

Unsted Park School

Munstead Heath Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1UW

Inspection dates

18 November 2014

Overall outcome

Independent school standards met

Context of the inspection

- This inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan. The school was last inspected in May 2014. The inspection judged that the school was not meeting all the standards for independent schools related to welfare, health and safety or all the national minimum standards for residential special schools. An action plan was submitted by the Principal and evaluated as satisfactory in September 2014. This was the first progress monitoring inspection visit since the emergency inspection in May 2014.

Main findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The emergency inspection of May 2014 identified that there were weaknesses in the school's recording of child protection incidents, its approach to e-safety, the training and induction of new staff and the quality of risk assessments, behaviour management plans and placement plans.

At the time of the last inspection, the school's records of child protection and safeguarding concerns were insufficiently detailed. In their action plan, school leaders undertook to revise their methods of recording child protection and safeguarding concerns, to include information about the chronology of actions taken to safeguard students and why concerns have or have not been referred to the local authority. A new summary sheet for concerns has been designed and is being used effectively. All records of child protection and safeguarding concerns, dating from January 2014, have been completed, outlining clearly the reasons for actions taken. As a result, school leaders are able to demonstrate that they have followed up any concerns, shared information with the relevant agencies and, in doing so, promoted safety and security for students in the school. During the monitoring inspection, concerns arising from recent complaints were considered. The school's procedures for responding to and investigating specific complaints are clear, including appropriate detail. They indicate that students and parents are listened to and show that concerns have been acted upon, are being monitored and, where possible, resolved.

Since the emergency inspection, effective action has also been taken to improve students' safety when using the internet and mobile phones. School leaders have issued consent forms and copies of the e-safety rules to parents. The rules have been shared with staff and students and there is now a facility for students to report their own concerns about e-safety. Inspectors confirmed that swift and effective action is taken if there is any inappropriate usage of technology, contributing to students' greater sense of security and safety while using information technology.

At the time of the emergency inspection in May 2014, there were concerns that arrangements for training staff in safeguarding and child protection had not been made with enough urgency. Safeguarding roles and responsibilities had not been formalised. This is no longer the case. The lead safeguarding roles are now clear and have been extended to additional leaders, who have

undertaken enhanced training. Staff know to whom they should report their concerns and they carry out their safeguarding duties responsibly, including accurately recording details. All staff have been provided with the necessary safeguarding and child protection training, including sessions on e-safety and child sexual exploitation. School leaders have made sure that staff have regular updates to support their work with students who may present additional risks or concerns. Staff are reassured by the fact that school leaders are highly visible and supportive around the school site. Parents spoken to during the monitoring inspection were adamant that their children were safe in the school and in the residential provision. Parents find the current school leadership team approachable and helpful, making particular mention of the positive impact of the Acting Principal and the leader for pastoral care. Students spoken to during the inspection know that staff will help them with any concerns and are comfortable reporting their worries. This regulation has now been met.

Records of serious incidents requiring sanctions of physical intervention are now systematically maintained. The school has introduced a new format for recording physical interventions, which includes all the required information. Staff have had guidance to ensure that the recording of incidents is consistent and accurate and are receiving ongoing support to maintain the necessary level of detail. Students are actively encouraged to contribute their views on any incidents and are fully debriefed, as are staff. School leaders, residential leaders and staff review all incidents, including those requiring physical intervention, at the end of each week in a high-priority and useful 'lessons learned' meeting. School leaders monitor records of sanctions closely, in order to identify any patterns and to determine whether behaviour management strategies and risk assessments require any amendments. Any concerns arising are considered individually in meetings with staff and students in order to identify further support and ensure students' well-being and safety. This regulation has now been met.

At the time of the emergency inspection newly appointed residential staff had not completed their training within the appropriate timescales. The school has taken action to ensure that care staff are trained to a level 3 qualification. All care staff who have been employed for three months have either achieved this qualification, are working towards the qualification or have a qualification which demonstrates the same competencies. As a result, the expertise and understanding of the care staff are contributing well to students' safety, welfare and security. This standard has now been met.

Since the last inspection, leaders have introduced a more student-friendly placement plan. Completed plans show evidence of helpful collaboration across the school, including care staff, education staff and therapists. Placement plans, risk assessments and behaviour management plans are now updated promptly and appropriately. Students are fully involved in this process through liaison with their key workers in setting appropriate goals and targets. Plans are signed by students and key workers and sent to parents for their agreement. Key documents related to students are readily available and accessible to relevant staff, including those new to the school, ensuring that they have useful and up-to-date information to provide safe care and meet the needs of students. This standard has now been met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended, and associated requirements

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Hunnam

Social Care Inspector

Information about this school

- Unsted Park is a residential special school, part of the Priory Group, offering full-time education to male and female students between the ages of seven and 19. The school is registered for 65 students.
- The school caters for young people with Asperger's Syndrome and high-functioning autistic spectrum disorders.
- There are currently 63 students on roll, of whom 20 are resident. All but five of the students are boys.
- The school opened in October 2007. Its last full integrated inspection was in July 2013. An emergency inspection took place in January 2014. A further emergency inspection took place in May 2014.
- The school is currently led by an Acting Principal, who was previously the headteacher and whose current position is being made substantive from January 2015. He has overall responsibility for the education and residential provision. The previous deputy headteacher is now acting headteacher. Both joined the school in January 2014. At the time of the inspection, the work of the Acting Principal and acting headteacher was being overseen and supported by the former Principal during a handover period. There is also a head of care, who is responsible for the residential provision. In September 2014, a pastoral leader was appointed.

School details

Unique reference number	135419
Social care unique reference number	SC363144
Inspection number	454443
DfE registration number	936/6592

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection of residential 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 residential special schools.

Type of school	Independent
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	7–19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	26
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	20
Proprietor	The Priory Group
Chair	Helen Sharpe
Headteacher	Richard Johnson (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	£72,000
Annual fees (boarders)	£98,000
Telephone number	01483 892061
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