

# Limpsfield Grange School

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

<b>Inspection dates</b>	29/01/2015	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is outstanding because

- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is outstanding. This is because residential students receive consistently high standards of care, which fully meets their individual needs. They make significant progress in many aspects of their lives as they aim for greater independence and autonomy.
- All residential students are well supported from the point of arrival to when they leave. The residential team work hard to get to know students and their families; they develop strong and trusting relationships with everyone. This helps provide stability and consistency as well as excellent emotional and practical support.
- Parents are delighted with the positive impact the residential provision has on the lives of their children and the outcomes being achieved. They very much value the way in which care and support is organised and delivered which maximises the opportunities for each student to reach their full potential. On parent stating that, 'they're fantastic.'
- Residential students are positive ambassadors for the school and show a great amount of respect for their boarding community. They talk proudly about the progress they make and enjoy the communal atmosphere and friendships they have.
- Residential students thrive across many aspects of their lives including learning, staying healthy, being more independent and keeping safe. Care planning and staff practice is child-centred and individually tailored to meet each student's unique needs. Consultation is a major strength, students are listened to and their views and opinions are valued.
- Students experience an inclusive environment where their specific and special needs are understood. The residential team are strong advocates, they ensure participation and involvement in the whole school programme is achieved for everyone. Students' rights and entitlements are soundly promoted.
- Residential students' safety and welfare is promoted well and soundly managed. They feel safe and comfortable in their boarding accommodation and with the team of staff

who look after them. The school's strong ethos and purpose around keeping everyone safe is reflected in practice.

- Behavioural expectations are extremely high. Challenging or difficult behaviour is calmly managed through good use of relationships and de-escalation skills. Residential students feel that their behaviour improves because of the encouraging and supportive help they receive.
- The provision of activities and recreational pursuits are a real strength of the school. Residential students have access to an extremely wide range of stimulating and enjoyable activities that combine confidence building and learning with fun and enjoyment. Many of these experiences significantly enhance the opportunities to develop individual talents and interests as well as promoting greater confidence and independence.
- Forward thinking and visible managers continue to strengthening and improve the residential provision. The senior leadership team are well informed about the strengths and areas for development because of the excellent quality assurance and monitoring arrangements. There is a strong emphasis on professional development with lots of opportunities for the team to improve their knowledge and skills for the benefit of residential students. The school meets all national minimum standards.

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools**

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

## Information about this inspection

This welfare only inspection was completed by one social care inspector following the appropriate notice period for this type of visit. A tour of the residential accommodation was undertaken. Two evenings were spent in the company of staff and students. Several students were spoken to and nearly all residential students were observed during the inspection. Two evening meals and several breakfast periods were also observed. A range of records were examined relating to the care provided. Discussions were held with members of the senior leadership team, governors, managers, care staff and parents.

## Inspection team

Julian Mason

Lead social care inspector

# 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. All students have a statement of special educational needs and may present as emotionally, educationally and/or physically vulnerable. Residential accommodation is available from Monday to Thursday. Currently 31 pupils access boarding, 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 December 2013.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

### Outstanding

Outcomes for residential students are outstanding. They make great progress because the residential environment is highly supportive and extremely nurturing. Students and families have a very positive view of the residential provision and the impact boarding has on students' lives. Students say, 'it's epic' and 'we get lots of things to do, I love doing all the activities and seeing my friends.'

Parents say that their children enjoy themselves, they are enabled to participate in many stimulating and challenging activities, they learn to be more independent and develop socially and emotionally. Parents state, 'It's a perfect environment, they're absolutely committed to the students and want them to do the best they can' and 'they've worked wonders, they go that extra mile.'

There is an excellent range of stimulating, interesting and rewarding activities available to residential students. They are fully occupied from the time they finish school to the end of the day. Residential students talk enthusiastically about the activities they participate in and what they achieve. These include many indoor activities such as arts and crafts, board games, quizzes, to accessing community based interests such as drama club, rock climbing and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Staff are very good at using fun activities as an opportunity for learning new skills. These opportunities positively enhance personal growth and development, which is an integral part of the residential experience. One parent commenting, 'my daughter has blossomed as a result of her boarding experiences.'

Staff place residential students at the heart of everything the school does. They are encouraged and empowered to put forward suggestions for the development of the residential community through individual and group discussions as well as more formal surveys and questionnaires. As a result, students show a great deal of investment in their school community, as they know that their views and opinions are valued and respected.

Personal goals and targets are set to be challenging and this approach helps each individual achieve their full potential. Where setbacks are experienced, there is a determined and committed approach to finding ways of helping students overcome their difficulties. One parent stating, 'they have a really good understanding of my daughter's needs, they work so well with her.'

Students gain significantly from highly effective support, coaching and training when learning and developing the skills they need as they get older and pursue greater independence. They benefit from a structured, comprehensive learning and skills programme that is closely monitored and evaluated. This ensures that programmes are individually tailored and reflect students' abilities and potential in preparation for moving on. Parents and students are unanimously positive about this aspect of the service. One parent stating, 'in boarding, they gain important skills that make a difference to their lives, they are able to do more things for themselves.' A student states, 'I've really been helped to learn about looking after myself.'

Students' needs in relation to their health and well-being are consistently met. Staff aim to maintain and improve students' health and fitness through the promotion of good diets and regular exercise. Staff coach and mentor each student in relation to healthy eating and fitness and try to encourage good habits that will benefit them in the future. Medication is safely administered and closely monitored to ensure students benefit from taking their prescribed medicines. This is especially the case for medication that is taken for life long health conditions and illnesses.

The quality of the residential provision and pastoral support is outstanding. Students experience and receive high quality care that is consistent with their needs and individual circumstances. Strong leadership provides excellent direction and guidance that helps shape staff practice and routines on a day-to-day basis. As a result, students clearly benefit from a service that is flexible and responsive to their needs. The school's routines and approach fully support students in developing personally, socially and academically. Students are successfully supported by a professional, well-informed team whose outlook is very child-centred and non-judgemental.

This inclusive approach is achieved through the development of positive and constructive relationships between the staff team and students. Staff set clear boundaries and have high expectations regarding students' behaviour. This approach is part of the school's drive to ensure students act responsibly and learn from their experiences. Their behaviour improves because of the bonds and attachments they have with staff.

The admission and induction of residential students is extremely well planned and organised. Students and their families have the opportunity to visit the school to view the residential facilities, meet staff and other residential students as well as accessing a recently improved range of written information. This enables them to make a fully informed choice about using the residential service. One parent stating, 'I can pick up the phone anytime, they are very responsive to any questions or queries I have.'

Links between care and education staff are very strong which helps archive a seamless transition to and from school and to the residential provision. This provides residential students with continuity and consistency of care in support of their social and educational arrangements. Academic and social achievements are frequently celebrated by the whole school to help reinforce and promote the positive culture of success.

Attentive staff and enjoyable experiences enable students to overcome their anxieties about being away from their families. Understanding and responding to student's communication needs is a key strength throughout the school. For example, the development of a visual display to help provide reassuring information in an understandable format about planned activities and routines. Students say that this has helped them to be less anxious about their afternoon and evening arrangements.

Staff ensure students are fully aware of the ways they can raise any issues or concerns about their care. There is a wealth of information around the school about how to make a complaint. This includes talking to staff, managers or the independent visitor as well as how to contact the children's rights director or external advocacy services. Students have not felt it necessary to make any formal complaints but are confident that if they did, their concerns would be dealt with fairly.

Staff promote residential students' good health and support them to lead healthy lifestyles. They work in partnership with families who retain primary responsibility for their child's health. This ensures staff are fully aware of students' health needs when they are away from home, including long term health conditions, dietary requirements and medication. Staff provide students with appropriate guidance and information about many health related issues. This means they develop a better understanding of their own health needs and how to take more responsibility for themselves as they get older. For example, some students are learning to safely manage and administer their own prescribed medication.

While at school, residential students are supported to access routine and specialist services such

as occupational and speech and language therapists. The school effectively utilises its links with specialist services to ensure specific health needs and conditions continue to be assessed and met. Visiting practitioners are also involved in helping the residential team improve their knowledge and skills around autism and learning difficulties.

Students live in very safe, pleasant accommodation with lots of space inside and outdoors. The school provides a comfortable and homely environment, which is clean, well maintained and decorated. Residential students are able to personalise their private bed space with pictures and photographs if they wish. Avoidable hazards are removed or remedied quickly to ensure good standards of health and safety are achieved for everyone. The accommodation continues to be upgraded and decorated as part of a rolling programme of improvements.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

## **Outstanding**

The arrangements for keeping residential students safe are outstanding. The school has highly effective leadership that consistently promotes an environment where protection and safety are paramount. Managers and the staff team demonstrate a high degree of responsibility and accountability for safeguarding arrangements. Staff are trained in safeguarding and alert to indicators that students may be at risk of harm. The school has very clear procedures for responding to child protection concerns. Managers work in partnership with external agencies to ensure any safeguarding issues are appropriately addressed.

Students are clearly benefiting from living in a school that has an excellent focus on safeguarding and protection matters. They are actively encouraged to improve their awareness and understanding about how to keep themselves safe. For instance, students learn how to improve their safety when in the community and to consider what information they share with others when using social media. Students feel safe; they know that staff care about them and that their well-being is important. One student stating, 'I feel very safe here, I've never been worried about this.'

A key strength of the residential provision is how staff and school colleagues understand the complexities of students' difficulties, behaviours and communication needs. This insight informs effective organisation and operation of daily support routines, which are kept under review. There are practical interventions and arrangements to support all aspects of students' residency because of informed and effective risk assessment practices. Strategies to manage risks are focused on safety but also promote opportunities for students to take acceptable risks as part of developing their life skills.

Staff consistently explore ways to encourage and reinforce positive behaviours and the use of praise and incentives is imbedded into daily practices and routines. For example, the use of 'on the spot' rewards, verbal praise and congratulations are very familiar experiences for many residential students. They are comprehensively helped to manage their anxieties, challenges and behaviours, which positively influences their relationships in school and at home.

The residential team are continually exploring ways to help students manage their behaviours and to safely express their emotions and feelings. The recent introduction of 'calm boxes' has added a new option for students to use that has had a positive impact on how they manage and communicate their behaviours and anxieties. This innovative new approach is being developed in consultation with students who are helping to shape how the new resource is developed further.

Physical interventions are not used; sanctions are kept to a minimum and are proportionate to the circumstances and individuals involved. Extensive information is collected and evaluated around the management of behaviour and related events. Managers are very well informed about the effectiveness of the school's approaches to managing behaviour and can quickly pick-up on

any concerning patterns or trends.

The recruitment, selection and vetting of staff is effective and promotes residential students' safety. There is a rigorous approach to health and safety matters which is underpinned by comprehensive health and safety policies. There are ongoing environmental safety checks, regular health and safety audits, practice fire drills as well as regular servicing of fire safety equipment and utilities. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken to minimise risks to students both on and off site. Any matters relating to safety and maintenance are promptly addressed. This results in the accommodation, grounds and activities being safely maintained and managed for everyone's benefit.

### **Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding**

Students benefit from using a residential service where it is organised and managed outstandingly well. An experienced, qualified head of care with a child-centred approach provides the staff team with a clear focus on necessary practices and tasks needed to successfully help students develop academically and socially. The head of care is well supported by governors, the senior leadership and residential team who all contribute positively to the culture, ethos and working practices developed within the school.

The established and qualified team have worked together for some time, achieving a consistent focused approach that provides students with outstanding quality of care. They understand their roles and responsibilities and work positively with the support of the management team to meet students' diverse and individual needs.

Managers provide excellent day-to-day support as well as more formal supervision arrangements and appraisals. These are used effectively to promote the professional development of the team and to maintain high standards of work practice. Staff regularly participate in core training and learning events to update their knowledge and skills as well as completing specialist training to address any specific areas of need. For example, self-harm, child exploitation and communication training. This means that staff are able to develop their knowledge and skills and to address and meet students' needs more effectively.

The head of care is well supported and demonstrates a clear understanding of the strengths of the residential provision and areas in need of improvement. This is reflected in the targets set in the school's development plan as well as individual performance and practice targets identified for each member of staff. As a result, the whole staff team are involved and responsible for the development and progress of the residential service and the impact this has on students.

The system for dealing with complaints is fair and transparent. There have been no complaints since the last inspection. All required policies and procedures are in place and are known to those who are required to implement them as well as this information being publicly available on the school's website. All national minimum standards were met at the last inspection and this continues to be the case.

Managers have an excellent insight into how well residential students are being looked after and what they are achieving. Quality assurance and monitoring activities are very strong. The head of care regularly carries out surveys and frequently seeks feedback from students, parents and staff around a host of operational matters. Governors continue to check how well students are doing and provide a helpful level of scrutiny across the school's operation. Many changes, developments and improvements have taken place over the last year. This is because of the commitment and drive to maintain high quality care and to continue to improve outcomes for all residential students.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	125459
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC013885
<b>DfE registration number</b>	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.

<b>Type of school</b>	
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Wild
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	09/12/2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01883 713928
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