

Unsted Park School

Munstead Heath Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1UW

Inspection dates	02/12/2015 to 04/12/2015	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Good	2
The quality of care and support	Good	2
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

- Staff focus effectively on the individual needs and wishes of the young people. Staff use this focus to inform individualised and integrated care planning for each young person.
- Promoting the well-being of young people is central to how the school operates. Staff promote healthy lifestyles and there is good provision for addressing both the routine and specific health needs of individual young people.
- Collaborative working across departments is effective in promoting the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of each young person.
- Young people are given opportunities to express their feelings and emotions in the knowledge that they are listened to and supported in a positive way.
- Safety is a priority and, through observation, it is evident children experience a sense of feeling safe.
- 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 meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Revise the current meal time arrangements to ensure they are social occasions.
- Ensure all issues relating to diversity are fully explored in the care planning documentation available to staff.
- Ensure there is effective communication with the young person's placing authority following any instances when a child has gone missing.
- Revise documentation to include strategies to be used by staff for low level behaviours including the use of consequences and rewards.
- Ensure there is robust oversight of behaviour management techniques to enable trends and patterns to be fully explored.
- Improve keyworker sessions to ensure there is an opportunity for learning and open discussion.

Information about this inspection

The notice given to schools is a minimum of one hour before the inspection team arrives. Ofsted carried out this inspection with three hours' notice. Inspection activities included: observation of residential practice over two evenings; informal group meetings with residential pupils; informal discussion during shared meals; meetings and discussions with the Principal, headteacher and head of care, residential staff, two members of the governing body one with a safeguarding lead, the school nurse, the pastoral lead and the premises and facilities manager; discussions with parents; 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
Maire Atherton	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. . At the time of the inspection there were 19 residential pupils aged from 12 to 18. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Young people are part of an integrated school community that includes group living, education and therapy. There are sound relationships between the teams in the school and with the young people.

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. Comments from parents included: 'he has made progress especially in his emotional development'; 'the school is amazing, I feel they are managing his needs well'; and 'when she started my child was in an exceptionally fragile state, they did great work.'

There are good relationships between staff and young people. Staff demonstrate understanding and provide effective role modelling for the young people in their care. Communication between staff and young people is effective and positive. The senior leadership team are very aware of the issues around retention of the residential staff and continue to address this and consider contingency plans.

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 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.

Young people are respected by staff for their individuality and as a result, their care is tailored specifically to their needs. This includes: dietary provisions, access to activities and health-related interventions. A culture of mutual respect is present throughout the school and young people are encouraged to live together with understanding and appreciation of each other. The school promotes equality and staff have developed strategies to help young people to understand that some of their behaviours may be interpreted as bullying.

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 or university.

The quality of care and support

Good

The quality of care and support in the residential provision is good. Residential staff understand young people's individual needs. Young people generally report that staff listen to them and there is someone available to talk with. Young people's opinions are valued. There are opportunities to be involved in weekly house meetings – staff strive to

engage them in this process. They have members of staff and adults to whom they can voice their thoughts and feelings. Young people are able to speak out as individuals or as groups and able to influence choices such as activities. Young people say they feel safe and secure and identify staff they can talk to about their feelings. There is also easily accessible information on notice boards about external help lines that young people could use.

Staff plan shifts carefully to ensure they are aware of any additional support needs for individual young people. They work closely with the therapy team and parents to ensure a holistic approach. Such an approach is most important given the complex needs many young people have.

The accommodation is well maintained and furnished. Young people have individual bedrooms, which they are able to personalise and do so with posters and photographs. Due to the layout of one area where the younger children reside, there isn't a central focal point for staff and young people to relax together. However, young people appear comfortable in their living environments.

Young people enjoy a range of activities and readily engage in new experiences. Activities reflect young people's interests. The types of activities they take part in are purposeful. This in turn enables them to develop skills and, at times, challenge themselves. These opportunities increase young people's self-esteem and confidence, which many lack prior to taking up residential placements at the school.

The range of physical activities enables young people to keep fit and young people know what is required to keep themselves fit and healthy. There are various links to support young people's psychological and mental health as far as possible. There is an emphasis on addressing young people's emotional well-being. This is an area that has been further expanded since the last inspection and they are continuing to develop. There has been agreement to recruit to further positions including an educational psychologist, clinical psychologist and a therapy lead practitioner. The accessibility of this team will mean that young people are not waiting for long periods of time for the therapeutic input they may require. Medical support and management is of a very good standard and promotes independence. The nurse provides both medical and emotional support to staff and students, this is greatly appreciated. The arrangements for food are of a good standard. Meals are varied and healthy with any special dietary requirements catered for. Young people benefit from a culture where they are learning how to stay healthy. Some young people choose to self-restrict their diets; however, there is a range of healthy options available. At present evening meals for those not cooking for themselves are not social occasions. They were observed to lack structure and appropriate role modelling is limited.

Young people's placement plans and identified targets are monitored periodically for effectiveness and appropriateness. They are up to date and detailed. However not all issues relating to ethnicity and diversity are fully explored in the documentation available to staff. This does not enable staff to know what support young people may require to develop a sense of their own identity.

Young people are able to contact families and carers by using their own telephones,

email or the house telephone. Contact is supported 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.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Young people reported they felt safe in residential time. Designated senior staff take responsibility for child protection and all have undertaken appropriate training. The school works effectively with the local safeguarding children board and local authority designated officer, promptly addressing any safeguarding incidents or concerns. Records of concerns provide a good audit trail, demonstrating how procedures have been followed and practice reviewed in the light of incidents. Information is available to enable everyone to be aware of risks and appropriate strategies to minimise them. Minutes of safeguarding meetings are retained; overview of decisions and responsibilities can be effectively reviewed. All staff have training in child protection and safeguarding of young people including training in child sexual exploitation and they apply this in their practice, improving young people's understanding of how to stay safe. Staff have a good understanding of the risks around internet use. When young people have accessed inappropriate material online action has been taken. However, responses do not include an educational element in residential time. Keyworker sessions have not incorporated an opportunity for learning and open discussion.

Young people can identify adults they can talk to and there are 'circle of support' plans in place for young people who struggle with relationships and attachments. This enables staff to be given the information about who young people feel confident in approaching and then be able to facilitate this.

On the occasions that young people have left the premises without permission during residential time staff acted swiftly to ensure their safe return. Records provide an accurate account of these events and their outcome. The school have learnt from these instances and adapted practice. Staff are mindful of what to do in such situations and have clear protocols in place, risk assessments are robust with strategies to minimise impact identified. Local procedures are in place, communication with the host authority is of a good standard however, this is not consistent with the placing authority.

Risk are identified in care planning and staff implement plans to reduce risk. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and updated. These risk assessments include environmental checks as well as on-site and off-site activities. Risk management is taken seriously, but does not detract from allowing young people to participate fully in activities and their interests. A comment from a parent stated that the head of care is good at both balancing and managing risk.

The application of the staff recruitment policy and procedures is now robust. There is clear responsibility and oversight. The Principal makes the final 'sign off', ensuring two thorough checks take place. File audits are now undertaken to ensure all recruitment files are being checked for compliance on a regular basis. 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.

The school has focused on ensuring any bullying is dealt with effectively. The appointment of an anti-bullying coordinator in both residential and education has enabled any incident to be closely reviewed and addressed in a fair and just manner and in keeping with the atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. Young people have been provided with a range of information; this has included workshops and written information. They have also been involved in producing posters for a competition. Within the sixth form, there has been a lot of information provided around cyber bullying. There are now clear strategies in place to help young people to understand when their behaviours may be interpreted as bullying.

There is a robust whole school behaviour management policy. Behaviour management techniques are implemented by staff who are mindful of the challenging behaviours of young people and seek the most appropriate ways to manage them. Staff work hard to support young people in addressing their most difficult behaviours, which can include aggression. Effective strategies are introduced on an individual basis. Staff are trained in the use of physical interventions and only apply them when necessary. Regular practice and accountability ensures there is sufficient challenge to all interventions and feedback into practice. There is learning from individual incidents, however the oversight of behaviour management is insufficiently robust. There is limited analysis of trends and behaviours, this has not enabled the school to develop strategies to minimise the need for interventions. In addition, individual care planning does not document approaches to be used for lower level behaviours. Strategies to manage these behaviours such as the use of sanctions and rewards are not documented. This does not give staff many options on how to manage some behaviours.

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.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

There a strong senior leadership team who provide effective and efficient leadership. An experienced senior management team offers good oversight and monitoring of the school. Practice is under constant review and challenge to ensure staff performance and conduct remains at a consistent standard to meet the needs of complex young people. Safety is given a high priority and management act upon any concerns as they arise.

The management team has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, and are constantly seeking ways in which to improve young people's experiences. Regular reports from the independent visitor provide substantial challenge and insight into practice.

There are sufficient staff deployed to meet the needs of the young people. There has been a high turnover of residential staff at the school. Staff retention remains an issue and the senior leadership team are actively recruiting to vacant positions and looking at ways of managing anticipated shortfalls in permanent staff such as the use of regular agency and bank staff to ensure some consistency for the young people. The high number of staff departures has affected staff morale. Staff do however continue to work together and ensure young people are central to all their practice and decisions made.

Staff report regular supervision and this is frequent for new staff to ensure they have the necessary support. A thorough training programme ensures staff are confident in their roles and that skills remain in line with current practice. Training is provided to reflect the needs of young people. Staff attend specialist courses when necessary. Group support is provided by a consultant psychiatrist who attends regularly to offer advice and support. Induction for new staff is robust and equips staff to undertake the role.

Staff are in regular contact with parents and matters are dealt with efficiently and promptly. The complaints process is comprehensive and widely available to parents, young people and significant others. 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 the outcome.

The majority of parents report that communication is of a good standard and they are kept updated as necessary. There is joint working with professionals to ensure a holistic approach. A parent commented positively about the relationship the home has with multiple professionals and how closely they are all involved to ensure consistency.

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	135419
Social care unique reference number	SC363144
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	19
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	12 to19
Headteacher	Richard Johnson (School Principal)
Date of previous boarding inspection	10/03/2015
Telephone number	01483 892061
Email address	unstedparkschool@priorygroup.com

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