

Hunters Hill College

Spirehouse Lane, Blackwell, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1QD

Inspection dates

16–17, and 25 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision	Requires improvement
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the residential provision	Requires improvement
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	School: Requires improvement Residential provision: Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Though some key improvements have been secured across the school, there is more work to do in ensuring that pupils' outcomes are consistently strong.
- Arrangements for ensuring that additional funding is spent effectively are not robust enough. Leaders and governors have not evaluated which strategies have the most impact.
- The full impact of new initiatives relating to behaviour, attendance and assessment requires further monitoring and analysis.
- The quality of teaching is variable across the school and is not yet securely good. Teachers do not routinely re-shape lessons if pupils find learning too easy or too hard. This limits pupils' progress, especially that of the most able.
- The school's inclusion room is not used as effectively as it could be. The room does not have sufficient space to meet pupils' needs. Some staff do not proactively support pupils during 'time-outs'. Though incidents of physical intervention are well recorded, analysis and debriefing are not strong enough.
- The school does not meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools.
- Practice in the residential provision is not as strong as it was at the last inspection. Leaders have not adequately monitored the overall quality of care and support in this area of the school. A range of policies, risk assessments and procedures require review.
- A shared understanding of how to support pupils so that they make the best possible progress is not yet established among all staff members. The overall standard of the environment in the homes and the school is not good enough. Some areas are unappealing, and aspects of routine maintenance have been overlooked.
- The targets in pupils' education, health and care plans lack precision and there is insufficient reference to pupils' views.
- Staff's views about the school's effectiveness are mixed. Some staff state that changes have been good, while others express concerns about the support they receive from leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is beginning to address several key areas of weakness in the school. The capacity of leadership has been increased following the recruitment of new leaders.
- The overall standard of education is improving. Leaders are implementing effective strategies. The quality of teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Improvements are greatest in English and mathematics.
- The support of advisers and external partners has been effective.
- Opportunities for teachers to moderate the impact of their work are in place and must now be sustained.
- Attendance is now managed more effectively. Any absence is quickly followed up and school leaders have established a range of effective procedures and rewards.
- Given pupils' needs, their behaviour is good. Social times are well managed and, on the whole, pupils engage with their learning.
- Some aspects of care practice are strong. For example, staff have regular supervision, and pupils enjoy staying overnight and talk positively about the range of activities from which they can choose.
- Governors are knowledgeable and skilled. Despite the shortcomings in relation to their evaluation of pupil premium funding and the oversight of the homes, they provide leaders with much effective challenge and support.
- The clinical psychologist works effectively with the school to support pupils' specific needs.
- There is a culture of safeguarding, and staff build positive relationships with pupils.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - staff across the whole school share a united approach
 - the thoughts and feelings of staff continue to be heard and acted upon
 - risk assessments are reviewed so that staff have a more detailed understanding of any risks that pupils may face and the resulting control measures that are required
 - pupils' education, health and care plans include specific and measurable targets, and take full account of pupils' views
 - new systems for monitoring behaviour, attendance and assessment are monitored for impact and analysed further to establish any trends and resulting actions
 - a clear strategy for the expenditure of additional funding is established for the new academic year that meets statutory requirements
 - the impact of additional funding and the effectiveness of residential provision are fully evaluated by leaders and governors
 - the environment in the homes and school is maintained to a higher standard
 - an external review of the use of the pupil premium is undertaken.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and thereby pupils' outcomes, by making sure that:
 - staff adjust learning if pupils find an activity either too easy or too hard
 - the most able pupils receive a consistently high level of challenge
 - the validity and reliability of the judgements teachers make about pupils' progress are increased by establishing more opportunities for moderation.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and well-being by:
 - fully embedding the new systems for improving attendance
 - further developing procedures for 'time-outs' and the use of the school's inclusion room
 - strengthening the analysis of the school's use of inclusion spaces
 - ensuring that the analysis of physical intervention is developed further so that more actions can be taken to reduce the frequency of incidents
 - making sure that pupils and staff have further opportunities to reflect upon, and record where appropriate, their thoughts and feelings following physical restraint and that any necessary follow-up actions are undertaken.
- The school must ensure that it meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools that have not been met.
 - Accommodation is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any children with restricted mobility. The accommodation

contains suitable specialist facilities to support children whose disabilities require them (NMS 5.4).

- A written record is kept of major sanctions and the use of any reasonable force. Records include the information in Appendix 2 (use of reasonable force). The record is made within 24 hours and is legible. Children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records. The school regularly reviews any instances of the use of reasonable force and examines trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and learn in a way that will inform future practice (NMS 12.6).
- The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary (NMS 13.1).
- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role (NMS 13.3).
- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met (NMS 13.4).
- The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate (NMS 13.8).
- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate (NMS 13.9).
- Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include:
 - checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and, where they exist, individual care plans for children;
 - evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded;
 - assessment of the physical condition of the building, and the furniture and equipment of the school; and
 - opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish) (NMS 20.2).
- The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day-to-day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan, there is appropriate consultation. Where applicable, the plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Where feasible, children in the school are aware of the content of their placement plans, and confirm that the school is providing care for them that is consistent with the plans (NMS 21.1).
- Each child has at least one key worker (or similar person) within the school who provides individual guidance and support to the child. They regularly make time

available to the child to enable the child to seek guidance, advice and support on any matter. They monitor the school's compliance on a day-to-day basis with the child's placement plan (NMS 21.2).

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the residential provision

Requires improvement

How well children and young people are helped and protected in the residential provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have taken a wide range of positive actions since the last education inspection to bring about improvements. The overall effectiveness of the school is moving in the right direction, but it is not yet securely good.
- However, since the last social care inspection in January 2018, there has been a marked decline in the level of oversight given to the residential provision. As a result, managers have not ensured that pupils' residential experiences deliver the best possible outcomes. Self-evaluation has not been prioritised, planned and coordinated to secure improvement. Consequently, there are several weaknesses in the residential provision that could put pupils' welfare, health and safety at risk.
- The school has received effective support from its local authority adviser and other alliances to improve educational provision. Work has rightly focused on attendance, reviewing the curriculum, raising expectations and bringing about more rigour to teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders have responded positively to the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. However, given the scope of improvements that have been required, changes have taken time. Several strategies are relatively new.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team are capable. They have a range of important knowledge and skills. They have established a detailed monitoring system to make checks on the school's overall effectiveness. However, at this stage, there are some key weaknesses that require further work. This is particularly the case in residential provision, where standards are not as strong as they were earlier in the year.
- Many aspects of the school's learning environment are appealing and well designed. For example, the school's bistro and cooking area are smart and modern and support pupils in learning important life skills. Pupils' toilet areas have also been refurbished in recent years. However, parts of the school's inclusion area, communal areas and the general state of repair of the residential homes are not good enough. Leaders, and the site team, have established a programme to deal with identified maintenance issues. The standard of aspects of the residential accommodation is not high enough and does not adequately reflect an environment that is safe and well kept. For example, internal walls are damaged and marked. There is water damage to ceiling tiles and some are missing.
- Some staff are managing the process of change. They acknowledge that some systems, particularly those relating to the management of attendance and exclusions, had to change. However, some express concerns about the quality of support they receive from leaders.
- Some staff raised specific concerns about the management of pupils' behaviour and

bullying. During the inspection, given pupils' needs, behaviour was managed effectively overall. Pupils' conduct at social times, including during activities after school in the homes, was positive. The concerns that have been raised are known to leaders. Strategies are in place to ensure that the views of staff are regularly sought. However, there is more work to do. Staff are not yet fully united.

- Leaders have an organised, well-founded approach to staff training. They have worked to gain consistency in the quality of teaching. As a result of important changes, pupils now have the opportunity to gain qualifications and accreditation at a higher level.
- Leaders devised a plan for the expenditure of pupil premium funding in the last academic year. The statutory information required in this document is not complete. Leaders have not adequately set out the barriers that disadvantaged pupils face. Furthermore, leaders have not evaluated the impact of the improvement strategies that were agreed last year.
- There is no clear strategy for the use of Year 7 catch-up funding. This money should be used to provide additional literacy and numeracy support to identified pupils joining the school at the start of key stage 3.
- The curriculum has been reviewed. One of the key outcomes of this review has been the development of detailed schemes of work and a clear progression model for each subject. Importantly, pupils' experiences and learning extend beyond the classroom. The outdoor education programme, working farm and educational visits ensure that pupils have a rich and varied experience at Hunters Hill.
- Middle leaders share the vision and values of the senior team. They have high expectations of pupils and have a good awareness of the school's key strengths and areas for development. They have effectively contributed to the wider coaching and mentoring of the teaching team. This work is bringing about improvements in teaching.
- Managers' self-evaluation of the residential provision lacks the detail required to help staff fully understand what the service does well and how it could develop.
- Managers in the residential provision do not always ensure that pupils' records hold all the required information. This means that staff do not have up-to-date information to help them plan and manage the personalised care of pupils.
- Managers have not ensured that the statement of principles and the policies relating to the residential service are up to date and reviewed at the required intervals. Similarly, managers have not ensured the review of children's placement plans.
- There were too few responses on Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to generate a response for the school. However, the school does frequently canvas the views of parents and carers. In a survey conducted this term, most parents responded positively about the overall quality of the school. Some parents have also written to the headteacher in person to express their thanks and gratitude for the support pupils receive through vocational opportunities with the school's partner agencies.

Governance of the school

- The chair of governors and members of the governing body are committed to securing further improvements. Governors have a clear understanding of the improvements in teaching and learning and the next priorities for this aspect of provision. They provide support and challenge to leaders and staff and are aware that new systems for monitoring aspects of the school's effectiveness now need to be analysed with even greater precision.
- Governors have not adequately monitored the impact of additional funding. They do not receive sufficient information from leaders regarding the residential service. As a result, the nominated residential governor is not able to offer enough support and challenge.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Despite the shortcomings relating to some specific aspects of the residential provision and some feedback from stakeholders, inspectors found the wider culture of safeguarding to be effective. Over the last two years, the school's child protection records have been further developed. Detailed chronologies and organised records allow leaders to see pupils' needs at a glance.
- The school has a dedicated clinical psychologist who provides effective support. His expertise is used to devise strategies and programmes of support to help pupils address their needs. In the last year, a new screening programme has been introduced to support pupils as they transition into the school. Though at an early stage of development, the programme highlights the school's ambition to tackle any difficulties that pupils may face at the earliest opportunity.
- The inspection team observed leaders managing any emerging safeguarding issues effectively. Leaders are prompt to engage other agencies for support and understand their responsibilities. Staff training is up to date and policies take account of the most recent government guidance.
- The school's assemblies and curriculum provide pupils with opportunities to learn about online safety, bullying and relationships.
- Security in and around the site has been enhanced by the installation of additional fencing. Staff have radio sets to ensure that they are able to share important information about pupils' welfare and to respond promptly.
- Staff do not ensure that risk assessments hold sufficient information. This means that staff do not always have up-to-date individualised information to help them fully understand and reduce the risks posed to pupils.
- Pupils in the residential provision state that they feel safe and are supportive and caring of each other. Family's views of the residential provision are positive. Pupils know how to complain, and safeguarding referrals are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Staff receive training in autistic spectrum disorder and receive regular supervision.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. However, there is variability in the quality of some practice. The level of challenge that pupils receive, particularly the most able groups, is not yet high enough.
- When learning activities are well within pupils' capabilities, teachers are not yet making adjustments to learning so that the level of challenge can be increased. Similarly, pupils' books show that on occasion, activities are too challenging and not enough thought has been given to pupils' starting points.
- In some pupils' books, work shows that there are not high enough expectations of what pupils will record and when. This is particularly the case in mathematics. There is insufficient work for some year groups, despite pupils demonstrating in previous years that they have the aptitude to record, present and set their work out well.
- Teachers have engaged with a programme of training to develop their skills. There is now a consistent approach across the school. Changes to the curriculum and schemes of work have ensured that learning is now effectively sequenced. Pupils are able to build progressively on their skills. There are clear routes to qualifications and accreditation that were not secure at the last inspection.
- Leaders have developed a comprehensive assessment system to track pupils' progress and engagement. The system has given staff a good framework to make checks against. Coupled with observations and checks on books, this means that leaders now have a means for comparing the performance of different groups. This work is at an early stage but is an important shift in the school's practice.
- There are some key strengths emerging in the teaching of writing. Pupils have opportunities to explore a wide range of exciting texts such as Bram Stoker's 'Dracula' and Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein'. Pupils are beginning to write at length and apply their basic grammar, punctuation and spelling skills.
- On the whole, pupils enjoy positive relationships with teachers. Pupils show interest in their learning. Teachers' good subject knowledge and effective questioning ensure that most pupils maintain positive levels of engagement.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Inspectors asked pupils about their attitudes towards bullying throughout the inspection. Pupils did not shy away from the fact that they do identify some behaviour that they see as bullying. However, they state that teachers respond to issues and that there are adults whom they can talk to if they have a concern.
- Leaders have devised systems to monitor any concerns about bullying. The analysis that leaders are able to make about any trends or patterns of bullying is at an early stage. Further work is required to ensure that leaders are clear about both the impact

of their actions, and the types of concerns that are being raised.

- The school's inclusion room is not as effective as it could be. There are sometimes too many pupils in the room for individuals to be able to sit and reflect on why they are taking 'time out'. Staff are not always proactive in supporting pupils while they are in the inclusion room. Leaders have not established a system to analyse how often, and why, pupils visit either the inclusion room or quiet reflection room.
- The school has a clear policy and guidance for staff on the use of physical intervention. All staff receive regular training and guidance on different forms of restraint. Clear expectations have been established for reporting and recording procedures. Records of incidents of physical intervention are detailed and are monitored carefully by senior leaders. Leaders monitor incidents for any patterns or trends. For example, one year group is currently receiving additional pastoral support following a rise in incidents in the autumn term. Despite this positive action, analysis could be strengthened even further. Some aspects of restraint, such as the length of holds, are not analysed in sufficient detail. There is no formal record kept of any debrief. This makes it difficult for leaders to adequately act upon feedback from pupils or staff.
- Work in books shows a positive move towards increasing pupils' engagement. However, the school's own information shows that pupils' levels of interest and resilience vary across different year groups. For example, staff have identified specific concerns regarding pupils' engagement in certain aspects of the curriculum such as English and physical education.
- The school provides pupils with effective careers information, advice and guidance. Leaders are using online tools to help them establish a clear strategy. The careers support offered by the school helps pupils make informed choices about their future.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Given pupils' specific needs, many make considerable progress in overcoming barriers to their learning and behaviour.
- Pupils' overall conduct around the school was very positive during the inspection. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and try to make the right choices. Pupils' behaviour at social times is good. Pupils are given the scope to make choices about what they do and when. They wait patiently to be served in the school's canteen and willingly tidy away their utensils and ensure that areas are clean and tidy.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered to visitors. They are happy to talk about how they feel and what school is like on a typical day. Pupils are learning how to self-regulate their behaviour and keep themselves safe.
- Leaders have transformed procedures for monitoring attendance. Though rates of attendance and persistent absence require further development, the school has secured several important improvements. Leaders now have the systems in place to tackle any concerns promptly and ensure that pupils' whereabouts are known at all times. A small number of pupils are on part-time timetables. These arrangements are appropriately coded on school registers and pupils' circumstances are regularly reviewed.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, every pupil was given the opportunity to work towards a qualification at the end of key stage 4. This is a significant step forward for the school. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are now higher. A number of pupils gained GCSE qualifications in English. However, outcomes across the school are not yet consistently strong.
- Owing to the shortcomings in the development and evaluation of the school's pupil premium strategy, and use of Year 7 catch-up funding, it is difficult to ascertain what impact additional funding is having on disadvantaged pupils' achievement. Pupils' books show that improvements are being secured. However, these improvements are variable and are not as marked in some aspects of mathematics.
- The school's own assessment information indicates some variability in pupils' outcomes. Information from data indicates strengths in core subjects, but some weaknesses in the wider curriculum.
- The principle documents that underpin and support the development of pupils' overall education, health and care are not strong enough. The objectives that are set out in pupils' plans are not precise enough. Furthermore, there is insufficient evidence of how pupils are involved in establishing these targets or reflecting on the progress that they believe they are making.
- Pupils accessing alternative provision are provided with a range of effective support. Their vocational skills are well tracked. Safeguarding arrangements are appropriate. However, the development of pupils' skills in English and mathematics is not always monitored effectively.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the residential provision

Requires improvement

- Managers have not adequately monitored and reviewed pupils' residential progress. This hinders the opportunities for pupils to develop to their full potential.
- Staff lack awareness of the behaviour management policy. Consequently, some sanctions are not recorded. This makes it difficult for managers to fully evaluate how well staff are managing pupils' behaviour.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to share their views. As a result, pupils cannot fully contribute to the development of the service.
- Reports provided by external visitors to support self-evaluation lack the detail and meaningful consultation required to help leaders fully understand what the service does well and how it could develop.
- Residential care staff build and maintain positive relationships with young people. However, they do not adequately seek pupils' views to support the effective implementation of placement plans.
- Young people enjoy their residential experiences, especially their participation in a wide range of activities that help them to improve their self-esteem and develop friendships.

School details

Unique reference number	103609
Social care unique reference number	SC043050
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10052851

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision 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	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Mr Paul Clarke
Headteacher	The Reverend Mr Andrew Lomas
Telephone number	0121 445 1320
Website	www.hhcollege.org
Email address	enquiry@hunthill.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Education: 11–12 May 2016 Social Care: 16–18 January 2018

Information about this school

- Hunters Hill College caters for pupils aged 11 to 16 with social, emotional and mental health needs. All pupils attending the school are boys. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The previous headteacher left the school in August 2017. The school's deputy headteacher was the acting headteacher for two terms and became substantive in post from April 2018.

- A deputy headteacher and an assistant headteacher left the school in July 2016 and a new deputy headteacher joined in September 2016. Two assistant headteachers joined in April 2017.
- The school was located on two sites, but the majority of teaching, with the exception of the farm, motor vehicle and skills for working life provision, has been moved to the main school campus. Cropwood House is not currently in use.
- Around 83% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has residential provision, with 37 full-time equivalent places. Up to 75 pupils stay each week for one or more nights.
- The school uses a range of alternative provision and college provision including: Bournville College, South College, Envirohort, Southside Learning, Nova Training, Aston Villa School's Programme and Solihull College.
- The local authority's commissioned school improvement partner has worked with the school to broker further support from a regional school alliance.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of specified information on its website. The school has not evaluated its pupil premium strategy or established a new plan for the academic year. The school does not detail or evaluate its funding allocation for the Year 7 catch-up premium.

Information about this inspection

- After the initial inspection, Ofsted decided that it was necessary to return to the school to gather further evidence to complete the inspection as a result of concerns about the effectiveness of safeguarding.
- The lead inspector met with the school's senior leadership team to discuss the school's self-evaluation and development plan.
- Inspectors observed teaching across key stages 3 and 4. Most observations were conducted jointly with leaders. During observations, and in a separate meeting, inspectors and leaders reviewed work in pupils' books.
- A meeting was held with the chair of governors and the chair of the standards committee.
- The lead inspector met with the school's adviser. A representative from one of the school's improvement partners attended the final feedback meeting.
- Inspectors talked to pupils throughout the inspection. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- There were insufficient responses on Parent View to generate a response. The lead inspector reviewed findings from a parent questionnaire and feedback collated by the headteacher.
- Inspectors reviewed 42 responses from the staff survey and findings from the school's own questionnaires.
- Inspectors met with leaders of the following areas to discuss the school's effectiveness: attendance, safeguarding, behaviour, alternative provision, curriculum, careers guidance, transition, English, mathematics, computing and science.
- An inspector visited two alternative providers. These visits were made jointly with leaders.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Alison Cooper

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

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