

# Limpsfield Grange School

Limpsfield Grange School, 89 Bluehouse Lane, Oxted, Surrey RH8 0RZ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Limpsfield Grange School is a maintained day and residential special school which provides care for girls aged between 11 and 16 who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and suffer from high and persistent levels of anxiety.

The residential service operates from Monday to Thursday. At the time of this inspection, 14 pupils were accessing the residential provision.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

### Inspection dates: 21 to 23 February 2023

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<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:** 29 to 31 March 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Children are extremely positive about their residential experiences. Many children told the inspector that they love being a residential pupil. This is because they enjoy being with their friends and they are well cared for by the staff. All children spoken to said that they feel safe at the school and that they can speak to the staff about any worries or concerns that they may have.

Staff are skilled in communicating with children. They understand the barriers children experience when trying to follow routines and having to process new information. Staff were observed to be patient and nurturing when working with children.

Children make excellent progress across many aspects of their lives. Some children, who have previously struggled with school attendance and engagement, are now participating enthusiastically in school life. One child, who has been a residential pupil for several years, spoke positively about recently attending a college interview, taking pride in the fact that she has now been accepted on the course she had hoped for.

As children's independence skills develop, they begin to pay greater attention to their personal hygiene and appearance. This improves their self-confidence and self-esteem. They learn many practical skills, such as cooking, shopping and ordering food in a restaurant. This enhances their life chances as they move towards becoming young adults.

Children have opportunities to enjoy a wide range of activities. This includes helping with caring for the farm animals that are part of the school and acquiring skills through the forest school programme. During the inspection, the children were observed enthusiastically decorating a lounge in preparation for the evening's pyjama party.

Staff prioritise children's physical and emotional health. All children have comprehensive health plans that clearly define their needs. In one case, observations made by a member of staff resulted in a child receiving support for a previously undiagnosed condition. Staff communicate well with parents and carers about all aspects of the children's health. Staff proactively refer children to specialist services when this is in the child's best interests.

Children are treated with dignity and respect and feel valued. This has a significant impact on their self-esteem. Children openly speak about their autism spectrum disorder and do not see this as a barrier to their ambitions and life chances. This represents considerable progress in terms of how the children often feel about themselves when they first arrive at the school.

Staff take pride in maintaining the residential provision to ensure that it provides a comfortable, homely environment where children can relax in the evenings and enjoy sociable time with their friends.

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

Safeguarding practice is consistently strong. Staff have detailed knowledge of why the needs of the children make them particularly vulnerable and at risk of exploitation. They have the skills necessary to build meaningful and trusting relationships with the children. Consequently, children develop the confidence to share any worries or concerns that they may have. This is a strong protective factor.

Children receive consistent messages about how to keep themselves safe online and when they are out in the community. The staff use creative methods to get these messages across, using a range of resources and adopting a communication style that best fits the needs of the children. This work is carried out in individual and group work sessions and is followed up by assessing how well children have understood the risks being discussed.

There are highly effective systems for assessing and managing risks. Children's placement plans specify the child's vulnerabilities and associated risks and provide guidance to staff on how potential risks for the child can be minimised. The need for individual risk assessments, to address specific areas of concern, is kept under review. Bedroom sharing risk assessments are carried out and these help to minimise the potential for inappropriate peer relationships to develop.

Children are appropriately supervised. Each child's whereabouts is always known. There have been no occasions since the last inspection, in March 2022, when children have gone missing from the school or the residential provision.

The school's behaviour support model is applied across the school and in the residential provision. This ensures that children receive consistent messages about the expectations and responsibilities placed on them. One child said that if they do need to be 'told off', the residential staff will 'do it in a nice way, like your family would'. This approach is highly effective. Over time, the children reduce behaviours that have previously impaired their development. For several years, there have been no incidents that have required physical intervention.

The staff have a clear understanding of the procedures that they should follow if they have concerns about a child's welfare. The reporting procedure is applied effectively, with staff identifying both minor and more serious indicators that a child could be at risk of harm.

Staff demonstrate good professional curiosity in their practice. One member of staff said that safeguarding is, 'Like a jigsaw...you have to fit all the pieces together before you can see the bigger picture.'

Any safeguarding or child protection matters are well documented. The records give a clear indication of the potential risks and the action that has been taken in response. The records also show that senior leaders will robustly challenge other professionals when they perceive that they are not meeting their responsibilities.

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

The residential service is exceptionally well managed. The head of residential provision has significant managerial experience and an in-depth knowledge of the needs of girls who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. She is well supported by the headteacher, who maintains effective oversight of the residential provision. This is a highly valued and integral part of the school's support services.

In recent months, there have been challenges replacing residential staff who have left the school. Leaders and managers have taken decisive action to temporarily reduce the number of residential placements available. This has provided the additional time to extend the recruitment to secure the right staff.

The systems for monitoring the quality of care are highly effective. The head of residential provision monitors children's placement plans, their key-work sessions and any significant incident reports. This ongoing detailed evaluation of practice ensures that ambitious standards of care are consistently achieved.

Detailed planning takes place in relation to the development of the residential provision. There is a development plan for each term, with targets that contribute towards the plan for the service.

Children's placement plans are innovative. They are child focused with a strong emphasis on involving the child in the planning process. The plans make specific reference to the targets set as part of the school's well-being, achievement, communication and independence (known as WACI) curriculum. Targets are also set in relation to the child's education, health and care plan. They provide a running record of how the child's needs are being met and the progress that they are making towards meeting their targets.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a major commitment to raising awareness of the needs of girls who have autism spectrum disorder. The school has been involved in two research projects and practice at the school has been featured in television documentaries. In recent months, the head of residential provision chaired a virtual conference, sharing good practice.

The residential staff feel supported in their role. They receive regular, excellent-quality supervision and have access to a comprehensive training programme. The

training that they receive is specific to meeting the identified needs of the children. For example, training has been provided on how to prevent children who have autism spectrum disorder becoming exploited and radicalised. The staff also benefit from attending well-being workshops. This helps to build their resilience, in recognition that staff who feel valued and supported are more likely to meet the challenges that they can experience in their role.

Members of the school's governing body have a strong presence in the residential provision. The governor with responsibility for the residential provision regularly speaks to the children, seeking their views on how well they are being cared for and supported. The governor consults closely with the head of residential provision, seeking regular feedback on how the service is developing and any concerns related to the well-being of the residential pupils.

## **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:** SC013885

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Sarah Wild

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Stephen Collett, Social Care Inspector

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