

Grafham Grange School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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Inspector	Paul Taylor / Janet Hunnam

School address	Grafham Grange, Horsham Road, Grafham, Bramley, GUILDFORD, Surrey, GU5 0LH
Telephone number	01483 892214
Email	
Headteacher	Mr R Johnson

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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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

Grafham Grange School, situated in Surrey, is a non-maintained residential special school for up to 44 boys aged from 10 to 19 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Grafham Grange Special Educational Trust administers the school.

All young people attending the school have complex and challenging needs. Many will have experienced breakdowns of previous educational placements and have had periods out of full-time education. Boarding provision is currently organised into two living units, one within the main school and the other, for older pupils, located nearby, close to the main school campus.

The residential provision was last inspected in March 2011.

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

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

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- The residential provision of the school is good. Residential pupils prosper from living in a nurturing environment which meets their unique needs. Residential pupils learn life and social skills, which increase their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils enjoy and engage in a wide range of activities within their local community and on the school site. There are good relationships between pupils and staff. A passionately committed leadership team, a dedicated experienced staff team and reflective practice ensures a commitment to improving standards and outcomes for residential pupils.
- There is good provision for ensuring residential pupils safety. Pupils feel safe living in the boarding provision. Staff are very aware of their obligations in relation to any child protection issues and the need for close liaison with safeguarding agencies. Review of behaviour management has led to a decrease in the level of physical interventions.
- Outcomes for residential pupils are good. Good relationships between staff and pupils enable them to develop coping strategies and to increase their confidence and self-esteem. Excellent communication and joint working is achieved between the staff and residential pupils' parents.
- Residential pupils' emotional well-being is supported to an excellent standard. Therapeutic and psychological advice and guidance is readily available for the pupils.
- Residential pupils benefit from having a wide and enriching choice of activities which enhance their personal and social development.
- Accommodation is of a good standard and well maintained and comfortable.

Pupils personalise their living areas in order to promote personal investment in their boarding setting.

- Considerable progress has been made since the last inspection, particularly in the areas of reducing physical intervention and addressing pupils smoking.
- The residential provision has significant strengths and any shortfalls identified are minor and do not have an impact on the residential pupils' safety and well-being.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. Their experience of boarding enables them to develop their social and life skills to a good standard, especially when bearing in mind their starting points. The sensitive support from members of staff encourages and enables residential pupils to develop constructive relationships with their peers as well as the adults caring for them. Residential pupils are enabled to develop tolerance and understanding of each others problems and speak positively of how they have developed during their time at the school. 'My temper is much better now and I can mix with the others better' was a comment made by a residential pupil.

Residential pupils benefit from living in an environment where tolerance and understanding of each other is consistently promoted. The structured and supportive residential provision enables them to develop their life and social skills to a significant degree. They experience success and receive positive acknowledgment which helps them to develop their self-esteem and sense of worth.

Residential pupils, on the whole, enjoy their boarding experience. They are offered an excellent range of enriching activities and experience success in their academic endeavours, often for the first time in their lives. Their behaviour is, overall, of a good standard and they benefit from having clear boundaries and detailed behaviour management plans. These plans ensure that members of staff know what strategies and approaches to use for each individual and this enables residential pupils to have the opportunity to maintain positive behaviour.

Residential pupils' views are central to the running of the residential units. They are able to influence choices such as activities and have numerous opportunities to voice their opinions and feelings to various members of staff. Residential pupils have ready access to key workers, tutors and other residential and teaching staff as well as being able to voice their opinions via the school council. Additionally, they have an independent visitor as well as at least weekly visits from governors. Residential pupils have ready access to senior members of staff who are present throughout the school day and in the evenings. 'Loads of people we can speak to' was a comment made.

Residential pupils' health is promoted to a very good standard. They have ready access to any routine health needs such as a doctor or dentist as well as on site advice from the school nurse. They particularly benefit from a setting where their

emotional well-being is promoted to a very high standard. Psychological guidance is easily accessible within school which enables access to counsellors, an Art therapist, Family support therapists and family liaison Managers. The routines and support which residential pupils receive from the staff, enable them to feel emotionally safe and very closely supported.

Residential pupils benefit from well-planned transition programmes. The planning of independence training and development of life skills has not become firmly embedded for the older pupils. However, a review of the process has identified the need to develop the programme.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the residential provision is good. Pastoral support offered to residential pupils is supportive and consistent. Each residential pupil receives a thorough induction in order to prepare for life at the school. There are efficient links between educational staff and residential care staff. Good communication is achieved and it is clear that all members of staff are kept up to date with relevant information about each pupil.

Residential pupils are offered good opportunities to develop their academic abilities as a result of detailed education and care plans. The plans contain achievable targets and the effectiveness of the plans is assessed at regular reviews with input and comments from the residential pupils. This approach ensures that the pupils feel involved in and have a personal investment in their plans.

Behaviour management plans and crisis intervention plans are of a good standard. These plans give members of staff a good knowledge of how to intervene and support residential pupils' emotional and behavioural needs.

Members of staff ensure that the residential pupils have access to a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities. These enable them to develop their self-esteem and confidence and to show them that leisure time can be spent productively and positively.

Residential pupils have access to very good health services and information. Routine health care needs are met with the staff facilitating appointments if needed and ensuring the residential pupils are supported to attend these. Access to specialist health care, such as psychologists and therapeutic services is also arranged promptly. This approach ensures that the residential pupils have their emotional well-being promoted to a particularly high standard. Systems to ensure that medication is recorded and administered are robust. Healthy living is encouraged and this is provided not only by ensuring the residential pupils have access to health care, but by encouraging exercise and a healthy diet. Very effective work has significantly reduced the numbers of pupils who smoke on the school site.

Food is of a satisfactory standard and individual dietary need whether culturally related or health related, are known and met. Meals are well ordered social occasions with close staff support and supervision. Meals are seen as an opportunity for the residential pupils to develop social skills.

Residential accommodation is of a good standard. Accommodation is comfortable, well furnished, and maintained to good standard. Residential pupils are able to personalise their own rooms.

Residential pupils are able to contact families, carers and loved ones by using their own mobile telephones or the school telephones.

Residential pupils' safety

There is good provision at the school for ensuring residential pupils are safe and protected from harm. Recruitment procedures are effectively implemented. The thorough and robust recruitment procedure ensures that only adults, who have been checked as being appropriate to work with children, are employed.

The safeguarding of pupils is a priority within the school. The head of care is a designated person with responsibility for child protection and has received training relevant to the role. Care staff have a good awareness of safe working practices and complete child protection refresher training on an annual basis. They are proactive in promoting and protecting the welfare of pupils and effectively implement the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. Records kept of any incidents are very well organised and of a high quality. Residential pupils report feeling safe within the residential provision. Bullying behaviour is addressed and strategies implemented by members of staff have reduced the number of incidents.

On occasion residential pupils have gone missing. Incidents have been addressed promptly and effectively with good liaison with external agencies, such as the police, as well as good communication with parents and carers. The approach ensures that residential pupils are supported well and reasons for their running away are discussed in order to help them deal with their anxieties and concerns.

Behaviour management is carefully thought through. For example, individual plans for residential pupils ensure that strategies are in place, enabling them to maintain positive behaviour. The strategies are mostly successful and residential pupils, on the whole, develop coping strategies and achieve much improved standards of behaviour. Positive behaviour is encouraged and celebrated. The implementation and review of behaviour management strategies has led to a decrease in levels of physical intervention. Good records are maintained of any incidents requiring physical intervention. These are reviewed by senior members of staff and the residential pupils are able to add their views and comments related to incidents they have been involved in. This ensures that the use of physical intervention is checked for appropriateness and to decide whether individual strategies need to be amended.

Residential pupils report that sanctions imposed are fair. The records of sanctions or reparation are not always completed consistently by all members of staff. However, no inappropriate sanctions have been imposed as all are checked by senior members of staff.

The safety of the school and residential provision is monitored effectively. Fire precautions and fire equipment are checked on a regular basis. Fire drills are held regularly and all residential pupils receive an induction which includes fire safety and evacuation. On occasion residential pupils have bought electrical items into school and have used these before they have been checked as safe by the member of staff responsible. Members of staff ensure this does happen when they do notice the equipment in the residential provision. However, there can be a slight delay between arrival and checking.

Risk assessments are regularly reviewed, updated and endorsed after auditing by senior members of staff. These risk assessments include environmental checks as well as on site and off site activities. Detailed individual risk assessments and positive handling plans, have been endorsed by each residential pupil's parents or carers. These plans address behavioural issues of the residential pupils and include strategies to manage the risk and how to support each individual. The premises are secure and a closed circuit television system also ensures additional security, particularly at night.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

Leadership and management of the school are of an outstanding calibre. It is a key strength and influence on driving and expecting high standards from staff and pupils. This ensures that the boarding community is seen as a central and important aspect of the school.

A very experienced senior management team provides excellent leadership. The Assistant Chief Executive Officer provides invaluable advice and support to the headteacher who has only been confirmed in post in the last six months. This has enabled the headteacher to develop strategies for the future of the school and to ensure that standards have significantly improved since the last inspection. In turn, an experienced head of care and senior school teachers liaise closely to ensure that all disciplines within the school are working in a coherent manner. This ensures that residential pupils are experiencing consistent, well -planned care across a 24 hour curriculum.

Detailed monitoring systems and clear lines of responsibility ensure that performance is analysed with a view to achieving high standards. This also contributes to improving on performance and delivery.

Grafham Grange is a reflective and learning institution. The systems operated ensure

that practice is analysed and areas for improvement acknowledged and acted upon. This has led to a marked improvement in the quality of care and outcomes for the residential pupils.

There are high staffing ratios available to support residential pupils. A stable staff team, with a low turnover ensures that consistent and experienced adults are available to offer very good levels of advice and nurturing to the residential pupils. Additionally, excellent levels of communication are maintained with parents and carers. The school also offers help and advice to parents in order to help them manage their children's behaviour during school holidays and weekends.

Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed. This ensures that all members of staff are up to date with their statutory obligations and the school's routines and procedures.

The comprehensive approach to assessment ensures that the unique and often complex needs of the residential pupils are known. Strategies are also in place to ensure that the well-being of the whole school community is promoted and protected.

Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed. Smoking incidents and incidents of restraint have significantly reduced due to the strategies and approach developed by the school.

An active governing body carries out statutory monitoring visits as well as ensuring that all governors visit on a regular basis. This ensures that the residential pupils know who the governors are and see them as an integral part of the school community.

National minimum standards

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

What should the school do to improve further?

- Ensure that all electrical items bought into the school by boarders are checked to ensure that they are safe to use.
- Ensure that all members of staff complete the records of sanctions consistently.
- Continue to develop the independence and life skills programme for pupils who are in years 10, 11 and 12.

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.



12/03/2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grafham Grange School

As you will know Ofsted recently inspected the boarding at your school. The inspectors visited the boarding areas, had meals with you, spoke to many of you, met with members of staff and looked at records. Many of you sent in questionnaires.

We think that your school provides a good standard of care for you. We think that you progress well when you come to the school and that the staff work very hard with you to help you deal with your problems and to have a better chance for a positive future.

We think that your school is a safe place for you to live. We are impressed by the relationships which you have with members of staff and your key workers.

We are also very impressed by the activities which you can do and the fact that you can have activities in the school as well as the local community. The camping trips and motor cross are very popular with you.

We saw you all trying to behave very well and thought that you were very tolerant of each other, even when people were having a difficult time. We are pleased that you can all telephone your home and loved ones.

We have asked that you make sure that the staff know when you have brought electrical items in the school so they can be checked to make sure they are safe. We have also asked the school to make sure that records of sanctions are always completed and that the independence programme for you all continues to be developed.

We are very impressed by the senior members of staff and how they make themselves available to you and help members of staff achieve good things for you.

Overall we are impressed by your school and think that it does a good job to try and get what is best for you.

We really enjoyed meeting you all and wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Taylor / Janet Hunnam