

Moor House School & College

Moor House School and College, Mill Lane, Oxted, Surrey RH8 9AQ

Inspection dates 08/11/2016 to 10/11/2016

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Outstanding	1
The quality of care and support	Outstanding	1
How well children and young people are protected	Good	2
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy their boarding experience and benefit from trusting, warm relationships with the staff who care for them.
- Close multi-disciplinary working ensures that each residential pupil's needs are known and planned for. Consequently, they are met to a high standard. As a result of this, residential pupils make excellent progress.
- The management of the school and college is stable and strong. This provides clear leadership, an embedded culture and expectation of high standards.
- Healthcare needs are met to an excellent standard by trained staff who have specialist support on site from psychotherapists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists.
- Residential pupils enjoy varied, enriching activities, which provide excellent opportunities for them to expand their life and social skills.
- Residential pupils' safety is protected by knowledgeable staff who implement rigorous systems so that issues are addressed promptly and effectively. Key staff with responsibility for safeguarding work well with other professionals and ensure that due process is followed in the event of a concern.
- The school and college provide support to parents and families and actively engage parents in training, in areas such as e-safety.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review the practice currently used for night-time observation checks and only implement these when they are needed.
- Ensure that parents sign and endorse their child's care plans.
- Update the exclusion policy, so that it includes details about whether a pupil can be excluded from the residential provision but, at the same time, still attend the school or college.
- Ensure that the school and college website is updated so that all revised and reviewed policies are available.
- Ensure that conclusions reached by governors, during their quality-assurance checks of safeguarding issues, evidence how these have been arrived at.

Information about this inspection

The school and college were given four hours' notice of the inspection. The inspection took place over a period of three days and was conducted by a social care regulatory inspector and a regulatory inspection manager. The inspection included two evenings spent in different accommodation areas, observation and discussion with staff and residential pupils, sharing mealtimes, discussions with the headteacher and other members of the senior management team, and meetings with staff from different disciplines in the school, such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and the child psychotherapist. Contact was made with the local statutory safeguarding authority. There were telephone conversations with parents, and a wide range of documentation concerning the residential provision was scrutinised.

Inspection team

Paul Taylor	Lead social care regulatory inspector
Sophie Wood	Regulatory inspection manager

Full report

Information about this school

Moor House School and College is a co-educational, non-maintained residential and day special school. There are currently 127 pupils on roll, between the ages of seven and 19, of which 63 are residential pupils. All pupils possess varying degrees of speech and language difficulties. Accommodation is all on site and is provided in six areas. Three of these are in newly built houses and are used for younger residential pupils, two are in the main building and are used for post-16 residential pupils. There is also a separate building used by post-16 residential pupils.

Inspection judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

Residential pupils thrive in this school. The experiences that they have while boarding enable them to feel safe, develop friendships and make huge strides in their personal development. Strong, trusting relationships develop over a number of years. Members of staff support the residential pupils and see them grow both physically and emotionally during their time in the school and college.

The close working relationships between staff from the different disciplines, such as occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, education and residential care staff, ensure that residential pupils receive wrap-around care, which nurtures them and enables them to flourish. Remarkable progress is made, especially when bearing in mind pupils' starting points. 'My son was nonverbal when he started. He's now doing A levels in a mainstream college,' commented one parent.

Residential pupils' safety is given a high priority, and all members of staff, whatever their roles, are fully aware of their responsibilities to keep all pupils safe. Close scrutiny of practice, together with rigorous systems, ensures that the well-being of residential pupils is at the centre of practice.

The residential provision is very well organised and managed. Staff are highly committed to ensuring that residential pupils' needs are appreciated and met to a very high standard. Residential pupils have numerous opportunities and different avenues to voice their opinions and feelings about their care. Consequently, they feel valued and respected.

The opportunities afforded to the residential pupils ensure that they can develop their life skills and confidence in an environment where their unique needs are appreciated and met. Bespoke programmes of care ensure that each residential pupil is supported to develop to their full potential and is prepared for the next stage of their life, whether this is further education or work.

The residential accommodation, particularly that in the newly built area referred to as 'The Village', is of a high standard. It is well maintained and comfortable. The living and bedroom areas are personalised by the residential pupils. There are viewing windows in the doors of bedrooms in some areas of the accommodation. This means that younger residential pupils can be checked on during routine tours of the premises by night-care staff. While some residential pupils find this practice reassuring, the checks occur for all younger residential pupils even if they do not have an identified need. Although the practice was established to ensure residential pupils' safety, it could be seen as intrusive. The school management team has been asked to review the practice and only to use it if there is an assessed need, for example if it is required to manage a medical condition or for residential pupils who like the reassurance.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Residential pupils receive excellent, sensitive and carefully planned support across all areas of their lives. Careful assessment is made of their needs, and plans are put in

place to nurture them into school or college life. Since the last inspection, the school has revised the process of assisting residential pupils into the college provision. The process is very structured, planned well in advance and takes into account each residential pupil's ability to cope with change. One parent said, 'They have been fantastic in helping him through this process. They have done everything they could.'

A multi-disciplinary team collaborates closely to ensure that each residential pupil's unique needs are planned for. The use of occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, medical staff and a child psychotherapist ensures that physical, practical and emotional needs are planned for in detail and met. Regular case discussions are held for pupils who need additional help during times of challenge and ensures that plans are flexible and adjusted to meet each residential pupil's changing circumstances. As a result, residential pupils thrive and make excellent progress, especially when bearing in mind their starting points.

Residential pupils have access to a wide range of enriching activities, which develop their confidence, widen their circle of friends and build their independence and self-care skills. Attendance at different clubs and activities is based on each residential pupil's own abilities and vulnerabilities. For example, a residential pupil may attend a club in the community on their own. The planning and opportunities provided to the residential pupils enable them to have access to active and interesting activities. One residential pupil said, 'We lead busy lives.'

The health of the residential pupils is promoted to an excellent standard. All have their health needs assessed, and specific detailed plans are put in place should they be needed. There is a health care team based on site, which is led by a health care manager. All staff are trained to monitor and support residential pupils who have specific needs, such as diabetes or epilepsy. Importantly, the staff team and specialists educate the residential pupils to develop self-management skills. Older residential pupils have become responsible for monitoring and managing their own conditions as they have gained in confidence and knowledge. This prepares them for adulthood and gives them a sense of responsibility and achievement.

Feedback about the quality of food is unanimously positive. All residential pupils have opportunities to help to prepare meals. This not only helps them to develop their knowledge and interest in food but also helps to improve their dexterity and risk awareness, especially when working in a kitchen and with sharp utensils. Support given to the residential pupils who are still developing these skills is excellently delivered by members of staff on duty, working closely with occupational therapists. Any information about specific dietary needs is shared between the health care team, residential staff and catering staff. This ensures that the residential pupils eat healthy diets, which are tailored to their needs. Some residential pupils may have self-limited diets due to behavioural issues. Members of staff work closely with parents, the residential pupils and catering staff to enable them to expand their diets and to learn to enjoy different types of food. This process has been managed to a high standard, and residential pupils subsequently enjoy varied diets during mealtimes, which are relaxed and enjoyable social occasions.

Each residential pupil has a detailed care plan, which outlines their needs and what specific strategies and approaches are to be used to keep them safe and to help them to grow and develop. The plans are regularly reviewed and, although parents and carers are involved in consultations and are central in the development of the care plans, they

have not signed them to show that they have examined and fully endorse them. The level of detail and staff knowledge of each residential pupil's uniqueness ensures that difference and diversity are appreciated and enjoyed. This enables residential pupils to live in a culture of acceptance and gives them a sound base of stability and security.

Residential pupils are able to contact parents and friends easily by either using their own telephones or those on site. Access to the internet is controlled and checked, especially for younger residential pupils. Older residential pupils can increase their access to the internet if they are assessed as being able to do this safely. They are able to maintain contacts and friendships in the wider community and are educated in the risks involved in the use of electronic communication and the internet.

Feedback from parents regarding the quality of communication with the school and college and the huge impact that it has had on improving their children's lives, is overwhelmingly positive. 'There is nothing we could want more. It is a truly amazing place,' one parent commented. All 70 responses received from parents in an online survey were 100% positive about their child being happy at the school and college.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

Arrangements to keep residential pupils safe are robust and effective. Environmental checks, including fire arrangements, are rigorously implemented. Some residential pupils have personal emergency evacuation plans, which outline their individual requirements for support in the event of an evacuation of the premises. This ensures that they are protected and know what to do in the event of a fire. Other environmental checks, including those of power plants, the swimming pool and equipment, are conscientiously and methodically carried out to ensure that all pupils and staff in the school and college have their safety enhanced and protected.

All members of staff receive regular training in safeguarding matters. They are clear about what to do and whom to inform if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or the conduct of a member of staff. Any concerns are promptly shared with the correct agencies, and this means that issues can be investigated appropriately and safety measures implemented if necessary. Safeguarding practice is examined by an independent senior social worker and members of staff to have their performance assessed. Members of staff responsible as designated safeguarding leads (DSL) also receive supervision from this social worker. Safeguarding practice is scrutinised to an excellent degree, which ensures that all issues are dealt with effectively and that agencies are informed promptly so that young people's welfare is protected. Although governors also scrutinise records and handling of safeguarding issues, the recording of how they come to their findings and conclusions sometimes lacks detail. This process has in no way impinged on young people's safety or well-being, but it is not as rigorous as that carried out by either the independent visitor or the DSL staff.

Unanimous feedback from residential pupils reported that they feel safe and looked after at the school and college. All are aware of the different avenues that they can use to address their worries or anxieties and are confident that members of staff listen to them and take them seriously. This means that they have confidence in the members of staff and the systems available to them.

Residential pupils have controlled access to the internet. All have been educated in the risks related to the internet and, especially, social media. Any incidents of concern are explored and addressed, and measures put in place to minimise the impact of these. These include addressing incidents which may have occurred when the residential pupils have been at home during weekends and holidays. The school and college approach is underpinned by welcoming parental input and has been supported by providing training in e-safety to parents. This means that safeguarding responsibilities are seen as everyone's concern.

The unique needs and vulnerabilities of the residential pupils are known and met. Specific risk assessments and detailed attention to care planning, in order to minimise risks, is embedded in practice. Close cross-disciplinary working throughout the campus gives residential pupils opportunities to build their confidence and self-esteem while associated risks are managed. For example, they are able to develop independent travel with the assistance and assessment from occupational therapists. As a result, they develop their confidence and skills and learn to take calculated risks.

There are clear plans in place should a residential pupil be absent or missing. There has been one incident since the last inspection, and the systems were implemented promptly and with vigour. Subsequently, the residential pupil was found in the school grounds and returned safe and sound.

Residential pupils report that bullying is not a worry or concern. Staff are very aware of the dynamics in the school and college and address any incidents or conflicts quickly. If incidents occur, apologies and restorative meetings take place and, if needed, sanctions are imposed and parents informed of the concerning behaviours. Bullying is addressed effectively, and residential pupils are confident that any issues will be dealt with firmly and resolutely.

Behaviour around the school and college is excellent. Inspectors observed residential pupils being considerate and polite to each other, members of staff and visitors. Interactions were open and relaxed. When sanctions are imposed, they are appropriate and their effectiveness is assessed and reviewed by senior members of staff. The residential pupils are also able to comment in the records made when a sanction has been imposed. While all members of staff are trained in physical restraint, there have been no incidents requiring this to be used since the last inspection.

There is a thorough recruitment process in place. All members of staff working at the school and college are only employed when their backgrounds have been examined and checks with past employers, as well as by the Disclosure and Barring Service, have taken place. As a result, only adults with appropriate and safe working histories are employed in the school and college.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

The standard of leadership at this provision is excellent. Close cross-disciplinary working and an expectation of high standards and conduct are embedded in the culture and practice. Members of staff are ambitious for the residential pupils and do all that they can to enable them to make excellent progress academically and socially, and, in particular, in developing their confidence and independence.

The staffing complement in the school and college provides a wide area of expertise and support, which enables members of staff to provide detailed bespoke programmes of care to the residential pupils. The broad range of skilled professionals on site means that all needs can be met to a high standard.

All residential staff receive thorough training and induction, which give them the skills and knowledge to provide these high standards of care. There are sufficient staff on shift to provide the assistance and guidance which each residential pupil needs. Members of staff receive regular supervision sessions and appraisals and are able to improve upon their knowledge base, reflect upon practice and have their performance assessed. This ensures that they are able to fulfil their roles effectively and maintain the high standards expected.

Scrutiny of practice by managers inside the organisation, as well as that of external visitors and governors, is very robust. Independent visitors assess the effectiveness of how the residential provision is being run, as well as the efficacy of safeguarding arrangements and staff performance in that area. Any shortfalls are addressed, and there is a culture of welcoming feedback from any stakeholder. As a result of this reflective and open approach, the organisation learns from complaints and criticisms and implements changes where necessary. There is no sense of complacency by leaders and managers, and this helps the school and college to constantly look to improve their performance.

Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated as necessary. However, although they have all been updated on the school and college's internal systems, they have not all been updated on the website. This could lead to external stakeholders not being up to date with changes to some policies. Additionally, the exclusion policy does not cover what to do if a residential pupil is excluded from the residential provision but not excluded from the educational provision. These are minor administrative shortfalls, which have no impact on the welfare or progress of the residential pupils.

Relationships between the school and key stakeholders, particularly parents, are excellent. Close communication is maintained, and any incidents notified to relevant authorities, agencies and carers. Not only does this ensure that young people are kept safe, but it also underpins the sense of transparency and consolidates the collaborative working to improve residential pupils' life chances and progress. 'We can't believe the difference the school has made,' is a comment made by a parent about their child's progress.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against 'Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework'.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceed the standard of good and result in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services, which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	125454
Social care unique reference number	SC013926
DfE registration number	936/7007

This inspection 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	Residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	63
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	Seven to 19
Headteacher	Helen Middleton
Date of previous boarding inspection	30/11/2015
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