

Charlton Park Academy

Charlton Park Road, London, LONDON SE7 8HX

Inspection dates

29/11/2016 to 01/12/2016

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good **2**

The quality of care and support

Outstanding 1

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 enjoy using the residential service. They have fun, make progress and are kept safe.
- The links between the education and residential provision are strong and mutually supportive. This provides a consistent experience of care for young people and means that they benefit from accessing a range of resources and support to promote their welfare and independence.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the care provided to their children. They have complete trust in the residential staff and frequently comment that staff go 'above and beyond' to make sure that young people are happy and safe.
- The school uses cutting edge technology to help young people to communicate to the best of their ability. This empowers young people to let adults know what matters to them and to have a say in how they are cared for.
- Staff are trained, assessed and supported by specialist workers so they are competent to meet the complex health needs of young people.
- Staff are committed and passionate about their work with young people. They enjoy their work and provide genuine love and care.
- The manager of the residential provision provides effective leadership. She is visible and accessible to staff and young people. She is well supported by senior leaders within the school.
- The physical environment is cheerful and well equipped to make sure that young people can enjoy their stay in comfort and safety. They participate in a range of activities to suit their needs.
- Senior leaders and governors of the school take an active interest in the residential provision. They closely monitor the quality of care provided to young people and provide a clear vision for service improvement.

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 that all staff nominated as designated safeguarding leads for the school have undertaken relevant child protection training to provide them with the skills and knowledge required to carry out the role. This training should be updated every two years. ('Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016)', Annex B, page 60).
- Ensure that, at all times, there is a residential member of staff on duty who is trained as a fire marshal.

Information about this inspection

The school received three hours' notice prior to the start of this inspection. The inspection activities included: meetings with senior leaders, residential staff and specialist support staff who provide therapy, training and healthcare support to young people. The inspector consulted with young people, parents and the statutory safeguarding authority. The inspector reviewed records and documents, observed practice, toured the school and visited some students during lessons.

Inspection team

Lee Kirwin

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

This is a residential special school that is maintained by the Royal London Borough of Greenwich. It provides 220 places for students aged 11 to 19 who have a statement of special educational needs. It also provides eight residential places, in four shared bedrooms in the on-site residential unit known as Rainbow House. There are currently 197 students on roll, 12 of whom use the residential service, though two of these do not stay overnight. Rainbow House is situated in the main school. The residential service is available during week days and term time only. The residential provision was last inspected in December 2015.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Young people look forward to staying at Rainbow House. The staff work closely in partnership with parents to make sure they understand the needs of each young person. They pay close attention to the small details so they know how to ensure that young people are comfortable, safe, have fun and make progress.

Staff make every effort to ensure that young people can communicate their wishes and feelings. This means that young people are encouraged to make choices about the way they are cared for and the activities on offer. Young people using the residential services contribute to the school council and participate meaningfully in order to inform service development across the school.

Young people benefit from access to extensive resources in the school and in the residential provision. This means they can access technology to help assist them in communication and use sports and recreational facilities to have fun and exercise. They also have access to a range of sensory equipment that can help provide stimulation or a calm space to relax and enjoy. There is provision for a range of needs and this means that all young people have access to activities and the support they need to enjoy their stay.

Young people are encouraged to learn independence skills appropriate to their abilities. Each young person has realistic targets. Staff identify small steps and measure progress so that young people make progress and experience success. Clear risk assessments and care plans provide guidance to staff to ensure that there is always a good balance between interventions to protect young people from harm, while maximising their opportunities to be independent.

Specialist staff work across the school and residential provision. They provide consultation and training to staff and also undertake direct work with young people. This ensures that care plans and interventions are informed by expert input. There is a clear focus on keeping young people safe, maximising their potential and promoting their overall well-being. Care plans are closely monitored and reviewed to ensure they continue to meet the needs of young people. Staff receive regular training and assessment to ensure that they can safely deliver interventions to manage complex health needs.

Parents appreciate the service provided by Rainbow House. They feel that the service makes a big difference to the quality of their children's lives. They trust the staff who work there and consistently describe the quality of communication with them as being excellent.

Staff work effectively as a team to deliver high-quality care. They have strong links with the school so that they can provide a consistent experience of care to ensure young people get the most out of their education and residential experience. Staffing is organised with the needs of the young people in mind. There are always sufficient numbers of staff to provide care and safe supervision. Staff are thoughtful about how they provide personal care and ensure that they protect the dignity of young people.

Leadership and management of the residential provision and school closely monitor the quality of care provided to young people. They set clear targets for young people, measure progress and celebrate success. All young people make progress in education and develop a range of skills to help improve their quality of life and ability to be as independent as possible.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

The school and residential provision work effectively in partnership to provide a 'team around the child'. Staff communicate well with each other and with parents to ensure that care planning is joined up. This provides a very secure, stable environment where young people experience consistency of care across the school, the residential provision and their home life.

Staff work effectively to deliver care in line with detailed care plans. Staff carefully monitor the lived experiences of young people and adjust plans accordingly to make sure that they have a positive experience of care and develop a range of skills in order to reach their full potential. This attentiveness to the important details of care enables staff to intervene effectively to meet the complex care needs of young people.

Young people report being happy, both in school and the residential provision. They get on well with staff and have fun. They enjoy a range of activities both within the residential provision and in the local community. Parents value this and consistently comment that their children benefit from spending time with other young people. They speak highly of the opportunities afforded to their children to go out on trips and engage with the wider community.

Residential pupils are supported to express themselves to the best of their ability. They each have an iPad with a personal 'wiki diary'. This is a device piloted by the school, designed to enable young people to engage with a safe social media platform in order to communicate. They use this to let people know what matters to them and how best to care for them to keep them comfortable and safe. They are able to share their experiences, activities and successes through words, pictures, sound and video. Staff and parents can contribute to their diary and this ensures that the young people's views and needs are clearly communicated to the people that they depend on to keep them safe.

Parents consistently give outstanding feedback in relation to the impact and benefits of the residential provision. One parent stated, 'I love Rainbow, it was a life changer for me - because my son can't communicate, I wouldn't let him use respite, but when he came here, he picked up his suitcase and wanted to come.' There were common themes from parents' feedback relating to having trust in the staff to provide excellent care for young people with complex health needs. They felt that staff listened to them and communicated well.

The school is a centre of excellence for Mobility Opportunities via Education (MOVE). The residential staff work closely with a physiotherapist to develop and review care plans. She works alongside the staff, providing training and competency assessments to ensure that personal care, as well as moving and handling, deliver the maximum amount of protection and comfort. There were several examples where parents came into the residential provision to benefit from this input and to share their own knowledge and understanding with staff. This true partnership working ensures a clear and informed focus on the welfare and experiences of young people.

A senior staff member, closely involved in the residential service, is a leading practitioner in the development and delivery of technology to enhance the communication and assistive technology for young people with learning and physical impairments. This means that young people have access to the latest technology. One young person is currently learning to use 'Eye Gaze', which enables him to operate a cursor with his eyes. This opens up new possibilities for communication and enables him to overcome barriers to communication in order to express himself to the full potential of his significant cognitive abilities.

A speech and language therapist provides additional support and guidance to staff to ensure that the methods of communication used are designed to optimise the participation of young people. She helps set clear goals and targets and guides intervention to help young people make choices, develop communication skills and increase their independence.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Careful planning and assessment ensures that the young people using the residential services are able to thrive and make a positive contribution to the residential experience. Young people only access the residential provision if it is clear their presenting needs and behaviour can be managed safely. Young people are well matched, get on with well each other and make friends.

Young people are well-behaved and staff intervene in line with behaviour management training accredited by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD). They demonstrate patience and sensitivity when managing behaviour that presents a challenge. Sanctions are not used and physical intervention is not required. Staff are creative and proactive in supporting young people who may be feeling anxious or upset. In one example, staff provide a toy for a young person to hold when delivering personal care. This provides a degree of comfort and reduces the likelihood that she will scratch staff. They use sensory spaces and one-to-one attention to help young people stay calm and find comfort.

Detailed care plans, excellent communication and expert guidance ensure that young people with complex health needs receive the care they need to promote their well-being. Qualified nursing staff are on hand at all times to provide advice and direct care to young people. Staff are trained by external providers and have their competency assessed to ensure that they deliver health interventions safely.

The school as a whole, including the residential provision, have made significant improvements to the handling, recording and administration of medication. Practice in this area is subject to frequent external audit by a qualified professional consultant. The consultant's feedback and audit reports demonstrated that there are no significant errors with medications that affect the well-being or safety of young people.

There have been no serious complaints or safeguarding incidents within the school or residential provision since the last inspection. The local authority safeguarding personnel reported that the school shares any concerns promptly and acts upon any advice given to investigate concerns or address issues in relation to the care provided to young people. Concerns and complaints are recorded and addressed in line with the school's policies. The designated safeguarding lead for the school recently left her post and the school has restructured their arrangements, identifying three safeguarding leads to provide increased cover and clear lines of accountability. The staff identified for this role have not undertaken child protection training within the last two years, as required by the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016). The head of the school is aware of this shortfall and training will take place in early January 2017. This shortfall presents some vulnerabilities in the safeguarding systems in the school, but the headteacher, who oversees safeguarding, is knowledgeable and promotes safe practice. There is no impact on the welfare of young people.

There is always a sufficient number of staff on duty to meet the needs of the young people, who often benefit from one-to-one care. Care plans and risk assessments clearly identify the risks and vulnerabilities for each young person. They include clear instructions for staff in order to reduce

risks and promote welfare. Plans are created in such a way as to achieve a suitable balance between promoting independence and keeping young people safe. Young people are closely supervised in the residential provision. Due to their vulnerabilities, they are never left unsupervised in the local community. Therefore, young people do not go missing.

Staffing is arranged in such a way as to ensure that only staff who know the young people well and who are trained in health interventions provide care. Personal care is provided in a way that is mindful of the feelings and vulnerabilities of each young person. Staff are alert to signs that a child may be at risk or suffering harm. They are fully versed in procedures to take action and share information in order to protect young people from harm.

There is a range of measures to provide independent monitoring of safeguarding practice and the quality of care provided to young people. The manager has good oversight and maintains effective systems for monitoring, ensuring good practice is promoted and sustained.

Each young person has a personal evacuation plan in the event of a fire. The fire safety systems are regularly checked and maintained. However, insufficient staff in the residential provision are trained as fire marshals. This creates a weakness in fire safety. The impact of this shortfall is mitigated in part due to regular fire drills being carried out. This ensures that staff know what to do in the event of a fire and young people can be safely evacuated.

Young people have access to an independent visitor who visits the residential provision weekly. She knows the young people well and holds professional qualifications in counselling. She is able to meet with young people informally to check on their well-being. She also provides some mediation to address low-level concerns. This ensures that young people have an independent voice and feel empowered to share any concerns at an early stage.

All staff working with young people in the residential provision are suitably vetted and checked to ensure they are of good character. Staff undertake regular training in key areas to ensure they can deliver safe care and meet the needs of young people with complex health needs.

Parents consistently report that they have had no concerns about the welfare or safety of their children. They trust the staff and feel that their children are safe when using the residential service.

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

The manager of the residential service is suitably experienced and qualified for the role. She is visible within the service and is close to practice. She has a clear understanding of the needs of the service, capabilities of the staff and the needs of young people. She manages the day-to-day care effectively to ensure that there is a clear focus on the needs of young people. She quickly identifies problems and takes remedial action to ensure that the progress, experience and well-being of young people remain at the heart of service provision.

The manager has a collaborative style of management. She encourages staff to share any concerns or challenges and uses their feedback to improve the service. Staff appreciate this and describe the manager as being supportive and approachable. Staff participate in regular team meetings and undergo regular supervision and appraisal. This provides staff with opportunities to share any challenges and address their learning and development needs.

The manager is well supported by the senior leadership team within the school. She has regular supervision and support. She has access to a range of specialists to provide advice and support.

in order to ensure young people receive high-quality care. She has good oversight of recording, care plans and risk assessments relating to young people. This is enhanced by independent monthly monitoring visits undertaken by an independent visitor. She acts on feedback from these visits to inform service development and address any shortfalls.

The chair of governors plays an active role in monitoring the quality of care in the residential provision. He undertakes regular visits, talks to staff and young people and observes practice. He is a former parent of a young person in the school and has a clear vision, from this perspective, about the priorities for young people and their families. He provides constructive challenge to the school to maintain improvement and ensures that practice in the residential provision remains central to school improvement planning.

The manager of the service works effectively in partnership with parents, teachers and specialist support staff. This ensures that young people have a consistent experience of care and they receive the support they need to develop to their full potential. The manager listens carefully to what young people say and ensures that, as far as possible, they are fully involved in making choices about their care and activities.

The manager has good oversight of the health and safety of the premises, ensuring the physical environment is a safe and attractive space for young people. She ensures the residential provision is clean, well equipped and well maintained.

The headteacher of the school has a keen interest in and a clear vision for the residential provision. He leads improvement and ensures that the residential manager has the resources and support she needs to maintain and improve standards. He has helped the service address the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. There are now more permanent staff appointed to improve consistency of care, more drivers available to support activities and more robust measures to support safe recruitment. The residential service continues to benefit from improvements to the school as a whole, in particular the innovative use of technology and more robust measures to improve medication systems.

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 exceed the standard of good and result 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	138547
Social care unique reference number	SC044128
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	12
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	11 to 19
Headteacher	Mark Dale – Emberton
Date of previous boarding inspection	01/12/2015
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