

More House School

Moons Hill, Frensham, Farnham, Surrey GU10 3AP

Inspection dates

5–7 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Exceptional leadership has made sure that meeting pupils' needs is at the heart of everyone's work at the school.
- Staff share leaders' high expectations for this school. Staff are highly skilled and receive excellent support and training to meet pupils' needs.
- Because of a first-rate therapeutic approach, together with outstanding teaching, pupils make outstanding progress in English and mathematics and across the curriculum.
- The curriculum is extremely rich and inspires pupils to learn. Pupils value highly the extensive range of extra-curricular activities.
- The sixth-form provision is outstanding. Students make exceptional progress and are prepared well for their next steps.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools. Boarding provision makes a significant contribution to the outstanding quality of the school.
- Pupils are looked after very well. They feel safe and supported.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable.
- Governors are very knowledgeable and skilled. They provide strong support and challenge to school leaders.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and how it has transformed their children's lives.
- Leaders' plans for improvement occasionally do not show how they will precisely monitor the success of their actions.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership further by ensuring that all improvement plans state clearly how leaders will monitor sharply the success of their actions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision	Outstanding
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the residential provision	Outstanding

- The highly successful headteacher and leadership team provide outstanding educational and boarding experiences for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' needs are at the heart of everything that staff do. Leaders have embedded a culture of continual improvement so that the government's standards for independent schools and residential special schools are met consistently well. Pupils thrive at More House School.
- An outstanding multi-therapeutic approach is central to the education pupils receive. Therapists, such as occupational therapists, a cognitive behaviour therapist and speech and language therapists, work in close partnership with teaching and boarding staff to ensure that pupils receive seamless support. Pupils are highly appreciative of the therapeutic services they receive and how these help them in their lives.
- Senior leaders are highly effective in their roles. They ably support the headteacher in the day-to-day running of the school and in driving improvements. They have acted on the recommendation from the last inspection to include staff more effectively in contributing to decision-making. Leaders, at all levels, work well as a team. Middle leaders make a significant contribution to the success of the school.
- Highly effective leaders and managers of boarding have ensured that the school's child-centred approach is firmly embedded in the boarding provision. Boarding leaders and managers, together with other professionals who work across the school, make decisions that are always in the best interest of pupils.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and what it has done to transform their children's lives. Staff communicate effectively with parents in a number of ways, including through termly reports. One parent, representing the views of many others, said: 'More House is a fantastic school. I am constantly overwhelmed by the dedication, skills and leadership of the staff.'
- Leaders consider that staff training, including in the boarding provision, is of the utmost importance. Teachers new to the profession are highly complimentary about the support and training they receive in understanding how to support pupils' learning needs. All staff continuously hone their skills. Leaders have recently enhanced staff appraisal systems so that management of performance is even more effective. While this is yet to be rolled out to all staff, those involved in the early stages speak highly of the new approach. Staff morale is high.
- Boarding staff also learn on the job through instructions, advice and support provided by the therapeutic team and teachers. This professional coaching extends the excellent opportunities for boarding staff to enhance their practice.

- Because of their outstanding teaching and therapeutic expertise, school leaders provide training regularly for other schools.
- Leaders have developed pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding extremely well. This is because leaders have a well-planned personal and social curriculum and a strong moral code. Leaders in the boarding house have developed a list of personal qualities entitled 'the gentlemen's tips'. This list is tailored to motivate pupils to develop a sense of integrity, chivalry and honour in the modern world. Pupils are tolerant of others' differences.
- The school is exceptionally well resourced and offers extensive extra-curricular activities. Boys can choose from a very large number of different clubs each week covering a wide range of interests, including music and performance groups, sports and leisure interests.
- Leaders, at all levels, have developed comprehensive plans to improve the school further. Plans describe actions to be taken, with appropriate timescales. Very occasionally, the plans do not explain precisely how leaders' actions will improve pupils' outcomes.

Governance

- Since the last inspection, governance has been strengthened further. Governors understand their crucial role in checking that the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for residential special schools are met consistently.
- The highly skilled governors ensure that the school goes from strength to strength. They insist that the school provides the very best opportunities for pupils. They bring a wide range of knowledge and expertise to the school. Leaders provide governors with comprehensive reports about the school. Governors also visit regularly to see the school for themselves.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective, and leaders have developed a strong safeguarding ethos.
- The school publishes the safeguarding policy on its website, which follows all current government requirements. Regular training ensures that staff are kept up to date with the latest advice and guidance. Staff, including for boarding, are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters and the potential risks to pupils' safety. The culture of transparency and a clear procedure for reporting concerns enable staff to work together effectively in response to any safeguarding concerns.
- Checks made when recruiting staff are thorough. The headteacher has put fail-safe procedures in place to ensure that double-checks are made on the suitability of staff. All checks are recorded meticulously on a central register, as is required.
- Leaders communicate well with parents, carers and other agencies should there be concerns about a pupil. Comprehensive chronological records are kept carefully and securely. A strong focus on communication, including sharing information with local authorities and the police, makes sure that pupils are supported and safe.
- The management of health and safety is strong because regulations are followed closely. Leaders undertake regular health and safety audits across the school site. The school

carries out fire safety checks regularly. Records of checks are kept fastidiously and are available for scrutiny. Risk assessments for the site and for activities show great attention to detail.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment are consistently strong across the curriculum. Teaching is characterised by extremely high expectations of pupils. Teaching staff ensure that pupils are successful in overcoming any barriers to learning that they may have. Teachers have an uncompromising passion for the subjects they teach. Consequently, pupils are highly appreciative of the teaching they receive and are inspired to learn. As one boy said, 'the teachers just keep pushing us forward'.
- Teaching accurately identifies exactly the support that pupils need to make progress. Many pupils have not had their learning needs met adequately in the past and they arrive at the school despondent and frustrated. Leaders waste no time in designing a bespoke curriculum, including regular therapeutic support, so that pupils quickly settle in and re-ignite a love of learning.
- Pupils in primary-age classes receive effective teaching in a separate area of the school for English, mathematics and other subjects that do not require additional resources. Pupils receive specialist teaching in art, technology, physical education, music and drama. The use of well-resourced and impressive facilities adds to the culture of high expectations for all pupils. Pupils enjoy learning and say that their lessons are fun.
- Teachers phrase questions skilfully both to challenge pupils' understanding and their learning. Pupils are encouraged to express their ideas with confidence. Teachers assess pupils' progress continually and adjust their teaching plans accordingly. Precise verbal and written feedback celebrates success and identifies pupils' next steps in learning.
- Small group sizes across all age groups and effective communication enable teachers to find out exactly what pupils know and can do. Pupils' individual learning plans and constant discussion among professionals add to the shared knowledge about each pupil. Consequently, teachers plan highly engaging lessons with exactly the right amount of support and challenge for pupils.
- The teaching of literacy is highly effective. Pupils who have writing and other difficulties often use information technology to overcome barriers. Pupils write well for a variety of purposes. Pupils' writing is celebrated through publishing pieces of work to the school community and displaying on walls.
- Similarly, reading has a very high profile in school life. The well-stocked library is the hub of school where books and audio books are available. For some pupils, it is the first time they have discovered a joy of reading. Younger pupils revel in World Book Day and talk excitedly about the books they are currently reading. Primary-age boarding pupils' enthusiasm for reading is encouraged effectively through a bedtime story. Older pupils recognise the importance of being able to read well in their future lives, and despite many having literacy difficulties, they develop a keen interest in reading literature in various genres.
- The teaching of mathematics across all age groups is strong. Because of clear instruction and a well-planned approach, pupils pick up mathematical skills well. Teaching

encourages pupils successfully to apply knowledge to solve real-life mathematical problems.

- Enthusiastic and engaging science teaching inspires pupils. The use of vocational scenarios enables pupils to think deeply and develop curiosity about the world around them. The teaching of technological subjects is equally effective, with pupils learning effectively about research, design and construction.
- Pupils receive outstanding creative-arts teaching. Music and drama tuition result in very high levels of commitment from pupils. Top-quality facilities, a wide range of musical instrument tuition and opportunity for public performance, including in other countries, add to a first-rate pupil experience.
- Leaders have made sure that pupils' boarding experience continues to add value to their learning. Pupils continue their learning effectively in the evening.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are very keen to learn. They are eager to show their work to others and are proud of their achievements. Pupils speak fondly of their experiences of boarding. They have developed a strong affection for the school and how it has helped them. One boy said: 'I cannot sing the school's praises enough because adults understand us and what we struggle with.'
- Pupils are looked after exceptionally well. Staff make sure that the well-being of pupils is put at the forefront of all they do. Parents agree that staff care deeply for their children's welfare. One parent, representing the views of many, said: 'Each pupil is nurtured in every way imaginable and therefore enabled to achieve his full potential.'
- Pupils report there is very little bullying in the school. They are confident that any problems or concerns will be sorted out effectively by staff. Pupils show remarkable maturity and understanding of others' needs. Boys relate to each other well with empathy, tolerance and patience. The school chapel provides a quiet area of reflection, and the chaplain and school counsellor provide valued additional support. Consequently, the school is a happy and harmonious place where pupils flourish.
- Pupils develop mentoring and leadership skills well, such as through the established prefect system and the peer-mentoring system.
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure. They know how to keep themselves safe, including from risks they may encounter when online. The school is a peaceful and calm haven.
- Leaders ensure that healthy lifestyles are promoted well. Pupils have a choice of a wide range of nutritious food. Leaders place much emphasis on well-being and mental health, which permeates throughout the school and residential provision. For example, pupils support each other successfully through a well-being ambassador scheme.
- High-quality careers guidance includes impartial advice from a careers expert. Leaders compare their careers provision against the government's new careers strategy in a bid to improve further.

- Leaders encourage pupils to understand the plight of others through fund-raising projects for worthy causes. For example, the pupils and staff sponsor and visit a school in Tanzania and have recently raised funds for a charity.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Staff have extremely high expectations of pupils' conduct. As a result, pupils behave impeccably, being unfailingly courteous and polite to others.
- Pupils take care of their surroundings. They move about the school in an orderly fashion. There is no litter or graffiti, and no swearing or derogatory language is heard at this school.
- Adults manage pupils' occasional extreme behaviours linked to their SEND very effectively. Strategies to manage each pupil are well known and shared by staff, so that consistent action is taken to resolve incidents. As a consequence, peace is quickly restored. Leaders use fixed-term exclusion very occasionally as a last resort.
- Pupils rarely miss a day, and attendance levels are high. Pupils value their education and what the school provides for them.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils enter the school at different ages and at different times of the year. A number of pupils travel considerable distances to attend the school. Many pupils join having had fragmented educational experiences in the past. Pupils are diagnosed with learning needs such as dyslexia, speech and language disorders, and autism spectrum disorder.
- Teachers make sure that pupils' needs are identified precisely when they join the school. Because of an excellent therapeutic approach, together with outstanding teaching, pupils make outstanding progress across the curriculum. Pupils also reported to the inspection team that they have made immense progress since joining the school.
- Above all, pupils regain their sense of self-worth and gain skills to cope with their learning difficulties. Pupils understand their barriers to learning and willingly work with staff to make progress. Pupils talk about the progress they make, showing that they are fully aware of their successes and areas to improve.
- At the end of the senior school, pupils take a wide range of GCSE and other qualifications. Pupils make consistently strong progress in their courses and many achieve top grades in their GCSE examinations, comparing well with other schools nationally. The vast majority of pupils go on to post-16 courses, with most staying on into the school's sixth form.
- Teachers monitor pupils' progress rigorously. This enables any misconceptions to be identified, and pupils are helped to catch up if their progress stalls. A new assessment system has been implemented recently to provide staff and leaders with even more helpful information about pupils' progress in a variety of skills.
- Because pupils' needs are met precisely, pupils who are disadvantaged also make excellent progress, in line with their peers.

- Parents agree that their children's progress is excellent at this school. One parent said: 'My son has made real, measurable, progress academically, socially and with his speech and language.'

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- Leaders have developed a highly effective sixth form where students thrive. Sixth-form leaders and teaching staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and are always looking to improve the provision further. Leadership of the sixth form is as strong as in the rest of the school.
- A highly bespoke study programme enables pupils to take exactly the right courses to cater for their diverse aptitudes. There is a large range of Level 3 courses and some Level 2 qualifications, including retakes of English and mathematics GCSEs. Leaders have searched for appropriate and innovative qualifications in a quest to meet students' varied interests. Therapeutic services, which are highly valued by the students, continue into the sixth form.
- Students speak very positively of the extra-curricular provision offered to them. Students participate in charity projects, trips abroad, sport competitions and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Other entitlements include a variety of music opportunities such as performing in a jazz band.
- All pupils gain externally accredited qualifications. In 2018 nearly a third of students gained an A* or A (or equivalent) in their chosen A-level or BTEC National Diploma courses.
- Teaching is highly effective. Teachers plan precisely, providing clear guidance of the standards required by examination boards. Teaching provides the right combination of challenge, encouragement and support. Typically, teachers provide a forum for discussion, and students share their thinking with their peers. Students respond very positively and learn well. As a result, students make outstanding progress.
- Students speak very highly of the support they receive. They say there is always someone to speak to should they have a problem. Students are exceptionally positive role models for younger pupils. They behave with maturity and are an asset to the school. The head of sixth form goes to great lengths to ensure that all students have a voice, in order to improve provision.
- Retention rates are extremely high, with most pupils staying on to the school's sixth-form provision and completing their studies.
- A newly opened sixth-form building is provided for students. A common room, quiet study area, and small rooms for therapeutic support and one-to-one discussions provide well for sixth-form students. A kitchen area is available, although there are plans to provide a larger kitchen facility to aid cooking skills in the sixth-form boarding provision.
- Leaders manage pupils' transition on from the school exceptionally well. Highly effective careers advice is provided. Extra support is provided for those students who need help with writing application forms or practising their interview skills. Students have the opportunity to explore courses at further and higher education colleges as well as other

options, such as apprenticeships and employment.

- Pupils typically move on to further or higher education after leaving the school.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision

Outstanding

- The boarding provision provides a meaningful contribution to the outstanding quality of the whole school. Boys receive excellent support from boarding staff and make remarkable progress in many aspects of their lives. Parents describe their sons' progress as exceptional. One parent said: 'My son loves boarding and it has helped his development and maturity, and he's learning so many new life skills.'
- The outstanding progress that boys make in their ability to communicate underpins their overall development. They thrive in an environment in which their needs are understood well and met fully.
- The excellent emotional support that boys receive, together with positive influences from the adults and peers around them, helps them to re-engage in learning. Having come from schools that did not know how to support them properly, boys start boarding not only with special needs related to their disability, but also with a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties. One member of the boarding staff talked about their joy in seeing how the boys, who at the beginning were shutdown emotionally, begin to blossom into their true selves.
- There are clear procedures to safeguard boarders. Boys say they are safe in the residential provision, and their parents agree. Pupils and their parents say that any concerns are responded to effectively.
- The behaviour-management practices in boarding are exemplary, and result in boys' increased ability to regulate their emotions and behave constructively. Boarding staff provide a positive living environment which is nurturing, calm and secure. Positive working relationships between boarding staff and boys, together with firm boundaries, support pupils' well-being extremely well.
- Boarders have a strong voice. Various forums, such as the school's council and the food council, give opportunities to boys to contribute their views to leaders. Boarders feel valued because leaders act upon their opinions to improve the residential provision.

School details

Unique reference number	125403
Social care unique reference number	SC013927
DfE registration number	936/6420
Inspection number	10056671

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	81
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	100
Proprietor	Gard'ner Memorial Trust
Chair	Sean Collins
Headteacher	Jonathan Hetherington
Annual fees (day pupils)	£13,113 to £18,378
Annual fees (boarders)	Up to £28,605
Telephone number	01252 792 303
Website	www.morehouseschool.com
Email address	schooloffice@morehouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–10 March 2016

Information about this school

- More House School is an independent residential special school owned by Gardner Memorial Trust Limited.
- More House School is situated in extensive grounds in a rural setting. It provides education for pupils who have speech, language and communication needs as well as other needs associated with autism spectrum disorders.
- Over half of pupils have an education, health and care plan funded by their local authority.
- The school has a Catholic ethos.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was an integrated inspection which took place with a day's notice.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and other members of staff. 78 responses were considered from staff to the online questionnaire.
- The inspectors held meetings with the governors of the school.
- An inspector held several conversations with parents at the school gate and on the telephone. There were 139 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. A further 80 parents made written responses.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning across all age groups and subjects.
- Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work and viewed case studies across year groups. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally, and meetings were held with three groups of pupils.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative of one of the local authorities that places pupils at the school.
- Social care inspectors met with leaders and members of staff in the residential provision. They spoke with occupational therapists, the school counsellor, the cognitive behaviour therapist and the lead nurse. They spent time with students in the residence in the evening.
- Several documents were scrutinised, including: the improvement plan; safeguarding documents; a number of school policies; risk assessments, support plans, behaviour records, education, health and care plans, performance management information and minutes from governors' meetings.

Inspection team

Sue Child, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Edwards	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Bzikot	Ofsted Inspector
Seka Graovac	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Barnaby Dowell	Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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