

Muntham House School

Muntham House School, Barns Green, HORSHAM, West Sussex, RH13 0NJ

Inspection dates	09/12/2015 to 11/12/2015	
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

Young people make very strong progress through using the residential provision within the school. They develop skills to respect and tolerate each other through staff's positive role modelling. Young people make great strides in their personal development by working towards the joint objectives agreed by residential and education staff. Their confidence increases as a result and their behaviour improves. Multi-disciplinary monitoring and graph-based analysis demonstrate success in an accessible visual format for students and staff.

The vast majority of young people say they feel safe in the residential provision. Staff have an excellent understanding of why young people may feel unsafe and do all they can to support those individuals. There is a proactive approach to student risk management, allowing them to participate fully in activities they enjoy. Policies and procedures are robust and thoughtfully updated in response to incidents or concerns.

The leadership and management of the residential provision is strong. Established systems run smoothly on a day-to-day basis, although the most up to date plans and information are not always available in all students care files. A highly motivated and experienced care staff group operate very well together as a supportive team. Staff are well qualified and trained to meet the needs of the young people they care for.

The quality of care is excellent with students clearly benefiting socially and educationally from the residential experience. Staff ensure young people are ready to learn and liaise with education staff at the beginning and end of the school day. This enables students to make extremely good progress socially and emotionally during their time at the school.

Pre-placement and transitional arrangements are tailored to each young person's assessed needs. The whole-school approach towards meeting the needs of residential students is seamless. Staff communicate and work effectively with specialists employed

by the school, external professionals and parents and carers. This promotes consistency in care, while understanding the needs, progress and development of each young person.

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?

- Establish a system to audit medication and medical supplies, to monitor stocks, quantity and use-before dates.
- Risk management of staff in issues of safeguarding should be formally recorded on personnel files.
- Implement a clear system for monitoring staff who are employed conditionally. Further, agree a timescale for which these arrangements can continue. This specifically relates to staff working in the school while references are still being sought.
- Ensure all gas cookers within the school are regularly tested for safety.

Information about this inspection

The inspection was announced, by telephone, to the Principal of school on the morning of the first day. An initial meeting was held with the Principal and head of care. Inspectors held discussions with: residential care staff; the senior leadership team; the deputy head of safeguarding; the site manager; speech and language and emotional well-being therapists; the safeguarding governor; and the head of governors. Inspectors observed, and when appropriate took part in, activities with young people in addition to having group and individual discussions with them. Inspectors held telephone discussions with parents and had email contact with the Local Authority Designated Officer and a social worker. A range of documents and records were also examined during the inspection. Questionnaires for residential students and staff were distributed during the inspection and the information gathered was evaluated and any lines of enquiry followed up with relevant staff. A range of documents and records were also examined during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jennie Christopher

Lead social care inspector

Amanda Maxwell

Social care inspector

Full Report

Information about this school

The school is a non-maintained residential special school for up to 56 boys aged between 8 and 19 years, of whom 48 may be boarders. At this inspection there were 29 residential pupils. It is a designated school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties who may in addition have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or present on the autistic spectrum. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school buildings are set in extensive grounds. Accommodation is located in the main building and in a separate building for the sixth form. There are numerous areas for the pupils to enjoy activities. The school was last inspected on 13-15 January 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Young people make good academic and personal progress as a result of using the residential provision. They learn life skills, such as how to share and live with others. They learn to respect each other's differences and behaviours, while understanding how their behaviour may impact on others. Accessing the residential provision is key in developing key skills for adulthood including cooking, cleaning and personal care. Young people's development and progress is clearly displayed in their outcomes wheel, a graph based depiction of targets and success. Joint working across all departments within the school ensures individual targets and goals remain relevant, while stretching young people to achieve further.

Young people are afforded the opportunity to share their views through various means, including the student council, key work sessions and residential area meetings. They feel listened to and that staff care about their ideas. Young people mostly say they enjoy the residential aspect of their education. Those who comment negatively say that the school and staff are not an issue, but they would rather be at home. Those who are experiencing crisis are supported to manage their emotions and changes within their life. Many students are proud of their achievements and are keen to show their awards.

Safeguarding is viewed as integral to the healthy development of young people. They generally understand how to keep themselves safe, in line with their age and understanding. Curriculum days, outcomes wheels and general discussions demonstrate individual's skills and knowledge of keeping safe, with topics covering sexual health and relationships, radicalisation and substance misuse.

Leaders and managers have a sound understanding of the strengths within the service, but also the weaknesses and shortfalls. The school's evaluation is reflective and allows staff to input their views on how and where change can be implemented.

The residential provision is run with young people in mind. They are held central to the organisation of evening activities, with adequate staffing to ensure safety during activities and free time. Planned activities are for the benefit of young people and not reliant on staff choice or preference.

Health care arrangements are sound and young people know who to approach with specific health and well-being concerns. The therapy team work closely with staff to ensure individuals' emotional and physical needs are met.

The quality of care and support

Good

The quality of care and support for young people is very good. Staff have an excellent understanding of individual's needs and vulnerabilities. They take time to listen to each young person and ensure their views are recorded and when appropriate, acted upon. Staff respond positively to ideas and are flexible in their approach to care. Young people know how to access external advocacy agencies and the school's independent listener. Young people say they are confident staff will listen to them and respond to any issues they may raise. Residential plans are of a good quality, although the most up to date version was not available in some files.

However, this had limited impact on the care provided. Evaluation of plans and the impact of accessing the residential provision is excellent. Outcomes wheels effectively demonstrate the progress made.

Young people are treated with dignity and respect and learn to develop the skills to celebrate who they are. Differing cultures and religions are explored through varied activities including the Spanish day taking place during the inspection. Young people experience the music, food and customs of the country they are exploring. Additionally young people are encouraged to consider those who are less fortunate than themselves and are actively involved in various charity and fund raising events. Discriminatory language and behaviour is robustly challenged and monitored to determine if it is indicative of a wider concern, including radicalisation.

Staff have excellent links with the education and therapy teams within the school in addition to strong joint working with external agencies. They liaise effectively with parents to ensure as positive an experience as possible for young people. Individuals who may be displaying concerning behaviour are discussed in multi-disciplinary meetings, including the therapy and support teams. Effective care and support packages are developed as a response. A particular strength within the school are the 'Ready 2 Learn' and therapy teams, which allow young people the time to prepare and collect themselves emotionally before continuing with the next part of their day. Early intervention through these teams is key in producing positive outcomes for young people.

Young people are supported to understand healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. They engage in a wide range of socially and physically stimulating activities, such as football, scuba diving and judo and arts, crafts and board games. They are encouraged to eat healthily and learn to make meals with fresh produce. Young people develop an understanding of physical and emotional well-being and positive relationships. External specialist services, such as substance misuse workers, engage young people alone or in a group, and staff reinforce these messages within the residential provision. Medication administration is safe, with staff training in safe administration. There currently is not a secure audit of medication and first aid supplies, with some homely remedies and dressings being out of date.

The residential area is well maintained and decorated. It has a homely feel with a variety of soft furnishings in line with individual tastes. Young people bring items from home, and the atmosphere is calm and warm. Meal times are social with some young people cooking for themselves or the group. Young people are able to contact their parents or carers at any time. Those consulted were extremely positive about the school and the progress their children had made, commenting positively on the quality and dedication of staff in the residential provision.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Young people demonstrated that they feel safe in the school, and particularly in the residential provision. Those who indicate they do not feel safe for any reason, are effectively supported and protected by staff to overcome their worries or concerns. Staff recognise that safeguarding is a key element of their role and are vigilant to any changes in young people's demeanour or behaviour. Staff confidently follow prescribed processes should they be concerned for an individual's welfare. They understand both the school's local policy and that of the local authority, including key safeguarding personal they would report concerns to in the local authority.

Records of safeguarding incidents and concerns are a particular strength in the school. They detail subtle changes in behaviour or language, and record who the concern has been raised to both in the school and externally. The school governor charged with safeguarding has many

years' experience in the medical field and a keen understanding of protecting vulnerable people. He has strong oversight and is comfortable challenging any poor practice within the school.

Concerns are reported to the local authority team charged with safeguarding children and young people. The local authority officer is confident in the school's transparency and reporting of concerns. Current, protracted investigations into issues of staff suitability require the decision-making process for continued staff deployment to be consolidated, to show how decisions have been reached.

Young people who are at risk of going missing benefit from extra staff support, to further ensure their safety. Staff encourage them to understand the risks they are taking and how they may be unsafe away from adults in the community. Policies in relation to this are clear and responses to those who are missing are robust. Staff will follow individuals and search for them in known locations, while calling the police if necessary.

Young people who have misused substances have the opportunity to work alongside external specialist agencies and therapists within the school. All are supported through the curriculum and ad hoc discussions with staff to protect themselves from risks and harm. Additionally these sessions provide young people with knowledge to raise awareness of bullying, radicalisation, homophobia and other discriminatory behaviours. E-safety is a key topic area due to the vulnerability of many of the students. The school's processes protect young people from accessing unsuitable content.

Positive behaviour is promoted throughout the school. A recognised on-line system monitors behaviour trends and patterns in all protective areas and, alongside the outcomes wheel, helps to identify those who may be at risk of exploitation, grooming, radicalisation and other vulnerabilities. Staff are skilled in managing unwanted behaviour and use diversion and redirection. Young people have the opportunity to work through their distress in a safe space, with time to reflect on how their behaviour may impact on others.

Individual risk assessments afford young people the opportunity to take age-appropriate risks in line with their peers. Staff are not risk averse and allow individuals to make informed choices on their safety, including unaccompanied trips for older students. The buildings and grounds are well maintained and assessed. Boilers are tested for safety, although two gas cookers have not been examined within the last year. Young people are protected from avoidable risks through regular tests of the fire alarm and firefighting equipment. Staff vetting is robust, although there is no clear assessment of those who are employed conditionally and no determined date for how long these arrangements can remain in place.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The leadership and management of the residential provision is strong. The service is effectively run by an enthusiastic head of care, who has relevant qualifications and experience. A highly motivated and experienced care staff group operate very well together as a supportive team. They are well qualified and trained to meet the needs of the young people they care for. Staff understand the aims and ethos of the service and ensure the residential experience is central to the progress of young people. They have high aspirations for those they care for and expect high quality work from each other. They feel supported by managers and the senior team, and also by each other.

Staff have an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities in improving outcomes and progress of young people. They work cohesively as a team, but also jointly with external

partner agencies and parents. Social workers comment positively about the school and state the school remedies any issues swiftly.

Leaders and managers monitor the quality of the service provided through regular reviews and self-evaluation. Staff are key to this process and have the opportunity to contribute to development plans across the school. There have been difficulties in sourcing an appropriate independent visitor to monitor the residential provision. A visitor has been appointed since the autumn term. Interim arrangements included members of the governing body visiting the school unannounced. All governors have a strong presence within the school, regularly visiting for sub-groups and committee meetings.

There have been no formal complaints to the school since the last residential inspection. Low level issues in friendships or disagreements between staff and young people are managed through a restorative approach and recorded effectively to demonstrate agreements made.

Policies and procedures are available to all staff in the school. They are regularly updated and reflect changes both locally and nationally. They provide staff with key information on how to conduct their roles safely and consistently across the school.

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	126154
Social care unique reference number	SC014636
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	53
Gender of boarders	Boys
Age range of boarders	8 to19
Head teacher	
Date of previous boarding inspection	13/01/2015
Telephone number	01403 730302
Email address	

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