

More House School

More House School, Moons Hill, Frensham, FARNHAM, Surrey, GU10 3AP

Inspection dates

10/11/2015 to 12/11/2015

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Requires improvement 3

The quality of care and support

Good 2

How well children and young people are protected

Requires improvement 3

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings

The residential provision requires improvement because

- Safeguarding documentation is not robust is does not detail the decision making processes to ensure the safety of the young people. Although improvements have been seen, the recognition of some young people's risks has not been fully embedded into practice.
- There is a lack of robust collaboration of information in relation to safeguarding and a reliance on staff knowing the young people.
- There is no formal risk assessment in relation to sleeping accommodation to show how decisions about shared rooms have been made. There is no audit trail in operation to demonstrate how findings, following informal risk assessments, are acted upon to tackle any identified risks.
- There is not a consistent understanding by staff about what a significant incident is, and what should be recorded as such. Therefore, thorough monitoring of behaviour is not taking place.
- Monitoring of records by the senior leadership team takes place, however trends and patterns are not being identified to improve outcomes for young people.
- Systems in place do not ensure staff are aware of where young people are during the evening and activity time.
- Young people make progress both academically and personally. They make good use of the wide ranging opportunities offered to develop their skills and interests. As a result they build their self-esteem and grow in confidence.

- There are good relationships between staff and young people. Staff demonstrate understanding and provide good role modelling for the young people in their care.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

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

NMS 11.1 The school ensures that:

- arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
- such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

NMS 12.1 The school has and consistently implements a written policy on managing behaviour, including promoting good behaviour. This policy includes:

- measures to combat bullying, including cyberbullying, and to promote positive behaviour;
- school rules;
- disciplinary sanctions;
- when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed; and
- arrangements for searching children and their possessions.

NMS 13.9 The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.

NMS 21.1 The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan there is appropriate consultation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure young people's whereabouts are known during boarding time.
- Improve frequency and content of supervision records.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out in conjunction with a progress monitoring inspection; it was therefore carried out unannounced. Inspection activities included: observation of boarding practice over two evenings; formal group meetings with boarders; informal discussion during shared meals; meetings and discussions with the headteacher and head of boarding, residential staff, the chair of governors and a governor with a safeguarding lead and the premises and facilities manager; contact with the local statutory safeguarding authority; a tour of the accommodation; scrutiny of the wide ranging documentation about boarding; consideration of responses on Parent View and of pupil and staff responses to Ofsted's surveys undertaken during the inspection.

Inspection team

Emeline Evans

Lead social care inspector

Jennie Christopher

Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

More House School is an independent Catholic foundation school, occupying a large self-contained site in a rural setting on the borders of Frensham Common, Surrey. It is open to boys of any faith, aged eight to 18. At the time of the inspection there were 112 boarders aged from 10 to 18. The school provides individualised learning programmes for boys who have specific learning difficulties and/or social communication/speech and language difficulties within the average range of ability. Day, weekly and full boarding places are provided. Boarding facilities are split between the juniors in the main school building and the seniors in a separate accommodation block. The previous welfare inspection took place in March 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Requires improvement

Young people are part of an integrated school community that includes group living, education and therapy. There are sound relationships between all of the teams in the school and with the young people. The community spirit helps young people develop a strong affiliation to their houses. They develop a sense of their own value in this community. Young people continue to receive support to address their own difficulties while learning a tolerance and understanding of others. They make new friends, grow in confidence, develop socially, take on roles of responsibility, and become more independent. One parent commented, 'his life chances have been transformed because he is a pupil here.' Young people recognise the progress they have made and reflect on how far they have moved on. However, there has not been identification of trends and patterns by the staff team. Behavioural incidents were noted during the inspection which had not been identified or evaluated by the management team. This lack of identification does not enable the staff team to look at improving outcomes for young people further.

The personal safety and emotional well-being of young people is underpinned by a range of policies and procedures. Staff are vigilant and young people are given information in a variety of ways to alert and educate them on how to keep themselves safe. However, information available is not integrated to enable everyone to be aware of risks and appropriate strategies to be implemented. This awareness of risks has yet to be seen to be fully embedded in practice. Arrangements for safeguarding are therefore not robust.

There are good relationships between staff and young people. Staff demonstrate understanding and provide good role modelling for the young people in their care. Communication between staff and young people is effective and positive. As a result they say, 'I like how they support me,' 'staff understand us,' and 'it's like a home.'

There are formal and informal systems for young people to have a voice in the school. Representatives on the student council take their role seriously and ensure they get the views and opinions from all young people to take to the meeting. The availability of staff enables their voices to be heard informally on a daily basis with prompt responses from staff.

A culture of mutual respect has a strong presence throughout the school. Young people are encouraged to live together with understanding and appreciation of each other. The culture of the school promotes equality and diversity and young people do not raise undue concerns of bullying or harassment.

The school encourages young people to learn life skills, experience the wider community and develop appropriate levels of independence. Staff prepare those at or approaching adulthood for their next step, be it living independently or moving onto a residential college.

The quality of care and support

Good

Residential staff understand young people's individual needs. Support offered to young people who are placed in the school is constructive and nurturing. Young people report that staff listen

to them and understand them and there is someone available to talk with. Young people and parents comment, 'staff are great, it's a home as well as a school,' and 'staff are brilliant, they overcame his significant homesickness with their kindness, nurturing and support.' A school counsellor and independent visitor are available as external means of support. There is also easily accessible information on notice boards about external help lines that young people could use.

The integration of new young people is well managed, engaging parents, prospective young people and care staff in a carefully planned induction process. Young people are able to stay overnight prior to decisions being made; this ensures a full assessment of needs prior to placement. In addition, this process enables young people to be prepared and know what to expect. Young people valued this opportunity. Young people are extremely well prepared for moving on from the school. Young people report, 'we are given more responsibility but someone is still around to support and guide us.' Staff make sure young people are well prepared and confident about their future plans. This helps them to make important choices and move successfully on from the school. Young people report they are well supported to prepare to live independently.

There are good links between academic and residential staff and open discussion takes place. Comments from parents included, 'excellent system means school hands over concerns to boarding.' There is frequent communication between the residential, medical, education and therapy staff. This holistic approach informs the support and care provided and enables staff to work consistently with young people. This information is not well documented in the care planning records.

The residential experience is helping young people to further develop a positive self-view and staff treat young people with dignity and respect. There is a good awareness by staff in relation to any form of discrimination, and information is provided to young people during regular assemblies and through conversations with staff. Staff and young people understand difference and focus on inclusion. Young people were seen to support younger children in a sensitive and nurturing manner.

Residential accommodation is of a good standard. The houses are comfortable and maintained to a suitable and homely condition. Young people are able to personalise their dormitories and do so with posters and photographs. Young people appear very comfortable in their living environments and generally invest in maintaining their condition with little evidence of damage. Residential staff organise a range of activities on site, which all the young people fully engage with. The school provides young people with a varied and exciting array of activities. Young people state, 'there is so much to do.' Activities arise from their choices and this improves their feelings of self-worth. Trips off-site include theatre trips and visits to parks and local shops. Young people are keen to integrate with the local community and are supported to be active members.

Health care is good and provides the young people with a caring, sensitive and innovative service. At the last inspection, a point for improvement in relation to medication audits was made this has been met. There is now a clear audit trail in relation to medication with a pharmacist pre-dispensing medication to limit errors. A range of protocols have been revised and are implemented in practice. Healthcare arrangements are robust. Young people's routine and emerging health needs are well met by an experienced and well-trained team that includes three registered nurses and a therapy team (including councillors, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists.)

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of how to meet the day-to-day needs of young people. Pupil profiles are in place for young people; this is not a detailed plan and does not reflect

welfare support needs and how residential staff are supporting and implementing agreed strategies. Young people who have support needs in relation to welfare do not currently have a specific plan. Although the necessary professionals are working together, to support young people there is a lack of documentation to demonstrate who this is and there is no record of evaluation of the work. In addition, there is no evidence young people are involved in this process and review of their care.

The school have a boarding council in place for young people and timings have been amended to enable young people to attend. They take place on a weekly basis. Young people were positive about this opportunity and the elected representatives for the council understand their role in gaining the views of others. Lots of examples of how their pupil voice has made a difference were given including; being involved in interviews of residential staff, new games consoles and activities. Young people have an active voice in the school and it is heard.

Young people are able to contact families and carers by using the house telephones. Contact is supported and encouraged by the staff to ensure young people are able to speak to parents and carers about any needs or issues they may have while away from home. Staff are flexible to facilitating this, are very aware of these arrangements, and support young people emotionally during these times.

How well children and young people are protected

Requires improvement

The senior leadership team have acted upon local authority recommendations and audits since the last inspection. They have been determined in making change and have made significant improvements to the safeguarding of young people. Effective leadership by the designated safeguarding lead has ensured that staff know, understand and effectively implement safeguarding procedures. There has been a range of safeguarding training and information provided. Staff describe how training has heightened their awareness and informed their safeguarding practice. Effective links have been made with external professionals to evaluate the current safeguarding arrangements and develop practice. Records of referrals are detailed and provide an audit trail, demonstrating how procedures have been followed and practice reviewed. The school is particularly competent at delivering online protection guidance to young people, enabling them to stay safe when using electronic equipment. Newsletters have been enhanced to include a safeguarding feature. This enables information to be made available to everyone. There is an increased awareness by governors regarding their monitoring of safeguarding in the school.

Although improvements have been seen, the recognition of some young people's risks has not been fully embedded into practice. Risk assessments have not always been updated in line with decisions on review. Information available is not integrated to enable everyone to be aware of risks and appropriate strategies to be implemented. Minutes of safeguarding meetings are not taking place; therefore, an overview of decisions and responsibilities cannot be effectively reviewed. Discussions in pastoral meetings refer to safeguarding concerns; these are not then documented. There is a lack of robust collaboration of information and a reliance on staff knowing the young people. In addition, there is no formal risk assessment in relation to sleeping accommodation to show how decisions about shared rooms have been made. There is no audit trail in operation to demonstrate how decisions have been made.

Young people report they feel safe young people are confident that any bullying is well-managed by staff and say that it happens rarely. All young people have a trusted adult to whom they could bring their concerns, young people comment, 'house masters and mistresses manage all bullying,' and 'staff are easy to talk to.' There are times when young people do not always get along and there are options available to young people to enable them to feel safe and manage

these relationships.

There have been no instances of young people going absent without permission in boarding time. Staff were clear on their responsibilities should this happen and how best to ensure that they are found quickly. However, there are not currently systems in place to ensure staff are aware of where young people are during the evening and activity time. Young people's whereabouts during boarding time is not confidently known.

The developing relationships with staff form the basis of sound behaviour management and positive behaviour is promoted. However, it is not clearly evidenced how staff support young people and how they deal with incidents of challenging behaviours. There is not a consistent understanding by staff about what a significant incident is and what should be recorded. Therefore, thorough monitoring of behaviour is not taking place and trends and patterns are not identified. This lack of monitoring means strategies in place are anecdotally rather than evidence based. In addition, there a lack of detail and clarity around boarding sanctions. This does not enable any effectiveness to be fully evaluated. Review of the behaviour management policy is required to ensure a consistent approach.

The application of the staff recruitment policy and procedures is now robust. There is clear responsibility and oversight. The headteacher makes the final 'sign off'; ensuring two thorough checks are undertaken. Risk assessments have been implemented for staff whose checks have not been received. These staff are unable to have unsupervised contact with young people until all checks are obtained. Recruitment processes are consistent and all staff involved in recruitment attend relevant training for ensuring that their skills are up to date and staff are kept abreast of best practice.

Health and safety within the residential provision is well managed. Routine servicing and checks take place as required. Maintenance is undertaken promptly and there is a clear programme of refurbishment and development. Fire safety precautions are checked on a regular basis, including the servicing of firefighting equipment, testing of alarms and the undertaking of evacuation drills. Risk assessments are routinely reviewed, updated and endorsed; these assessments include environmental checks as well as on-site and off-site activities.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement

There is a new head of boarding in post and he is beginning to settle into his new role. The senior leadership team are recognising they need to develop practice further and fully embed new processes.

The residential provision is integral to the school and the 'welcome to boarding' handbook offers young people and parents a detailed description of the residential provision. The culture of the residential provision promotes new experiences for the young people; residential staff have high aspirations. The staff are clear on the aims and ethos of the school.

There are sufficient staff deployed to meet the needs of the young people. There is a strong group of suitably qualified and competent staff. Young people talk positively about the staff. One said, 'staff are great; they are around to talk to.' Staff make themselves readily available to young people and are on hand to support the times such as feeling upset or homesick. This is greatly appreciated by young people.

Although monitoring of records including safeguarding procedures and assessment of risk takes place, this oversight requires improvement to ensure they are implemented effectively in practice. Trends and patterns are not being identified to improve outcomes for young people.

There is external scrutiny by the governors but is difficult to ascertain what impact this has had. Records do not demonstrate how the leadership team learn from these visits and improve practice and experiences for young people.

The school implements a clear procedure that ensures young people and their parents/carers are aware of how to complain. Complaints are taken seriously being responded to swiftly and in a rigorous manner. Records of complaints confirm an appropriate response with details including the nature of the issue and their outcome. Good communication is maintained between the school and parents, carers and placing authorities.

Appraisals for staff demonstrate that there is an appropriate level of challenge from leaders. Residential staff feel well supported informally to undertake their boarding responsibilities, with regular one-to-one and handovers. However, formal supervisions records are minimal in content and have not taken place for a number of months. There is little evidence of how staff are supported to develop their professional practice. Staff do report they are well-led and are confident in the leadership team.

Induction programmes for staff are robust and include relevant training delivered by the school. The staff are committed to improving practice through professional development with relevant training. The training programme has core elements and staff seek training in response to the emerging needs of young people.

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

Unique reference number	125403
Social care unique reference number	SC013927
DfE registration number	

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	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	112
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	8 to19
Headteacher	Jonathan Hetherington
Date of previous boarding inspection	04/03/2015
Telephone number	01252 792303
Email address	headmasterspa@morehouseschool.co.uk

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