

# Muntham House School

Barns Green, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 0NJ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

Muntham House School is a special school that provides boarding and day provision for boys aged five to 18 years. There are currently 125 students on the school roll. There were 21 students boarding at the time of the inspection.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

### Inspection dates: 21 to 23 January 2025

<b>Overall experiences and progress of children and young people,</b> taking into account	<b>outstanding</b>
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding
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The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

**Date of previous inspection:** 23 January 2024

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Staff deliver care and support that transforms the lives of the children and their families. Increasingly, staff now extend this support to children and families in the local community who do not attend the school.

Staff speak proudly of the holistic approach at the heart of their practice. They keep the needs of children at the centre of their thoughts and consider how the child's experiences are shaped by the provision, their whole family and the whole community.

Children benefit from warm, affectionate and skilled support from staff. Staff share a clear ethos and a deep understanding of the emotional, physical and psychological needs of all the children in their care. This enables them to provide tailored support that encourages children to exceed expectations and achieve excellent outcomes.

Children gain access to a wide range of experiences, many of which are life changing. Whether climbing the Three Peaks, sailing in 'Tall Ships' or performing in public for the first time, children are encouraged to challenge themselves. As a result, children grow in confidence and self-belief. This enhances their life chances. Children make exceptional progress in relation to their starting points and make remarkable progress in relation to their emotional and personal development.

A multi-disciplinary therapy team contributes immensely to the quality of care that children receive. The team also provides research-based knowledge and insight. Leaders ensure that this is embedded and reflected across all areas of the provision. The therapy team provides support to other providers in the local community to share best practice and work with individual children and families. They also provide guidance and support to staff in mainstream education settings to help them provide the best support possible to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The head of care has spearheaded a drive to thread trauma-informed practice into the daily fabric of the provision. Staff strive to understand how children's life experiences impact on their self-image, behaviour and outcomes. This enables them to support students to address (and move past) obstacles to their growth.

Children feel listened to and that their opinions matter. A proactive student-led council ensures that all children have their voices heard. Children are able to identify changes that have happened as a result of their involvement in decision-making. The principal and head of care are fully committed to placing student voices at the centre of discussions when considering changes to the environment, policies and procedures, or to how staff practice.

Staff develop strong trusting relationships with children's families, and parents speak highly of the provision. One parent said, 'Muntham has transformed [name of child]'s life and, in doing so, has also transformed life for the family.'

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

Children live in a safe and supportive environment. Staff have an impressive level of insight into the individual needs and vulnerabilities of each child. This enables staff to allow the children to take positive and appropriate risks that enhance their confidence and ability to keep themselves safe.

The safeguarding team, with dedicated support from the governing body, has continued to enhance and improve systems and processes. Staff have gained confidence and assuredness when managing complex safeguarding issues. The small number of safeguarding incidents that have occurred have been managed expertly, so that children have been kept safe. Records and chronologies are clear and detailed. Communication with the wider safeguarding networks around children is excellent.

Children reflect positively about their feelings of safety. They describe a positive, supportive atmosphere between peers. They can also readily identify who they would go to if they had any concerns about their safety or the safety and well-being of others.

The safeguarding lead for internet safety continues to develop close working relationships with parents to ensure that, wherever possible, parents work in partnership with staff to keep children safe. Staff share relevant and helpful information with families about how to safeguard children from emerging threats or risks online.

The school is an active participant in networks and partnerships that share best practice in relation to safeguarding. This enables them to keep abreast of new areas of research into effective safeguarding practice. Parents and professionals give positive feedback that clearly demonstrates their trust and confidence in the ability of staff to keep children safe.

Children are well behaved and respectful of staff and each other. When children require support to manage their emotions or behaviour, staff provide this sensitively and with understanding. If needed, staff focus on consequences that are restorative and never punitive. This helps children to learn good social skills and how to express their feelings positively.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

Leaders share a common goal to continually enhance and improve practice. They encourage staff to be innovative and push the boundaries of what high-quality care

looks like, so that they provide children with the best experience of residential care possible.

Leaders see themselves as part of a much wider professional community. They contribute to networks of residential special schools across the country, sharing and seeking out best practice. Leaders' support and lead on initiatives such as an annual national football tournament for residential special schools and a concert of performing arts that is open to other special schools to participate in.

Staff say that they feel well supported and praise the constructive and knowledgeable approach of the head of care. They particularly appreciate the quality of reflective supervision, which works hand in hand with additional layers of support from the school's therapeutic services. Leaders ensure that training is comprehensive and regularly refreshed for all staff. Staff praise the leadership team's willingness to provide bespoke training to help them to meet the needs of individual children. They also highlight the opportunities that they have to engage in individual training that enhances their skills and career development.

Staff feel valued and that their views matter. In providing high-quality support for staff, leaders have ensured a consistent and stable base for children. Staff retention rates are high, and many staff have spent extensive periods of time working at the school. This helps to provide a positive continuity for children who are able to build relationships of trust with staff over time.

Leaders are proud of everything that they have achieved for children. They have excellent oversight and undertake rigorous monitoring of standards and practice. They use their findings to create clear, achievable targets for staff alongside ambitious action plans for further enhancement. Governors are active and regularly visit the boarding provision to seek the views of staff and children.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Residential special school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC014636

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Harry Anderson

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Peter Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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