

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, boys aged eight to 19, who have literacy needs, developmental language disorders and associated social communication needs.

The school has a Catholic ethos. It is situated in extensive grounds in a rural setting. More than half the pupils have an education, health and care plan funded by their local authority. The residential provision is split between the lower school in the main school building and the upper school in a separate accommodation block.

At the time of this inspection, there were 79 residential pupils at the school and 494 students on the school roll.

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

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 18 to 20 January 2022

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: 29 January 2020

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The residential pupils make exceptional progress at this school and they enjoy a wide range of positive experiences. The residential staff have a thorough understanding of the learning and mental health needs of the pupils they care for. They are excellent role models for the pupils and are skilled in building positive, nurturing relationships. The residential pupils benefit from a broad range of positive experiences, from engaging in challenging recreational activities to enjoying a bedtime story at night.

The residential pupils have access to excellent specialist resources. These include speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and counsellors. These professionals work collaboratively to design bespoke packages of support for the pupils. They work with each residential pupil to set targets which are designed to improve the pupil's social and organisational skills and develop strategies for improving their academic performance.

This approach has been highly successful. The majority of residential pupils make significant progress in developing their social skills. For the first time, many pupils build friendships with their peers and learn to empathise. One residential pupil spoke fondly of how his peers had supported him when he became unwell. The younger residential pupils receive high levels of support to understand the concept of time, and this significantly improves their organisational skills and ability to engage in daily routines.

The healthcare needs of the residential pupils are met effectively. The nursing team maintains oversight of each residential pupil's healthcare plan and maintains records of the administration of medication. However, these records do not always provide sufficient detail regarding the action that is taken when an occasional medication error occurs. There are established procedures for responding to residential pupils who become unwell and detailed plans are in place in relation to minimising the impact of COVID-19. A healthy lifestyle is promoted and residential pupils enjoy a good range of high-quality nutritional meals.

There is a strong emphasis on listening to the views of the residential pupils, particularly in relation to how the residential provision is organised. A 'boarders' council' is an effective platform for residential pupils to make their views known. The residential pupils discuss a broad range of issues at these meetings. For example, they have recently addressed the issue of food waste in the school and now intend raising the issue of male health and opportunities to increase awareness of different cultures and religions. This approach ensures the residential pupils feel valued and listened to, and this has a positive effect on their self-confidence.

Residential pupils in the sixth form can become prefects. Their responsibilities are clearly defined, and they receive guidance from the head of boarding on what they

are required to do in this role. There is an emphasis on prefects supporting and offering guidance to the younger residential pupils. They are therefore taught how to respond if they become aware of any safeguarding issues. This excellent practice is indicative of the strong safeguarding culture present throughout the school.

The work undertaken to prepare residential pupils for independence is a strength of this school. There are excellent facilities for the pupils to develop their domestic skills and there are planned outings which focus on supporting the residential pupils to access and use community resources. The residential pupils have individual independence plans and their achievements are recognised and celebrated.

The outcomes for residential pupils are overwhelmingly positive. As well as developing improved social, organisational and independence skills, the majority leave the school and attend university or some other educational establishment to continue their studies. All the residential pupils who left the school in 2021 have clear destinations in terms of their future careers.

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

A strong safeguarding culture has become embedded in practice at this school. This can be partly attributed to the work undertaken by the head of safeguarding, who started in the post in September 2021. The head of safeguarding is knowledgeable and familiar with good practice in child protection practice. Since taking up the role the head of safeguarding has taken steps to raise awareness among staff and parents of the risks vulnerable children may become exposed to. Consequently, staff and parents are better equipped to support the residential pupils to keep themselves safe.

An effective electronic recording system has been introduced. This has resulted in low-level concerns about a residential pupil's welfare being quickly identified and reported to key staff with responsibilities for protecting children from harm. A multi-disciplinary approach was then taken to support the residential pupil. Effective systems are in place for monitoring any safeguarding concerns that may emerge.

Communication with external safeguarding professionals generally takes place in a timely way. In one case, a tenacious approach was taken to ensuring the relevant agencies were informed when concerns for a residential pupil's welfare became apparent. However, one case was identified where communication with a residential pupil's carers should have been initiated sooner, to explore the potential risks to the residential pupil's welfare.

The residential pupils say they feel safe at the school, and they confirm they feel confident to speak to boarding staff about any worries they may have. This is because the residential staff have the skills to communicate effectively with the pupils and they have a thorough understanding of the individual needs and vulnerabilities of each residential pupil.

There is an established system for promoting positive behaviour in the residential provision. Significant work has been undertaken to ensure that the staff are familiar with the triggers for any unwanted behaviours and there are risk assessments in place for responding to any challenging situations. The staff have the skills to de-escalate volatile situations. Consequently, since the last inspection in January 2020, there have been no occasions when staff have had to use physical interventions to manage behaviour in the residential provision.

There are clear protocols for staff to follow in the event of a residential pupil going missing from the school. These are understood by the staff but have not had to be implemented in practice since the last inspection, because there have been no episodes of residential pupils going missing.

A combined approach is taken to reducing the risks that residential pupils can be exposed to when accessing the internet and social media sites. This consists of educating the residential pupils, monitoring their internet access and having effective online security tools installed. The staff are alert to any emerging online threats and take a creative approach to mitigating against the risk. For example, the police have been invited to speak to the residential pupils after a residential pupil was recently exposed to a social media scam. Technology is also being used to make it easier for the residential pupils to report any concerns or worries they may have.

There are strong and effective procedures in place to minimise the potential for unsuitable adults being employed at the school. There are also robust measures for ensuring that any visitors to the school are appropriately supervised.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The residential provision is exceptionally well managed by an experienced head of residential, who is currently studying for the level 5 diploma in residential childcare. He is supported by the headmaster who plays an active role in monitoring practice and the quality of care being provided in the residential accommodation. The residential provision is very well resourced and there is a dedicated residential care staff team. This enables the residential staff to focus wholly on the care and support needs of the residential pupils.

The quality of care being provided is closely monitored. Audits and quality of care assessments are routinely undertaken, and the findings are scrutinised by the senior leadership team and the governing body. The governors have a strong presence in the school and spend time visiting the residential provision. Highly effective governance meetings have a strong focus on how well the pupils are being safeguarded. The head of safeguarding's attendance at these meetings provides opportunities for updating the governing body on amendments to statutory guidance in relation to keeping residential pupils safe.

The senior leadership team has a clear vision for how the needs and vulnerabilities of the residential pupils will be addressed. The ethos of the school empowers the residential pupils to focus on their individual talents and capabilities. This approach enables the residential pupils to overcome any previous negative experiences of education. One parent told the inspectors that the support their child had received meant he was now 'on track for university, where this was previously unthinkable considering his starting point'.

Leaders and managers oversee a comprehensive admissions process. Residential pupils' plans are thoroughly scrutinised to ensure that the school and the residential provision will be able to meet the prospective residential pupil's needs. Detailed planning is then undertaken to determine exactly how the child's needs will be met once a place is offered. There is effective monitoring and review of children's education, health and care plans and records are kept of each residential pupil's progress.

A proactive approach is taken to working in partnership with local agencies and organisations. This includes engagement with local authority initiatives and building new partnerships with organisations supporting vulnerable children. A partnership with a well-known football club has resulted in pupils being able to access mentors provided by the club. Many residential pupils engage well with this service, and this has a positive impact on their self-esteem.

The residential staff are supported to fulfil their responsibilities in caring for the pupils. They complete a comprehensive mandatory training programme which is enhanced by supplementary training on safeguarding and welfare issues. The staff receive regular supervision and a thorough annual performance appraisal takes place. An inclusive approach is taken, and parents are invited to contribute towards these appraisals. The staff work collaboratively as a team, ensuring consistency in the care that residential pupils receive. Any low-level performance concerns are addressed effectively and in a timely way.

Leaders and managers prioritise the health and safety of the residential pupils. Recreational equipment is regularly checked and maintained, and a detailed audit of the safety and security of the premises has been undertaken. This ensures the residential pupils can thrive in a safe environment.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that detailed records are kept of the actions taken when a medication error occurs.
- The registered person should ensure that effective communication takes place with carers whenever there is a concern for a child's welfare.

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

Telephone number: 01252 792303

Email address: headmasterspa@morehouseschool.co.uk

Inspectors

Stephen Collett, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Matt Nicholls, 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 children looked after, 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 2022