

# Charlton Park Academy

Charlton Park Road, London SE7 8HX

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

This residential special school is an academy in the London Royal Borough of Greenwich. The school has 229 students aged 11 to 19. The school provides up to 11 residential places in single bedrooms in the residential facility. Currently, a total of 17 young people use this service for short breaks. Typically, young people stay for two nights a month. There were three young people using the service on each day of this inspection. The school was originally registered with Ofsted in 2003 and the latest residential facility became operational in April 2021.

An interim head of care has been in the role since June 2021. She is appropriately qualified.

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

### Inspection dates: 7 to 9 February 2023

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **good**

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

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

**Date of previous inspection:** 5 October 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

Children have positive experiences of short breaks at this school. Children who can express themselves verbally said that they were happy. Other children indicated in differing ways that they were having a good time.

Staff know children very well and have the skills to meet children's needs. This includes dealing with children's medication and meeting children's complex medical, emotional, social and learning needs. Staff provide bespoke care to children. They make sure that children are always well presented and comfortable.

Staff have created a nurturing and caring environment for children. They make extra efforts to ensure that children have positive experiences. For example, they turned a recent issue with the lifts not working into children having fun, feeling safe and learning about evacuation while being carried along the staircase in evacuation chairs.

Staff have built authentic and warm relationships with children. During the inspection, children were joking with staff and being playful with them. Children enjoyed 'freezing' and 'unfreezing' staff on their command, or mischievously accusing staff of cheating in order to win games. The residential facility was resounding with children's laughter.

Staff communicate effectively with children. They help children to express themselves and make choices. One child who uses short breaks is a member of the school council. This means that there is a residential voice at the school council.

Children choose the main dishes for the menu. Staff add a variety of vegetables and salads. Delicious and nutritious meals are social occasions that bring everyone together. Staff help children to develop healthy eating habits and social skills.

Children engage in a wide range of creative and recreational activities, such as swimming, yoga, music therapy, drama therapy, art therapy and foot massage. They develop their interests and talents. They build on their physical and emotional balance and resilience.

Children learn while having fun. All children have clear targets that they are trying to achieve. This helps them to build on their independence. An example of this is children being able to brush their hair independently. However, not all parents are aware of these targets. This undermines the consistency of support that children receive from different adults.

Parents provided exceptionally positive feedback about the short breaks. They appreciate the detailed reports that they receive from staff. One parent talked about

the small things that show that staff genuinely care, such as how carefully they pack children's belongings and make sure that their clothes are freshly laundered.

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

The safeguarding team monitors safeguarding practice across the school and ensures that the safeguarding arrangements are effective. Educating children and their parents about online safety, safe relationships and the risks to children in today's world is an important part of the school's proactive approach to safeguarding.

Staff receive information, training and guidance on a wide range of safeguarding topics. This enables them to maintain high safeguarding awareness and understand children's vulnerabilities. Staff can identify concerns, know the reporting procedures and know how to keep children safe.

Staff create a positive and safe environment for children. Good relationships between children and staff underpin children's positive behaviours. Children were courteous and well behaved during the inspection.

There have been no major safeguarding incidents during children's residential time. Children are safe when they stay for short breaks at the school. Children were comfortable and relaxed during the inspection. Those children who can communicate verbally said that they felt safe. Parents said that they have confidence in staff keeping their children safe.

School leaders work in close partnerships with the local authority and the police to address safeguarding concerns when they arise. The school has a clear and effective procedure for dealing with allegations and concerns about staff conduct. No allegations have been made against the residential staff.

The environment is of a high quality and physically safe. Regular fire drills ensure that everyone knows what to do in case of a fire.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

School leaders and staff have a shared vision of providing an enabling and child-centred residential special school. Staff feel very much supported by the head of care to do their best for children. Staff take pride in their work and in children's achievements.

However, there are a number of weaknesses. The residential service does not meet all elements of the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The difficulties in the commissioning arrangements, the lack of a permanent residential leader and a shortage of permanent staff undermine the long-term development of the provision.

The school's internal monitoring processes are not thorough. The school leaders have not systematically evaluated the residential service against the national minimum standards for residential special schools. For example, they had failed to identify some administrative gaps in the staff recruitment records before the inspection. However, they took immediate action to obtain the missing information during the inspection.

The school leaders have been slow to adjust the service so that it meets the national minimum standards, after those standards were amended in September 2022. The governors are getting used to the new aspects of their role. Children will receive the first visit from an independent person (advocate) in May 2023. The arrangements for these monthly visits should have been in place since September 2022.

The record of the staff duty roster is unclear and incomplete. It does not include the hours worked by the head of care and the night staff. The information about the sleeping-in staff, who are on on-call duty, is also not included. The school has a digital key-fob-based record of staff accessing the school buildings.

The permanent residential staff are suitably qualified and have access to a wide range of training. However, this does not include training in the specific behaviour management approach that the rest of the school uses with children. This undermines consistency across the whole school.

The permanent residential staff receive regular supervision and find it helpful. There are no arrangements for the agency staff and education staff who work across education and the residential facility to receive supervision and individual support in relation to the residential aspect of their work. Otherwise, the joint working between the academic and residential aspects of the school is strong.

## **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:

- The headteacher (or school equivalent), governing body, trustees or proprietor carry out, and record in writing, once each year: a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for residential pupils, in relation to: its statement of purpose; its staffing policy; the placement plans for individual children; and an internal assessment of its compliance with these standards and actions it will undertake to ensure compliance. Where appropriate, such a report may be incorporated within a review of the whole school.  
(Residential special schools: national minimum standards 3.4)

Specifically, school leaders must improve the monitoring of the residential service and the quality assurance processes relating to staff recruitment. They must carry out a systematic evaluation of the residential service against the national minimum standards for residential special schools and share the report with the governing body.

- The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who children may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. This person may be known as the 'independent person'. Children know who this person is, know how to contact them and feel comfortable talking to them. The person is easily accessible at all reasonable times, visits regularly (at least monthly), and knows the children. The person should have the necessary skills to interact and communicate effectively with the children and be able to recognise good/poor care and safeguarding concerns. Children who cannot communicate verbally are given the means to request individual support. Schools may need to make a range of arrangements for independent support, which might be provided by more than one person, to ensure that the needs of each child are met.  
(Residential special schools: national minimum standards 17.2)

### **Points for improvement**

- School leaders should appoint a permanent head of care and more residential staff.
- School leaders should ensure that parents are aware of the targets that their children are working towards. This would enable parents to continue to support their children to achieve those targets in the home environment.

- School leaders should improve records of the staff duty roster so that the records clearly show when staff are on duty, including the head of care, the waking night staff and the staff on sleeping-in duties.
- School leaders should ensure that residential staff have opportunities to receive training in the same approach to behaviour management as the rest of the school.
- School leaders should consider how best to support and supervise agency staff and other staff who work across the residential provision and the rest of the school.

## **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:** SC044128

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Mark Dale Emberton

**Type of school:** Residential Special School

**Telephone number:** 020 8249 6844

**Email address:** MDALE-EMBERTON@charltonparkacademy.co.uk

## **Inspector**

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023