

More House School

Moons Hill, Frensham, Farnham, Surrey GU10 3AP

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

More House School is an independent residential special school for day and residential pupils, for boys aged eight to 19 with literacy difficulties, developmental language disorder and associated social communication difficulties. The school has a Catholic ethos. It is situated in extensive grounds in a rural setting.

At the time of this inspection, there were 74 residential pupils at the school and 494 pupils on the school roll. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

The head of boarding has been in post for a year and is suitably experienced and working towards the relevant qualification.

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 November 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: 7 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Pupils are truly at the heart of this provision. They are helped by a confident staff team that is solely focused on the pupils' experiences and progression. Staff are proud of the exceptional progress that the pupils make. Parents reported that their children's progress has been transformational and that they flourish.

Staff have excellent relationships with the pupils and know them well. Staff lead after-school clubs with the pupils, and they create a fun and playful atmosphere. Pupils take part in scavenger hunts, parties, manhunt games and bedtime stories. Pupils enjoy their time at the school and have developed supportive friendship groups.

Staff place great emphasis on nurturing and developing pupils' interests and talents. The pupils benefit from a wide range of facilities. These include well-designed living and social spaces, and a new gym. Pupils use educational facilities after school, including music and sports facilities and computer labs. Pupils have taken part in school productions and performed at a performing arts festival.

Pupils who have previously not attended education are now enjoying school; they are happy, settled and thriving. The staff understand the pupils' needs and have created an environment that enables them to be comfortable. Pupils have made considerable progress with their independence skills, often in a short period of time. Parents consistently said that their children are more independent at home as a result.

New pupils settle in quickly. Staff welcome new pupils and help them to understand the rules and routines. New pupils are provided with a newly developed comprehensive parent and child handbook to help them anticipate the experience of staying in the boarding provision. Parents are extremely pleased with how their children are introduced and supported.

Pupils have trusting relationships with staff. If they need help, they have absolute confidence that they will be listened to and will receive the right support. Children are accepted for their individuality and can be themselves. However, staff do not routinely facilitate discussions about identity, including sexuality, with pupils using the schools resources.

The quality of the environment is excellent. The accommodation is of an extremely high standard and the food available is varied and enjoyable. The pupils talk highly of the accommodation. There is enough space for pupils to play and have their individual needs met.

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

Safeguarding processes are excellent. The designated safeguarding lead is dynamic and knowledgeable. They have been instrumental in developing a strong safeguarding culture and disseminating their knowledge to staff.

The designated safeguarding lead ensures that staff and governors are knowledgeable about their safeguarding responsibilities. They use staff development days and bulletins to brief staff on current national and local trends. They have developed a superb, researched-informed safeguarding handbook, which is a key document for staff. When staff report safeguarding concerns, there is excellent monitoring from the headteacher. As a result, staff are confident in reporting concerns and know that they will be managed well.

There are clear plans for managing behaviour and bullying. Staff implement these plans well and involve pupils in deciding on the rules and consequences. Staff use reward systems effectively, including schemes such as 'pizza points'. Pupils believe that they are treated fairly by staff and are clear about what the rules are.

Pupils' health needs are well met. A team of nurses and counsellors works with boarding staff to meet pupils' holistic needs. Staff have clear plans to support pupils with health needs such as epilepsy. Referrals are made to counsellors for individual sessions, and pupils can also be signposted to support in their home areas if they prefer.

Online safety is taken very seriously. There is a sophisticated system in place to protect children from harm when using the internet. Staff are aware of online risks and help pupils to understand these. Parents are pleased with the vigilance of the staff in the residential provision.

Safer recruitment processes are excellent. Detailed checks are undertaken on staff and on their visitors and family members who visit and stay with them. The headteacher has excellent oversight of this, ensuring that he vigorously reviews safer recruitment checks.

A new estate manager has made a positive impact. The residential provision and campus are incredibly well maintained. Routine servicing and maintenance ensure that the grounds are safe and regularly monitored to meet the pupils' needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The leadership team is extremely effective. The headteacher is energetically involved in the residential provision and has strong oversight. The head of care has made an excellent impact since their appointment. Senior leaders are inspirational and are highly aspirational for the pupils. The ethos of the school is very well embedded and embraced by both pupils and staff.

Leaders know the provision's strengths and areas for development. There are clear plans in place to continuously improve the provision. Leaders consult staff and pupils to develop these plans. There is a student council, which is newly elected for this academic year and is eager to influence changes in the provision. Leaders are committed to listening to the pupils' views and involving them in developments.

The head of care has excellent relationships with the pupils and is an approachable and present figure. They understand the pupils' experience and are acutely aware of the progress that pupils are making.

Staff receive superb support to carry out their roles and are experienced in supporting the pupils. Staff receive high-quality training to meet the needs of the pupils, and are provided with continuous guidance and support in their practice. Leaders provide new staff with clear and structured inductions to enable them to feel confident in their new role. Staff reported strong teamwork, which enables them to provide consistent support to the pupils.

The board of governors has excellent oversight and scrutiny. Governors are invested in the provision and have high aspirations. When governors visit, they spend time with the pupils and staff. Governors hold the senior leadership to account to ensure that the highest possible standard of care is provided.

Leaders and staff communicate excellently with parents and provide frequent feedback on their children's experiences. Parents feel well supported by the staff, who offer help to the whole family when needed. If a parent or pupil has a concern, this is dealt with promptly.

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

Point for improvement

- The registered person should ensure that pupils can explore their identity with resources available to help them with this.

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: SC013927

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Jonathan Hetherington

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

Mark Dawkins, Social Care Inspector (lead)
Sarah Olliver, Social Care Inspector

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