding arrangements.

Priorities are incorporated into a good short-term improvement plan that reflects the school's ambition, but the plan does not focus sufficiently on long-term strategic aims. The school is fully inclusive. It focuses on meeting individuals' needs and successfully removes barriers that might restrict an individual student's participation in activities. The school's good contribution to community cohesion reflects its deep-seated concern for the needs of students and their families and the importance that it places on gathering very good intelligence on students' local context and circumstances in order to ease the transition to living at home full-time. The school has forged good links with parents and carers and it works successfully to involve them in their children's education, even when they live a considerable distance away. The school exploits good partnerships with other organisations, such as local schools and colleges, to extend students' learning opportunities. The range of these partnerships further demonstrates how well the school supports community cohesion as in some cases it arranges work experience in students' home areas, thereby including them in their local community and job market.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Boarding provision

The boarding provision is of outstanding quality. All of the key national minimum standards for residential special schools are met. The residential units are pleasant, homely and well maintained. Although old, the building has its own unique identity forged by the individual young people and the staff. While bedrooms are shared, all are personalised and arranged to offer privacy.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. All differences and individuality is valued; all boarders are included on all occasions. The school works successfully to ensure that all students enjoy and achieve during their time as boarders. Such very high-quality provision is the result of excellent organisation. The school benefits from an efficient senior team that offers clear leadership and management, for example through routinely monitoring records such as sanctions. Senior managers lead a well-trained care team.

An experienced staff team meets boarders' needs in a consistently high manner. Staff know the boarders very well and are clear about how to support them as individuals. Very thorough daily handovers between care and education staff ensures a consistent approach to support and guidance. This enables the residential units to make a very good contribution to boarders' education. Boarders' learning and achievement is encouraged very well by the excellent range of out-of-school activities on the school site or within the wider community. The ready availability of on- and off-site activities makes a very significant contribution to promoting boarders' independence and personal growth, with a clear focus on the acquisition of life skills.

Boarders' health is promoted exceptionally well. The school provides a balanced diet with wholesome home-cooked meals and good access to healthy snacks and drinks. All relevant dietary, medication and health information is communicated promptly to boarding and

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catering staff. Individual health plans are comprehensive and relate to all aspects of health care provision. The school deploys an excellent multi-disciplinary team approach to ensuring that boarders’ health needs are addressed in the best possible way. Staff are trained in first aid and the administration of medication, which is stored securely. Logs demonstrate very competent record keeping.

National Minimum Standards (NMS) to be met to improve social care

All National Minimum Standards are met.

These are the grades for the boarding provision

The effectiveness of the boarding provision	1
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Views of parents and carers

Although less than a third of the questionnaires were returned, they show that parents and carers have a mixed view about the school. Over two thirds of parents and carers show wholehearted support. Comments that represent the views of many include: 'We have been very impressed with the progress that our daughter has made educationally and socially' and 'We already feel that we are part of the school community, which is amazing considering that the girls live great distances away from each other.' On the other hand, a small minority of parents and carers expressed disquiet about a range of features of the school's work. While there is no consistent pattern to these negative views, they do suggest that a small group of parents and carers is not wholly convinced of the school's effectiveness and believe that it could work more closely with them. Inspectors found that the school works hard to keep parents and carers involved and informed, although their comments indicate that it is not doing this successfully in all cases.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Limpsfield Grange School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 52 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	5	31	7	44	4	25	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	8	50	5	31	0	0	2	13
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	50	8	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	25	9	56	0	0	1	6
The teaching is good at this school	6	38	8	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	25	9	56	3	19	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	44	7	44	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	5	31	5	31	1	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	50	4	25	0	0	3	19
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	31	6	38	1	6	3	19
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	50	4	25	0	0	2	13
The school is led and managed effectively	6	38	5	31	2	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	44	5	31	2	13	2	13

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Limpsfield Grange School, Oxted RH8 0RZ

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. A special thanks goes to those of you who gave up your time to speak with us. You told us that you really enjoy being at Limpsfield Grange and that it is a good school. We agree with you. It is a good school and the residential units are excellent.

The staff take outstanding care of you and you told us how safe you feel in school. They also help you a great deal to develop as young people. We were very impressed with how mature you become as you move through the school. Your behaviour is excellent. You are polite, courteous and helpful and supportive of each other. You have an excellent understanding of how to live a safe and healthy lifestyle. The school prepares you well for moving on to college or into employment.

You make good progress in your work. Lessons are good and you are given a good range of activities, including a ski trip to Italy for many of you. The people who run the school do a good job. They are keen to make the school even better and we have given them some ideas that will help with this:

- make sure that all teachers provide you with work that is set at just the right level so that you can tackle it on your own.
- check to see whether you make more progress in your work than the students in other schools that are similar to yours.
- confirm regularly that the school's priorities for improvement are going according to plan.

While most of you go to school as often as you can, a few could try harder. You can help your school to improve by continuing to attend regularly and by maintaining your very good attitudes and behaviour. Finally, thank you again and I wish each of you every success for the future, especially if you are leaving school next year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell

Lead inspector

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