

Muntham House School

Barns Green, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 0NJ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Muntham House School is special school that provides boarding and day provision for boys aged five to 18 years. There are currently 119 students on the school roll. There were 25 students boarding at the time of the inspection. The head of care has been in post for 18 months and has a relevant qualification, as required by the national minimum standards.

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

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 March 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
---	--------------------

How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
---	-------------

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
---	-------------

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: 14 February 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Dedicated staff provide excellent care and support to children. Staff recognise the uniqueness of every child and provide tailored support that meets the needs of each individual in their care. Staff use a highly developed approach to tracking the progress of children. As a result, staff can clearly demonstrate the transformational impact that the school has on children's lives. Children achieve consistently impressive outcomes, with the vast majority moving on to higher education, work and training. Staff's focus on developing independence skills also supports children to have positive and successful transitions into adulthood.

Children benefit from a vast array of on-site opportunities for education, recreation and social development. This year, the expansion of the primary school, animal husbandry areas, forest school, IT facilities, therapy centre and catering department have all continued to broaden the student offer. Children speak enthusiastically about their lives at the school and enjoy the wide range of opportunities available. Children are also encouraged to go into the local community, and they benefit from a range of clubs and activities outside of the school.

Both formally, through the school council, and informally, children have opportunities to influence decision-making at the school. Children are able to give clear examples of the positive impact that their voice has had and feel valued as a result.

Staff and children enjoy warm, affectionate relationships that are full of humour. Many children cite the quality of their relationships with staff as their favourite thing about being at the school. The school's focus on trauma-informed ways of working has enriched staff skills and understanding, enhancing their ability to provide the much-needed specialist support and care that children need to succeed. As a result, staff have deep insight into the impact that trauma has had on the lives of many of the children.

The successful integration of a multi-disciplinary therapy team contributes greatly to the school's ability to achieve positive outcomes for children with complex needs. The range of interventions available enables a truly bespoke approach to providing the emotional support that children require to maximise their chances of success.

Parents provide consistently high-quality feedback about their experiences of dealing with the school. Parents say that the school has an inclusive and welcoming approach, which ensures that they are fully integrated into their child's lives and experiences at the school. They praise the excellent communication, regular progress updates and opportunities to contribute to reviews, events and activities at the school.

Professionals hold the school staff in high esteem, with one social worker saying, 'At meetings and reviews, staff always seem professional and experts in their field. [Name of child's parent] absolutely loves the placement and is totally confident with the school. Staff always place [name of child]'s views first and will make decisions based on what he would like and what meets his needs.'

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

A passionate and skilled safeguarding team delivers high-quality practice that keeps children consistently safe. They have worked hard this year to fully embed new recording systems. This has gone well, creating confident staff who know exactly when and how to raise concerns. The quality of recording and monitoring of safeguarding incidents is excellent. Strong oversight from qualified and experienced governors offers an enhanced layer of protection to already strong systems.

Safeguarding leads recognise the importance of multi-agency approaches to safeguarding children. They also work hard to integrate parents, providing regular news updates on emerging safeguarding issues, whether that be online or in the community. Parents praise opportunities to visit the school for safeguarding coffee mornings, where they are given help in navigating the complex risks that children now face online.

Children say that they feel safe at the school. They identify trusted adults that they can go to with any concerns or worries. They also have a good understanding of important issues such as e-safety and positive relationships. Children benefit from the close integration of the school's personal, social, health and economic team and the boarding provision. This enables children to have meaningful discussions about important issues such as consent, safe relationships and identity.

Staff manage children's behaviour skilfully in a manner that promotes restorative solutions and minimises blame or stigma. Staff have managed to create a culture where children understand the impact of their behaviour on others, develop empathy and value a space where children treat each other with kindness and respect.

Staff create a strong sense of inclusion for all children that recognises the specific vulnerabilities and risks that they face. Children are safe to express their identity and culture in a school that celebrates difference.

Staff impose sensible and effective boundaries around the safe use of mobile technology and the internet. However, students in the 16 plus accommodation question whether these systems are always age-appropriate. They ask whether the restrictions on their access to mobile phones keep pace with their age and prepare them adequately for the realities of life after school.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders at the school share a passion and commitment to continually enhancing and improving the lives of children. They strive to offer an outstanding whole-school experience, successfully delivering on ambitious targets and goals and always looking for new and exciting ways to expand the offer to children at the school.

Leaders constantly look to share best practice and learn from other providers. They take a lead role in setting up conferences and events for a large network of similar schools. They have also created some productive partnerships with mainstream schools in their local area. This has enabled vulnerable children in mainstream settings to benefit from the school's therapy centre. Leaders have also offered opportunities for staff providing special educational needs and disabilities support in other schools to benefit from training and expert advice from staff at the school.

The head of care has had a huge positive impact since taking on the role last year. He has championed the integration of trauma-informed ways of working.

Staff have confidence and trust in leaders. Staff highlighted the impact of the trauma-informed model on their practice, giving them an enhanced sense of confidence and feelings of professionalism and pride in their work.

Staff are well supported through effective professional supervision and direct access to advice and support from the school's clinical leads when required. Staff benefit from a wide range of training opportunities that are tailored to the individual needs of the children that they care for.

Staff feel that their expertise and experience are valued by leaders. They have plentiful opportunities to contribute to development planning at the school. They feel that their opinions matter and that they have a strong role in shaping future growth at the school.

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

Recommendation

- School leaders should ensure that they consider whether the school's "earn and learn" approach would be suited to allowing older children a graduated pathway to taking more control over their own mobile devices, improving their ability to manage this safely before they leave the school. ('Residential special schools: national minimum standards', page 12, paragraph 7.2)

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: SC014636

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mr Harry Anderson

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01403 730302

Email address: HarryAnderson@muntham.org.uk

Inspector

Peter Jackson, 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.

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, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023