

Limpsfield Grange School

Limpsfield Grange School, 89 Bluehouse Lane, Oxted, Surrey RH8 0RZ

Inspection dates

21 March 2016 to 23 March 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

Outstanding 1

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding 1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is outstanding because

- Residential pupils make significant progress as a result of the highly effective individualised care and responsive support provided by staff. The enthusiastic, experienced and committed staff team know each of the residential pupils extremely well, understand their specific needs and implement successful strategies to promote positive outcomes.
- Residential pupils flourish and improve their social, communication, independence and self-management skills. Their confidence and self-esteem grows with increased capacity to learn in school. Their emotional resilience improves, and they are more able to manage their emotions. A parent described their child's outcomes as 'amazing'.
- Forward-looking leadership and management inspire staff to have high expectations of residential pupils. The staff are ambitious for pupils to succeed, providing numerous opportunities for them to develop, and to become independent, active adults to the best of their ability.
- Leaders and managers are continuously driving forward improvement to ensure that all residential pupils' needs are met, with increased opportunities for them to maximise their potential and to advance their future life chances.
- Through extremely positive relationships with staff, and sensitive, consistent care, residential pupils develop a sense of safety, protection and trust, enabling them to respond to the support that staff offer.
- Robust and effective safeguarding measures protect residential pupils. Staff are competent and confident in their safeguarding role, and implement appropriate action

to protect pupils' welfare and to promote their well-being.

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?

- Ensure that all residential pupils have placement plans identifying clear strategies to promote positive outcomes.
- Consider providing residential pupils with access to specialist psychological support and providing specialist support and supervision for staff, to enable them to implement effective strategies for residential pupils with mental health difficulties.

Information about this inspection

The school was given three hours' notice of the inspection. A tour of the residential accommodation was undertaken. Meetings were held with the head, the head of residential provision, the school business manager, staff and governors. Inspectors joined residential pupils for meals, and activities were observed. Discussions were held with residential pupils. Telephone or email contact was made with parents and the local safeguarding team. A range of records relating to the care provided was examined.

Inspection team

Jan Hunnam
Donna Marriott

lead social care inspector
HMI

Full Report

Information about this school

Limpsfield Grange School is a maintained day and residential special school catering for girls, between the ages of 11 and 16, with communication and interaction difficulties. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and have a wide range of needs. Many have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder, including Asperger syndrome, and suffer from high and persistent levels of anxiety. Residential accommodation is available from Monday to Thursday. Currently, 38 pupils access boarding provision. Some of these are on a shared basis, as there are 24 available beds. The school is situated within the residential area of Oxted, Surrey. The school was last inspected in January 2015.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Outstanding

Through highly personalised care and support, residential pupils flourish and make excellent progress. A residential student commented that being at the school has 'completely turned my life around'. Residential pupils strongly voice their appreciation of the support that they receive from staff. One commented that they 'really get me.....they understand my anxiety and know how to help me with it'. Parents, too, are extremely positive, acknowledging the difference the school is making and the progress achieved. A parent commented, 'she is a totally different child.' Parents noted significant progress in emotional resilience, mental health, independence and social skills.

Residential pupils who historically found school extremely difficult are learning now, maximising their future life chances, and are happy at school. Staff focus support to develop key areas of communication, independence, self-management and self-esteem so that residential pupils develop into active learners in school. Their residential experience has a positive impact on their academic progress. Their capacity to learn improves with consequent advancement in academic achievement.

Developing life skills and independence is fundamental to the ethos of the residential provision, in fulfilling the aim of supporting residential pupils to become independent and active citizens in the future. Through the 'Rainbow Curriculum', which has been developed with input from an occupational therapist, they follow a structured, comprehensive learning and skills programme tailored to their specific needs. For older residential pupils, work experience is part of this programme, and this has recently been extended to paid, part-time work, preparing them for moving on. Staff plan and support their transition from the residential provision back home with visits to their home area, so that they can familiarise themselves with their local amenities and build their confidence in accessing resources and in transferring the skills they have learned.

Residential pupils enjoy their boarding experience, comments included, 'I like boarding because it is fun and care staff are really friendly', 'we do some fun activities' and 'I really don't want to leave'. Making friends is an important aspect of pupils' experience, particularly when many have historically experienced negative peer relationships. They value the friendships they are making. With staff support in developing their social communication, they are acquiring an understanding of healthy, positive relationships.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

Staff provide residential pupils with highly individualised care and support, delivered with a sensitive and nurturing approach. Staff know each of the pupils extremely well, and a parent commented that they, 'know her like I know her, which is great'.

Pupils' placement plans are current, and they identify the support and strategies required to meet their individual needs. Residential pupils update their child-friendly care plan diaries daily, these provide an overview of their daily life, including favourite things, sources of support, activities and arrangements for managing anxiety. This involvement of residential pupils helps to develop their self-management skills and confidence. Placement plans are not in place for Year 7 residential pupils who commence boarding after the February half term. Staff would benefit from a clear structure outlining the reasons for the residential placement and the strategies required to promote positive outcomes.

Staff are exceptionally caring and responsive. A residential student commented in a recent Ofsted survey that, 'care staff really care about me... they mean the world to me. I just can't describe how amazing they are.' Residential pupils' anxiety levels reduce as they benefit from staff support in managing their day-to-day lives.

Staff are proactive in seeking residential pupils' views and opinions. Residential forums, chaired by a residential student, allow them to voice their opinions on day-to-day matters affecting their residential experience. Surveys and questionnaires are a frequent method of consultation. Staff respond to their views and comments, which results in change, such as adding new activities, opportunities for some non-structured free time and even 'a new bed so it no longer squeaks'. Informal conversations with staff occur as part of daily routines, providing opportunities for residential pupils to put forward their views. A student advocate also visits throughout the year, giving residential pupils further consultation opportunities. Consequently, residential pupils know that their opinions are important.

Residential pupils receive appropriate support to maintain their physical health and to lead healthy lifestyles. Staff are aware of any health conditions, compile healthcare plans and support pupils to take responsibility for themselves. This includes developing strategies so that they learn to self-medicate safely. Their emotional and psychological needs have a high priority. Focus groups help residential pupils to develop their emotional awareness and to manage their emotions. Some residential pupils have mental health difficulties. Staff liaise closely with external specialists, such as the child and adolescent mental health service, ensuring that pupils receive a consistent and effective response when they are under the care of such specialists. However, not all pupils are receiving the level of specialist support necessary to promote their psychological well-being. Residential pupils would benefit from direct psychological interventions from qualified specialists. Staff would be better equipped to support pupils with mental health difficulties if they received direction and supervision from such professionals.

A rich and varied programme of evening activities provides structured leisure opportunities for residential pupils. Staff plan the programme carefully for the year to provide development opportunities, specifically linking activities to individual pupils' aims and objectives in their placement plan. Residential pupils learn new skills while having fun and enjoying their leisure experiences. Activities include the Duke of Edinburgh's

Award, arts and crafts, sports and community-based activities. Based on the results of research, staff have recently introduced a programme of pre-school morning activities to energise residential pupils in readiness for learning, and to promote their health, fitness and well-being. Yoga, exercise class and dog-walking are some of these pre-school activities.

Accommodation for residential pupils is comfortable, homely and suited to their needs. Some refurbishment has taken place, and further work is planned. Residential pupils are able to personalise their bed spaces. A room has been converted as a specific relaxation sensory space, and this is a well-used and a popular calming experience. The catering team provides healthy, nutritious meals, with staff encouraging residential pupils to adopt healthy eating habits.

How well children and young people are protected

Outstanding

Extremely effective safeguarding measures protect residential pupils. All staff are acutely aware of their vulnerabilities, due to the pupils' difficulties with social interaction and social imagination. Staff are alert and mindful of their responsibility to ensure the safety of residential pupils. This responsibility is not confined to keeping residential pupils safe while in school, but extends to raising their awareness and understanding of keeping themselves safe in the future and in the wider community. Understanding e-safety and using social media appropriately are high priorities. Workshops, focusing on safeguarding issues for parents and carers, help parents to consolidate the work that staff undertake with residential pupils.

Staff are well trained, vigilant and confident in their safeguarding role, with the necessary understanding of current issues that can present a risk to residential pupils, such as child sexual exploitation, e-safety and radicalisation. The head of residential provision is the designated safeguarding lead, and has four deputies, all of whom have undertaken appropriate training to perform the role. Staff are diligent in informing the safeguarding team of any concerns, and there is a robust procedure for considering any issues affecting the welfare of residential pupils. Appropriate action is taken, including referral to, and consultation with, external authorities.

Extremely positive relationships between residential pupils and staff underpin successful behaviour strategies. Through thoughtful, sensitive and consistent support from staff, who understand their complex and particular needs, residential pupils develop a sense of safety, protection and trust, enabling them to respond to the support that staff offer. Staff have high expectations of residential pupils, who respond to clear structures and routines. A residential student commented in a recent Ofsted survey that, 'care staff are really friendly and I like them being around. You feel safe when they are around.'

Behaviour within residential time is exemplary. Residential pupils are polite, helpful and mutually respectful. Physical intervention is not used. Staff know and understand each residential student very well, and staff successfully implement personalised strategies to

help residential pupils to self-regulate their emotions and to manage their difficulties. The recent introduction of 'calm boxes', which contain a variety of resources to help reduce anxiety, worries and frustrations, is an example of how staff continually seek new and creative ways of supporting pupils.

Staff view all behaviour as a form of communication, and the staff team is constantly reflecting on the meaning of residential pupils' behaviour to inform individual support strategies. Bullying is not an issue and residential pupils reported that it is not accepted. Residential pupils do have difficulties managing friendships, but receive appropriate support from staff to develop social skills and to achieve and sustain relationships.

Comprehensive health and safety measures protect residential pupils. Appropriate fire checks are routinely applied, including regular fire drills. Robust recruitment processes safeguard residential pupils from unsuitable adults working with them.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Outstanding

All staff share a passion and a commitment to provide opportunities for pupils to become independent, active adults, to the best of their ability. Led by inspirational and visionary leaders, staff rise to the challenge of continually developing their own knowledge, understanding and skills to support pupils to achieve positive outcomes. Staff are ambitious for pupils to succeed and to believe that they can flourish. Their drive and enthusiasm influences and motivates pupils to engage with staff and to benefit from the support and opportunities offered.

The head of residential provision provides strong leadership, underpinned by honest and transparent communication, and with respect for each staff member's strengths. The stable and experienced residential staff team work cohesively, supporting each other to meet pupils' individual needs. Staff training and development has a high priority, it is directly linked to improving the quality of the service, and is aligned with the school improvement plan. In addition to core training, staff undertake additional training and development to expand their knowledge and understanding of specific areas in order to benefit pupils. Examples include mental health first aid, mindfulness and yoga. All members of the residential team have responsibility for specific areas relating to pupils' needs, such as e-safety, dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and audit this provision to ensure that it is meeting pupils' needs effectively. Through regular, formal supervision, informal ongoing discussions and annual appraisals, staff receive appropriate support and review of their practice in order to maintain high standards and to achieve objectives.

Continuous monitoring of the residential provision is an integral part of the drive to improve opportunities for pupils to succeed and achieve. Feedback from pupils, in the form of surveys and questionnaires, informs managers about the success of new practices to ensure that they are appropriate to the pupils' needs. Recently introduced visual timetables and calm boxes have been assessed by pupils. Parents, carers and

professionals are also offered opportunities to comment on the service. Regular reports by an independent visitor are evaluative and constructive. Governor visits contribute to these quality assurance arrangements. Consequently, this drive for continuous improvement has resulted in many improvements and developments in the service, while consciously embedding previous changes.

Parents report that there is excellent communication with residential staff. One parent commented that communication is extremely effective. Staff constantly liaise with her, seeking her views and opinions on strategies to support her daughter, and she stated that, 'they are very good at consulting.' Another parent referred to excellent communication from staff, where positive and negative issues are fed back regularly. There have been no complaints since the last inspection, illustrating the excellent relationships and communication with families.

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 exceeds the standard of good and results 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's 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 if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	125459
Social care unique reference number	SC013885
DfE registration number	936/7019

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	38
Gender of boarders	Girls
Age range of boarders	11 to 16
Headteacher	Sarah Wild
Date of previous boarding inspection	29 January 2015
Telephone number	01883 713928
Email address	headofcare@limpsfield-grange.surrey.sch.uk

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