

# Littlegreen School

Littlegreen School, Compton, CHICHESTER, West Sussex, PO18 9NW

## Inspection dates

22/02/2016 to 24/02/2016

## 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

Requires improvement 3

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good 2

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is good because

- Young people want to access the overnight respite. They enjoy the experience and have lots of fun.
- The recently appointed headteacher is showing exceptional leadership. She is bringing positive change. She demonstrates an unreserved commitment to the young people who access the residential accommodation.
- Staff work well with other professionals and parents. Communication is a strength so the current needs of young people are at the forefront of practice.
- Staff listen to young people. They feel they have a voice and staff respond positively to them when they raise any issues.
- Staff act on any concerns that come to their attention. They work with others to adopt strategies to keep young people safe.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Young people respond to the positive approach by staff who understand their needs. There has been no need for any physical intervention in residential time since the last inspection.
- Key staff teach young people how to keep safe in the cyber world. They adopt strategies to keep young people safe on the internet. Young people have won an award for their video on internet safety.
- There is extremely close and collaborative working between education and care staff. The residential experience has a positive impact on young peoples' learning.
- There is a long-serving staff team resulting in consistency of practice. They are highly motivated to meet the individual needs of 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?

- Ensure the designated safeguarding lead is trained to the appropriate level.
- Review the medication procedure and include a stock count of controlled drugs at the time of administration.
- Ensure all information is collated as necessary to inform any relevant welfare plans.
- Consider keeping a safeguarding chronology and close safeguarding concerns when agreed strategies are working.
- Ensure governors document their assessment of the effectiveness of safeguarding practice.

## Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection with one and a half hours' notice. Inspection activities included: observation of residential practice; formal and informal discussion with a range of young people who stay overnight; sharing mealtimes; discussions with the headteacher, head of care and the chair of governors; residential and ancillary staff were consulted; the designated safeguarding lead and teachers with a role in residential were spoken to; contact was made with the local statutory safeguarding authority; a tour of all the accommodation and grounds was undertaken; a wide range of documentation concerning boarding was scrutinised; the responses on Parent View were considered as were questionnaires completed by residential young people during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Keith Riley

Lead social care inspector

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

Littlegreen is a maintained residential special school for 63 boys aged from 7 to 16 years. The school provides flexible boarding for up to 12 young people overnight. Currently young people access the residential facility two nights per week. The accommodation is located on the first floor of the main school building. The school is situated in the rural area north of the village of Compton, approximately 11 miles from Chichester. The school caters for boys with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. The residential provision was last inspected in May 2014.

## Inspection Judgements

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

Good

This is a school where young people want to come and access the short break. They enjoy their experience. They love the rural setting and want to access the nearby woods to engage in imaginative play. An example is young people building 'camps' with their friends and visualising what each area is used for. Staff support their enthusiasm and excitement. They come up with ideas associated with what young people find in nature and translate this into more recreation. An example is using wood bark to create a crocodile for young people who enjoy art. One parent said, 'It is a real treat for him to stay there.' A placing social worker said, '(name of young person) enjoys his overnight stays. He comes back from there happy.'

The headteacher is providing exceptional leadership. She understands the needs of the young people and the challenges for the school. She ensures that young people receive the best possible experience during their stay. She involves key staff in monitoring and measuring young people's progress. They have put into place quantifiable measurements that show young people make good progress.

Staff ensure there are comprehensive personal, sexual, health and emotional development plans in place. Young people make good progress especially in their social interaction, independence and assertiveness. A placing social worker said, 'The young person can now travel independently.' Young people grow in their self-esteem and confidence. They behave appropriately and demonstrate good manners and politeness toward adults and each other. A parent said, 'I am pleased with his development. He has come on so much academically and socially.'

Young people are able to build their self-esteem and confidence. They have a positive time during their residential stay and are happy. They feel cared for and that their presence is important to staff and the group during their overnight stay. Young people carry this experience into their school day and are more settled, ready to learn. Young people develop academically as a result of their short break.

Young people are safe. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of safeguarding practice. Risk assessments allow young people to take age-appropriate risks. Shortfalls found at inspection do not have an immediate impact on young people. They relate to the management processes and review.

Young people develop good relationships with staff and each other. There is a mutual respect. Young people learn how to treat others with respect. Their manners are impeccable and behaviour exemplary.

Staff are long serving members of the team. They feel supported and suitably trained. They speak highly of the new headteacher and the changes she is implementing. They enjoy working at the school and watching the young people develop. They put the needs of young people at the centre of their practice.

Staff have been employed at the school for a long time. They get to know the young people very well. They provide a consistent approach and a secure base. They are dedicated to show empathy and understanding of each young person's needs. Their enthusiasm is contagious and young people readily engage in the 'fresh air' activities made available to them. Young people keep fit and healthy. A parent said, 'Each member of staff is so helpful and supportive. The care for individual needs is done particularly well.'

Staff keep good records, especially at night. They clearly evidence the care given and how young people are helped to settle for the night. Senior staff give careful consideration to the sharing of rooms. Young people are able to have a positive stay sharing a room with their friends. Young people, new to the residential side, can elect to stay in a room on their own while they grow accustomed to the experience. One young person spoke of his excitement at staying away from home for the first time.

Young people have a voice. The close and collaborative working between care and education, as well as electronic communication systems, means the voice of young people is heard loud and clear. In addition, there is a proactive school council whose members have specific tasks allocated to them. This successfully promotes positive change, for example, the dining room is now located in a quieter room. There is now an intimate and family feel to meal times: it is a warm, social occasion.

Catering staff provide nutritious and wholesome meals. They account for any allergies, religious or cultural needs. They listen to the young people and adapt the menu according to their preferences where practical. Young people are able to have second helpings at meal times and snacks at other times. They say there is plenty of food and they never go hungry.

Staff have a sensitive and thoughtful approach to care. They treat young people who have delicate medical issues with dignity and respect. Young people make good progress as a result. They are able to access trips and other activities with their peers. Staff are successful in finding external partners so young people can try out new things that interest them and in which they may make a future career.

Young people stay in a warm and comfortable environment. Rooms are tastefully decorated to a particular theme and are well known by their names, such as the 'James Bond Room'. Communal areas are furnished and maintained to a high standard. Young people treat their accommodation with respect and there is no damage.

Young people benefit from a range of activities. They particularly enjoy the large outdoor recreation areas including the hard court for go-karting, the swimming pool and the woods. Young people are enjoying their time away from the cyber world, engaging in creative play and made-up games. They make friends and include them in their imaginative world.

The primary responsibility for health is with parents and carers. Staff ensure they know any relevant health needs and how to meet them, such as ensuring young people receive the medication that health professionals have prescribed to them. The system for managing medication administration is overly complex. Staff had not accounted for one controlled drug they had received. Young people are not at risk due to this clerical error. The previous recommendation to develop a more effective recording system for

medication errors is met.

## How well children and young people are protected

Requires improvement

Key staff take a lead role in child protection and safeguarding issues. They act on any information that comes their way. They follow the correct procedures and consult with other professionals to agree strategies to keep young people safe.

Staff have child protection and safeguarding training. This has included training on preventing extremism and radicalisation. They demonstrate a thorough knowledge of what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern. However, some staff, responsible for safeguarding, are not trained to the level three standard.

The risk assessment process is robust. Staff know and apply the control measures to keep young people safe without being risk averse. Young people are able to enjoy the activity of their choice. They describe how much they enjoy coming to stay at the school.

Staff demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the young people's needs. They know the necessary support to provide. Information is kept in various hard copy or electronic files or is 'known' by staff. Care plans are brief and do not provide a full and succinct picture of each young person where necessary. Some plans, termed 'safeguarding plans' are long overdue for a review. Staff have not updated them when young people are no longer at immediate risk. A clear chronology is not available to highlight historic concerns should a similar safeguarding issue arise in the future.

Young people's behaviour is exemplary. They have many indoor and outdoor activities to burn energy off and distract them from negative behaviour. Staff support and coax them to make the right choices. This is a school where young people enjoy their residential experience and do not want to miss the opportunity to stay. There is no need for physical intervention to manage behaviour during their stay.

Young people have good relationships with staff. They easily identify adults they can talk to about any concerns they have. This includes regular meetings with the school counsellor if they wish. There is a complaints system in place. Young people have not accessed this for some time.

Governors meet regularly and hold the headteacher to account. The headteacher provides a detailed report to the governing body that includes any safeguarding concerns. Minutes of governors' meetings do not reflect any subsequent discussion about safeguarding. The governing body do not demonstrate how they have reviewed the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements.

Young people stay in a safe environment. Key staff ensure all necessary health and safety certification is completed on time. Key staff maintain the listed building to a very high standard. The residential accommodation is comfortable. Staff monitor the closed circuit television that is used extensively throughout the premises. This does not intrude young peoples' privacy in bedrooms or bathrooms.

Safer recruitment practices are adopted. Only adults deemed to be suitable to work with young people are employed.

Bullying is not an identified issue in residential. Staff are on hand to diffuse any emerging issues and teach young people how to interact appropriately.

Young people do not go missing from this school or engage in offending behaviour. Other behaviours, such as misuse of substances, is not an issue.

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

**Good**

The recently appointed headteacher is showing exceptional leadership. She is determined to understand the culture of the residential side and ensure it continues to meet the needs of the young people who access it. She is inspiring and ambitious to make this the best possible experience for young people. She networks with other schools and shares the facilities. Staff describe the changes she is making as 'very positive.' A staff member said, 'I feel very supported. She is there for us.' Another said, 'I am here because of the leadership she is showing.'

The headteacher has produced a self-evaluation and a school improvement plan. She has grasped the strengths and weaknesses of the provision in a short space of time. An example is the need to improve the school website and ensure all the necessary policies are readily available to parents. She is ambitious for positive change and recognises the challenges this brings.

A strength of this school is the close and collaborative working between care and education. The relationship is seamless. Young people benefit from staff who work well together and know them extremely well. The care provided fully underpins and supports their education. Young people get to a place emotionally where they are able to engage with their learning.

Staff work very well with other professionals. They are effective communicators and advocate for young people to ensure they are getting the best possible help and support. They are creative in their thinking, ensuring every possible scenario is considered. They take appropriate action in sharing information to ensure young people make continual progress. A placing social worker said, 'They passed on what was shared in counselling and this was appropriate. They maintain contact and use the email and text system effectively.'

Staff have excellent relationships with parents. Parents describe the school in the most positive of terms. They say staff tell them of any concerns or issues and they contribute to the planning for the short break. A parent said, 'There is really good phone feedback.'

Governors play an active role in the life of the school. They visit regularly and spend time in boarding, often arriving early for breakfast or staying late for dinner. They provide a report about their visit in accordance with the minimum standards. They have improved the format of this as recommended at the previous inspection.

Senior managers ensure staff have the core training and development. The admissions process identifies any bespoke training the staff require. An example is autism or attachment issues. Staff ensure they provide guidance in social settings to young people on the autistic spectrum. They have an understanding of presenting behaviours associated with attachment disorder and modify their approach accordingly.

All work is underpinned by the relevant policies and procedures. The headteacher is



effective in prioritising and reviewing these to ensure they reflect the current practice.

## 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>	126156
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC042656
<b>DfE registration number</b>	938/7005

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>	63
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Boys
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	7 to16
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lynda Butt
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	13/05/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	02392 631259
<b>Email address</b>	office@littlegreen.w-sussex.sch.uk

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