

More House School

Monitoring

Unique reference number	SC013927
Inspector	Jennie Christopher
Event type	SC - Monitoring
Provider type	Residential Special School

Inspection dates	25 and 26 May 2016
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Context of the inspection

A standalone social care inspection was conducted on 10 to 12 November 2015 and judged the school to require improvement for overall effectiveness. An action plan was submitted which was initially judged as not satisfactory on 29 March 2016. This monitoring inspection was undertaken to assess the progress in meeting the national minimum standards that were previously unmet.

The inspectors held discussions with the senior leadership team, residential staff and the school nurse. A range of records were scrutinised, and a telephone discussion and email communication with the local authority designated officer took place prior to the inspection.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

Four national minimum standards (NMS) were judged as not met at the last inspection. The management team have strived to ensure no shortfalls remain and the NMS are met.

NMS 11 - Since the last inspection the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and other members of the senior leadership team have strengthened safeguarding practice across the school. Weekly meetings to discuss students of concern are now clearly documented and provide an audit trail of

action taken and who is responsible for the oversight of individual students. Newly implemented weekly meetings with key residential staff and the DSL also identify any extra needs and record who is responsible for ensuring agreed actions take place. The records provide a weekly chronology of concerns and highlight any new or changing behaviours. They also detail which external organisations information has been shared with. The local authority designated officer spoken with had no concerns regarding the reporting of information and incidents. Records also show the swift response in reporting of any areas of concern in relation to adults in the school. The DSL continues to produce clear records of safeguarding and child protection concerns, which demonstrate his follow up to any incidents or concerns, including his regular contact with social workers, and his concerted effort to contact with them and seek updates if they have not responded.

The residential staff have started to implement risk assessments for students whose behaviour or medical conditions cause concern. Of the documents sampled most were of good quality, demonstrating insight into the students' needs and risks and how staff can mitigate them. Others had limited information and highlighted what actions had been taken rather than how to support the student to reduce risk. There remains a reliance on staff knowledge of young people rather than recording formation. However, staff in the residential areas continue to demonstrate an excellent understanding of the students' needs and are aware of those students who require extra support and monitoring. Where serious concerns regarding behaviour or relationships are identified, good quality records highlight these. For example two students' placement plans identified potential concerns and this was further highlighted in brief risk assessments and weekly staff meeting minutes. Staff who work with the students are also aware of the levels supervision required. Risk assessments regarding bedroom sharing have been implemented since the last inspection, to ensure safety and compatibility are fully considered. The senior leadership team acknowledged that some risk assessments did not contain sufficient detail and are seeking to redress this immediately.

An area of further development since the last inspection is the implementation of a new system of 'roll calls' that staff undertake at various points in the evening. The register of students, recorded electronically, highlights if a student is missing, ensuring that there is good oversight and knowledge of young people's whereabouts throughout the evening.

NMS 12.1 – Since the last inspection new systems have been implemented to record sanctions which are given in residential time. The new approach allows for greater evaluation and scrutiny of any sanctions which are also discussed in weekly residential staff meetings. As trends and patterns are much easier to identify, key staff are developing support packages for students to occupy them or divert them during identified difficult periods of the evening. This is highlighted for relevant students in their placement plans. Additionally, staff are recording a wealth of key information regarding changes in behaviour or occurrences of concern, such as eating habits or negative interactions with peers, in order to better plan for young people's needs.

A 'behaviour grid' provides consistency in approach for staff and identifies what is deemed as a major sanction. This again allows for greater scrutiny, but also provides consistency for students to understand what is expected of them, and what the likely consequences of their actions will be. Staff are positive about this and find electronic recording via their tablets an effective way to record any changes in behaviour or significant issues while they remain fresh in their mind.

The newly implemented process remains under review and the head of care has already identified areas for improvement in the system, such as how best to record evidence and evaluate student's views of sanctions. However the process is much improved since the last inception.

NMS 13.9 – The head of care has implemented various systems since the last inspection in order to improve monitoring of the residential provision. For example, the weekly residential staff

meeting, with the DSL identifies students at risk or causing concern and also includes how to improve and develop the residential provision. The minutes of the meetings identify improved oversight of health and safety issues, the quality of the fabric of the residential areas and how to improve recording systems. The minutes provide a chronology over the weeks of ideas such as the behaviour grid, its implementation and staff's reflection upon its success. A weekly topic for discussion includes staff's views on compliance with the NMS, enabling all staff to become involved in improving the service and meeting the standards. The head of care has also made copious notes on how he would like to see the residential service improve and develop in order to meet the NMS.

The headteacher and head of care have completed an evaluation of the service against the NMS, which highlighted the need to further develop placement plans and risk assessments. Key staff have benefited from the opportunity to visit other schools locally to observe good practice and evaluate this against their own.

NMS 21.1 – All students who access the residential provision now have a placement plan. These vary in detail depending on the individual needs. They include the students' views and staff have spent time determining with students what they feel their strengths are and in which areas they require additional support. Students also have the opportunity to identify what can make them upset or distressed and agree how staff can best support them in this instance.

Placement plans include risk assessments for those students where one is already in place. Where necessary, health plans and protocols are also included within the plan. The plans are continuously under review and many showed they had been updated since they were first devised. The head of care is considering other ways in which to improve the plans and make them more student friendly, including sections for goals and targets which students can have their own copies of.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The NMS scrutinised at this inspection were NMS 11; NMS 12.1; NMS 13.9 and NMS 21.1. They are now judged as met.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the information in risk assessments to ensure they identify risk and the actions to help mitigate the identified concerns.

Inspection team

Lead inspector
Team inspector

Jennie Christopher
Emeline Evans (Day 1)

Information about this school

The 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 115 boarders on role. 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 November 2015.

School details

Unique reference number	125403
Social care unique reference number	SC013927
DfE registration number	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 boarding schools.

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection

Type of school	Independent Special School
Number of boarders on roll	115
Gender of boarders	Male
Age range of boarders	8-19
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Hetherington
Date of previous residential inspection	10-12 November 2015
Telephone number	01252 792303
Email address	headmasterspa@morehouseschool.co.uk