

More House School

Moons Hill, Frensham, Farnham, Surrey GU10 3AP

Inspection dates

20/03/2017 to 22/03/2017

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

- Outcomes for young people are good. They learn tolerance and respect for each other from role modelling by staff. Young people develop their personal skills by working towards the joint objectives agreed by the residential, therapeutic and education staff. As a result, young people become more confident.
- Young people's views are central to the residential provision and school development plans. The school council meets regularly. The group only raises what it would like to change, and is often solution focused. The members are respected by other students and also the senior leaders in the school, who respond effectively to any ideas or concerns that they raise.
- The leadership and management of the residential provision are good. Residential students are cared for by an enthusiastic team of staff who are eager to continually improve practice. Staff are well supported by leaders and managers, and have access to varied training opportunities. Joint working across the school ensures that all students have access to good-quality care and leisure experiences.
- Young people say that they feel safe at the school and have staff in the residential provision whom they would go to if they were worried or upset. Young people talk positively about the residential staff and say that they trust them to manage any issues in their peer relationships, including bullying.
- The quality of care is good, with young people benefiting socially and educationally from the residential experience. Residential staff ensure that emotional well-being and readiness to learn are clearly communicated to education staff at the start of every school day, with a reciprocal arrangement at the end of the school day.

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?

- Evaluate incidents of unwanted and negative behaviour to determine the root causes and how incidents may be reduced.
- Monitor and review young people's goals and targets as set out in their care plans, identifying the impact of accessing the residential provision. Furthermore, focus on those in the details of the plans for students with greater needs.
- Consider the benefits of increasing staff supervision to half termly.
- Ensure that discussions and agreements with partner agencies regarding young people's care are recorded.

Information about this inspection

The inspection was announced by telephone to the head of school on the morning of the first day. On arrival, an initial meeting was held with the headteacher, head of care, designated safeguarding lead (DSL), deputy headteacher and bursar. Inspectors held discussions with residential care staff, the DSL, the bursar, therapists (occupational, psychotherapeutic, and speech and language), the school nurse and governors. All residential areas were observed and visited during the inspection, and the inspectors observed and, when appropriate, took part in activities with residential students in addition to having group and individual discussions with them. Inspectors held telephone discussions with the local authority designated officer and parents. A range of documents and records were also examined during the inspection.

Inspection team

Jennie Christopher
Kenneth Smith

Lead social care inspector
Social care inspection manager

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 111 residential students. 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 lower school in the main school building and the upper school in a separate accommodation block. The last welfare inspection took place in November 2015.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

Young people make good progress in their education and social and emotional skills while using the residential provision. They form friendships, often for the first time, and learn to tolerate those whom they may struggle with. Staff are strong role models and demonstrate respect for each young person. In turn, young people develop respect for each other's differences.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the residential provision, and identify its strengths and weaknesses through regular visits and continued monitoring of the significantly improved plans. Staff have a strong understanding of each young person's needs and identify those who may require extra support through daily handovers between school and residential staff.

Young people's views are sought and are central to forming development plans. Young people are able to share their views in daily house meetings and with their key workers at any time. Young people say that they feel listened to and that change has been made as a result of their suggestions.

Young people say that they enjoy the residential provision, and all identify activities that they enjoy. They develop interpersonal skills through engaging in school activities and through staff guidance. Staff support personal development by prompting young people how to achieve their goals, as agreed with the residential, therapeutic and education staff. Young people are confident, and identify peers, senior students and staff whom they would go to if they were anxious or upset.

The residential accommodation in the lower school is homely, and the bedrooms are decorated to each young person's likes and interests. As the rooms are shared, personal information, such as care plans, is not always confidential as it is pinned above young people's beds. The senior accommodation is decorated more sparsely, especially in the corridors. Communal and bedroom areas are welcoming and personalised.

The quality of care and support

Good

Staff, including those who are new to the residential provision, have a good understanding of each young person's needs. They make time for young people who may need extra help and support. Multidisciplinary meetings monitor the progress that young people are making, mostly on a behavioural or social basis. These are focused meetings, identifying the social and life skills that the young people need to develop. Staff liaise with physical and emotional health professionals on site and in the community. However, the plans for young people do not consistently record the discussions and the agreements made with partner agencies regarding young people's care. Further development is required in young people's plans to identify their goals and targets, and to identify when these have been met.

Young people are treated with dignity and respect, and individuals' understanding and

communication are sensitively managed. Young people who find communication and social situations difficult are able to join the group at their own pace. Individual beliefs and faiths are well respected and catered for. Those who are new to the residential provision benefit from tailored inductions set at a pace that they can cope with. Many young people commented that this was the first school to which they felt they belonged. Mealtime observations showed older students actively listening to and engaging those who were newer to the school, helping them to understand the school's inclusive culture and how this could benefit them.

Arrangements for health promotion are strong. Young people are encouraged to understand a healthy lifestyle and what this means for them. Staff have excellent relationships with other professionals and parents to ensure that individual health needs are met. Medication storage and administration are safe, and practices have been strengthened to ensure accountability for checks of the medication in stock. Young people enjoy varied and healthy meals that are freshly prepared and include an abundance of fresh produce. All young people engage in healthy activities such as man hunt, football and swimming in the onsite pool or in the community. In addition, young people access a range of emotionally and socially stimulating activities, such as army cadets and music lessons.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Young people say that they feel safe at the residential provision and can access an independent listener, who visits the school regularly in addition to making her email address and phone number available in the residential areas. Posters identify external support and advocacy services that young people can contact if they do not feel that they can access the options available at the school. Complaints are responded to swiftly and robustly, and to the complainant's satisfaction.

Staff recognise each young person's vulnerabilities, and have a good understanding of safeguarding and their role in protecting the young people. They are able to use their training in practice and are confident of the process to follow should they be concerned for a young person's welfare. Staff are knowledgeable of the risks associated with exploitation in all forms, and understand that some young people may be at risk in their home communities. Currently, there are no young people who have been identified as being exploited, but staff are aware that this could change at any time, given the vulnerability of those whom they care for.

Investigations into any allegations or disclosures are robust. The DSL has good links with the local authority designated officer and colleagues in the local children's safeguarding team. The DSL follows up any referrals made and relevant staff attend multi-agency meetings. The school is proactive in monitoring changes in behaviour and reports all concerns to partner agencies as required.

Young people rarely go missing from the school, and responses to incidents are robust. When young people do go missing, it is usually to the local shops or to the pub for a meal. Close links with the proprietors of these establishments mean that young people are swiftly returned to school, should they be away without permission.

The school is not a risk-averse environment. The recently appointed DSL is being supported by the former post-holder to update and develop the risk assessment process. This is now more effective and allows young people as much freedom as possible in line with their age and understanding. Joint working with the therapies team and education staff ensures that all assessments are thoroughly considered and robust. Staff are acutely aware of the risks that the internet and mobile communications may pose. Formal and informal education in this area means that young people are aware of the risks, and parents and carers are also involved in decision making regarding internet access via mobile devices.

Positive behaviour is promoted throughout the school day. Staff work cohesively, resulting in young people knowing what is expected of them. Young people identify bullying as a concern, on occasion, but are happy that staff manage this well. Plans have become more precise in identifying negative behaviours and how staff should respond. However, incidents of unwanted and negative behaviour require further evaluation to determine root causes and to consider how such incidents may be reduced.

Young people are protected from avoidable risk through regular checks of the building and grounds. Additionally, the school follows safer recruitment practice and completes a range of pre-employment checks prior to staff taking up a post.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

The leadership and management of the residential provision are strong. The head of care has significantly developed his skills and practice since taking up post, and is driving the service forward. Staff are enthusiastic and are eager to improve practice through teamwork. They say that they are well supported by senior leaders and are always able to contact them. Staff have an excellent understanding of the purpose and ethos of the residential provision, and work towards providing a homely and caring environment.

Staff have access to a wide range of training in order to meet young people's needs. Most are working towards a level 3 qualification, if they do not already hold this. Staff benefit from termly supervision, but leaders may wish to consider the benefits of increasing staff supervision to half termly.

The head of care regularly monitors the quality of care provided through his own visits and increased evaluation, and reviewing reports in line with national minimum standard 20. Complaints are evaluated and changes in practice or procedures are considered. The development plan for the service is clear and is amended in response to noted concerns and inspections. The governing body provides a sound level of scrutiny and is confident in challenging senior leaders as required.

The staff team works effectively with other departments at the school, and twice-daily handovers ensure that any relevant information regarding young people's needs or behaviour is shared. Staff also attend key meetings with education and therapy staff regarding young people who are currently displaying uncharacteristic behaviours or struggling with peer relationships. This leads to consistency in approach across the school and, where necessary, updating individual plans and procedures.

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 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	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 residential special schools.

Type of school	Residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	111
Gender of boarders	boys
Age range of boarders	8 to 19
Headteacher	Jonathan Hetherington
Date of previous boarding inspection	10/11/2015
Telephone number	01252 792303
Email address	headmasterspa@morehouseschool.co.uk

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