

Charlton Park Academy

Charlton Park Road, London SE7 8HX

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

This residential special school, commissioned by the Royal Borough of Greenwich, provides 196 places to students aged 11 to 19. During weekdays and term-time only, the school provides up to 10 residential places in four shared bedrooms in the residential unit, Rainbow House. Currently, a total of 14 students use this service for short breaks, 12 of whom stay overnight.

Inspection dates: 23 to 25 January 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 29 November 2016

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is outstanding because:

- Students have a great experience and accomplish a lot.
- Managers and staff give high priority to students' well-being and the progress that they make.
- Students are very happy at the school and enjoy being with their friends and the staff.
- Families trust the staff to look after their children. A parent said, 'They are a fantastic team and I have no worries when my son stays.'
- Managers and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to keeping students safe.
- Students feel very safe during their stays. One said, 'All members of staff look after my needs and I feel safe at Rainbow House.'
- Leadership and management are excellent. A staff member said, 'I am lucky to work in a team where the manager is so student-focused, and where the care team will not question going the extra mile to ensure the happiness, well-being and health of the young people who use the residential department. The staff team does this consistently and has a great deal of fun while working extremely hard.'
- Students have plenty of opportunities for varied, interesting and challenging activities.
- When asked if there was anything they would like to change, students said that they would like to go out more, stay more nights and stay at weekends.
- Parents and staff could not think of any suggestions for improvement. One parent said, 'I feel that he (and his family) are made to feel like Rainbow House family. Only wish he could stay forever, not just until he is 19.'

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Students really love their breaks at Rainbow House. They look forward to staying and enjoy the independence of being away from home. One parent said, 'We do a countdown on sleeps when he goes to Rainbow, as he can't wait to get back there.' Students experience a high-quality stay where they make friends, have great fun and enjoy many different activities. One student said, 'Being with friends makes me happy. I enjoy the banter, I enjoy going out.' Students empathise with and are accepting of others' disabilities and health needs. This contributes to the family-like, relaxed atmosphere in the house.

Central to students' very positive experiences are the close and friendly relationships they form with staff, who know the students' needs very well. A settled, permanent staff team, led by a respected head of care, has been central in developing this service and in providing students with consistency. There is a lot of good humour, laughter and banter, for example when staff and students sit together to share the evening meal. A member of staff said, 'We work brilliantly as a team and ensure a positive attitude, which is reflected by the laughter and positive progression of the students who stay with us.' A student said, 'They [the staff] care about me, making sure I'm comfortable and listen to me.'

Children make excellent progress. A staff member said, 'The children we look after are fantastic and it is great watching them achieve even the smallest target.' For example, students with limited communication can now express their views with communication aids, gaining sufficient confidence to chair student meetings. Another student is now able to make their views known by using technology to operate a sensor with their eye movements.

Staff anticipate and deal with any changes in students' behaviour in a low-key way. As a result, children feel secure in how staff help them to manage their emotions, and behaviour does not become challenging. A parent said, 'The staff there are amazing. They know how to approach my son and what his likes and dislikes are. If he 'throws a strop' they deal with it calmly without him lashing out.'

The service is accessible to students with high needs regarding their health and/or disability. Staff meet students' highly complex health needs very well so that the focus is on students' enjoyment and participation rather than on medication regimes or frequent health interventions. A parent said, 'My son's health needs are met at all times.'

Staff aim high in their ambitions for students. They will accommodate any requests so that students can participate fully in the local and wider community. This includes enabling wheelchair users to enjoy rock-climbing and ice-skating. Students learn independence skills when possible, for example helping staff to prepare food in the

kitchen or helping to plan birthday parties. A parent said, 'They have shown me pictures of my son doing chores in Rainbow House. He looks happy and seems to enjoy being part of a team, even if it's just putting his apron in the laundry.'

Students have a very good induction to Rainbow House. Most stay for tea visits after school until they are confident enough to stay overnight. Staff support students to prepare them for when they move on at 19. They work with staff in adult services to help ensure that students experience a positive transition. When some students have to go into hospital, they receive amazing support from the staff team.

Staff help students to keep in touch with friends who have moved on to live in adult residential accommodation, for example by teaching them to use electronic communication safely or by facilitating meetings. This helps students to maintain friendships.

Empowering and acting-upon students' and parents' views are central to this service. A parent said, 'I have no worries in this matter as they go "above and beyond" with this.'

Student meetings provide enjoyable opportunities for students to give their views about everything. For example, each student chooses a meal for their next stay and decides how they would like to celebrate special occasions, such as Christmas or leaving parties. Staff also take time at these meetings to publicly acknowledge students' achievements and praise them. Staff report that 'children always get a say in decisions regardless of how big or small and are able to express any views to any member of staff whom they feel comfortable with, as well as in a group setting.'

Students experience a wide range of activities plus a holiday in the summer. These activities cater to individual interests, such as beauty makeovers, bowling and trips to the cinema and to the Transport Museum. A member of staff said, 'They are always excited and always look forward to the activities with the staff.' Students said that they would like more of the activities that they do with staff. However, it is difficult to arrange some activities involving considerable travel because of the limited time available after school. Students also benefit from using the school's facilities and grounds for leisure activities, for example playing games, listening to their favourite music or swimming.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Students feel safe and trust the staff to look after them safely. Careful planning and risk assessment help to promote students' safety in the building and when on trips. As a result, incidents and accidents are very rare.

Sufficient staffing ensures that students have the attention that they need. A member of staff said, 'The children are safe because we always work on a two-to-one basis.' Key workers change every so often so that all staff can get to know each child. Checks of new staff are thorough. Sanctions and physical interventions are not

required.

Staff maintain the building well so that it is safe for students. Staff make sure that it is cleaned to a high standard and managed hygienically, for example by training staff in infection control and health and safety, and by checking the safety of the premises.

Trained staff, including governors, know how to respond to any concerns relating to keeping students safe, such as the risk of female genital mutilation. They are aware of the particular vulnerability to abuse of those who have disabilities and are protective of students, for example by thorough checking and supervision of any visitors to Rainbow House. A member of staff said, 'We are provided with excellent training which, along with good teamwork, enables us to provide a safe environment.'

A new medication system is working well to help staff better manage complex medication regimes and reduce the likelihood of errors. Nurses are always available to provide treatment and to administer medication with trained staff. This helps to improve students' safety.

Students have access to an independent person. She visits weekly and gets to know the students well. Students can and do ask to talk to her about anything which may be worrying them. This is useful as an additional safeguard for students' well-being and safety.

Fire safety has improved as managers have met the recommendations made at the last inspection to train fire marshals. Each shift now includes a staff member who has had fire marshal training. Students participate in regular fire drills and each has an individual fire evacuation plan that helps to promote their safety in an emergency.

Managers have taken action on a recommendation, made at the last inspection, to train those staff taking a lead in safeguarding children at the school and at Rainbow House. This meets guidance in 'Keeping children safe in education' (2016) and helps ensure that staff are familiar with current safeguarding issues.

There have been no complaints or allegations about staff at Rainbow House since the last inspection. The designated officer describes the school staff as working effectively with them, but on one occasion communication could have been more effective on a school-related matter. However, they are confident in the school's reporting procedures and staff's ability to protect students.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The head of care provides excellent management, supported by the principal, governors and other leaders at the school. Staff praise her low-key and quiet approach to managing the service. She shows determination to continually improve students' experiences and progress by working collaboratively with staff and families.

A member of staff said, 'My head of care is extremely considerate to our thoughts, opinions and needs. She will work hard to take the team with her. To do this she has to listen to our views. The team's focus is always our students.'

Students benefit from staying in on-site accommodation so do not have to spend time travelling. Academic and care staff work very effectively to support the students, for example with handovers when they accompany students to and from the school. A member of staff commented, 'I believe the residential staff, from the head of care right the way through the team, are a very committed group of individuals who genuinely go the extra mile for the students in our care.'

Staff also work in a highly effective way with specialist staff, such as occupational or speech and language therapists, to ensure that they support students in the best way possible. As a centre of excellence for Mobility Operations via Education, residential staff work collaboratively with families and a physiotherapist to ensure that when delivering personal care, or moving and handling students, staff perform this in the best way possible to protect the student.

Students have access to the latest technology to assist their communication. This has led some to make remarkable achievements in how they can communicate with others and express their preferences. All students continue to make very good use of their personal 'wiki' diary on tablet computers. This provides students with a safe platform to communicate their wants and needs and to share their experiences. Parents and staff can also contribute to this. This ensures that students have a voice and that adults listen to them.

An independent person visits Rainbow House each month to ensure that the building is safe and that students receive the best possible care. They provide reports of their visits to the governing body and to the registered manager. Monitoring is conducted at twice the recommended frequency. This is because leaders and managers want to continuously improve the service and provide the most positive experience for students.

Staff regard their support and training highly. A comprehensive induction helps new staff settle quickly into their role. New staff appreciate the consistent support from their more experienced colleagues and the manager. General and highly specialist training help staff, alongside nursing staff, to provide a service to students with highly complex needs, for example training in tube feeding, complex care needs and moving and handling. One staff member said, 'My supervision and appraisals support me and help me to improve. If I have an issue, it is listened to and acted upon. I have confidence that any concerns I may have will be listened to fairly and, if appropriate, acted upon.'

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC044128

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mark Dale-Emberton

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Inspector

Jacqueline Graves, social care regulatory inspector



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