

# 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 a registered charity. It provides specialised schooling and therapy for children with speech and language difficulties. The school and college are leaders and specialists in developmental language disorder (DLD). At the time of inspection, there were 205 children on roll, including 48 residential children. There are 53 residential places that provide weekly boarding.

The headteacher has been in post since 2015.

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

### Inspection dates: 12 to 14 November 2024

**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:** 2 October 2023

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

Students thrive at this residential special school. It is a safe, vibrant and inclusive environment which promotes and enables everyone's strengths and abilities. The celebration of individual uniqueness and a culture of high aspirations and equal opportunities means that students have life-changing experiences.

Since the last full inspection, due to changes in the ages of students who access boarding, and an increasing number of college students, there has been a rearrangement of the residential accommodation. The number of school houses has reduced to two, with the third now being used to accommodate college students. There has also been changes to the names of each house, and soft refurbishments. This has been done in consultation with boarding students.

Hearing students' voices is a real strength of this service, and their views are central to the provision's development. The student board council, and several different committees, champion the students' views, wishes and feelings. Students say that they feel safe and speak fondly of their relationships with staff. Students can confidently explain how to respond in the event of a fire and how to raise concerns and complaints with staff.

Leaders work with students, families, staff and other professionals effectively. This means that students receive consistent and personalised support. This, combined with staff who actively encourage students to advocate for themselves, means that students have a very high degree of control over their daily lives and future planning.

Students actively take part in regular discussions with staff and value the advice and support that they receive. Staff encourage students to pursue their interests and hobbies. For example, students attend youth clubs, cadets, football clubs, tennis clubs, and go swimming, shopping and to the gym. Staff are enthusiastic not just to improve progress and experiences for students, but to promote positive life chances as they grow and develop.

Students gain vital social and employment skills working at the students' barista cafe. Boarding students take it in turn to work in the cafe, and relish the opportunities to serve customers and handle money. This approach to work experience allows students to explore problem-solving skills and teamwork in a safe and supportive environment.

Regular collaborative meetings are held between class teachers, teaching assistants, speech and language therapists, residential staff, occupational therapists and members of the mental health and well-being team, including psychotherapists. All aspects of the students' needs are discussed. When a student achieves a goal, staff

celebrate this success and then sensitively develop new goals to help students make excellent progress.

A dedicated transition coordinator ensures that there is detailed planning for all students' next steps. Planning for transitions from the school start early in year 12. This helps all professionals, families and students to consider what their options are and provides students with a wide range of options and pathways.

Staff successfully help students to pursue further education placements. All college students who have left the school have gained college placements and apprenticeships, and 10% of all boarding students' secured university placements. A post-leaving check provides students with any additional support or service needs. This preparation and commitment helps them prepare for life outside of the school.

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

Students behave impeccably in the boarding houses. Through exceptional support and consistent care, staff have developed trusting relationships with them. Students are very clear that their residential experiences are helping them to grow and develop into appropriate role models.

Staff increase students' independence when this is appropriate and providing that their vulnerabilities can be safely managed. Targets are reviewed as children's abilities to cope with self-management skills and responsibilities improve. This process is monitored closely, and decisions taken involve the student, parents & carers, staff, therapists and schoolteachers. This cohesive planning ensures positive outcomes for students.

There is a robust well-being and mental health support system that threads throughout the school. Staff are inquisitive about students' mental health. They are alert to changes in their presentation, have regular 'check-ins' and talk with students about their worries and feelings. Staff consider students' home lives and work intuitively with families to promote a supportive and collaborative environment.

Staff regularly review and update students risk assessments to highlight risks. There are clear staff strategies in place to promote students' positive behaviours and the measures needed to help students stay safe and feel supported by staff. When needed, a multidisciplinary approach is taken to implement additional risk management plans and request external support and services for students. This collaborative approach helps to ensure that students' needs are appropriately reviewed and assessed.

School leaders safely recruit staff. Central records are meticulously kept up to date and integrated systems demonstrate effective monitoring and leadership oversight.

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

The head of care demonstrates a strong sense of ambition and has high expectations of staff and students. Students and staff feel that they are valued, and there is a strong shared ethos of togetherness and respect.

Since the last full inspection, leaders have improved how students social and educational targets are monitored. This helps leaders to review the quality of care provided to residential students and identify their progress and support needs. Staff have an excellent understanding of students' targets and areas of support.

Staff benefit from a structured induction and development process that allow them to settle into their new roles confidently. Existing team members provide an added layer of guidance and support to new staff. This inclusive and welcoming environment means that there is excellent staff retention, and students benefit greatly from the stability and permanence this brings.

Staff receive reflective and targeted supervisions. Set goals filter into regular discussions with line managers and mirror the values and ethos of the school. Staff can, and do, contribute to their professional and personal targets. This means that staff feel invested in, and can achieve, ambitious goals, while contributing to the development of the provision.

The introduction of a dedicated compliance manager has allowed greater oversight and scrutiny of how the provision is performing against the national minimum standards. The evaluations that are completed are shared with senior leaders, governors and team leaders. This is a positive response to previously identified gaps in management oversight. Improvements, including nocturnal fire drills, have been introduced to the residential boarding provision since the last inspection.

## **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

**Telephone number:** 01883 712271

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## **Inspectors**

Kelly Monniot, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Mark Newington, Social Care Inspector

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