

# Charlton Park Academy

Charlton Park Road, Charlton, London, SE7 8HX

<b>Inspection dates</b>	10/02/2015 to 12/02/2015	
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	Good	2
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is good because

- Residential students make progress, improve confidence, self-esteem, and have a range of enjoyable experiences that extend their horizons and appetite for life.
- The residential provision is part of a robust and supportive multi-disciplinary welfare service that combines a relaxed residential experience with educational, therapeutic, and nursing expertise on site. The environment is comfortable and safe.
- Long standing, knowledgeable, residential staff have warm, positive relationships with residential students. Inspiring therapeutic staff strive to maximise opportunities for improved communication, movement and independence for residential students. They see their role as: 'exhausting all the options to find the best solution.'
- Safeguarding is an area of developing strength in the school. Senior staff are knowledgeable and confident advocates about children's rights to protection and work well in partnership with parents and the local authority.
- Leadership provides critical challenge to the residential service. Systems of governance are well organised with a practical focus on improving the experience of students in residence and responding to local and family need.

### 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

Ofsted carried out this inspection with three hours' notice. Inspection activities included: observation of residential care practice over two evenings; a trip out on a bowling activity with young people; informal discussion during shared meals; meetings and discussions with residential and therapeutic staff; contact with the statutory safeguarding authority to gather their views; and scrutiny of a wide range of documentation about residence. Parent View information was not specific to boarding, but the inspection included responses to Ofsted's point in time surveys by young people and parents.

## Inspection team

Christy Wannop

Lead social care inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

This is a residential special school that is maintained by the Royal London Borough of Greenwich. It provides 220 places for students aged 11 to 19 who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. It also provides eight residential places, in four shared bedrooms in the on-site residential unit known as Rainbow House. There are currently 205 students on roll, eight of whom use the residential service. A young adult, previous a student at the school and now over the age of 19, also has residential care currently.

Rainbow House is situated in the main school. The residential service is available during week days and term time only. The residential provision was last inspected in March 2014.

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

- ensure all residential students have an opportunity to practice emergency evacuation.
- continue to recruit to permanent vacancies in care and nursing teams.
- make better entrance arrangements to the residential area, to improve 'kerb appeal' and encourage easy access.
- make clear in school documentation, how young adults over the age of 19, are cared for alongside children, and how their specific requirements as adults are met.

## Inspection judgements

### Outcomes for residential pupils

**Good**

Outcomes for residential students are good. Social development and communication has a high priority and all staff see this as the key to young people's independence and confidence. Ofsted's consultation with parents about the school indicates their high level of satisfaction about their children's happiness and good progress. One parent said their child: 'Loves it here. He's with his friends, accessing things he won't do at home'. They make an active choice with their parents to stay in residence.

Residential students have a growing sense of self-esteem and they enjoy the peaceful and supportive atmosphere. They have good relationships with the long standing residential care team and make new friends amongst agency carers. They widen their experience of life and build friendships outside of the classroom and their homes. They say they like staying and are pleased to see staff and friends.

The school promotes good health and young people have good role models for healthy lifestyles: staff do not smoke; ancillary staff go the extra mile and help young people grow their own vegetables and flowers, and most young people swim in the school hydro pool. Creative, challenging programmes for movement emphasise the importance of active bodies to students' wellbeing and independence.

The school arranges lively leisure activities and lunch-time clubs that stretch young people's physical, social, and intellectual development. An external youth activity company provides daily lunchtime exercise and competition. The Radio Club teaches media and journalism skills. This creative use of media empowers students to take control of their own lives. There is an inclusive scouts' troop based at the school in the evening and an ex-student is a leader.. There are regular cinema and bowling trips in the new school mini bus. Residential students benefit from a holiday at an adventure holiday centre linked to the school and the school hosts its own mini festival in the summer. The residential unit celebrate religious and cultural festivals. Through such activities, residential students celebrate different cultures and learn about difference and diversity.

Residential students develop in confidence as they see their views and wishes taken into account: in school development, in their choice of carers and in how they plan their own care. They practice leadership skills when they participate and represent their peers in the school council and in weekly residential meetings. One parent said their child chairs meetings, 'quite empowering.' Some take part in national young people's consultation forums. These opportunities expand their experience and enhance their self-confidence so they are ready for the challenges of young adulthood at their next destination. There is respect for difference and dignity for all.

### Quality of residential provision and care

**Good**

The quality of residential provision and care is good. There is very good communication and partnership working between all disciplines within the school. Residential students, with profound and multiple disabilities, benefit from committed and imaginative school-based specialists who work as a team around the child and communicate well with placing social workers and families. This team includes: teaching staff; physiotherapists; speech and language therapists; music and drama therapists; therapeutic counsellors and a 24-hour nursing service in conjunction with a small core of permanent and well-trained residential staff. Their aim, and the outcome for residential students, is greater independence, better life experiences and care that meets emotional as well as physical and educational needs.

Health care is well managed: students' complex and sometimes declining health needs are

carefully met, respecting parents' primary role. Residential students get the medication and treatment they need from properly trained staff and registered nursing staff.

Students have a carefully planned entry into life in residence. Pre-admission assessments and careful partnership working with local authority social care and parents ensures that care plans and packages of health support are good. A parent described how the care plan: 'makes perfect sense.' Another described how their child, 'loved it straight away.'

Residential accommodation, the premises, and facilities are spacious, light, and well-resourced with specialist equipment to assist young people with mobility needs. Shared bedrooms add to the 'sleepover' experience, but there are sufficient bedrooms for separate arrangements where this suits students better. The residential provision has no 'front door' after school hours; visitors, and students go in and out of a side door through a storage area. Better entrance arrangements would improve 'kerb appeal' and encourage easy access.

The residential timetable adjusts to take account of the regular outings and planned activities, so that residential routines do not hold up students' opportunities. The shared evening meal, heated up in the residential kitchen, is flexible. Food is tasty, nutritious and plentiful. Staff and residential students eat the same food together, maximising opportunities for social communication and building new self-help skills. One parent wrote, 'I think the meals are very healthy.' Parents tell Ofsted that they are highly satisfied with their children's care at the school. Staff described their role as: 'Not just about caring- it's about enabling.'

### **Residential pupils' safety**

**Good**

Residential students' safety is good. Some students have complex health conditions and all are vulnerable because of their learning and physical needs. Care practice balances residential students' need to take fulfilling 'everyday' risks. The placing authority is confident that young people are 'are safe and well at the unit'.

Safeguarding practice is strengthening under the lead of the new welfare and safeguarding manager. Policy, procedure, and practice take account of the particular vulnerabilities of children with disabilities. The school has worked closely with the local safeguarding services when there have been concerns. Senior managers are confident advocates about children's right to protection by the wider safeguarding services. The school's recruiting and vetting procedures are thorough and ensure that children only have contact with suitable adults.

Residential students do not go missing. Intimate personal care is managed sensitively and students can exercise their choice about which staff deliver this. Behaviour management is thoughtful and creative. Physical intervention and sanctions are unnecessary because politeness and respect is mutual.

The school makes sure students activities and the environment are safe. There are regular health and safety checks to ensure that specialist equipment and services are safe. Regular fire safety checks are carried out at different times of the day and night; there are individual evacuation plans that take account of mobility needs. However, not all residential students have taken part in a fire drill in residential time.

There is a good range of sympathetic skilled and sensitive adults that students can talk to share any worries. An independent visitor provides an additional advocacy service, prioritising the residential students' views and welfare. Residential students, staff and parents are regularly reminded in the school's magazine, about practical ways to keep safe online, think about anti-bullying strategies and communicate to keep children safe. Parents report 100% confidence that

the school manages bullying safely and promotes good behaviour.

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

Leadership and management of the residential service is good. An effective senior management team have provided skilled leadership to the residential provision through a period of leadership change and service development. This has sustained an overall good quality of care until the appointment of a new head of care.

The school's residential capacity is greater than its use. The residential provision aims to be responsive to the needs of the local area and commissioners of services and is often in competition with social care 'respite' services. Local authority commissioners describe a trajectory of improvement and are confident that children's needs are met at the service.

The school is increasingly rigorous and accurate about its evaluation of residence, through a robust routine of internal and external monitoring and reporting by managers, governors and external consultants, followed by action and review. The headteacher and governors have a firm grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the residential service. They are aware that the school's sophisticated systems for tracking residential students' achievement and progress do not yet fully capture the contribution made by residential staff to educational and independence targets. They take action where care practice has not been consistently good. The headteacher has plans for expansion and development of the service and is ambitious that the residential unit and staff are equipped for the challenge.

Residential students get close care from sufficient well-trained and supervised staff. Regular weekly training forums ensure that everyone is up to date with the latest developments for students' education, care and health. There are not currently enough permanent staff in the residential and nursing teams. Vacancies are covered by specially selected and trained agency staff, which provides regular cover and a degree of consistency. A parent said they had: '100% confidence in all the staff.' Residential students look forward to their stays, familiar adults and enjoyable activities.

The school has implemented changes following the last inspection, in response to Ofsted's suggestions for improvement. There are now better processes for ensuring that there is follow up action about suggestions after residential students' meetings. Residential care plans now include an explanation of how staff are to engage and ensure that they plan care to include students and that plans are as accessible as possible. The school has exceeded this suggestion in the development of safe online individual forums, called 'wikis', for sharing plans and achievements. These student-led and created websites have enabled grandparents living overseas to also share in the celebrations of residential students' progress. This technology and empowering process gives control of plans to residential students and means that students can define their own identity, hopes and aspirations.

The school communicates well with parents and stakeholders about events in school and in the local and national special needs community. The school's regular, widely read newsletter demonstrates an inclusive approach and keeps everyone well informed about changes in policy, news and developments. Information for residential students and stakeholders is lively and engaging, but does not make clear how young adults over the age of 19, are cared for alongside children, or how their specific requirements as adults are met.

Parents report their children are well looked after and the school is well led and managed. They value their children's small but significant steps to progress and the spirit of partnership and support offered by the school. One parent wrote: 'I class Rainbow House as an extension to our

home- the care is second to none'.

## 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>	138547
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC044128
<b>DfE registration number</b>	203/7199

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>	Academy
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	12
<b>Gender of boarders</b>	Mixed
<b>Age range of boarders</b>	11 to 19
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Dale-Emberton
<b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b>	20/01/2014
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8249 6844
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