

# More House School

## Inspection dates

9–10 March 2016

## 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 effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The school provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Each pupil's needs are very effectively met. Pupils flourish at the school and grow in confidence and ability.
- The newly formed leadership team is successfully led by the headteacher, who directs improvements very effectively. Leaders have ensured that all independent school standards are met.
- Pastoral and academic leaders maintain a sharp focus on ensuring pupils' varied and changing needs are fully met. Leaders are highly visible and easily accessible to staff, parents and pupils.
- The school's leaders use their excellent knowledge and expertise to develop consistently strong practice in assessing the learning of pupils with additional needs.
- Pupils achieve very well at the school in a range of academic and vocational subjects. An above average proportion achieve A\* to C grades in their GCSE examinations.
- Pupils make very strong progress from their starting points due to highly skilled teaching.
- Teachers make excellent use of information that tracks pupils' learning and progress. They provide many and varied opportunities to ensure learning focuses sharply on pupils mastering key skills and deepening their subject knowledge.
- The excellent deployment of specialised therapies has significantly strengthened pupils' sense of self-worth and their communication skills.
- Pupils respond very well to the work teachers set for them, and are keen to improve. Teachers' feedback successfully helps them to achieve their goals and maintain a buoyant outlook.
- Following previous social care inspections, many improvements have been made to safeguarding. Leaders and governors rigorously monitor and scrutinise safeguarding procedures. The school's safeguarding culture is now more open.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They respond very positively to the rewards and sanctions devised by the school.
- Extensive clubs and extra opportunities, including the chance to participate in drama and music, help pupils grow in confidence and enable them to discover the full extent of their talents.
- The sixth form is excellently led. Learners achieve very well in the post-16 courses they pursue and gain the skills they need to be successful in their next steps.
- Governance has improved and governors now have a deep and accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for further development. They use this effectively to challenge leaders to do even better.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the wide-ranging opportunities that exist for them to contribute to new policies and initiatives, and are clear about the stages of the consultation process, including timescales.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Excellent leadership at all levels and in all areas of the school ensures that pupils who join the school, very many having had turbulent experiences hitherto, settle in well, grow rapidly in confidence, and make strong progress from their starting points.
- The school's values are very successfully promoted. In pursuit of these values, leaders make sure they get to know the pupils in their care very well. They nurture and celebrate each pupil's individual talents. Of particular note is the way the school actively rewards pupils who quietly and consistently work hard and do the right thing, without necessarily excelling. Pupils and learners leave well equipped to make a positive contribution to society and fully able to embark on their chosen next steps.
- This is a welcoming school and parents are encouraged to be very involved in their son's journey through the school. They are very well supported by the highly detailed academic and social reports that the school provides for them. Parents prize the enormous difference the school makes to their youngsters. Comments such as, 'More House is a life-changer' and, 'a truly outstanding school that changes lives for the better', were not uncommon in the written responses on Parent View.
- The newly formed and extended leadership team is highly effective. Under the headteacher's clear direction, leaders' actions have led to rapid improvements and have ensured that all independent school standards are met. For example, following the introduction of a successful system of rewards and sanctions, pupils, of whom a significant number find interacting with others difficult, now behave very well and have positive interactions.
- The inclusion and assessment leader ensures that additional support for pupils has a transformative impact on their learning and confidence. She has excellent knowledge of how best to support pupils who have additional speech, language and communication needs, which she successfully employs when devising each pupil's programme. As a result, pupils with a statement of special educational needs make particularly strong progress.
- The school's approach to supporting pupils is outstanding. The needs of pupils who join are very precisely assessed and leaders use this assessment to devise a bespoke programme of very effective additional therapies. These include speech and language therapy and occupational therapy, as well as work with external agencies, if necessary. Pupils are also very well supported by their class teachers and mentors. As a result, many pupils and learners achieve success in the weekly 'challenges' set by their therapists.
- The method used for tracking pupils' progress works exceptionally well. Teachers, pupils and parents track the small steps that pupils make in their learning as well as their progress towards end-of-year targets. Information from the tracking forms a key aspect of each pupil's well-focused annual review meeting where new targets, which will inform a new cycle of therapies and 'challenges', are agreed with parents and pupils.
- The two deputy headteachers responsible for teaching and learning collaborate very successfully to develop teachers' skills and capabilities. They use their extensive knowledge and experience to provide well-focused, bespoke training. For example, they make good use of local effective mainstream schools to help to enhance some teachers' subject knowledge. In addition leaders regularly identify the areas that need to become the focus for weekly whole-staff training. This has provided very effective guidance for teachers, many of whom come from mainstream schools, in finding the best approach to meet the needs of pupils. Teaching is highly effective due to a wealth of expertise in the staff body about how best to cater for pupils with speech, language and communication needs.
- The management of teachers' performance has improved and is now sharp and incisive. Leaders have an accurate overview of each teacher's strengths and weaknesses, taking full account of pupils' progress, as well as feedback from pupils and parents. This overview is now better linked to teachers' pay. Not all staff are fully aware of these links, or the opportunities there are for them to make a more substantial contribution to the school. The school has robust plans in place to address this.
- Heads of subjects keep a watchful eye on the 'target tracker' to monitor how much progress pupils are making in the subjects for which they are responsible. They use this information extremely well to focus where pupils' progress is weaker, successfully guiding teachers as to the best approaches to use, and they monitor pupils' progress rigorously. Consequently, a very high proportion of pupils make strong progress towards their challenging end of year 'potential grade'.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils exceptionally well. Pupils starting their GCSE courses in Year 9 take full advantage of much-needed additional time to prepare thoroughly for their examinations. Leaders have ensured subjects on offer cater very well for pupils' needs, and include vocational qualifications as well as practical GCSE subjects, such as photography. Of particular note is the flexibility built into each

pupil's timetable, which enables pupils to access several therapies each week as well as their lessons, so pupils do not need to miss out on either. As a consequence, pupils flourish at the school and develop real enthusiasm for the subjects.

- Disadvantaged pupils' progress is carefully monitored by the deputy headteacher. This group is very well supported and makes the same very strong progress as others in the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, including the promotion of British values, is a focus in this school. The myriad clubs, societies and additional experiences offered enhance these aspects of pupils' education very effectively. Leaders check that teaching plans include opportunities to guide pupils on the importance of fundamental British values. Consequently, teachers seamlessly link them to the topics pupils are studying. For example, they are effectively promoted as a part of physical education, when pupils are taught about how they need to respect the referee and the importance of fair play.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted throughout the school. Tolerance and respect are fostered at every opportunity and are part and parcel of the school's fabric. Through assemblies and as part of therapy sessions pupils are encouraged to be highly tolerant of each other by teachers in lessons. Teachers listen carefully to the language pupils use both formally and informally and immediately challenge pupils if they feel it is not appropriate or if discrimination is implied. This helps pupils to gain a better understanding of nuances in language, and thus improves the harmony throughout the school.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The governing body has successfully secured the financial future of the school and developed the school's facilities. However, following recent social care inspections, governors rightly acknowledge that they need to hold leaders to account more robustly. Governance has improved and is now much more challenging. A new Chair of the Governing Body was very recently appointed and has made further well-focused changes. The governing body's three committees monitor teaching, safeguarding and the school's finances very thoroughly, bringing their considerable experience to ensure that decisions made are well informed and thoroughly scrutinised. The committees enable governors to hold the school's leaders to account more effectively.
  - Governors have successfully focused on ensuring the school maximises the progress pupils make, including those who join the school after Year 6, and disadvantaged pupils. They have worked very effectively alongside the school's leaders, challenging and supporting them to develop further the way that pupils' progress is tracked. They have asked for a clearer overview of the progress different groups of pupils make and have supported the school in acquiring computer software that will help them to do this.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are now very effective. Since the previous social care inspections, leaders have focused relentlessly on improving safeguarding across the boarding and school provision. Actions listed on the improvement plan sent to the Department for Education (DfE) have been successfully implemented and reviewed. In the process policies have been developed further and the staff policy on conduct provides comprehensive guidance that supports staff in how to maintain appropriate relationships while providing high levels of support for pupils. All safety policies are signposted very clearly on the website and are up to date.
- Safeguarding changes have been validated by representatives from the local authorities that place pupils who have special needs at the school. They have visited to assess how effective safeguarding is. Reports from these visits are positive and indicate safeguarding has greatly improved in terms of the monitoring of procedures and policies. The headteacher stringently scrutinises the safety checks made on teachers, their references, and employment history.
- Leaders have rightly identified the need to ensure that safeguarding is as effective as it can be as a priority, and this is being achieved. Establishing a more open culture at the school has been at the heart of their work, so that the school now collaborates very effectively with Surrey local authority. Leaders frequently seek advice from the local authority designated officer and have attended authority-led training that will enable them to respond to allegations made against staff with even more confidence. At the same time, leaders diligently monitor the actions taken by the local authority to ensure the continued welfare of referred pupils, intensely scrutinising local authority decisions.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are consistently very effective. The highly detailed online tracking enables teachers to identify the skills and subject knowledge that pupils need in order to move on in their learning. Teachers successfully use this information when they plan lessons. They routinely set carefully planned tasks that enable pupils to progress rapidly.
- Teachers ensure pupils make excellent progress towards their end of year 'potential grade'. They use

their deep understanding of each pupil's needs to ensure that everyone participates fully in learning activities, is able to share their ideas clearly and confidently, and completes written tasks to the highest standard of which they are capable.

- No opportunities are missed to further pupils' ability to think for themselves, which is a key strength of the school. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to plan tasks that enable pupils to do this. For example, in a Year 10 chemistry lesson, pupils were given a scenario in which they were detectives solving a murder. They were able to synthesise all their learning about atomic mass and apply it in order to discover the poison used. This task showed how pupils developed their independence because to solve the mystery they had to apply their knowledge of chemistry unaided.
- Teaching in English is very effective and has led to high levels of achievement in examinations. This is because teachers use their excellent understanding of GCSE examination marking criteria to ensure all pupils are crystal clear about what they need to do to achieve examination success.
- Teachers have a deep understanding of how pupils with the type of needs prevalent in this school learn best. They use this well, along with their very good knowledge of the difficulties their subject holds, to remove any barriers pupils encounter. For example, a number of pupils struggle with understanding abstract concepts in mathematics. However, teachers use effective methods to assist pupils in their understanding. Pupils can, therefore recognise potential pitfalls, and how to avoid them. Although not quite as strong as in English, GCSE mathematics results were above the national average for 2015.
- Teachers provide pupils with very effective and immediate feedback on their work. Pupils take their discussions with the teacher into account as they continue working on a task, and the dialogue with their teachers is very well focused. The pupils spoken to on inspection said this approach really helps them to feel less stressed about completing their work.
- The teaching in lower school is highly effective and enables pupils to make a very good start at the school. Teachers are particularly skilful at introducing pupils to new ways of working and establishing class routines. Pupils rapidly grow in confidence and demonstrate that they enjoy learning and being stretched, including the homework they are set.
- Homework very effectively supports pupils with their learning. Tasks are carefully set so that they enable pupils to arrive at lessons with knowledge to hand. This means the process of applying knowledge is swifter and more effective. For example, pupils made very good use of facts on global warming from their homework research when completing a persuasive piece of writing in English.
- A highly effective curriculum enables pupils to make excellent advances in their learning. Pupils are highly stimulated because the school makes very good use of real-life situations to help pupils to hone their practical skills in situations that they may encounter in the world of work. For example, pupils studying business studies budgeted and organised the refreshments at the play pupils put on as part of their BTEC drama course.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Exploring the way pupils think about themselves, their work and others is given prominence in the personal education and development programme and in the therapies that pupils access. This helps pupils cope with day-to-day social interaction very well. Teachers and therapists explicitly teach and model what positive interaction looks and feels like. Consequently there is a very civil atmosphere.
- The school's open layout and extensive grounds provide a superb environment for pupils who need quiet time in order to maintain equilibrium. The school's staff recognise this and make very good use of the nurturing environment in their work with pupils.
- Despite many pupils joining the school having experienced failure in their education thus far, pupils display exceptionally positive attitudes to their learning. Staff work very effectively to rekindle pupils' interest in learning. They do this successfully by rewarding positive attitudes and providing pupils with detailed and immediate feedback on how they are developing as learners.
- Specialised, well-focused and effective work with therapists has helped pupils to develop very positive learning habits as well as empathy with others. Therapies help pupils to become confident enough to work more independently, collaborate with their peers, and give as well as take advice.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils respond extremely well to the high expectations teachers have of their conduct. Teachers successfully ensure pupils do not become anxious and stressed by being in class. They provide pupils with opportunities to take time out, reflect and re-boot. When necessary teachers remind pupils of their

expectations, making excellent use of the school's rewards and sanctions processes.

- The pastoral leaders work very closely with form tutors. Time at the end of the day is used highly effectively for pupils to share their successes and talk one-to-one with their form tutors, who have access to the daily list of sanctions for their class. Pupils use this time very well to check out any queries or concerns they have.
- Heads of year make a very positive contribution to ensuring pupils behave well. They use their very detailed overview of the rewards and sanctions their year group have accrued when working with pupils on an individual basis. As a result of having such detailed knowledge of each pupil, they have a strong impact on improving pupils' behaviour when form tutors refer pupils to them, in line with the school's policy.
- Attendance is very closely monitored and was high until a very recent spate of flu. Pupils enjoy school and want to attend. Teachers register pupils at the start of each lesson to ensure all pupils attend every lesson. This helps leaders to track pupils across the day and keep a very close eye on their well-being.
- There are a few cases of bullying, and on the occasions when it does happen it is dealt with very well. A small number of parents raised this in comments on Parent View.
- Inspectors spent time investigating bullying. Pupils spoken to said the school was safe and bullying was rare but taken seriously. Some pupils in the school find managing their own responses and behaviour difficult. Staff have been well trained in how best to defuse situations and the vast majority of the time they do this effectively.
- The school provides a very high standard of care and safety for its pupils. Teachers and leaders do not make excuses for pupils. They calmly and consistently ensure that their high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct are met. Some pupils need support to meet these high standards, including on occasion physical support to help them stay safe and calm. Very occasionally restraint is used, but only as a last resort, under very close supervision, and for the minimum amount of time possible. All restraints are recorded in detail at the time they are carried out.

## Outcomes for pupils

## are outstanding

- Pupils and learners achieve a gamut of excellent outcomes as a result of strong teaching, highly effective support and very careful monitoring of pupils' progress by leaders. These outcomes are not only academic but also relate to pupils' increased confidence, their improved sense of well-being and their ability to form meaningful social relationships.
- GCSE and vocational qualification results are above average and pupils make strong progress from their starting points. Pupils are well grounded in the key skills that will enable them to be successful in their next steps, including how to work with others.
- Pupils achieve highly in a range of GCSE subjects, a particular strength of which is English. In 2015 GCSE examinations, 86% of pupils achieved grades A\* to C in English. This was significantly above the national average. Examination results in mathematics were lower, but nevertheless 70% achieved A\* to C grades, which was well above the national average for 2015. Pupils also achieve well on practical GCSE subjects such as photography.
- The assessments undertaken when pupils join are wide-ranging and thorough. They enable staff to be very precise about the different types of support each pupil needs. The tests undertaken are notably effective at providing information on the specific aspects of reading with which pupils struggle. As a result, pupils who have a statement of special educational needs make particularly strong progress from when joining the school to the end of Year 11.
- The vast majority of pupils make strong progress each term, adding to the number of key performance indicators that they have achieved. As a result, the majority reach their end of year 'potential grade'. Where a pupil's progress is slower, teachers work closely with them to help them catch up. Where necessary, pupils can access additional help at the excellent Learning Development Centre drop-in sessions, which are open to all.
- Leaders and teachers monitor the progress of all pupils very carefully, including disadvantaged pupils. Anyone in danger of not meeting their 'potential grade' is provided with extensive support, including after-school revision sessions. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make the same strong progress that other pupils make.
- Older pupils and those in the sixth form make very good use of information from the tracking to focus their studies and revision. The same tracking approach is used across the school, and supports post-16 learners exceptionally well in identifying and taking responsibility for what they need to do to meet their own targets. Most are on track to meet these.

## Sixth form provision

is outstanding

- Sixth form provision is highly effective because it caters extremely well for the diverse needs of its learners. The combination of close care and guidance, alongside practical support in completing applications for further training courses and universities, means that learners are very successful in pursuing their chosen next steps, whatever they may be. Very few leave at the end of Year 12 and those who do often move to colleges to take more specialised courses.
- The careers education programme is very strong and learners are accompanied by the sixth form leader to a 'careers fairs'. Leaders select careers events that focus suitably on the particular types of careers that interest learners, such as design. Consequently, these opportunities successfully support learners in pursuing their next steps. Leaders know that the prospect of leaving the caring school community can be daunting and learners are very well supported in the process of moving on through bespoke therapies and work-related learning.
- Sixth form leaders keep a watchful eye on learners' progress and make sure that they are up to date with their work. However, in line with the school's ethos, leaders provide learners with effective opportunities to be independent and self-reliant. This is so learners can acquire the skills required for success in their next steps by, for example, managing their own study time. However, leaders ensure that no one slips through the net and, where necessary, take very prompt action so that learners who may be falling behind can catch up. This means that the vast majority of learners achieve the targets they are set. Learners have very good access to additional English and mathematics courses to ensure they meet the entry requirements for higher education.
- Achievement in the sixth form is very strong. Learners make very good progress from their starting points and achieve highly in examinations. There are no entry requirements to join the sixth form; some learners have a keen interest in their subjects but may not have achieved exam success. Teachers nurture the passions learners have for their subjects very effectively. They use their very good knowledge of the types of questions set and the best way to approach them to help learners to be as successful as they can. A-level results are typically better than AS results because learners need time to get accustomed to the higher level of challenge. In 2015, nearly a quarter of learners achieved A\*/A grades at A level and 100% achieved grades A\* to E.
- The sixth form programme of activities enables learners to gain a wide range of additional skills that successfully assist them in their next steps. These include working with others, emotional health and well-being, developing cultural understanding, helping with charities, and undertaking careers and employment training. Sixth form tutors have a detailed overview of each learner's experiences. They support learners extremely well in identifying what skills they have gained from the additional opportunities they access through well-planned reflection and evaluation activities that learners carry out with the assistance of their tutors.
- Teaching in the sixth form is very strong. Teachers know exactly how to ensure learners have the levels of knowledge needed to be successful in examinations. They set tasks that are challenging, and provide detailed feedback. Learners respond by using their knowledge to make links between subjects and apply their learning to different contexts. Learners fully absorb new learning, using interesting media to do this, such as film clips, extracts from newspapers, and diagrams. Teachers make excellent use of exam-style questions, which they set for homework so pupils become familiar with styles of questions and how much detail they need to include in their answers.
- Sixth form learners behave very well and make a very positive contribution to the school. Some are school prefects and a number of others take on responsibilities such as helping younger pupils in their lessons, through the school's 'Amicus Programme'. Sixth form learners find their work with younger pupils very rewarding and welcome the benefit of having a leadership role that does not necessarily require them to work with large numbers of pupils but does allow them to make good use of their knowledge. Sixth form learners are safe and help keep younger pupils safe through their very active involvement in the school community.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125403
<b>Inspection number</b>	10008882
<b>DfE registration number</b>	936/6420
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School status</b>	Independent residential special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	461
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	70
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	108
<b>Proprietor</b>	Gard'ner Memorial Trust
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Sean Collins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jonathan Hetherington
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£12,234 to £17,145
<b>Telephone number</b>	01252 792303
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.morehouseschool.co.uk">http://www.morehouseschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:jhetherington@morehouseschool.co.uk">jhetherington@morehouseschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 March 2013

## Information about this school

- More House School is owned by the Gard'ner Memorial Trust Limited. It has a Roman Catholic ethos.
- It is situated in extensive grounds close to Surrey's border with Hampshire and provides education for pupils who have speech, language and communication needs as well as other needs associated with autistic spectrum disorders.
- It has 461 pupils currently on roll; 273 have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan, and the rest are provided with additional support.
- The school is registered for pupils aged between eight and 18 years of age. Currently 353 pupils are day placements and 108 reside in boarding accommodation on the school site.
- There are 70 post-16 learners, studying for level 3 academic and vocational qualifications.
- The school's aim is 'to help each boy who joins, achieve, in the widest possible sense, more than he, or his parents, ever expected'.
- The proportion of pupils on roll who are disadvantaged is well below average.
- Since the previous school inspection a new headteacher has been appointed, taking up his post in September 2015; a new Chair of Governors has also been appointed.
- The official date of the school's opening is 1939.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Teaching and learning was seen in 20 lessons, most of which were visited with senior leaders. Inspectors made short visits on three different occasions to observe teaching, learning and assessment in the sixth form, in the lower school and in tutorial time.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised. Informal discussions were held with pupils, including sixth formers, throughout the inspection and inspectors met separately with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to a group of teachers, which included newly qualified teachers; they also held meetings with senior leaders, subject and pastoral leaders, and a significant number of the governing body. They spoke separately with the team of governors that comprise the safeguarding committee.
- Questionnaires submitted by 40 members of staff were scrutinised.
- Documentation and policies were checked for compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors took account of 102 written comments and 128 survey responses made by parents on Parent View.
- Inspectors made telephone calls to the local area designated officer and to a representative working for Surrey local authority who conducted a safeguarding review at the school.

## Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jennifer Boyd

Ofsted Inspector

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