

# Moor House School & College

Moor House School & College, Mill Lane, Oxted, Surrey RH8 9AQ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Moor House School & College is a co-educational, non-maintained residential and day special school and registered charity. It provides specialist schooling and therapy for children and young people who have speech and language difficulties. The school and college are leaders and specialists in developmental language disorder (DLD).

At the time of inspection, there were 176 students on roll with 62 residential students. There are 75 residential places that provide weekly boarding.

The headteacher has been in post since 2015.

### Inspection dates: 25 to 27 February 2020

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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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:** 22 January 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## **Inspection judgements**

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

The children attending this school hold the adults who care for them in high regard. All children identified adults who would help them if they had a problem. They feel cared for, safe and part of a community with a real sense of belonging. The children are making exceptional progress. One parent described her child as 'totally transformed', which she attributes to the care and input from the adults. Another parent said, 'It's as good as a second home can be, he wouldn't be where he is if it wasn't for the last two years.'

Independence skills are a real strength at this school. The school's research-led innovative practice identifies the small steps required to enable the children to reach their potential. Carefully thought-out plans, across the specialisms, break down life skills into manageable steps. Games and activities provide further opportunities to develop speech and language, fine and gross motor skills in a subtle and fun way. The wealth of social opportunities also provides the children with the arena to test out their new skills in an accepting and nurturing environment.

The multidisciplinary approach, from the point of referral and assessment, provides a clear baseline from which services are identified. All children are making very good progress and, in many cases, this progress is exceptional. Children also demonstrate a clear understanding of their own progress. They delight in their success as they achieve goals. The adults raise the children's aspirations. Opportunities for work experience and, later, college further accelerate children's potential and help them to achieve their aspirations. The children speak passionately about their work experience opportunities. Some children spoke of their first day helping at a nursery and others of working with the maintenance team. Others spoke of their plans to become a tree surgeon in the future.

Research-informed practice continues to put this school at the cutting edge of speech and language-led interventions. The outcomes for boarders are excellent, and they are excelling in their academic work. The students enjoy their journey through the school and college, and are successful in securing university offers and placements.

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

A strong safeguarding culture underpins the practice throughout this school. Children benefit from trusted adults that listen and work effectively in partnership with parents and safeguarding partners to keep them safe. New systems for the reporting and recording of safeguarding concerns enable greater managerial oversight and scrutiny. This further supports the effectiveness of the safeguarding culture. All the adults are qualified in safeguarding. The training incorporates adults working across the provision to equip them with the skills to identify and take action when

there are concerns. Safeguarding and welfare concerns are discussed in the multidisciplinary teams. The appropriate action is taken to help the children learn and make safe choices. Although practice is strong, in one example the vulnerability of a child was unclear in respect of the potential for risky behaviour.

The children understand the rules and boundaries. They have a sense of community and contribute to the school being a safe environment. Children are supportive and nurturing towards each other and do not tolerate any bullying. They are uninhibited in sharing concerns with adults about each other or other significant issues.

The culture of acceptance and inclusion enables the children to explore their identity freely. A child said, 'Here, I can express my feelings and talk about things. At my other school, I was told off a lot and always felt angry.'

Although safeguarding practice is strong, there are a number of students aged 18 and above. The school's safeguarding policy does not fully reflect the fact that some of the students are adults or that there are adult safeguarding considerations.

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

The vision of the leadership team is aspirational and shared by all who work at the school. The principal is child focused, compassionate and dedicated to enabling the children to achieve the very best possible outcome. She leads her team skilfully, drawing on a wealth of knowledge gained from many years working at the school. The new head of care has already made a positive impact. She has brought in some carefully considered changes such as part-time roles, which have increased the staffing complement. The adults report that leaders and managers are visible, accessible, supportive and reliable.

The adults provide a well-informed approach that makes sure decisions about the children are made in partnership with parents and external agencies. High-quality assessments inform plans that result in the children making exceptional progress. Several children and parents describe their experience of boarding as their second home. This is due to the passion and care that all of the adults exude.

Governors take an active interest in the day-to-day running of the school. They are familiar faces to the children and meet with them during their frequent visits. Their governance provides a robust layer of scrutiny and oversight.

The outward-looking leaders and managers ensure that they keep up to date with developments to guard against insular practice. A combination of in-house and external training provides adults with the knowledge to develop their skills in delivering bespoke care and education.

The children's voice is heard. Numerous avenues for consultation enable children to participate in making decisions about the development of the provision. Regular forums for parents further extend the transparent working and provides an open dialogue with the adults. Subsequently, the adults understand how the children experience care and the progress that they make.

Leaders and managers have absolute clarity on the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Development plans are effective in foreseeing potential shortfalls and planning to avoid them. The meticulous oversight from the leadership and management results in excellent quality of care. Their bespoke approach ensures that every single child benefits from the boarding experience.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Review the safeguarding policy in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults and ensure that the DSL receives training in this area.
- Ensure that individual risk assessments contain clear context and that risk management is clearly planned.

### **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:** SC013926

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Helen Middleton

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

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## **Inspectors**

Sarah Olliver, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Lee Kirwin, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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