

# Chart Wood School

Taynton Drive, Merstham, Redhill, Surrey RH1 3PU

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Chart Wood School is a maintained school. It provides for both day and residential boy pupils aged from nine to 16 years. There are 92 pupils on roll, with provision for 24 boarding at any time. At the time of the inspection, there were 30 residential pupils accessing the provision on different boarding arrangements. There is one residential unit on the school site. The school takes young people who have been unable to succeed in mainstream school and who have education, health and care plans arising from social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and mental health needs. This inspection was aligned to, and took place at the same time as, an education inspection.

**Inspection dates:** 6 to 8 March 2018

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **inadequate**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **inadequate**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **inadequate**

There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded and/or the care and experiences of children and young people are poor.

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is inadequate because:

- Safeguarding processes are ineffective and some significant safeguarding concerns have not been reported to the relevant agencies.
- Weaknesses have not been identified by the senior leadership team, local authority or governing body. The audits completed have been weak.
- The school's governing body has not monitored the residential provision or safeguarding procedures effectively.
- Record keeping is poor, and there are gaps and inconsistencies in the accuracy of information.
- Staff are unable to manage effectively all the risks posed to young people in their care, because care plans are not clear and risk assessments are not specific in detail and do not consistently take into account all information.
- There has not been any self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the residential provision.
- There have been delays in the local authority filling important vacant posts. This has led to the senior leadership team taking on additional responsibilities that it does not have the capacity for.
- Young people are not consistently given the strategies to begin to learn how to keep themselves safe.
- The head of care has not had any formal supervision to enable reflection on practice and to ensure that she has the capacity for the responsibilities that she holds.

The residential special school's strengths are:

- Staff are very positive in their approach and are child centred in how they work.
- There are good relationships between young people and staff.
- Young people's views are central to the operation of the residential provision.
- Young people say that they enjoy staying at the school and choose to be there.
- Behaviour is managed well, and there is a positive atmosphere at the residential provision regarding resolving any concerns.
- Residential staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities well.
- There is a good range of activities on offer. Young people are able to try new things and have fun.

## **What does the residential special school need to do to improve?**

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools**

The school does not meet the following national minimum standard(s) for residential special schools:

- 11.1 The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 12.5 All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) within 24 hours incidents of restraint, including reasonable force, they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by.
- 13.1 The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.
- 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.
- 13.9 The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate.
- 19.6 All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance.
- 21.1 The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan there is appropriate consultation. Where applicable the plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Where feasible, children in the school are aware of the content of their placement plans, and confirm that the school is providing care for them that is consistent with the plans.
- 20.2 Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they

are safeguarded; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish).

## **Recommendations**

- Document the risk assessment of the residential environment, including the location of young people's bedrooms, to enable review.
- Ensure that staff are equipped with the necessary skills around mental health awareness.
- Ensure that staff have an understanding of different aspects of safeguarding to enable the monitoring of staff's abilities in this area.
- Collate all the necessary recruitment information prior to appointing staff.
- Develop an agreement on phone use to ensure that boundaries are understood.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate**

The serious failings identified in the other judgement areas have limited this judgment to inadequate.

The school has been through a turbulent time in recent months, following the amalgamation of two schools. In addition, the school has changed its admission criteria, resulting in the young people who access the residential provision displaying a higher level of vulnerability. Despite this, the residential staff appear unaffected and are very positive in their approach. The staff clearly put the young people's experiences at the heart of all the decisions made.

A strength of the residential provision is the quality of the relationships formed between the young people and staff. Staff clearly know and understand each of the young people well. Young people enjoy both the staff's and each other's company, and young people said, 'It's just like being at home, but we get to do more things here.' There is a good range of activities, which demonstrates a sensitive understanding of the individual boys who attend each night. Young people are given a choice of activities and say that they enjoy what is on offer. They have opportunities to both have fun and also progress in their social skills. The staff have also recognised the need for the young people to develop empathy for others, so have created opportunities for this to be explored. For example, they invited people from the local care home for afternoon tea. This was extremely successful, and young people were proud to share this experience.

Young people progress as a result of the residential experience. They choose to stay, because they enjoy it. Some young people have developed better strategies for managing anger, and others have made progress both in their social skills and in recognition of their personal identity. Young people are fully supported to develop their independence skills, and an individualised programme is in place. There are a few missed opportunities to enable the young people to develop their own strategies in managing their individual needs, such as being able to manage social situations and to self-administer emergency medication.

Each young person has a 24-hour management plan. However, the plans do not consistently include the necessary information or detail why some vulnerabilities are no longer considered to be a concern and how strategies have changed. In some cases, they lack detail on how to support young people with particular vulnerabilities, such as the risk of child sexual exploitation. They do not provide the steps to support young people to develop coping mechanisms and strategies to keep themselves safe.

Key workers know each of their key children well. Medication is managed well. Due to the changing nature of the school, there are now links in place with the child and adolescent and mental health services (CAMHS), and a worker visits on a weekly

basis to undertake work with young people. Plans are in place to increase the links for staff with CAMHS workers, but have not yet been implemented. Young people are introduced to the residential provision carefully and at a pace appropriate to each individual. This ensures that the introduction is successful and that young people feel listened to. Parents and professionals were very positive about how staying at the residential provision supports their child and also the family.

Parents and social workers describe the relationship with the residential staff as good and that communication is generally effective. Where communication is not so positive, staff have plans in place to improve it. One parent stated, 'All in all, my son gets everything he needs. They look after me and his sister as well. Everyone works together to support us.' A home-school link worker provides additional support to families who would benefit from this.

Young people are encouraged to give their views about aspects of their care. This helps them to develop reflection skills and self-awareness. The boarding forum is also an opportunity for young people to express their views and proposes changes which staff act on appropriately.

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate**

There are serious weaknesses in the school's safeguarding processes. Significant concerns identified by staff relating to young people who do not have current social service involvement have not then been shared with the relevant professionals in the local authority. In some cases, concerns have been raised on a number of occasions and over a period of months. There is a reliance on the home-school link worker to manage the concerns, instead of referring them onto the appropriate professionals. This has left young people at significant risk of harm. In addition, when there are delays in the allocated social worker responding to the referrals made to them, the senior leadership team has not been proactive in escalating concerns. Inadequate oversight has resulted in these weaknesses going unchallenged.

Meetings with the necessary people at the school have taken place to consider safeguarding concerns. However, incidents are looked at on an individual basis, and the whole chronology of each young person has not been considered or explored. This does not ensure that the senior team has full oversight to enable actions to be made and to ensure that young people are safe.

Staff demonstrate a good awareness of how to report any safeguarding concerns. They have no hesitation in their safeguarding responsibilities. However, staff's awareness of specific safeguarding issues is not fully explored in team meetings and supervisions. This is an area that would benefit from being enhanced to enable staff to become up to date with current safeguarding practices improve the monitoring of staff's understanding and their ability to manage a diverse range of safeguarding scenarios.

No young people have gone missing during residential time. Staff encourage young

people to talk to them when they are upset, and take appropriate action if they feel that the young people may attempt to go off site without authorisation.

Young people do not identify bullying as a concern at the residential provision. Any instances reported during the school day are acted upon and managed appropriately.

There have been some incidents of inappropriate mobile phone use. These have been managed well. However, this issue could be improved by agreements setting out clearly the rules and boundaries about phone use to ensure that young people are aware of, and also that staff consistently apply, these rules.

Young people's individual risk assessments do not always identify either the strategies for staff to support young people to begin to learn skills to keep themselves safe or how staff should intervene when certain behaviours are exhibited. There are tools to assess the risk of sexual exploitation, but these have not been completed in the majority of cases, including for some young people who may be at a risk of exploitation.

Behaviour is good at the residential provision, and young people are frequently praised. Staff use rewards for good behaviour. The staff work together well to manage potential confrontations. There have been very few physical interventions, and only two restraints were recorded between September 2017 and December 2017. The restraint records give good details on what led up to the restraint and how the restraint occurred, and identified the actions to follow up. Sometimes debriefings take place some length of time after the restraint, therefore the impact on changing the behaviour is limited. There has been some analysis by the head of care of when restraints take place, to begin to try to identify any patterns. The sanctions policy has been reviewed, with the number of sanctions being reduced and a focus instead on positive reinforcement and rewards. Young people are positive about the individual way that this takes place and their involvement in its review.

Recruitment of residential staff is well documented and demonstrates good recruitment practice. There were gaps identified in the independent person's records. The leadership team needs to ensure that it collates all recruitment information prior to appointing staff.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate**

There has been insufficient monitoring and oversight of all aspects of the residential provision by the school senior leadership team, the local authority and the governing body.

The previous governing body resigned, and the local authority replaced it with an interim executive board. This resulted in a period when the leadership team was not being supported. In addition, there have been long delays in the local authority filling important vacant posts. This has meant that the senior leadership team has had to take on additional responsibilities.

There has been a lack of oversight and awareness of the safeguarding concerns identified during this inspection. In addition, the leadership team has not recognised or had the capacity to monitor other weaknesses, including disjointed record keeping which has resulted in omissions and inconsistency in the accuracy of information. There is currently no self-evaluation of the effectiveness of residential provision to enable improvements to be made.

The current capacity to manage all aspects of safeguarding across the school is insufficient. The school intends to look at the deployment of responsibilities in this area. However, this has yet to occur.

The residential provision has not had regular independent reviews. The senior leadership team has now appointed a new visitor. However, the visits undertaken have not fully explored safeguarding practice or evaluated whether young people are effectively safeguarded.

The aims of the residential provision are to 'assist and support the pupils to grow and develop physically, emotionally and socially, which is achieved by providing them with a safe, consistent and enjoyable environment.' Although the school has been through a turbulent time, the residential staff, supported by the head of care, have continued to meet these aims and objectives.

Staff state that they have undertaken a range of training. However, the records do not clearly show when training has been undertaken and when it needs to be refreshed.

Staff feel very well supported by the senior leadership team. They receive appropriate and well-documented supervision that enables them to reflect on their skills and any areas for development. However, the head of care does not currently receive formal supervision for the full range of roles that she fulfils. This does not enable her to reflect on her responsibilities or agree on the priorities and strategies for managing her workload.

Relationships with professionals are maintained well, and the residential staff contribute effectively to discussions about each young person's welfare and safety. Parents and social workers are positive about these relationships. The ethos of this school is to promote tolerance and inclusion, which it successfully achieves in a variety of ways.



## **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 difference 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:** 1271379

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Craig Anderson

**Type of school:** residential special school

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## **Inspector(s)**

Emeline Evans, social care inspector (lead)

Ruth Coler, social care inspector



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