

Unsted Park School

Munstead Heath Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1UW

Inspection dates	10/03/2015 to 12/03/2015	
Overall effectiveness	Adequate	3
Outcomes for residential pupils	Adequate	3
Quality of residential provision and care	Adequate	3
Residential pupils' safety	Adequate	3
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is adequate because

- The residential provision is improving. Senior leaders and managers have a good understanding of key strengths and areas for development and are taking action to improve outcomes for residential students. They are driving forward development of the service to achieve high standards of care.
- Many students enjoy positive, sensitive and nurturing relationships with staff enabling them to trust the adults who care for them and benefit from their support and guidance. Consequently, some residential students are making significant progress in their social skills, confidence and self-esteem. Some residential students are making good progress in behaving appropriately.
- Not all residential students feel safe and protected. Senior managers are, however, taking robust action to remedy this situation. There is a focus on bullying to increase residential students' awareness of the issues and how to raise concerns. Further work is required with an emphasis on proactive, preventative work to protect residential students. Further development of behaviour management plans and risk assessments to provide detailed guidance for staff will also protect residential students.
- There has been a high turnover of residential staff recently. Consequently, senior managers are focusing on developing the staff team so they can provide competent and confident care for residential students and promote positive outcomes. Well-planned training is in place and effective support, supervision and appraisal for staff.
- Recent recruitment records demonstrate a rigorous approach to checking the suitability of adults to work with residential students. However, one record sampled was found not to be compliant.
- Care plans for residential students are improving but they would benefit from sharper, more relevant targets demonstrating high expectations for residential students soon to transition from the school.

- The arrangements for promoting residential students' psychological well-being require a more cohesive approach, clearer specialist oversight and a greater degree of guidance for staff to develop their understanding of residential students' emotional needs.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

The school was given three hours' notice of the inspection. Meetings were held with the Principal, Headteacher, Head of Care, school nurse, site manager, therapy team, Improvement Regional Manager, HR lead, catering manager, residential staff and residential students. An inspector joined students for two meals. Inspectors spent time in each of the residential units.

Inspection team

Janet Hunnam

Lead social care inspector

Sophie Wood

Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Unsted Park is a residential special school for boys and girls aged 7 to 19 years. The school provides day and residential provision for students with Asperger's syndrome. Residential placements are provided in three boarding houses. The residential provision was last inspected in May 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- ensure that residential students' targets are appropriate to their individual needs
- ensure that there is clear oversight of the arrangements to promote residential students' psychological and emotional well-being
- continue to develop staff and residential students' awareness and understanding of bullying and ensure that clear, proactive strategies are in place to prevent bullying.
- ensure individual behaviour management plans and individual risk assessments outline clear guidance for staff to protect residential students.
- ensure all records of physical intervention provide details of the behaviour leading to the physical intervention and record the views of the residential student.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
 - Schools operate safe recruitment procedures and vet staff in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 14.1)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Adequate

Outcomes for residential students are adequate. Residential students experience good quality relationships with staff who respond to them with warmth and good humour. Consequently, many residential students listen to staff and accept the support they offer, enabling some to make significant progress in relation to their starting points.

Currently, the difficult, disruptive and challenging behaviour of some residential students is having a detrimental impact on other students who report they feel intimidated. Senior managers are seeking to resolve this issue but not all residential students demonstrate respect and understanding towards staff and their peers.

Residential students enjoy the activities available though some residential students report that there is not enough to do in their free time. Managers are aware of these views and have taken action to provide a wider range of enriching activities to enable residential students to follow their personal interests and participate in new leisure pursuits, allowing them to develop their self-confidence and social engagement.

There is a strong focus on preparing residential students for their next stage and the transition from the school. Residential students are encouraged to develop their daily living skills at a pace and level appropriate to their individual needs. More structured programmes are in place for older residential students enabling them to build their confidence in preparation for their next stage.

Quality of residential provision and care

Adequate

The outcomes for residential students are adequate. Residential students benefit from supportive, nurturing and individualised care that enables some students to make significant progress and development.

Staff know residential students very well enabling them to tailor support to residential students' specific needs. There is a range of documentation in place to support the delivery of care to residential students. Placement plans focus on residential students' individual needs as identified in their statement of special educational needs with specified targets for their development. However, some of these targets do not demonstrate that staff have high expectations of residential students, particularly for those residential students approaching a transition to the next stage of their life. Staff recognise the importance of individual key work sessions with residential students. Senior staff are developing detailed guidance for staff to improve and strengthen the key worker role to provide effective, individual support to promote positive outcomes.

All residential students have individual health plans, which are regularly updated. Residential students with specific medical conditions have very detailed health plans with comprehensive and particularised procedures in place to ensure medical needs are met. Staff receive specialist training to meet the specific health needs of residential students, ensuring they have the knowledge and skills to provide specialist care when needed. A recently appointed experienced nurse oversees all residential students' health needs including the administration of medication. Residential staff are trained to administer medication, with the nurse checking on their competency to administer medication safely. Consequently, the system for administering medication is robust. The nurse is building excellent relationships with residential students and this role has strengthened the health and medical provision for residential students. She has introduced a new initiative focusing on sexual health for older students, further developing the health provision.

A team of therapists, including speech and language therapy, occupational and art therapy, provide development opportunities for residential students in line with their needs identified in their statement. Although specific strategies are included in some residential students' placement plans, monitoring of how the therapy provision is meeting students' needs demonstrates that not all students are receiving the therapy necessary to meet their needs and promote positive outcomes. A consultant psychiatrist is available for staff to seek advice on strategies to support individual students and also to provide staff training on specific issues relating to the care provision. However, the arrangements for promoting residential students' psychological and emotional well-being require a more cohesive approach, clearer specialist oversight and a greater degree of guidance for staff to develop their understanding of the emotional needs of residential students.

The quality of the catering arrangements is of a high standard and provides residential students with a varied and nutritious diet. Individual and specialist diets are also well catered for. The catering manager takes into account feedback from the students and liaises closely with parents in relation to specific dietary needs. There is a mixed response from residential students about the food on offer with some commenting that they do not always have the food they like. Some residential students have the opportunity to plan, shop and cook their own meals thus developing their independence skills.

The accommodation is of a good standard. Residential areas are well-maintained and have undergone a programme of refurbishment. Further work is planned to continue to provide a more homely and less institutional living environment.

Residential pupils' safety

Adequate

The arrangements in place to protect residential students and ensure they receive safe care are adequate. Not all residential students say they feel safe in their house.

The safeguarding policy has recently been updated and staff receive training in safeguarding and child protection. The policy outlines clear steps for staff to follow if they have any concerns. Staff demonstrate the necessary knowledge and understanding of potential safeguarding risks which may affect the welfare of residential students. Concerns are appropriately referred to the designated child protection officer whose well-documented records show that proper action is taken including consultation and referral to the local safeguarding authorities. Such detailed record keeping is assisting the designated child protection officer to monitor safeguarding concerns robustly to identify patterns and trends and ensure effective action is taken to safeguard residential students.

Not all residential students state that the school deals well with any cases of bullying as reported in the recent Ofsted survey of residential students. Managers have focused on raising students' awareness of the issues relating to bullying. They have created an anti-bullying pack to help students understand, hold fortnightly anti-bullying meetings and have concentrated on raising students' awareness and how they can raise concerns. Although this initiative is a positive step, it is still in its infancy and should extend to raising staffs' awareness and understanding of bullying with evidence of clear proactive strategies to prevent bullying.

Residential students have individual behaviour management plans identifying known risks, triggers and strategies to guide staff in supporting residential students in difficult situations. Some of these plans lack detailed, prescriptive guidance for staff to follow to protect students. Staff receive training in behaviour management and physical intervention to manage situations safely. Recent reports of physical intervention demonstrate that staff are now providing more detail of the incident. However, not all reports clearly demonstrate the student's behaviour

leading to the physical intervention and the views of the student relating to the incident are not consistently recorded.

Although recent recruitment records show a rigorous approach to checking that adults are suitable to work with children, one record sampled was not fully compliant. This does not demonstrate a sufficiently robust recruitment process to protect residential students. Improved visitor protocols are in place, thus strengthening the safeguarding of residential students.

Staff have undertaken training in e-safety and child sexual exploitation. Their knowledge, understanding and awareness of the risks students face is improving and developing, thus strengthening their ability to safeguard students. A focus on raising students' e-safety awareness, individually and in group sessions, demonstrates a commitment to protecting students. Although staff are aware of the risks associated with students leaving the site without permission and appropriate policies and procedures are in place to manage such occurrences, individual risk assessments do not always clearly prescribe the action staff should take in such circumstances. Also, risk assessments do not clearly outline preventative strategies to protect students from the risks associated with leaving the site without permission.

Safety of the residential environment is monitored effectively. A range of health and safety checks and fire checks are carried out regularly, including fire drills for residential students. Such comprehensive systems protect residential students and staff.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The leadership and management of the residential provision is good. The new principal, new head teacher and senior leaders all share a common understanding of the ethos of the school where the residential community is seen as a central and important aspect. The head of care is appropriately qualified and experienced. He provides strong leadership to a staff team where there has recently been a number of new recruits. Although there is evidence of good progress in relation to training and developing the residential team, further team development is necessary to ensure all residential staff are confident and competent in meeting the often complex needs of residential students. Managers provide effective supervision and appraisal for residential staff and staff report that they feel well supported to carry out their roles.

Senior managers are committed to embedding best practice through the training and development of staff and improving the quality of documentation, care plans, risk assessments and individual key working for residential students. The breaches of the National Minimum Standards identified at the previous inspection have been met. The head of care routinely monitors the residential provision and there is evidence of improved recording. Reports of monitoring visits are comprehensive, evaluative and provide action points for improvement, demonstrating a constructive and positive tool to assist the drive for improvement. The organisation is also providing increased support for the head of care, working towards achieving the objectives in the development plan and developing the staff team to promote positive outcomes for residential students.

Senior managers are embedding a developmental approach and a 'lessons learnt' meeting is held weekly to consider all significant incidents and events and how practice can be improved. Concerns from parents are recorded and discussed at these meetings to review practice and how residential students' individual needs can be more effectively met. Concerns rarely reach the stage of a formal complaint but a complaints process is in place if the concerns cannot be resolved informally.

The school uses formal surveys to obtain the views of residential students. Senior managers analyse the results of surveys, clarify the issues raised and take action to take account of

residential students' views. Consequently, a member of staff has been appointed as the anti-bullying co-ordinator for residential students and activity plans have been revised to include weekly off-site activities in response to residential comments in the survey.

What inspection judgements mean

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

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.

Type of school	
Number of boarders on roll	20
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to 19
Headteacher	Mr Richard Johnson (School Principal)
Date of previous boarding inspection	02/07/2013
Telephone number	01483 892061
Email address	unstedparkschool@priorygroup.com

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