

# Muntham House School

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

<b>Inspection dates</b>	28/02/2017 to 02/03/2017	
<b>The overall experiences and progress of children and young people</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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

- The school has a positive impact on the lives of children and young people. Boarding is highly valued within the school community. In particular it is valued for its significant contribution to children's and young people's positive experiences, and their good progress.
- Children and young people receive integrated care and support that is of excellent quality. A collaborative model of working is fully developed. The partnership between the boarding and the therapeutic teams is particularly strong.
- Extended education and a leisure-based curriculum are embedded in normal routines. Children and young people learn about themselves and the world around them through having fun and enjoying themselves. They appreciate the extra opportunities that boarding gives them to develop friendships, engage in a wide range of interesting activities and develop their life skills further. Children and young people receive good support to gain qualifications and skills that increase their independence and future employability.
- The school provides a highly structured environment that enables children and young people to express themselves and develop their individuality. A restorative justice ethos and a non-judgemental approach to children's and young people's challenging behaviours help them to gain self-awareness and improve communication. Excellent residential care, therapeutic support and creative activities add to these crucial aspects of their development.
- The management of risks and behaviours is effective in promoting children's and

young people's constructive and safe behaviours. Consistent praise, trusting relationships, clear rules and firm behavioural boundaries have contributed to their growing sense of self-worth, achievement and inner security.

### **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 the medication policy is comprehensive and precise. In particular, clarify arrangements for the stock control of medicines and procedures for enabling young people to self-administer their medicines.
- Review the school's CCTV policy. Ensure that the school community is aware of its content and that the policy is fully implemented.
- Conduct fire drills during day-school hours more frequently and at least once per term.
- Improve the central log of incidents in which children and young people go missing from the school.
- Ensure that there are at least six independent visitors' monitoring reports evenly spread over a school year and improve on their content.

## Information about this inspection

The school had five hours' notice of inspection. Inspection activities included: individual discussions with boarders and a discussion with the children's council; a children-led tour of the whole school; meeting boarding staff and observing their practice; observation of the school assemblies; individual discussions with the principal, the head of care, a data analyst, an administrative officer, the therapies coordinator, the children's advocate, one of the deputy safeguarding leads for the school and a member of the family support induction team, the chef, the safeguarding governor, the school's health team and the estate management team. The inspector had telephone conversations with the local authority's safeguarding lead, a social worker from one of the placing authorities and two family members. The inspector scrutinised a wide range of policies, procedures and documents, including individual files for boarders and staff members. One parent gave their view through the Ofsted Parent View.

## Inspection team

Seka Graovac

lead 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 18 residential pupils. It is a designated school for pupils who experience social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties and who may in addition have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autistic spectrum disorder. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. The school buildings are set in extensive grounds of 20 acres of land. Accommodation is located in the main building with a separate building for the sixth form. There are numerous areas for the pupils to enjoy activities. The school was last inspected in December 2015.

## Inspection judgements

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

**Good**

This residential special school has a positive impact on the lives of children and young people, and their families. Boarders receive high-quality residential care and support from staff members who they trust. The positive relationships underpin children's and young people's positive experiences. They enjoy boarding and have made good progress overall.

Children and young people have achieved good outcomes across different areas of their learning, welfare and development. In the last school year, the school has recorded a 100% GCSE pass rate. In comparison with the whole school results, boarders' progress in reading is particularly good. The school marks World Book Day in a traditional way by asking pupils and staff to dress up as their favourite book characters. During World Book Day, children and young people showed great creativity and excitement, and a love for the world of words and storytelling.

A well-developed leisure curriculum enables children and young people to learn through having fun and enjoying themselves. They appreciate the extra opportunities that boarding gives them to develop friendships and engage in a wide range of activities. Children and young people have developed their interest in learning and have gained confidence to try new things. The school's 'Ready to learn' project promotes the school's motto, 'Education is light', effectively. Children and young people talked very positively about learning at this school. Some of them have progressed significantly, from refusing to enter any classroom to now achieving 100% educational attendance.

Children and young people have developed confidence in themselves and their own abilities and skills. They have become more willing to engage with adults and other children and young people. Their behaviours and social skills have improved. One young person's grandmother described the changes in her grandson: '[He has] transformed from being a very shy and almost a wild child when he entered the school to a confident young person with high aspirations.' Another young person shared with the inspector, in a highly articulate manner, the story of how he arrived at this school as an elective mute. He said that the school has helped him to find his voice. He has developed the resilience he needed in order to engage with people around him. He is now a star pupil and enjoys showing visitors around the school and telling them about his life journey. Another young person proudly showed to the inspector the national award that he got for resilience, courage and perseverance in managing his medical condition. The school supported him effectively to ensure that he did not allow his serious medical condition to limit his life opportunities.

The school provides a highly structured environment that enables children and young people to express themselves and develop their individuality. A restorative justice ethos and a non-judgemental approach to children's and young people's behaviours help them to improve their self-awareness and their communication skills. Easy access to therapeutic support and creative activities adds to these crucial aspects of their development.

The school has an effective children's council. It ensures that children's and young people's views and feelings are made known to the leaders and managers, and are taken into account. Children and young people have recently worked with a team of media professionals to produce a video about their experience of the school. This video is their story of what it means to be a part of this school community. The video creatively demonstrates how well children and young people can communicate. At the inspection, some young people were preparing to record a song in a professional studio.

Children and young people enjoy staying on a beautiful Victorian school estate that has extensive grounds and a grand entrance. They have personalised their bedrooms and the physical environment is kept clean and is maintained to a high standard.

Children and young people feel safe at the school for most of the time. An example in which a young person came to the school after he had gone missing from the family home demonstrates that he saw the school as his place of safety and belonging. Another young person explained, 'Nothing is like home, but the school is a bit like being at home.'

Children and young people trust the leadership and management of the school. They benefit from receiving well organised boarding provision. Children and young people know that the professionals work closely together within the school, and with their parents and carers, to ensure that they receive the support they need. They describe their experience as being positive most of the time. They reported that when difficulties arise, they are well supported to resolve any issues in a constructive manner.

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools. It exceeds some of them. There are some areas of practice that need to be improved; these shortfalls do not affect the well-being of children and young people.

## **The quality of care and support**

## **Outstanding**

The quality of care that is provided by the school is outstanding. Staff practices exceed a number of the national minimum standards that underpin the quality of care. The excellent quality of care and support has led to the majority of children and young people making good progress. In a number of instances, children and young people have made outstanding progress.

Children and young people, and their families, receive comprehensive information prior to the children and young people starting to board at the school. Children and young people benefit from a sensitive induction to the school. The school's family support and pupil induction team takes a lead role for ensuring that everything goes smoothly. This team continues to support good family life during each pupil's journey through the school. Parents and carers provide exceptionally positive feedback on the quality of the boarding provision. They describe it as fantastic, brilliant and 'could not ask for better'.

Children and young people receive integrated care and support that is of excellent quality. This approach is embedded across education and throughout social, emotional and physical care. The school has developed very close working relationships with a strong therapeutic team. During their 12-week induction to the school, each child or

young person receives a well-being assessment. The report includes clear recommendations on specific interventions that might be helpful for them. Children and young people have easy access to an exceptionally wide range of therapies, including therapeutic horsemanship, therapeutic drumming, animal therapy and therapy based on the use of plastic-bricks. A placing authority's social worker describes the school's success in enabling a young person to engage in a psychological assessment as something 'unheard of'. He also commented, 'At the time of the fostering placement breakdown, the staff went above and beyond their duty to support the young person. This happened during summer holidays.'

The physical and medical healthcare needs of children and young people are met to a high standard. The school has its own health team which ensures that children's and young people's health needs are met. The procedures for dealing with children's and young people's medication are safe.

Therapeutic staff, together with the academic and boarding staff, make strong positive contributions to care planning. Formal reviews focus on the effectiveness of teaching, care and pastoral support. The care plans and associated documentation demonstrate that children and young people receive carefully and holistically planned care. These plans are individually tailored to meet their needs; this further enhances their progress.

The school has designed its own model for describing and measuring children's and young people's progress and outcomes regarding their welfare and development. This method includes specific progress indicators that embody the school's holistic approach to the education and care of children and young people. It is a clear visual tool that the principal of the school states has been adopted by 47 other residential special schools. This is an example of the school's innovative work. This school's initiative has supported the progress of good practice in the sector.

The food provision at the school is outstanding. The chef and his team go far beyond just providing appetising, nutritious and tasty meals. They put exceptional effort into making sure that the whole experience of eating and sharing food feels special for children and young people, staff and any visitors. They find creative ways to get children and young people to try healthy foods, such as arousing their interest in oily fish by using it in sushi and linking it with the Japanese culture. In addition, by creatively using food-related topics to teach children and young people how to make healthier choices, they educate children and young people about the impact of the food industry on the earth's ecology.

Children and young people receive excellent information on living healthily and are supported to develop healthy lifestyles. The school offers a wide range of indoor and outdoor recreational activities. Additionally, staff often make arrangements for children and young people to access local and regional facilities and attractions. These arrangements also support children's and young people's social integration very well.

Other areas of the school's high-quality provision include the promotion of young people's independence. Older young people stay in self-contained flats. They have excellent opportunities to practise their independent living skills under the watchful and caring eye of staff. They receive good support to gain qualifications and skills that

increase their employability. The school has been approved to deliver a motorcycle mechanics course by the Institute of the Motor Industry. Some young people have developed excellent woodworking skills. Local businesses provide varied work experience opportunities for young people to help them further enhance their skills and their customer care experience. This has recently included young people working at an auction house, at various food outlets and shops, and for a football club.

## **How well children and young people are protected**

**Good**

The safeguarding leadership team is strong. The principal is the designated safeguarding lead for the school. He is supported by three deputies and an additional two staff members who have all undertaken safeguarding training at an enhanced level. A designated governor is closely involved in overseeing any safeguarding concerns. His extensive medical background and the therapeutic team's expertise ensure that together they make meaningful contributions to the school's approach to keeping children and young people safe. In particular, this increases the understanding of the underlying conditions and difficulties that may compromise children's and young people's welfare. When appropriate, the school works closely with children's services and the police to promote children's and young people's safety. Recent police involvement related to young people missing from where they were supposed to be, illegal substances and vulnerability to extremism.

The school's practices around the management of risks and behaviours are effective in promoting children's and young people's constructive and safe behaviours. At school assemblies there is consistent praise and celebration of children's and young people's achievements. This has a positive impact on their confidence and feelings of self-worth. Trusting relationships, clear rules and firm behavioural boundaries have contributed to their growing sense of inner security, safety and responsibility. As children and young people progress through the school, they develop more constructive and safer behaviours.

The overall number of incidents has reduced year on year. Physical interventions are less frequent in the boarding environment than in previous years. Staff only intervene physically when it is appropriate to do so. Records of physical interventions evidence good and effective behaviour management practice. The occupational therapists record risk assessments of the particular holds and strategies to minimise any risk of injuries. This is a further example of excellent multi-agency working.

Staff display a high level of awareness of safeguarding and safe practices at the school. They receive training on various safeguarding topics, such as radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, grooming and internet safety, and behaviour management and restorative justice. Staff have access to clear policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting children's and young people's welfare. They are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, including those that relate to information sharing and the reporting of concerns. The local authority's designated officer for safeguarding confirmed that there have been no allegations made against the professionals associated with the school since the last inspection. The relationship between the local authority and the school is positive.



Children and young people live in an environment that is kept safe. The estate team ensures that the site is maintained well. The servicing of the equipment and the required health and safety checks are carried out in a timely manner. The variety and levels of technical skills and knowledge within this team mean that the need to use external contractors is rare.

Arrangements for maintaining security are good. Visitors and contractors are chaperoned when on site. The security of the school, including the grounds, is enhanced by strategically placed cameras.

Children and young people receive support and help from adults who have been vetted appropriately. The school carries out thorough recruitment checks before it appoints staff and puts them in a position of trust.

Children and young people report feeling safe for most of the time. They know who to approach if other children or young people make them feel unsafe. They have confidence in the school's child protection, safeguarding and anti-bullying policies, the procedure for raising complaints, and staff practice. Children and young people know that the staff are there to safeguard them and will do anything in their power to help.

The staff's modelling of positive behaviours has been effective in promoting children's and young people's caring attitudes towards others. Older boarders reassured younger children who were experiencing a low level of bullying and needed to share the difficult feelings that that were going through. Everybody at the school, including children and young people, is committed to building a community that is free from bullying, intimidation and discrimination in any form.

The estate team is also responsible for the fire safety at the school. Fire drill are frequently held outside of normal school hours. However, drills for the whole school have not been conducted each term.

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

The school's leadership, management and staff teams demonstrate a high commitment to helping children and young people to achieve positive outcomes. Boarding is highly valued within the school community. It is seen as an integral and vital part of the school's identity. The ethos of high expectations and aspirations for children and young people runs consistently through the various aspects of the school. The collaborative approach that is used in the school and with external partner agencies has a positive impact on children's and young people's progress and outcomes. Boarding makes a significant contribution to this achievement.

Boarding is managed efficiently and effectively. It fulfils its purpose of providing additional support and a positive experience of communal living to children and young people who have special educational needs.

The boarding provision is appropriately resourced and staffed. The team's stability provides consistent practice and steady relationships. The school has recently achieved the gold accreditation level in the Investors in People Awards. Staff's qualifications,

access to a comprehensive training programme, and regular supervision and review of practice have resulted in a highly competent workforce. The school's leadership and management team contributes to the development of practice in the wider professional community by providing training to other institutions and schools.

The governing body, the principal and the head of care closely monitor the school and its impact on children and young people. The existence of various committees that have a specific, well-defined focus and the comprehensive framework of meetings enable good sharing of information and assure the quality of the provision.

The school benefits from appropriate monitoring, although its frequency is below the expected level. An independent person visits the school to provide external scrutiny. The safeguarding governor accompanies the independent person on these visits. The independent person produced only four monitoring reports in the last school year and so far has only produced one report during this school year. Along with the fact that the visits are not being carried out with the frequency that is described in the national minimum standards, the reports do not consistently cover all the areas that are specified in the standard. The school has produced a reporting template to make sure that all of the required information is captured in the reports in the future.

Another area for improvement relates to the monitoring of the school's central log of instances in which a child or a young person goes missing from the school. It is clear from the log that appropriate reporting protocols are followed and that joint working with other agencies and the families is good. However, there is not always a clear record in the log of when the child or young person returned to either the school or their home, and therefore were not deemed to be missing any longer. The principal was not aware of the gap in recording until the inspection.

The school's governors have a keen interest in the school and a good oversight of the school. They receive safeguarding reports and monitoring data on a regular basis. These relate to a wide range of outcomes for children and young people. Governors also carry out reviews of the school's policies and procedures. However, the policy regarding the use of CCTV has not been reviewed since it was written in 2011. This policy has a low profile and its content is not well known in the school. In addition, the policy on dealing with children's and young people's medication does not provide clear guidance to staff on the stock control of medication, particularly with regard to non-prescribed medicines. Good practice in relation to promoting young people's self-administration of medication when the risk assessment allows for this to happen is also not covered.

The leaders and managers have an appropriate development and improvement plan for the school. This includes maintaining and improving on the school's current standards in boarding, as well as meeting future challenges.

## 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's 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 their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	126154
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC014636
<b>DfE registration number</b>	126154

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>	52
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Boys
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	6 to 18
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Boyle
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	09/12/2015
<b>Telephone number</b>	01403 730302
<b>Email address</b>	principal@muntham.co

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