

Limpsfield Grange School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125459
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315240
Inspection dates	18–19 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike Smith

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Powell
Headteacher	Mrs Lynis Williams
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2004
School address	89 Bluehouse Lane Oxted RH8 0RZ
Telephone number	01883 713928
Fax number	01883 730578

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Limpsfield Grange School provides for day students as well as weekly, and part weekly boarders, for around a third of its students. Students come from Surrey, nearby counties and London Boroughs. Students have statements of special educational need for a wide range of difficulties that include moderate learning difficulties, speech and communication difficulties and increasingly, social, emotional and behavioural needs and autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). The great majority of the girls are of white British heritage and five are looked after by local authorities. The school has achieved a range of acknowledgements and awards for its work including Investors in People, Arts Mark Silver and Bronze and Silver Eco-School Awards. The school is part of the local 14-19 schools federation. There was an inspection by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in June 2006. The newly appointed headteacher commenced her role at the beginning of this term, two weeks ago.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Good and relevant opportunities ensure that students' individual needs are met, enabling them to positively re-engage with learning and achieve as well as they can. The newly appointed headteacher has made an impressive start. She clearly demonstrates a good strategic vision for school improvement. She is very well supported by the deputy, head of care, committed staff and a knowledgeable governing body. Teamwork is a strength and the excellent working partnership with other professionals and parents ensures there is a very effective coordinated approach to promoting students' well-being and educational needs. A parent, reflecting the views of many, said 'There is good communication with other agencies to find the right solution to support students' needs. I am very happy and feel very positive for the future of my daughter's education.' School self-evaluation has led to development planning that has identified challenging targets promoting high quality care and education. However, school evaluation and planning processes have not always involved everyone in the school.

Standards are broadly average and, given the students' starting points and barriers to their learning, achievement and progress are good. Many students achieve GCSE examinations in line with their mainstream peers while others are able to gain appropriate accreditation in line with their abilities. The thorough assessment of students' educational and personal needs on entry initiates appropriate target setting which is regularly reviewed. Students' achievement is the result of excellent relationships, positive attitudes, good teaching and the excellent care, guidance and support they receive for their individual needs. The school is aware of where the very best practice is to be found. It is also aware of the need to share this practice more widely to ensure continued support for improving standards and achievement. The tracking of students' progress is continually developing and they are clear about what they have to do to improve. Students are increasingly being involved in evaluating their own progress in lessons. One parent said, 'Our daughter is encouraged to work to the best of her abilities and is given many opportunities to try new experiences.'

Mutual respect between staff and students is clearly evident and their personal dignity is ensured at all times. As they get older, students become increasingly able to take responsibility for their own learning, behaviour and regular attendance. Students' personal development is good as are their attitudes to learning. They appreciate the efforts being made to support their needs and to help them succeed. One student said, 'I know all the adults are doing all they can to help me and I know I can talk to them about anything.' Students get on very well with each other and are very sensitive to each other's moods and feelings. They understand the importance of keeping safe and leading a healthy lifestyle, and their spiritual, social, cultural and moral development is excellent and totally integrated into everyday life at school. The students' contribution to their own and the wider community is outstanding. After the school had won the 'best school grounds in the south east of England' and had built a 'stumpery' in the local village, the site manager reported, 'This creates a great community spirit and it is good for our girls to be involved with the village.' The curriculum is relevant to the needs and interests of the students and encourages positive attitudes towards learning. Work-related opportunities are increasing and there are opportunities to engage in activities at the local mainstream school. The governing body effectively fulfils its monitoring and support role and, along with the local authority, is involved with the strategic management of the school. Considering the ever increasing numbers of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties and ASD, the school

is doing well in meeting their needs. Understandably, the school is concerned about the balance of students' needs with regard to maintaining its current high standards. The school clearly demonstrates it has a good capacity to improve its provision and help continually raise students' achievements.

Effectiveness of boarding provision

Grade: 2

The last inspection by CSCI shows satisfactory improvement since the previous report. It recognised that almost all of the National Minimum Standards (NMS) were met. Since then, the school has given good attention to implementing each of the recommendations through an effective action plan. Menus are now in place. The school ensures the safe administration of medication, and any change to prescribed medication is made by the prescribing medical practitioner. The revised policy for child protection is now in line with the required NMS. The excellent relationships with care staff ensure that students are very well cared for and are happy. Residential provision consolidates and complements the work being done in the school. Students take part in a range of activities including the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, sports clubs and looking after the smallholding and school animals.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that strategic management and development planning are clearly a result of whole school self-evaluation processes involving everyone in the school.
- Ensure the very best practice in teaching and learning is effectively shared across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly average for most students at the end of Year 11. Once again this year, students achieved well in a range of GCSE level and entry level courses and the school ensures that learners' efforts and achievement are celebrated at every opportunity within the school community. Considering their previous difficulties, their progress and achievement are good in relation to their starting points. Students who are looked-after by the local authority make progress in line with other students. There are opportunities to work in mainstream, which are carefully planned and co-ordinated, and support and encouragement enables many students to positively re-engage with learning and achieve success. Students also gain success through their work-related opportunities in the community. Personal targets are regularly reviewed and students make good progress towards them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students make good progress in their personal development because the school's provision is excellent. Students say they feel safe and secure in school and can confide in adults if they have any worries. They are listened to and treated with respect. Attitudes to learning are good and, as one student put it, 'I used to hate school, but it's alright here, I like it.' A parent wrote, 'My daughter enjoys going to school now and her confidence has been boosted. She comes home and is eager to tell me what happened during the day. She is a changed girl.' Attendance is satisfactory overall when considering students' medical, assessments and other authorised absence. The school works hard at encouraging students to fully attend and maximise all learning opportunities. Behaviour is good and students have a very clear sense of their own community.

They take part in charity, community, and enterprise projects and learn useful skills that effectively prepare them for life after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall resulting in students making good progress. There are examples of outstanding practice where the wide and varied learning needs of the students are met very effectively. This practice needs to be shared better across the school. The excellent relationships between staff and students ensure there is a very positive learning environment, where students gain confidence and are encouraged to do their best and to have high aspirations. A parent said, 'My daughter is growing in confidence within the positive atmosphere and receives support when required.' Ongoing feedback and support in lessons makes it clear to students how they might improve and they are increasingly more involved in monitoring and recording their own learning and progress. Effective teamwork ensures all students get the best out of their learning opportunities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is increasingly relevant to the different needs and interests of the students and there are good links with a local mainstream school to enhance further the breadth of learning opportunities. For example, some girls attend agricultural science lessons. The developing vocational and work-related curriculum is helping to meet the changing needs of the students and, with residential field trips, successfully supports their personal development. They learn important skills that support their move into further education or the world of work. Core subjects are emphasised, alongside practical and creative subjects that encourage and motivate students' interest. The school is aware of the need to increase students' achievement in reading and a variety of cross-curricular initiatives have been initiated. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is developing well and good use is made of visiting speakers and trips out into the community. The curriculum successfully supports students' safety and healthy living. There is a good range of additional activities after school that supports students' learning and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of students are outstanding and clearly understood practices and procedures ensure students are safe and secure while encouraging their personal independence. The excellent teamwork between educational and care staff together with the very effective partnership with external support agencies, ensures that there are consistent approaches and effective support for all students. Students and parents know that all staff have their best interests at heart. One parent wrote, 'We feel privileged to have our daughter at this school and for the first time we can relax in the knowledge that she is safe in the hands of staff who know what they are doing.' Students' progress is monitored and recorded well and they are clear what they have to do to improve and make good academic and personal development. The partnership with parents is excellent. A parent wrote, 'The school has worked positively with myself and communication is excellent.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed headteacher has very quickly settled into the life of the school and, with the good support of the deputy, has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. There is an established positive ethos and staff commitment, which very effectively promotes high quality care, education and personal development for all students. This results in all students being able to achieve well. While monitoring and self-evaluation processes have led to appropriate development planning, they have not always involved the whole school and have often lacked a co-ordinated approach. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the relevant curriculum improvements have been made. Performance management for all staff leads to relevant training and professional development based upon the changing needs of the students.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 October 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Limpsfield Grange School, Oxted, RH8 0RZ

Thank you for making my visit to your school so pleasurable and a special thank you to the School Council who had lunch with me and told me all about their work and experiences while at school. I agree with you and your parents/carers; your school is good and effectively supports your individual needs, enabling you to make good progress with your work and personal development. You become increasingly confident and make the best of your learning opportunities. Some of you are still a little shy and you must make sure you talk to staff if you are worried about anything.

I particularly liked that:

- all staff care about your progress; they listen and treat you with respect
- relationships are excellent and you enjoy your learning
- you appreciate how to be safe and healthy and you feel secure while at school
- your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent
- you get outstanding support and guidance and good teaching which helps to prepare you for when you leave the school
- the care for your personal needs and your education is a priority and you are encouraged to achieve as well as you can
- the school works extremely well in partnership with the others to ensure your individual needs are well met
- the school's drive to become as eco-friendly as possible
- the school grounds, your small holding and the way you care for the animals
- your new headteacher has settled in very quickly and, along with staff, is aware of how to further improve your school and your opportunities.

There are a few things the school knows it can improve upon, such as:

- ensure that everyone in the school is involved in evaluating what it does well, what needs to improve, and how it is going to be done
- ensure the very best practice in teaching and learning is effectively shared across the school to support your continued good progress and achievement.

Once again, thank you for an interesting time and particularly for the duck eggs. I wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Mike Smith

Lead Inspector