

Grafham Grange School

Grafham Grange, Horsham Road, Grafham, Bramley, Guildford, Surrey GU5 0LH
Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Grafham Grange School, situated in Surrey, is a non-maintained residential special school for boys aged from 10 to 19 with complex and challenging needs, many of whom will have experienced breakdowns of previous educational placements and had periods out of full-time education. At the time of the inspection, there were 37 students on roll, including four who board. The Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust operates the school. The residential provision is due to close in July 2019.

Inspection dates: 20 to 22 March 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The residential special school is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of previous inspection: 27 November 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school requires improvement to be good because:

- A change of the entire staff team in the residential provision has had a significant impact on students. Students do not have confidence that all those who work with them genuinely care about them.
- Managers and staff do not record the views of students regarding incidents of the use of reasonable force that those students have been involved in. There are no records of management monitoring of such interventions.
- The school's complaints policy does not include those complaints made by students. The log of complaints made by adults only contains communications about them, which does not conform to the policy.
- Minutes of children looked after reviews and children in need meetings are missing from files. Therefore, it is not possible to ensure that relevant plans reflect those agreed with other agencies and people who hold parental responsibility.
- There has been a substantial reduction in the number of residential students. Students now have their own bedrooms, but they lack a homely feel.

The residential special school's strengths are:

- A recently introduced electronic system to record safeguarding concerns and the rigorous approach taken by leaders and managers mean that safeguarding monitoring is thorough and contributing to the safety and well-being of students.
- Students' health and well-being are well provided for and carefully reviewed so that students and their families are confident in their physical health.
- New staff, including the headteacher, interim head of care and residential workers, have undertaken their respective roles with fortitude in difficult circumstances. They have endeavoured to run the provision as though it were going to continue.
- The school has been able to utilise the resources of the trust to improve aspects of the residential provision.

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 standards for residential special schools:

- 12.6 A written record is kept of major sanctions and the use of any reasonable force. Records include the information in Appendix 2 (use of reasonable force). The record is made within 24 hours and is legible. Children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records. The school regularly reviews any instances of the use of reasonable force and examines trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and learn in a way that will inform future practice.
- 18.1 The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory requirements.
- 21.4 The school contributes appropriately to all statutory reviews for children; enables, as far as possible, children to contribute to and understand any processes of review that apply to them; and actively implements any resulting actions.

Recommendations

- Ensure that relevant plans are updated following a change in circumstances and plans accurately reflect the specific work being undertaken.
- Ensure that children's bedrooms are attractive environments, specifically that dormitory fixtures are removed where they detract from a homely atmosphere.
- Ensure that a record is made and retained of the rotas as they were worked so that it is clear which staff were working on each shift.
- Ensure that minutes of children's meetings record the salient points of topics discussed.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Students' experience of care is heavily influenced by the decision to close the residential provision in July 2018 and the decision to remain open until the summer of 2019. Students are upset about the loss of familiar staff who they feel were like family to them. The decision to maintain the service was in direct response to the wishes and feelings of students and their families, but the process has significantly undermined confidence in the organisation.

This lack of trust is shown in various ways: students' criticism of staff, their negative interpretation of decisions, unhappiness about food and activities, and a belief that there is no point in making a complaint or talking to the independent visitor about concerns as nothing will be done.

Leaders and managers were surprised that students expressed such dissatisfaction and that improvements they had made did not have the impact that they had desired. Their awareness of the experience of young people has therefore not been well informed by the methods currently in place to apprise them.

Nevertheless, students' wishes are sought on day-to-day matters such as food and activities. Where possible, action is taken to accommodate students' wishes. Where it is not appropriate to do so, staff explain the reasons. The inspector did observe positive interactions between students and staff. Students said that there were staff members who they could relate to and who listened to them.

Most students like their bedrooms. However, they were once dormitories and partitions to divide space into cubicles are still in most bedrooms. This detracts from a homely environment. One young person said that they made him feel 'claustrophobic'.

Case files do not always include the most recent information about students. Not all documents are updated when students' circumstances or behaviours change (although they are well known to staff). Some elements of health and welfare plans, particularly those regarding cultural needs, do not reflect what work is being done. Records do not always demonstrate the progress that young people have made. The interim head of care suggested the latter was because the plans took more account of what was happening in the school than in the residential provision. He redrafted the record for one young person so that the record described the young person's experience in both places and it was a more accurate report. However, taken together, this means that plans are not always reliable documents for staff to work from.

Students' attendance at college and school is far better than before they came to the residential provision. When things have gone wrong, staff have worked extremely well to help students to re-engage with their education and to support the

attainment of qualifications that can widen future opportunities.

Some parents and professionals believe that staff could do more to deter students from damaging property or assaulting others by involving the police. However, the staff are mindful of their duty not to criminalise young people unnecessarily and they can evidence a reduction in vandalism and violence over time.

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

Safeguarding procedures and processes are strong, with a recently introduced electronic system to record concerns. It alerts the appropriate staff about tasks that need to be undertaken or reviewed and it tracks progress. Staff know what to do if they have concerns. There is good evidence that managers are determined not to allow matters to drop until they are sure that the school and other agencies have done all that is needed to keep young people safe.

Managers do not make copies of rotas as they were worked. Although there are other records, such as dates that agency staff are used, it is not straightforward to see who worked on which shifts. This could hamper identifying who was present in the residential provision should a concern come to light later.

Health and welfare support for students is delivered well and overseen by an experienced school nurse who gives appropriate care and advice to young people, parents and staff. They hold her in great respect, which means that they are confident in going to her about issues and that they follow what she says.

Health and safety assessments and processes are in place and are generally of a high standard. Nevertheless, there are some gaps. For example, maintenance staff had not been made aware that the top floor of the residential provision had been reopened. Consequently, it was not included in weekly checks. A risk assessment drawn up for fishing on a lake in the school grounds did not include important elements such as staff to student ratios and the safest places on the bank for students to fish from.

Staff help students to understand risks by getting them to think about potential hazards while undertaking an activity. This helps them to grasp what risks are and what to do about them because they are in the context of their lived experience.

Conversations are always held with students and staff who have been involved in physical intervention. However, the views of young people are not included in the logs and there is no record of management monitoring. This means that it is difficult to learn from individual incidents or to identify patterns.

Staff and students set targets jointly, three targets are put forward by staff and two by students, which helps the motivation to achieve. These are recorded daily and are having a positive impact. Some parents were originally doubtful when targets were initially introduced but now see how they are helping their children.

One parent commented, 'My son would not have developed into the teenager I am proud of had he not been here.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Ownership of the school has changed since the last inspection. The new arrangements have enabled managers to draw on the expertise of other staff in the organisation and to share good practice across the trust. An example of the latter is a reciprocal arrangement to audit administration of medication records, which increases scrutiny.

The adoption of the new trust's policies has done much to improve procedures, including safeguarding and arrangements to care for young people who are unwell. These have been acted on and have led to improvements in practice. An exception is the complaints policy, which does not cover those complaints made by young people. There is no record of the verbal complaints that residential students have made. Logs of parental complaints consist solely of correspondence between the complainant and school staff. It is not evident if recommendations were made, if a written outcome was sent to the complainant or if they were satisfied with it.

The governing body has been reformed with the change of ownership and experienced members have been brought in to provide oversight of the school. A good working relationship is being established with the trust and school managers, leading to better strategic planning. However, an understanding of the views of students in the residential provision is limited. Governors and school managers were surprised by the level of grievance expressed by young people during this inspection. A contributory factor is the lack of feedback given to the independent visitor following her standard 20 reports and changes made.

The statement of purpose for the residential provision has been revised and staff were familiar with it and knew what they need to do to meet its aims for this group of young people.

Despite being in the thick of it from the outset, staff feel well supported by managers and colleagues. Supervision has been at the required level since the beginning of the year (records prior to that are incomplete) and covers essential topics.

Key-work session records going back up to two months were printed off during the inspection rather than being available for young people to read session by session. However, they are largely well documented and explicitly state the views of students. Documents do not always identify the author, but the interim head of care devised a sheet during the inspection to accompany all new significant paperwork to address this issue.

Parents' views of the residential provision differed widely. Where good relationships have been made, the support given, especially by longstanding members of staff, is greatly appreciated. One parent said, 'It's not just what they do for the kids but for

families too. They have pulled me from the deepest, darkest [place] and you can't put a price on it.'

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: SC013920

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Inspector

Chris Peel, social care inspector



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