

Pield Heath House School

Pield Heath Road, Uxbridge, UB8 3NW

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The school meets fully its key aim of providing the essential skills and knowledge for students to live fulfilled lives. Students' achievement is outstanding.
- Students make outstanding progress from their starting points to the end of Key Stage 4. This is particularly the case in literacy and numeracy, as well as in their communication skills.
- The sixth form is outstanding. All students continue into the sixth form and stay for three years. They make outstanding progress and are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education, other training opportunities or, for some, moving into living accommodation in readiness for further education.
- Students say the school is a safe place to be because 'teachers and adults care for us'. Residential students have similarly positive views about the residential house. The school's safeguarding procedures, including those for boarders, are highly effective. They include thorough recruitment procedures and the careful checking of alternative provision as well as having staff accompany students to this.
- Students' behaviour in and around the school and at alternative provision sites is excellent. Their attitudes to learning are outstanding because of the extensive range of subjects they can study, interesting lessons and outstanding teaching.
- The executive principal, her associate headteachers and others with posts of responsibility are highly effective in leading and managing the school and boarding provision. As a result, improvements in the quality of learning, teaching and achievement have been sustained and all key aspects of the residential provision are outstanding.
- The highly experienced Chair and members of the Governing Body know the school really well and have made a strong contribution to the sustained improvements in teaching and achievement. They are highly effective in holding the school to account and in checking students' achievements and progress, as well as the quality of teaching.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by seven different full-time teachers, a supply teacher, two teaching assistants, a speech and language therapist and a dance therapist.
- Meetings were held with mixed groups of secondary-aged students and sixth form students. Meetings were also held with the executive principal and the associate headteachers, others with posts of responsibility (including for safeguarding), the Chair of the Governing Body and the chair of the curriculum committee.
- Inspectors took account of 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 19 responses to the staff questionnaire. In addition, inspectors took into account the 25 responses to the school's most recent parent questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's practice and looked at a range of documentation, including its checks on how well it is doing, improvement planning, information on students' progress, documents used by senior leaders to check the school's work and governing body documentation, as well as records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The inspection of the residential provision was led by the social care regulatory inspector. Meetings were held with the head of care, senior school leaders and others with posts of responsibility for the residential provision. The inspector took account of four responses to this provision as part of Parent View, nine residential student questionnaires and six responses to the residential staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

James Bowden, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Karen Malcom

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Patricia Barford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school provides for students with complex learning needs, moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) and increasing numbers with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and associated speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The school is divided into two separate sections: the main school for 7 to 16 year old students, and The Victor Braun Centre for sixth form students.
- Students attend on a daily or weekly residential basis. The school also offers a respite service, in conjunction with social services, to enable students to access 24-hour education and help them improve their social, independence and life skills.
- Currently, the large majority of students are boys. Just over half are of White or mixed backgrounds. A small minority are Black or Black British (mainly African) backgrounds and a few are Asian or Asian British (mainly Indian) backgrounds. A small minority are from homes where English is not the home language. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students at the school eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and children from service families, is well above the national average. Currently, there are no students in local authority care and no students from service families. However, the school currently receives none of this funding from the students' local authorities nor does it receive any literacy and numeracy catch-up funding for Year 7 students. It has only just recently received its allocation of primary schools sports funding.
- Students new to the school are usually admitted in September but there are also admissions throughout the year. Increasing numbers are joining the school at the start of sixth form. Including Hillingdon, student placements are commissioned from 17 different local authorities.
- Two small groups of sixth form students are accompanied by school staff for one day every week at Acton College and Uxbridge College. Another student is accompanied by a member of the school staff to a motor vehicles course (SKIDZ) provided by Hillingdon Youth Service on one day per week.
- The executive principal has overall responsibility for both education and boarding, as well as oversight of two other sister schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Broaden the range and use of new technologies to enliven learning and make the curriculum even more exciting.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Careful assessments made when students join the school show they are working at levels well below those expected for their ages. All are provided with targets for improvement in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and communication, as well as for personal development such as in developing independence and social skills.
- By the end of Year 11, students make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points, including in their key skills. They achieve exceptionally well as a result of high quality teaching and the outstanding teamwork of all adults who work with them. This includes very effective contributions from different therapists and other specialist professionals. Achievement is outstanding irrespective of individual special educational needs or disabilities.
- Regular monitoring shows sixth form students' progress continues to be outstanding and sustained across the broad range of nationally accredited courses they follow. This prepares them very well for life beyond the school. School data show that those who leave at the end of Year 14 sustain their placements after leaving. Currently, no students are entered for GCSE courses.
- The most able students make outstanding progress, as do other students, because teachers set tasks which are hard enough to ensure they meet their targets. Staff check students' progress carefully through the diligent use of subject and individual tracking sheets. New targets are set and explained to students when appropriate.
- As a result of high quality teaching and focused individual support, there are no particular differences in the rates of progress made by different groups. This includes, boys and girls, students from different ethnic backgrounds, and those from homes where English is not the home language. Similarly, there are no particular differences in the rates of progress made by different groups of sixth form students, including those who join the school at the start of the sixth form.
- Despite the lack of pupil premium funding, school information shows that the progress of those entitled to free school meals is in line with their classmates in literacy and numeracy, as well as in communication skills. As with all students, their attainment levels in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11 vary widely because of the differences in their starting points.
- In almost all lessons, students' progress is typically outstanding. Highly effective support is given to developing their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in a main school English lesson seen during the inspection, students wrote carefully phrased responses to a party invitation. At the end of the lesson they listened carefully as the teacher read aloud an example of their work. This was supported by appropriate signing to ensure all understood. In a sixth form mathematics lesson, students successfully recapped simple addition problems prior to moving on to learn the operations involved in subtraction. In all lessons, a range of different means of communication, including the use of visual communication cards and the school's own signing system, are used effectively to support non-verbal students' learning.
- Sixth form students working off-site also make outstanding progress in the courses followed. These courses are highly effective in the contributions they make to these students' overall progress.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- As a result of high quality teaching, including in English and mathematics, outstanding learning is the norm. In a main school reading lesson, students listened carefully as the teacher read aloud a story. They responded correctly to the 'either/or' prompts provided by the teacher to connect visual images to the written word. In a sixth form mathematics lesson, the adult supporting the teacher carefully noted students' small steps in learning. This helps planning for the next steps in learning for students. This may include modifying individual targets for the next

lesson.

- A scrutiny of a sample of older students' mathematics work also confirmed how effectively teachers check the progress being made by students. They use this information to make sure follow-up work in the next lesson is hard enough to sustain students' outstanding progress.
- Highly effective verbal feedback from all adults in the room helps keep students interested and on task. In a sixth form personal, social and health education lesson, this was instrumental in improving students' speaking and listening skills. It also improved their personal and social development by involving them in agreeing their own class rules. Their positive responses and concentration were clear signs of their enjoyment in learning throughout this activity.
- Teachers and all adults in the room work exceptionally well with one another. They have high expectations of students' attitudes and behaviour. Their focused support for individual students and their tactics for managing students' individual needs and occasional frustrations keep them interested and on task. This was particularly effective in a small group speech and language therapy session. Students were on focus throughout as they greeted one another, stated how they were feeling and developed their communication skills in real-life situations through a shopping role-play activity. This resulted in students making excellent progress towards their individual speaking and listening targets.
- Teachers are adept at using electronic whiteboards to support teaching. However, senior leaders have recognised that there needs to be a greater range and use of new technologies to enliven learning further and make the curriculum even more interesting.
- Parents who responded to Parent View consider their child to be making good progress and being taught well. Students who spoke with the inspectors confirmed that lessons were lively, they were involved in learning and had lots of one-to-one help.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of students is outstanding. This is because the school is a happy and very well-managed community with high levels of adult support and consistent routines throughout the day. Students know exactly what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour both at school, including in the sixth form and in the residential provision, and when working off-site or on visits. They respond accordingly with an excellent standard of behaviour in all settings.
- Staff respect for students' dignity and well-being results in very positive relationships between all adults and students. This in turn results in an enjoyable, purposeful and safe atmosphere throughout the whole school day, including on off-site courses, where students are accompanied by staff they know. Students respect the fabric of the building and the extensive resources, grounds and facilities available to them.
- Typically, behaviour over time is outstanding. The school is very effective in addressing potential discrimination. There have been no recorded instances of bullying, homophobic bullying, sexual misconduct or racist incidents since the previous inspection. Also, since the previous inspection, there have been no permanent exclusions or instances where students have not been allowed to go to school for short periods of time because of poor behaviour.
- Detailed records also show that day-to-day instances of poor behaviour have declined significantly over the past two years. This is as a result of the school's positive, listening and learning (PLL) approach, which enables students to manage their behaviour effectively through reflection time and discussion with staff.
- Older students told inspectors that they feel safe at school and on visits, are taught how to stay safe and know about different kinds of bullying, saying there was none. One commented, 'I feel comfortable here, it's friendly'.
- Attitudes to learning are excellent, which is as a result of interesting lessons and the fact that activities provided are matched carefully to students' learning needs and abilities. In addition, the extensive range of subjects and other activities provided also motivates students very well. For example, a group of sixth form students relished the opportunity to practise their singing and playing skills in preparation for their planned musical stage production.

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding. This applies to off-site courses and visits as well as to the school itself including the residential provision, and is overseen very effectively by the governing body. Internet safety has a high priority in both the school and residential provision with access denied to social networking and other inappropriate sites when students are online.
- The school's effectiveness in maintaining good levels of attendance has meant overall attendance rates have been sustained with no unauthorised absence. As all students are transported to school, punctuality at the start of the day is reliant on local traffic conditions. The daily breakfast club is a popular event and provides a very positive start to the day, allowing students to relax after, for some, very early starts from home.
- Parents who responded to Parent View are happy with the school's care for their children and that the school makes sure students behave well. This was also confirmed by the responses to the staff questionnaire.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding because of the executive principal and her associate headteachers' drive and determined ambition to provide the best education possible for all. Supported very effectively by staff with teaching, learning and other responsibilities, as well as by governors, this has led to continuing and sustained improvement in teaching and achievement since the previous inspection. All staff are highly committed to ensuring the best outcomes possible for all students and preparing them successfully for life beyond the school.
- The shared leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent and overseen very effectively by one of the associate headteachers.
- There is excellent quality communication between the school and residential staff, including hand-over meetings at the start of the school day.
- The teaching and learning team regularly check the quality of teaching and students' progress. This supports senior leaders in setting clear targets for teachers to improve further the quality of their work. At the end of each year, recommendations are made regarding additional responsibilities and training opportunities.
- As a result of the school's unbending commitment to equality, all students, regardless of circumstances or needs, make outstanding progress in relation to their starting points in their learning and personal development. The extra support and guidance students are given supports their excellent all-round personal development.
- The subjects and topics students study are fine tuned to match fully the abilities and individual needs of all. The strong focus on developing students' key skills of literacy, numeracy, communication, independence, physical and social development. It prepares them very well for the next stage of their education in the sixth form and afterwards for life beyond the school. An impressive range of other extra activities is appreciated by students and makes learning even more interesting. As a result, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is impressive.
- The highly effective support from other professionals as well as from its own team of highly experienced therapists supports students' wide-ranging learning needs particularly well.
- The school maintains very close links with parents, including providing a range of appropriate information on its website. This they appreciate, as is evident in their positive responses to Parent View and the school's own regular parent surveys. One parent commented on the school's most recent parent questionnaire, 'Just keep doing the great work you already do. We think the school is wonderful, and our child enjoys going. What better praise.' Parents who responded to Parent View think the school is well led and managed and that the school responds well to any concerns they may have.
- Since the previous inspection the Trustees of the school have offered light touch support for this outstandingly successful school.
- **The governance of the school:**

- The very experienced Chair of the Governing Body and governors are highly effective in working closely with the school to support its drive for continuing improvement. They are prepared to challenge senior leaders, if necessary, in order to sustain improvement. Governors’ specific areas of expertise support their effectiveness in their roles. For example, there is a member with responsibility for safeguarding. This helps make sure procedures and protocols are robust and effective in the school and that off-site provision is also a safe place to learn. The governing body has a good understanding of performance data, the quality of teaching in the school and of the use of performance management. After checking the work of the executive principal and other staff, governors make appropriate decisions about how well they are working. They consider any action that needs to be taken, as well as training opportunities and pay.
- Governors are highly effective in ensuring the school’s finances are balanced. Allocated funding for the support of primary physical education and school sport has only just been received by the school. Plans for how this will be used have yet to be made so there is currently insufficient evidence of its impact.

Outcomes for residential pupils	are outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	is outstanding
Residential pupils’ safety	is outstanding
Leadership and management of the residential provision	is outstanding

- The outcomes for residential students are outstanding in all aspects of care. Residential students have a highly inclusive yet individualised residential experience. This is because there is excellent consistent care and support where their needs are not seen as a barrier to experiencing a fully enriched lifestyle. The experience of boarding clearly enables students to make excellent progress in their educational, personal, social and cultural development.
- Dedicated staff ensure that students feel safe and have fun while learning. Residential students have exceptionally positive relationships with care and teaching staff. Seeking the views of residential students is central to practice and their views influence planning of events, routines and activities. The school works together with students and parents to ensure that the students’ health and care support needs are delivered in accordance with their wishes. Parents are complimentary about the improved outcomes the residential experience offers their children.
- Arrangements are outstanding for the protection of residential students and keeping them safe. Robust recruitment practice ensures all new staff are checked as suitable to work with students prior to them starting work. All students know who they can approach and talk to if they feel unhappy.
- There is an excellent awareness of health and safety issues and action is taken immediately to address potential hazards. Residential students and their family members consider the residential houses are safe places to live. Residential students are aware of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire or crisis occurring.
- An excellent robust and positive approach to managing behaviour within the school is emulated within the boarding house. . As a result, students feel safe and empowered through this positive approach and the numbers of behaviour incidents across the school and boarding have reduced.
- Surveys received from students and parents are positive. A residential student stated, ‘I like staying at St Joseph.’ Students are encouraged to express their feelings and a variety of communication methods are used to suit their individual needs. Pictures, symbols and signs are evident throughout the school and residential house, and a child-friendly complaints procedure is available in picture form.
- Staffing arrangements meet residential students’ needs. Positive, nurturing and sensitive

relationships enable residential students to trust the adults who care for them. All care staff have as a minimum National Vocational Qualification at level three or equivalent as well as 'in-house' specialist training. This specialist training ensures staff are able to support the residential students effectively.

- Leadership, management and organisation of the residential provision are outstanding. The residential facility is well managed and organised to meet the needs of residential students first and foremost. The head of care routinely monitors practice and uses information gained to drive forward continuous improvement. Students' needs and views are central to all aspects of how the school operates and develops its practice. The management team has an excellent understanding of the residential provision and the commitment to continual improvement for the benefit of residential students.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

Boarding		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	102464
Social care unique reference number	27138
Local authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	431293

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	7–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	66
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	26
Number of boarders on roll	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marius Sykes
Executive Principal	Sister Julie Rose
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 January 2009
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