

# More House School

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

<b>Inspection dates</b>	04/03/2015 to 06/03/2015	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is inadequate because

- Serious failings in the implementation of the school's safeguarding policies have led to residential pupils being left at potential risk of harm. Safeguarding arrangements within the school are inadequate.
- The leadership and management of the residential provision are ineffective at ensuring residential pupil's safety. Senior managers have failed to adequately monitor and take action in regard to key documents such as child protection files and recruitment checks. Poor self-evaluation processes mean that senior leaders are unaware of the strengths and weaknesses of this aspect of the residential provision.
- Residential pupils are positive about their boarding experience. They benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities and experiences on offer. Through these events, residential pupils develop confidence, leadership skills and make new friends.
- A stable residential staff team provides good quality care for residential pupils. The staff work effectively to actively promote personal educational goals.
- Other shortfalls identified on this inspection relate to the independent visitor announcing all visits, and these occurring in the school day, limiting residential pupils' opportunity to meet her. One boarding house door can be opened from the outside, leaving some residential pupils feeling unsafe. This was rectified by the school during the inspection. Weekly boarding council meetings are very time limited, leaving some residential pupils no time to share their views. Medication stock systems require improvement. Current arrangements do not include records of accurate stock levels of prescribed medication.

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

The school does not meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The details are listed in the full report.



## Information about this inspection

This inspection was announced in the morning and the inspectors were on site by the early afternoon. Both residential accommodation areas were inspected. Both formal and informal discussions were held with residential pupils during mealtimes, evening activities and structured feedback sessions. Meetings took place with the headteacher, head of boarding, therapists, the independent visitor and residential care staff. 31 responses from the Parent View website were evaluated. 87 residential pupils completed Ofsted boarding surveys during the visit. Documents relating to the safety and welfare of residential pupils were sampled and scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Anna Williams	Lead social care inspector
Stephen Collett	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 103 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 2014.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Devise a system which accounts for all prescribed medication within the school surgery and allows for safety audits of this medication to take place.
- Ensure all external exit doors within the boarding accommodation are appropriately secure and ensure maintenance is undertaken promptly if faults are reported by residential pupils.
- Revise the format and timing of the boarder's council to ensure all residential pupils who attend have their views and wishes heard.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
  - 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 (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 11)
  - The records specified in Appendix 2 (Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards) are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. (NMS 13.3)
  - Schools operate safe recruitment procedures and vet staff in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 14.1)
  - Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of physical interventions, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish). (NMS 20.2)

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

**Good**

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. Residential pupils speak positively about the impact the school has had on their lives. They comment, 'I am better at reading and writing since coming to this school', 'I have fun as a boarder', and 'I have made friends since being here'. Relationships within the residential provision are harmonious and friendly. Residential pupils speak warmly of the boarding staff. One residential pupil commented, 'the boarding house staff treat us like family.'

Through the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer, residential pupils have a good range of different events to take part in. One residential pupil said, 'weekends are great here. We go shopping, play football, and go visit places.' Other residential pupils confirmed that they have tried new experiences since boarding. One commented, 'I am enjoying rehearsing for the school play.' These opportunities allow residential pupils to discover and develop new talents and interests, building their confidence.

Good opportunities exist for residential pupils to take on additional responsibilities. Leadership programmes offer older pupils structured opportunities to support younger boarders. Residential prefects take on this role only following the completion of in-house training in matters such as professional conduct and safeguarding. These trained residential pupils also support the running of the boarding houses, such as assisting in the organising of activities. After a year of service, residential pupils achieve a certificate acknowledging their new skills and accomplishments. Other residential pupils engage in personal development through taking an active role in the boarders' council. These good opportunities support residential pupils to develop management, organisational and social skills.

Since the previous inspection, a new 'cooking for life' scheme has commenced. This offers older residential pupils a more structured approach to gaining independence skills. This programme supports residential pupils to budget, plan and prepare meals. Led by the school chef, this course also extends residential pupils' knowledge about healthy living and diets. In general, residential pupils learn a good range of daily living skills as they undertake appropriate household tasks. This prepares them well for adulthood and transitions to other education settings.

### Quality of residential provision and care

**Good**

The quality of the residential provision is good. Residential pupils report that they are able to maintain contact with family and friends when at the school. This is through visits, telephone calls, letters and email. Filtered Wi-Fi has been introduced across the boarding areas since the previous inspection. This ensures residential pupils maintain attachments with those important to them.

Food and catering arrangements are of good quality. Mealtimes offer residential pupils a wide choice of balanced meal options. The health and welfare of residential pupils is well-promoted. Arrangements for the administration and recording of prescribed medication are safe and effective. Stock checking systems within the school surgery require improvement. Controlled drugs are clearly recorded and stock checks can take place as all controlled medication is fully accounted for. This is not the case for other prescribed medication. Although prescribed medication is signed into the surgery, there is no system in place which maintains accurate stock levels. As such, the storage of generic prescribed medications is based on trust and this is not an appropriate system.

Residential pupils like the accommodation and their bedrooms spaces. Some dormitories have

been fully redesigned and renovated with high quality furnishings since the previous inspection. This redesign benefits residential pupils as more sleeping areas are now divided into smaller shared bedrooms. This offers more privacy and independence.

Residential care staff organise a good range of activities which all residential pupils fully engage with. These include art club, bell ringing, air cadets, yoga, rock climbing and talent shows. One residential pupil commented, 'I like the fact that we have a wide variety of options in our free time.' Residential staff vary the activities on offer and respond to feedback from pupils when planning new ideas. Another new club on offer is 'fix it' which encourages learning about mechanics and bike maintenance. These varied leisure events provide residential pupils with a good range of experiences and new skills.

New residential pupils settle in well to boarding. This is due to the well-established support systems in place. Some residential staff also work in the school. This supports already good communication between the two areas. A residential staff member commented, 'the boarding staff work very hard with the day team to ensure students are happy and well rounded, but we also talk regularly with parents and include them in the triangle of care.' The newly formed 'additional pastoral provision team' comprises of academic, therapy and residential staff. This team offers extra support for individual pupils where their needs are identified as requiring a focused and bespoke response. This supports effective working across separate departments to meet residential pupils' personal needs.

### **Residential pupils' safety**

### **Inadequate**

Safeguarding arrangements within the residential provision are inadequate. The vast majority of residential pupils state they feel safe in the school, however they are not fully protected because risk management systems within the school are weak. This relates to assessing the suitability of some staff working with pupils in an unsupervised capacity. Although risk assessments are written, these documents are not reviewed following changes in staff circumstances and when additional information is received by the school. This does not demonstrate an understanding by the senior leadership team of up-to-date child protection practice, and as a result the senior leadership team fail to address risk adequately. This places pupils at risk of access to unsuitable staff. Allegations and suspicions of harm are not consistently referred to external safeguarding agencies in line with the school's own child protection policy. The senior leadership do not demonstrate an attitude of 'it could happen here' with regard to their evaluation of safeguarding concerns. This approach does not protect pupils.

A small number of residential pupils within the school display behaviours that some staff find challenging, including some sexualised conduct. Although staff record incidents of concern within log books, patterns and trends in relation to behaviours shown are not identified by senior staff. Consequently, inconsistent actions are taken by residential staff to address and minimise risk. This results in some residential pupils' concerning behaviour continuing and this negatively impacts on other boarders within some dormitories.

Recruitment practice within the school is inadequate. Files sampled show that one member of staff joined the school prior to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check being completed. While the school did write a risk assessment to consider the risks associated with allowing this to happen, the school failed to complete an interim separate barred list check in line with statutory guidance. Further to this, anomalies in information given by the candidate were not identified by the school. These discrepancies were addressed when highlighted to the school during the inspection, but had not been identified through internal monitoring procedures. Another file sampled showed that the member of staff commenced duties with only one personal reference in place. Previous professional employment references were received several months after starting

in their role. This is not in line with statutory guidance and does not protect residential pupils.

Regular safety checks are undertaken of portable appliances throughout the school and accommodation areas. Through termly fire drills, residential pupils are suitably refreshed on emergency evacuation procedures. This promotes residential pupils' safety. While the majority of the boarding accommodation is maintained to a high standard, one external door to a boarding bedroom corridor was identified as unsafe during the inspection. The senior leadership team took immediate steps to fix the door during this visit. However, this door had been faulty for some time leaving some pupils feeling unsafe.

There have been no residential pupils reported as missing and no use of restraint in the residential provision since the previous inspection. A previous recommendation to improve the detail within incident records has not been met. Some documents relating to incidents and concerns raised by staff about residential pupil's behaviours do not contain clear information about the event. This hinders the head of boarding's ability to assess the occurrence and the staff member's capacity to reflect upon the practice subsequently.

### **Leadership and management of the residential provision Inadequate**

The leadership and management of the residential provision is inadequate. The boarding provision is integral to the school as a whole and the 'welcome to boarding' handbook offers pupils and parents a detailed description of the residential provision. However, due to the weaknesses in leadership and management, safeguarding arrangements are poor and key policies are not followed in practice, such as recruitment. This does not protect residential pupils.

An independent person visits the school to undertake external monitoring visits on a regular basis. However, their visits to the school are all announced. Further to this, visits take place within school hours when residential pupils are in lessons. This decreases the opportunity for residential pupils to meet with the visitor in private should they wish. It also means the visitor does not observe direct practice within the boarding houses in the evenings. Reports produced by the visitor lack professional challenge. Formal action points and direct feedback from residential pupils are rare within the reports seen. This does not support the residential provision to develop and continually improve.

Residential pupils take part in boarder's council meetings where they meet with and raise issues directly with the head of boarding. These sessions take place each week for 15 minutes. The restricted timing of these meetings means that there is limited opportunity for all attendees to share their views. Some residential pupils do not have opportunity to share their feedback within the timeframe allocated. This does not support the voice of residential pupils to be heard in a meaningful way.

Residential staff receive regular, recorded supervision and appraisal. They feel well-supported by the senior leadership team. Currently, three staff have achieved the Boarding School Association professional award and the remainder of the team are actively completing the course. Staff also undertake training in adolescent mental health, first aid and medication. This ensures residential pupils are cared for by staff with relevant childcare skills and knowledge. Parents' feedback on the residential provision is positive. They feel the boarding experience helps their child's progress and development, and the vast majority would recommend the school to another parent.

Self-evaluation systems within the school are weak. They fail to adequately evaluate in depth how the school is meeting the national minimum standards. Some internal management monitoring systems are in place, but these are ineffective at ensuring the safety and well-being of residential pupils. For example, the 'managing allegations of abuse' policy, and the recruitment policy have not been implemented consistently or effectively and this places residential pupils at

risk.

Previously excellent practice within the residential provision has not been sustained. The senior leadership team do not demonstrate a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The senior leadership team took immediate actions to address some areas of concern highlighted during this visit. However, other shortfalls identified demonstrate more systemic failings in management oversight of key areas within the school. This lack of effective monitoring means residential pupils are not adequately safeguarded.



## What inspection judgements mean

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	Adequate	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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125403
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC013927
<b>DfE registration number</b>	936/6420

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>	Independent residential special school
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Boys
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	10 to 18
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Barry Huggett
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	04/03/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	01252 792303
<b>Email address</b>	headmasterspa@morehouseschool.co.uk

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