

# Charlton Park Academy

Charlton Park Road, London, 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 202 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 and one single bedroom in the residential unit, Rainbow House. Currently, a total of 12 students use this service for short breaks.

**Inspection dates:** 29 to 31 January 2019

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, considering** **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 23 January 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- The students form positive relationships with staff and their peers, sharing lots of good humour.
- A very experienced, consistent staff team shows commitment to meeting students' needs and giving them the best quality of care.
- Students are happy in Rainbow House and look forward to their stays.
- Students are kept safe by staff diligence and by effective management monitoring.
- Planned activities are varied and change according to each student's preferences on the day.
- Students enjoy a positive experience and are helped to make progress, in socialising, trying new foods and activities and improving independence and communication skills.
- Staff support students well with transitions to and from other services.
- Excellent use of technology assists students' participation and learning.
- The head of care left recently. An interim manager has ensured stability while recruitment to the post is ongoing.
- The team is adapting its care (and the building) to support the admission of students with autism spectrum disorder.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Ensure that the garden is well maintained.
- Review the children's guide to ensure that students have current information.

## Inspection judgements

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

Staying residentially allows students to develop friendships. Staff consider students' friendships when planning admissions. Some students enjoy sharing a bedroom and having a 'sleep-over' with their friends. Good use of technology enables students to keep in touch with friends when they move on.

The service is widening its accessibility. Residential stays have long been provided to students who have special educational needs and/or physical disabilities. Leaders and managers are piloting overnight stays for students with autism spectrum disorder. While the building is not ideal for this intake, leaders have adjusted some aspects to meet students' needs, for example by converting an office into a smaller bedroom.

Effective joint working with school staff and families is helping staff to understand the specific needs of students with autism spectrum disorder. To help reduce their anxiety about staying away from home overnight, staff help prepare students by using social stories and inviting them for tea visits and early evening activities. By slowly getting to know the building and the staff, students are helped to settle and feel secure as they adapt to this new experience. Students enjoy healthy meals and snacks, eating at the table with staff.

Leaders and managers have exciting plans to rebuild the premises, so that residential accommodation is more suitable for students with a wider range of needs. Students are 'at home' in the building. Good use is made of the school's facilities for leisure in the evening, such as the swimming pool and sensory room as well as after-school clubs like Scouts.

In a survey, a student described what they like about their stay in Rainbow House: 'The staff and students are kind. The rooms are comfortable. Food is good. We have nice trips out.' Students experience short breaks away to experience a country life. A member of staff described what they like about the setting: 'Staff work incredibly well together and work hard to make sure the children feel safe and happy. Students learn a lot through laughter and fun and staff do their utmost to make the setting a great experience for students.'

Students work towards meeting targets, for example to develop some independence skills, to maintain a healthy weight or to try a wider range of foods. Some students do not stay frequently enough to achieve significant progress. Nevertheless, they get a great deal out of the residential experience. One student said their favourite activity is 'chatting and laughing with staff'.

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

Students are kept safe. There is a team approach to safeguarding students throughout the school. A student said that staff respect him and 'keep me safe here'.

Going missing is not an issue at this school.

Staff, the designated safeguarding leads, the principal and the link governor are confident about their roles in protecting students who are particularly vulnerable because of their disabilities. They have refreshed their skills in safeguarding this year to ensure that they act in line with current guidance.

An independent listener, who visits regularly, knows the students well. She is available to students should they wish to raise concerns. As staff know the students well, they recognise any changes in their behaviour and respond accordingly to make sure they are safe.

In surveys, parents said that staff 'always' keep their child safe. A parent described their child's care: 'His views and opinions are sought, valued and acted upon. He feels safe, included and valued. Staff genuinely care about the students.' Staff do not use sanctions as this is deemed inappropriate because of the students' level of understanding and their needs.

Medication is very well managed. For example, nurses have oversight of the administration of medication and an external consultant conducts regular audits. Staff receive training so that students with specific health needs can access the service, such as in gastric feeding and epilepsy.

Maintenance of some parts of the garden has lapsed. However, students are not currently using the garden in the cold weather. Leaders and managers took action during the inspection to make some improvements; they hope to bring forward the planned development of the outside space.

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

An experienced and well-qualified interim head of care is leading the running of Rainbow House until a permanent appointment is made. Staff respect his leadership. Only one member of the staff team has left during this inspection year. Some of the team have worked at the residential unit for many years, showing commitment and dedication to the students.

Staff value their training and support. It has been a challenge providing a service to a new intake of students. However, staff are enthusiastic about increasing their skills so that a wider range of students can access the service. Staff recently learned about autism spectrum disorder and how to physically manage challenging behaviour. Staff said they would welcome further training on autism spectrum disorder, British sign language and picture exchange communication to support their work.

Communication is effective. Parents, carers and social workers reported that staff keep them informed about how students have been while in Rainbow House. Staff are working on how they can evidence the difference the residential experience makes to students' lives.

Complaints are encouraged. A thorough response was made to the only complaint received during this inspection period.

An independent person visits Rainbow House frequently. The focus of their visit is to monitor the safety of the residential unit and the quality of care. Reports of their visits are shared with governors to keep them informed. The link governor also makes regular visits to the residential unit, conducting a useful role as a 'critical friend' in helping the service to develop.

There is good joint working with families and other professionals involved in the students' lives. Leaders and managers challenge effectively when students are not getting what they need. Information is provided for students in the children's guide. However, some of this requires an update.

## **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

**Type of school:** residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Jacqueline Graves: social care regulatory inspector



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