

# 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 provides for both day and residential boy pupils aged from nine to 16 years. There are 90 pupils on roll, and provision for 24 residential places at any time. There is one residential unit on the school site. The school takes boys who have education, health and care plans arising from social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and mental health needs.

**Inspection dates:** 1 to 3 October 2019

**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.

**Date of previous inspection:** 4 February 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** inadequate

## Inspection judgements

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

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that children's safety and well-being are protected and promoted. They have not ensured that staff have all the necessary information, guidance and skills to support the children's complex and varied needs.

The potential of some children to cause themselves serious injuries through self-harming behaviour is high. Staff are not sufficiently experienced or trained in recognising these risks, or to take the necessary precautionary steps to reduce them.

Care planning documents are not sufficiently personalised, and there is no clear way of identifying and measuring the children's progress or changing needs. Some of these documents, such as risk assessments and safety plans, are completed in isolation and present a disjointed picture of an individual child's holistic needs. Relevant historic information about children's past experiences is not considered. There is limited evidence to show that the individual needs of children are thought about in relation to the potential risks and concerns that children may pose to themselves and/or others.

One-to-one discussions between the staff and children remain infrequent. Consequently, children are not routinely encouraged or helped to talk about their feelings and experiences. Staff do not consistently or skilfully help children to reflect on and explore how their emotions affect their lives. The written records that staff produce do not accurately capture some of the positive support that some staff and children told the inspectors about. Through poor recording, staff are unable to track and monitor the children's progress and to review whether current strategies are working or need to change.

Children's ability to complain is variable. During this inspection, some of the children readily approached staff and asked questions, and some children said they would approach staff if they had any concerns. One child did not know how to raise his concerns until he was encouraged to do so by the inspectors.

Children talk about liking boarding better since the last inspection and enjoying the activities provided. Consultation with children has improved; for example, changes to routines have been implemented so that the children have more say in what they do each evening. A new reward system is under way. Children said that they generally like this and understand it. This system is in its early stages of implementation, and therefore an assessment of its success is yet to be completed by leaders.

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

Leaders and managers have failed to demonstrate that they have understood the serious safeguarding practice shortfalls identified at the last inspection. Consequently, these have continued. Safeguarding risks and incidents are not being recognised. As a result, incidents are not being shared with, or referred to, the appropriate safeguarding agencies. Leaders and managers are failing to guide staff and equip them with the strategies they need to protect and promote children's safety.

The information available for staff is not specific about the precise nature of the children's behaviours that pose risks and vulnerabilities, including children's mental health needs and their propensity for serious self-harm. Consequently, staff do not always recognise that a child's behaviour is becoming increasingly worrying. They do not spot patterns or trends in children's behaviours that have on occasions resulted in more dangerous behaviours developing, particularly in respect of self-harm.

Weak systems fail to sufficiently monitor and review agreed safeguarding strategies. For example, when an approach is agreed, safeguarding records do not demonstrate whether previously agreed actions have been undertaken. There is a lack of clarity about timescales and actions, therefore compromising accountability. Potential patterns and trends are not identified. This process lacks analysis.

Recruitment practice gaps compromise the protection of children from potentially unsafe adults. Recruitment records show gaps in respect of reference verification for permanent staff. An agency staff member's suitability was not sufficiently recorded as having been explored with the agency.

No child has gone missing from the residential provision since the last inspection. In response to challenging behaviours, staff's use of physical restraint is extremely rare. One such incident has occurred since the last inspection. Similar to the situation at the last inspection, the information in this restraint record does not contain any details of a debrief with the children. This practice precludes the children's input. It prevents the staff from reflecting on what they did and how to reduce the use of restraint for the children involved in the future.

Since the last inspection, insufficient progress has been made by leaders to establish strong and effective links with all relevant safeguarding partners. Some positive links have been established, for example with the designated officer, but there are examples of self-harm incidents not being referred to relevant health professionals.

The use of closed-circuit television in residential areas is not subject to policy or procedural guidance. Its use is not justified. Children and staff are not suitably protected. Fire safety records do not capture who was present at fire drills. This impedes good monitoring and ongoing risk management. Some health and safety practices have improved, in relation to the concerns identified at the last inspection. The range of health and safety records maintained, such as premises and electrical checks, are now appropriate and clear.

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

Leaders and managers demonstrate a lack of urgency to improve the residential provision, which was judged inadequate in February 2019. The subsequent monitoring visit in April 2019 and this inspection have found little progress in meeting the national minimum standards that were not met previously.

The residential statement of purpose does not provide information about the types of children's needs that the residential team can support. This results in a lack of clarity about which children would benefit from the residential service and prevents senior leaders' ability to be assured that the staff team has the necessary skills and training.

School policies and procedures do not encompass the residential provision. The missing children's policy lacks details about the residential provision, and the staff supervision documentation is not adapted to reflect the residential staff's roles and responsibilities. Such omissions show that leaders and managers do not routinely consider the residential provision when planning reviewing and monitoring whole-school policies and procedures. This results in a lack of appropriate and consistent guidance for residential staff to follow.

Oversight of the residential provision is weak, especially in relation to safeguarding. Processes for reviewing and monitoring the residential practice are in development but not fully in use. Access to data about residential care from the school's database is limited, and key staff do not know how to obtain this.

The residential provision does not receive adequate independent challenge and scrutiny. The governing body and organisation have met twice since the monitoring visit in April 2019. The independent visitor is new to post and has visited the residential provision twice. The most recent report did not evaluate or identify the significant shortfalls in safeguarding practices.

Confidentiality breaches occur in the records that the staff maintain. For example, online records contain sensitive information about other children in some children's files. This error has not been identified by the school's monitoring systems. These errors demonstrate that the staff do not have an acceptable understanding of the law relating to confidentiality.

The continuing absence of a clear and measurable plan, owned by the senior leadership team, means that the required and necessary improvements have not occurred with sufficient pace and impact. The head of the residential provision is respected by the staff team, and morale has improved. However, significant gaps remain in terms of the quality and content of staff supervision and, in particular, the staff team's training needs. Consequently, senior leaders are not clear about where the gaps are and do not have a planned approach to securing improvements. This leaves children and staff vulnerable to the risk of harm.

## **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:

- 1.1 A suitable statement of the school's principles and practice to be known as the Statement of Purpose is available to parents and staff, is made known to children through an appropriate method of communication and is seen to work in practice. The statement describes the overall purpose of the school and describes any theoretical or therapeutic model underpinning the practice of the school. It also explains the ethos and philosophy of the school and provides an outline of provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 3. 4 The school has effective links with health agencies, including specialist services where appropriate, such as child and adult mental health services and sexual health services. The availability of such services is taken into account when considering admissions.
- 6.3 The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- 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.
- 13.3 The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role.
- 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.
- 13.5 The school's leadership and management actively promote the

wellbeing of pupils.

- 14.1 Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 19.1 Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school.
- 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).
- 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.
- 21.2 Each child has at least one key worker (or similar person) within the school who provides individual guidance and support to the child. They regularly make time available to the child to enable the child to seek guidance, advice and support on any matter. They monitor the school's compliance on a day to day basis with the child's placement plan.
- 22.1 Every child has an accurate, permanent record of their history and progress which can be read by the child at any time (except where the data controller is not obliged to supply the information to the child), and add personal statements or statements correcting errors.

## Recommendations

- Children are actively encouraged to contribute their views to the operation of residential provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school. Children are not penalised by raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith. (NMS 17)

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people, 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:** 2523136

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Mr Graham Payne

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors:**

Ruth Coler, social care inspector (lead)

Emeline Evans, social care inspector



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