

Grafham Grange School

Grafham, Guildford, GU5 0LH

Inspection dates 12–13 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The leadership and management of trustees and governors are inadequate. They acknowledge safeguarding concerns and weaknesses in achievement and teaching. However, they have not acted decisively enough to put the needs of students first.
- Despite alerts from students, their parents, external agencies and staff members about excessive use of physical restraint and isolation, trustees' and governors' response has been slow and convoluted.
- Although students say they generally feel safe in the school, they cite bullying as a concern and feel it is not consistently well managed by staff.
- For residential students, the lack of an adult independent visitor leaves students unable to raise concerns that they would not wish to share with school staff.
- The school must ensure that it meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools which have not been met.
- The day-to-day running of the school has not been appropriately secured. Current arrangements are short term and temporary.
- Teaching is inadequate because teachers do not plan work effectively enough. Until very recently, teachers new in post have not been adequately supported.
- Students' achievement over time is inadequate. The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and others is wide.
- Leaders' work to keep students safe is unacceptably weak; procedures concerning potential safeguarding incidents out of school time are not sufficiently robust and record-keeping is not always complete.
- Students' behaviour is inadequate. Absence and exclusion rates are too high. Behaviour management policies do not place sufficient emphasis on teachers' roles in improving learning.
- Students are unsettled. Their volatility reflects their loss of trust and faith in the leadership of the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Temporary leaders new in post have correctly identified the areas of most urgent need. Effective action is taking place to review and correct safeguarding procedures.
- Staff demonstrate considerable patience in their engagement with students. They are committed to improving students' experience of the school.

Information about this inspection

- In this unannounced section 8 deemed section 5 integrated school and residential inspection, inspectors met with groups of students, the Chief Executive of the trust, the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the newly appointed Chair of the Governing Body. They also met with the interim deputy headteacher, a range of staff in leadership roles and other staff working within the school and residential provision.
- Inspectors observed a total of eight lessons, of which four were jointly observed with the interim deputy headteacher. Inspectors spent time in the residential areas and observed an assembly.
- Inspectors scrutinised students’ work during lesson observations, talked to students in lessons and discussed students’ current achievement with leaders.
- Since the school does not provide separately for students of sixth form age, the quality and impact of the school’s provision for these students is encapsulated in the main report text and associated judgements.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation including leaders’ self-evaluation, their plans for improvement, and documentation relating to safer recruitment procedures.
- Inspectors scrutinised all child protection and safeguarding policies, including health and safety risk assessments. They also scrutinised the school’s behaviour management policies and other statutory documentation concerning residential provision.
- Inspectors took account of 10 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View. They also conducted telephone conversations requested by several parents.
- Inspection activities conducted by social care inspectors included visiting all the residential accommodation, speaking with and observing residential students in the boarding houses, eating meals with residential students, observing a school assembly and the morning handover between education and care staff, and speaking with parents. There were also formal discussions with groups of care staff and the interim head of care. Documents relating to the welfare and safety of students were sampled.
- During this inspection the interim deputy headteacher acted as the main point of contact, with whom the lead inspector kept in touch. Since the time of the inspection, an executive headteacher has been appointed. Details of the executive headteacher appear on the final page of this report.
- This inspection was carried out following a complaint made to Ofsted which raised serious safeguarding concerns. The complaint was deemed to be a qualifying complaint and Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector decided that an unannounced inspection of the school should take place to follow up the whole-school issues that were raised. Inspectors established whether safeguarding procedures meet requirements, including the response to students presenting challenging behaviour. They also sought to determine whether staff are suitably trained and able to seek advice and support when required, and whether leaders and members of the governing body are effective in monitoring and evaluating policy and practice for safeguarding within the school.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty’s Inspector

Hilary Macdonald

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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Social Care Inspector

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Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- Grafham Grange is a small residential special school for boys with challenging behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Many students also have associated learning difficulties and delays in learning, predominantly because of past absences from their previous schools.
- The school has 52 places with up to 44 of these allocated for residential students.
- All students are either supported through action plus or have a statement of special educational needs, or an education, health and care plan.
- The school supports students with autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit disorders or obsessive compulsive disorders.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from service families) is much higher than in most schools.
- Most students are White British.
- Students come from a wide area with nine different local authorities purchasing places.
- A very few students, including all those of sixth form age, attend the local Brinsbury College to follow vocational courses.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement by ensuring that:
 - teachers raise their expectations of what students can achieve
 - teachers can access opportunities to learn from best practice from within the school and elsewhere
 - teachers' development needs are identified properly so that bespoke training helps them to improve their practice
 - teachers learn how to incorporate students' health and education plans effectively into their planning.
- Improve students' behaviour by ensuring that:
 - the behaviour management policy is re-visited and adjusted to reflect an appropriate emphasis on the role of teachers and other adults in helping students to learn
 - strategies are developed to support and encourage better attendance and reduce the need for exclusion and other sanctions.
- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - fragile, temporary or short-term leadership roles are immediately addressed and leadership accountabilities are known to all
 - the day-to-day running of the school is identified and made clear to all
 - an external review of governance is undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved
 - safeguarding and child protection procedures are fully reviewed and all shortcomings identified within this inspection are rectified.
- The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.
 - A suitable statement of the school's principles and practice to be known as the Statement of Purpose is available to parents and staff, is made known to children through an appropriate method of communication and is seen to work in practice. The statement describes the overall purpose of the

school and describes any theoretical or therapeutic model underpinning the practice of the school. It also explains the ethos and philosophy of the school, and provides an outline of provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. (NMS1.1)

- The school provides opportunities for all children to develop the daily living skills needed by the young person for their likely future living arrangements, taking account of their age and needs. (NMS2.8)
- Children’s physical, emotional and social development needs are promoted. (NMS 3.1)
- Where necessary, a child has a clear individual health and welfare plan or similar record, containing relevant health and welfare information provided by parents/carers, and recording significant health and welfare needs and issues. (NMS 3.12)
- The school ensures that the welfare of students at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy, and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. (NMS 6.3)
- All children, including those with special dietary, medical or religious needs, are provided with meals which are adequate in nutrition, quantity, quality, choice and variety. (NMS 8.1)
- The school ensures that:
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school
 - such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (NMS 11.1)
- The school’s leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met. (NMS 13.4)
- The school’s written record of complaints identifies those complaints relating to residential provision, and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). (NMS 18.2)
- Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up to date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school. (NMS 19.1)
- The learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and is updated if necessary. (NMS 19.4)
- The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the running of the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who is independent of the management of the school, to visit the school six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the headteacher (or school equivalent). (NMS 20.1)
- Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced and include:
 - checks on the school’s records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children
 - evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded
 - assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school
 - opportunities for any child. (NMS 20.2)
- To improve further: provide clear records of how decisions have been reached when responding to safeguarding and child protection concerns by implementing a clear system to record staff medical training, their competency in the procedure and which specific child for whom they have been trained to carry out the procedure.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Safeguarding procedures are inadequate. As a result of ill-judged leadership from trustees and governors, senior leaders' responsibilities to keep students safe in the school have not been the subject of sufficient monitoring, scrutiny or challenge.
- Changes to the leadership of the school and to key governance roles have recently taken place. However, these urgent steps have been far too slow to take effect.
- Lines of accountability at all levels lack transparency. Communications between trustees and governors are a distinct weakness. During this inspection, trustees and governors were unable to agree about who has control of the day-to-day running of the school. Staff members are equally unclear.
- Governing body minutes reflect leaders' failure to identify an independent adult visitor, with whom students could share their concerns, over a considerable period of time. This role remains vacant at the time of this inspection. Furthermore, a vacancy for a local authority governor has only just been filled.
- When serious safeguarding concerns have been raised by parents, students and staff, trustees and governors have failed to take rapid enough or appropriate action, putting the need to avoid disputes with employees as their first priority.
- Residential and other staff within the school do not know trustees and governors. They cite frequent changes of personnel which have affected their confidence, and in some instances their understanding of their roles.
- Procedures for managing staff performance are weak. All staff, including those in residential, make mention of targets and dialogue with their managers. Governing body minutes record interrogation of the process. However, staff say they have little opportunity to develop their skills. Moreover, ill-defined terms of reference concerning the roles of trustees and members of the governing body have resulted in delays in addressing unacceptable performance at a senior level.
- Staff, particularly in residential, are unable to learn from parental or student complaints. This is because outcomes are not shared with them. Records are often of poor quality or incomplete. Similarly, potential safeguarding incidents outside of school time are not always recorded or reported to external agencies.
- The leadership of learning and teaching has not been a high enough priority. For example, the behaviour management policy emphasises teachers' rights to 'discipline' students. In their endorsement of such policies, trustees and governors have failed to recognise the absence of teachers' responsibilities to help students learn.
- The curriculum covers an appropriate range of subjects, some of which are vocational, available for pursuit to GCSE level. Discussions with students attest to their understanding of right and wrong and of some aspects of fundamental British values. However, they express injustice that upon voicing their own concerns, only recently have things begun to change for the better.
- Leaders have neglected to recognise or address with sufficient urgency, discriminatory practice within the school. This has included the excessive use of physical restraint and isolation, the imposition of a vegetarian diet for residential students and restrictions to the programme of enrichment, for example the lack of opportunities for students to prepare evening meals.
- Students are encouraged and supported by staff in consideration of their next steps in education, employment or training, with none dropping out altogether. However, insufficiently high expectations of what they can achieve in school has resulted in many repeating the same level of qualification after they have left.
- Leaders monitor the attendance, achievement and behaviour of students who attend Brinsbury College, thereby ensuring that most students secure success in their chosen courses.
- Leaders have used pupil premium funding to help develop students' speech, language and communication skills. Targets have been set and monitored, with most moving forward and many meeting their targets. However, no evaluation of these students' academic achievement has taken place.
- Middle leaders express a desire to play a full role in improving the quality of students' experience in the school. However, as with other teachers and staff, they have not benefited from good quality training or development, or a clear steer from senior leaders of what is expected of them.
- Leaders have made effective use of the primary school sports funding available to them. This is helping to raise students' participation in a wide range of sports and activities which they enjoy.
- Leaders may not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance arrangements are inadequate. Governors and trustees recognise that an urgent review

of who has the power to act and in what circumstances needs to take place. They acknowledge that they have been aware of weak teaching, a decline in students' achievement and discriminatory practices taking place within the school. They are also aware that performance management systems are too weak for them to be able to reward the best teaching with absolute certainty. Despite this, they have yet to secure the leadership of the school, resulting in staff, students and parents feeling uncertain and insecure.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are inadequate

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is inadequate. Over time, students have not been supported well enough to develop the necessary skills to self-regulate their behaviour. Consequently, although current behaviour is improving, students are unsettled and at times volatile.
- Inspectors observed unchallenged verbal bullying and homophobic language during unstructured times within the school day.
- Students are very aware of the different types of bullying that exist, including cyber bullying. Although they identify trusted staff they would approach with their concerns, they also express concerns that bullying is not consistently well-managed by staff.
- The behaviour of the small number of students who attend Brinsbury College is good. Their attendance is also good.
- Leaders' disregard of the need to promote equality of opportunity has resulted in residential students vociferously complaining that evening meals are prepared centrally; they had previously enjoyed making their own meals with staff. Additionally they were very unhappy with the only recently rescinded, enforced vegetarian diet.
- Students benefit from a site with extensive and beautiful grounds. These give rise to opportunities for students to engage in stimulating activities such as fishing and cycling, which they say they enjoy. Despite this, students take little pride in the school or what it can offer. Rates of attendance are far below those of special schools nationally and incidents of exclusion have been exceptionally high.

Safety

- Leaders' work to keep students safe and secure is inadequate. Individual students' risk assessments are incomplete. They fail to provide the staff caring for them with appropriate guidance on how to keep them safe, or care for them. A particular deficit is the absence of an assessment of behaviours that place students at risk to themselves or others.
- Positive handling plans for individual students fail to identify personalised de-escalation techniques to assist staff in supporting students to manage their behaviour effectively.
- The use of physical restraint and prolonged periods of isolation has been excessively high. Although these strategies have been considerably reduced by temporary leaders, there is a legacy of mistrust of the strategic leadership within the school from students and staff alike.
- During this inspection, the fire alarms were raised deliberately on three occasions.
- Governors with specific responsibility for child protection and safeguarding have not received essential external training in order to carry out their roles effectively. There is no specific role description for named governors to guide them in the interpretation of their roles.
- Recruitment records do not consistently demonstrate that governors and trustees adopt best practice procedures in relation to safer recruitment guidance. This is evident in their approach to the recruitment of a new headteacher and also to staff employed from external agencies. Insufficient checks have been made to ensure their suitability to work with vulnerable young people.
- Although experienced staff know what procedures to follow if they have concerns about a student's safety or welfare, those new to the school are less secure. Some are unaware of whistleblowing procedures within the school. Others are unclear about the role of the designated local authority officer.
- Whistleblowing procedures are inadequate. Residential students are unable to access an independent adult visitor with whom they can raise concerns they would not wish to raise with school staff.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Over time, teaching is inadequate. Teachers and teaching assistants demonstrate patience and determination. However, training and support for staff in planning how individual students' should progress in their learning has only recently been introduced. Consequently, even within small classes of three to four students, some students' learning needs are not addressed properly.
- Classroom displays and timetabling priorities attest to a well-intended focus on the development of students' literacy and mathematical skills. However, students, including those whose attainment on entry to the school is indicative of good learning in the past, fail to make adequate progress in mathematics and English, where outcomes are well below national norms.
- Over a third of staff are new in post since September. These staff have welcomed the weekly support for planning that has been introduced since Easter. During the interim period, however, much of their time has been focused on keeping students occupied and managing their behaviour.
- Until very recently, leaders have not tracked the achievements of disadvantaged students or those vulnerable to underachievement. Neither have they provided teachers with assessment information to guide them in their planning. Although data about students' progress are now available to teachers, it is too early to assess its impact on teaching.
- Teachers' expectations of individual students are too low. Teachers have not been routinely provided with opportunities to learn from best practice, either from within the school or elsewhere.
- The school's extensive grounds and facilities, combined with the range of subjects and activities available to students, offer the potential for staff to attend well to students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. However, work in this area at present is underdeveloped.
- Although teachers have positive relationships with students, their teaching does not routinely reflect a well-considered application of students' individual health and education plan targets and strategies. Consequently, teaching does not enable students to maximise their full potential.

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Students' achievement is inadequate. Results in GCSE examinations have declined since 2012. Leaders acknowledge that current achievement across all years has been adversely affected by recent staffing turbulence within the school.
- Disadvantaged students achieve much lower results in English and mathematics than other students nationally. This gap in achievement has not narrowed over time. In 2014, neither disadvantaged nor other students within the school secured good GCSE grades in English. In mathematics, just under a third of the students altogether secured good GCSE passes, while no disadvantaged students secured similar such grades. There is too little evidence about the achievement of different groups of students over time to judge accurately whether gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and others in school are closing.
- Students achieve better outcomes in art and a range of entry level vocational qualifications such as preparation for work and land-based opportunities. However, achievement in academic subjects, including science, is low.
- Students' achievement in English and mathematics is adversely affected by a lack of training for staff and precise planning in teaching.
- Students who attend Brinsbury College achieve in line with national expectations.
- The most able students underachieve and do not progress as well as their peers nationally in their learning. Expectations have been low. Students have not been provided with tasks and activities that enable them to acquire new learning quickly enough.
- Until very recently, there has been no coherent system for assessing students' abilities on arrival, setting them targets or measuring their progress towards them. Consequently, students have not been sufficiently challenged or supported to succeed.
- Although students universally take up apprenticeships or college courses on leaving the school, their underachievement while attending the school precludes entry to higher level courses. Consequently, most have to repeat entry-level qualifications which do not provide sufficient opportunities for them to progress with their learning.
- Disabled students and those with education and health plans do not make the progress of which they are capable. Although these students are often supported in lessons, there has been insufficient attention paid to challenging and developing their learning in lessons.
- Students are not entered early for examinations.

The quality of care and support	is inadequate
How well children and young people are protected	is inadequate
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	are inadequate

- There are significant shortfalls in both the leadership and management of the residential provision, and residential students' safety. The evaluation of the leadership and management of the residential provision and residential students' safety are incorporated in the relevant sections above. This section only covers outcomes for residential students and the quality of residential provision and care.
- Residential staff have a good understanding of students and are empathetic to their needs. They recognise the need to encourage students to understand and respect each other. However, a lack of attention to their individual training and development needs has meant that some are not fully equipped to challenge effectively students' discriminatory attitudes or use of derogatory language.
- Students' care and placement plans do not incorporate their identified individual support and healthcare needs. Targets are not specific enough; consequently, their progress cannot be assessed or celebrated.
- Communication and sharing of information with external professionals are significant weaknesses. Parents and relevant professionals have raised concerns about the withdrawal of tailored therapies for certain students and the negative impact that has ensued. Despite a declared intention to maintain an open dialogue with external professionals, this is not part of routine practice for residential staff.
- Leaders and managers have failed to provide a direction or purpose for the school. The residential Statement of Purpose lacks clarity. Care planning, as a consequence, is inadequate. As a result, students' progress cannot be appropriately measured and students remain insufficiently challenged or supported.
- Despite an absence of high quality strategic direction, residential staff endeavour to maintain an enjoyable and rewarding residential experience for students.
- Although several parents comment favourably on their son's social and emotional development, current limitations do not enable them to develop new skills such as cooking, budgeting or household chores. This is a direct consequence of leaders' decision to withdraw such opportunities for residential students.
- Despite vociferous complaints from students about the central preparation of evening meals, this discriminatory practice has yet to be addressed.
- Although the acting head of care and other senior staff endeavour to ensure that students' basic needs are met, they each currently carry too many responsibilities to develop the care and support properly.

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>

Residential provision		
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	Requires improvement	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	125482
Social care unique reference number	SC013920
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	464597

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	All-through
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	10–19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	2
Number of boarders on roll	14
Appropriate authority	The RADIUS Trust
Chair	David Hope
Executive Headteacher	Trystan Williams
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 June 2013
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