

# The Marchant-Holliday School

MARCHANT HOLLIDAY SCHOOL, NORTH CHERITON, TEMPLECOMBE, SOMERSET, BA8 0AH

<b>Inspection dates</b>	01/07/2015 to 03/07/2015	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of care and support	Outstanding	1
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is good because

- The residential provision is effectively managed by the head of care and a dedicated staff team who place children at the centre of their practice. The accommodation provides a warm comfortable environment where children feel safe and protected. The school grounds and facilities enable children to play and explore within a balanced environment of freedom and safety
- The school community provides a nurturing environment where staff are sensitive to each pupil and their individual needs. Children receive an outstanding quality of care and support enabling them to grow in confidence and independence. The strength of relationships between the children and staff contributes greatly to the success of this residential placement.
- Leaders and managers work effectively with parents and other agencies for the safety and protection of children. Risks are managed well without stifling the opportunity for children to take part in varied and adventurous activities.
- Children enjoy staying at this school and recognise the progress they have made. Parents and carers express high levels of satisfaction with this residential provision and have confidence in the safety and care provided. There are effective partnerships with parents and professionals, supported by good communication.

### Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools

- 13.7 The school follows and maintains the policies and documents described in Appendix 1.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Present the minutes of the school council in a child friendly manner.
- Link the risk assessments with the behaviour management plans and one page profiles.

## **Information about this inspection**

This inspection was announced at 09:20 on 1 July 2015 and commenced later that day at 13:00. Inspection activities included discussions with residential pupils, parents, the headteacher, the head of care, residential staff, matron, the deputy headteacher, the school business manager, SENCO, support staff, a governor and the independent visitor. Key documents and policies were reviewed. Meals were sampled with pupils, the inspector attended a celebration assembly and observed activities. A tour was undertaken of the residential provision and school facilities. Ofsted received feedback from health and social care professionals towards this inspection.

## **Inspection team**

Mrs Clare Davies

Lead social care inspector

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

The Marchant-Holliday School is an approved independent charitable residential special school. It is managed by a board of governors, who are also trustees, and by a senior management team. The school provides education and care for boys with social emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many pupils have additional needs associated with sensory processing and communication. Children are aged between five and 13 yrs.

The school is situated in rural surroundings three miles from the nearest town, Wincanton. The school provides accommodation for up to a maximum of 32 residential pupils. At the time of this inspection there were 22 residential pupils, plus 18 day pupils. Residential pupils are accommodated in one of two boarding areas, separated by age group. All residential pupils go home at weekends at least once every two weeks. Many are weekly or flexi boarders. The residential provision was last inspected on 17 October 2014.

## Inspection Judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Good**

Children enjoy their boarding experience at this school. They recognise their own progress and receive consistent praise and reward for personal achievement, no matter how small. Many children have negative experiences of school prior to coming here. As a result of not fitting into mainstream classes, many boys were previously isolated from their peers and some have been excluded from their education.

Children are making progress in their learning and social development. This school environment, where children are valued, enables them to gain confidence and try new skills. Children manage their behaviour with support and learn strategies to utilise when they feel anxious. Staff can readily provide examples of how children respond effectively to structure and routine, making good progress in their social skills, communication and personal hygiene. Staff have high expectations for the children, they encourage new targets to be met and then exceeded. Success is varied from trying a new food, engaging in eye contact, participating in assembly and learning to swim.

There is a strong community at this school and gatherings take place three times a week at assembly. Celebration assembly is a joyous occasion, applauding success and achievements. Children nominate each other and staff members, in recognition of something special that has occurred. This communal event is used well by the senior management team to instil a sense of belonging where individuals can develop a positive self-view and act as role models for others.

Assessments contribute to monitoring the progress that children make. Documents such as the one page profile, identify individual needs and how they will be met. Key people, including parents, meet at least three times a year to review the profile and adjust accordingly. Home visits and regular contact ensure that parents and carers are fully involved in their child's plan. Seeking the views of children is given a high priority, whether it is about their personal circumstances or consultation towards the whole school. The school council put forward their views on food, activities and changes to the school day. The outcomes of school council are reported in assembly and discussed in care staff meetings. The minutes of the council are not child friendly, they lack colour and pictures. This is in contrast to other school communication that is accessible and inviting to read.

Effective arrangements exist to assist children with their communication. Throughout the school, photographs, signs and symbols are used. Some children benefit from many prompts on their bedroom wall such as personal hygiene routines and timetables of what happens when. At times of stress and anxiety, visual aids become more helpful to children as they struggle to express themselves verbally. Staff are fully aware of each child's characteristics and how to best support them. The strength of these relationships often provides an intervention that de-escalates a child from getting into crisis.

Children receive support to adopt healthy lifestyles through the food provided, lots of physical exercise and good bedtime routines. The catering staff received a five star award for their food hygiene practices. An improvement since the last inspection is a choice of cooked lunches. Not only does this give children options but the ability to make a choice has seen an improvement in behaviour at lunchtime. Long-term prescribed medication is reviewed regularly as school staff advocate to reduce medication where possible. A social worker reports that high levels of medication were reduced, and then ceased, as the child is managing without medication. Additional services are provided such as play therapy and counselling.

The residential provision is well organised and run for the benefit of the children. A member of staff reported, 'the staff are not here for a job, they are here for the children.'

## **The quality of care and support**

## **Outstanding**

Children receive excellent care and support from dedicated staff. The strength of the collaboration between all staff, across the school site, demonstrates that children are central to any decision making. Children benefit from structure and boundaries tailored to their individual needs. The keywork system has developed significantly since the last inspection with care staff taking responsibility for this role. It involves regular liaison with parents, education staff, matron and senior managers ensuring that the wellbeing of their key child is at the centre of their practice. A parent commented on the 'special bond' between their child and his keyworker.

The sensitive approach to the management of transitions enables children to have a successful introduction to the residential provision at a pace comfortable to them. Children report how well they are welcomed into the school, shown around the buildings and informed of the routines. The effectiveness of this was evident as a new boy competently provided a tour of the school during the inspection. Equally, children receive extensive support to move on to other schools. Calendars and charts provide visual aids towards these changes.

Parents and carers report high levels of satisfaction with comments such as; 'It is a very caring school with clear structures for the children to follow.' 'Staff know my child so well' and 'What a difference, my child made dramatic progress within three months of starting at this school'.

Children develop their social skills and communication. There is a sense of identity amongst the residential group as they socialise at mealtimes, enjoy activities together and some boys share a bedroom. Children are supported to be tolerant of one another, to show kindness and think of others. This extends beyond the school as children get involved in projects such as making things for children in developing countries and learning from visiting speakers.

The school site and extensive facilities enable children to explore and play in a safe environment. The woodland provides an adventurous place for campfires, games and a forest school. Children can take measured risks in climbing trees, camping and playing on go karts and bicycles. Adventure is encouraged and contributes to the learning environment of the waking day, beyond the classroom. The covered swimming pool provides the opportunity to learn to swim. This is an essential life skill, giving children the confidence to have fun in water and supporting them to be safe when visiting the beach and other venues with water features. Children benefit from joining community groups such as the Scouts, where they can form friendships outside of school. Membership of such clubs are transferable to their home area when they cease to be a residential pupil, enabling another positive transition.

The provision for health and medical care is excellent. Matron is a qualified nurse and

has extensive experience. She works closely with parents, care staff, therapists and health professionals to deliver personalised medical care and treatment. Children readily approach matron with any concerns, she is trained in a higher level of safeguarding and a member of the senior management team. Consequently, she has an immediate line of communication to pass on any concerns that require action from leaders and managers.

The residential accommodation is of a good standard with personalised bedrooms where boys can access their toys, books and belongings. Twin or single rooms offer a good level of privacy and some have en-suite bathrooms. Support staff maintain the building to provide a safe comfortable environment that boys respect and consequently, damage is minimal.

### **How well children and young people are protected**

**Good**

Safety is given a high priority at this school. Children feel safe and they are aware of measures in place to protect them and keep them safe. Children know what to do when they hear the fire alarm and they have practiced evacuating the two storey building. Children report that they can climb certain trees but must avoid others. Children know to wear protective clothing when on bicycles and go karts. For protection and privacy, children know when they are changing they need to be suitably covered with a towel or dressing gown and that they are not permitted into other children's bedrooms. These safe practices are routine and the children adopt them well.

Children know how to complain and are encouraged to speak to school staff and external contacts to raise any concerns. An independent person is a known visitor to the school, boys can chat and raise any issues with him. The strength of relationships between boys and staff means that worries are shared and dealt with quickly.

All staff are clear about the procedures to report any safeguarding concerns. A concerns form aids this reporting along with the accessibility of the senior management team. The head of care is the designated person for safeguarding, supported by three other staff who are trained at the higher level for this role. The policy provides suitable procedures to follow if staff have any concerns that a child is being harmed, though it fails to make reference to current government guidance. Practice does reflect current guidance and the policy is supported by all staff having read part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015).

There are links with the local authority to report any safeguarding concerns and to receive staff training. As a result of training in safer recruitment practices, the business manager implemented improved documents and procedures, and the head of care has re-written job descriptions and person specifications. These changes reflect the importance of safeguarding and the responsibilities of staff. Records confirm that staff report concerns on their observations or discussions with children.

Children receive guidance on e-safety and how to protect themselves from others contacting them through the internet. A member of care staff also teaches information, communication technology (ICT) in the school. Outside of the formal learning in the classroom, this member of staff has assisted parents and carers with understanding passwords and internet restrictions to keep children safe. Family members have sent in tablet computers for the school to install safeguards and home visits have enabled parents and carers to feel more confident in using technology safely. This is another excellent example of working together with parents to improve outcomes for children.

Incidents of going missing from school are rare. Children identify a 'safe space' they can go to if

they need to get away from a difficult situation. This may be the swing, a climbing frame or to be with a particular member of staff. When children leave the site without an adult, staff actively search and follow to ensure their safe return.

By being given choices and through staff intervention, children are supported to manage their behaviour. Each child is encouraged to identify what makes them upset and how this can be reduced. Risk assessments alert staff to particular behaviours that pose a risk to the child or others. Colourful charts, photographs and symbols support children with a behaviour management plan. Records fail to demonstrate the link between the risk assessment and the behaviour management plan that is very evident in staff practice.

Children make good progress responding to the strategies in place and embracing the incentive scheme of being rewarded with tokens. Children are proud of their success in gaining tokens for good behaviour and enjoy spending them in exchange for toys and books. Staff are trained in the use of physical intervention and comprehensive records are maintained by residential staff, an improvement since the last inspection. Low levels of physical intervention occurs during residential time. The loss of tokens is an effective sanction to support boys in making the right decisions.

The school is maintained as a safe site through routine inspection and visiting contractors. Arrangements have been agreed to increase site safety with the impending building of new classrooms, such as perimeter gates and CCTV. This school is not risk adverse and ensures that children receive opportunities to take measured risks as part of their growth and development.

### **The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

**Good**

The management and organisation of the residential provision is good. The senior management team is effective in driving forward the development of the whole school and ensuring the residential aspect is integral to the ethos of the school as intended by the founders. The head of care is well respected and has made significant changes to improve the delivery of residential care. The head of care is a member of the senior management team and is well supported by this leadership group.

As staff vacancies arise, the senior management team, with the support of the governors, review the complement of the staff team and identify what skills are required to meet current needs. This creative approach has led to some new appointments and provided the support where required. For example, a deputy has been appointed to assist the head of care and an occupational therapist to work in supporting children with their behaviour.

Care staff effectively work with other staff with the interests of children at the forefront of their practice. Training is delivered through a varied mix of online courses, visiting practitioners, inset days and external events. Staff are encouraged to pursue additional training that is beneficial to the children and their professional development. Care staff have skills and qualifications to contribute during the school day such as ICT and sport. Teaching staff engage in activities after school, working alongside care staff.

Leaders and managers monitor the quality of the residential provision to inform their self-evaluation. They seek the views of the children, parents, carers and professionals through the educational review process and through regular contact. Parents and professionals report that communication is very good and they are readily able to approach school staff. 'We are able to sort any problem out and the school have been very accommodating to (my child's) particular needs', says a parent. A local authority officer reports, 'working with professionals is a real strength' of this school.

The senior management team are reflective and learn from incidents. Senior managers are visible as they take a hands-on approach within daily school life. Children and staff can access senior managers to raise a concern, or more commonly, share an achievement.

The strength of the leadership and management of this school is to put children first. The high quality care and support is not fully underpinned by policies as many are out of date and in need of review. This shortfall has minimal impact on the safety and wellbeing of the children.



## What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123920
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC033089
<b>DfE registration number</b>	933/6089

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Residential Special School
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	40
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Boys
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	5 to13
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr T Kitts
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	17/10/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01963 33234
<b>Email address</b>	office@marchant-holliday.co.uk

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