

# More House School

## Independent Special School

### Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	936/6420
Unique Reference Number	125403
URN for social care	SCO13927
Inspection number	330290
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Linda Kelsey HMI
Social care inspector	Gavin Thomas

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended. The inspection of boarding was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 08456 404040

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.

## Information about the school

More House School is an independent approved residential and day special school for 327 boys between the ages of eight and 18 years with specific learning difficulties and /or speech and language difficulties. The majority of pupils are from White British ethnic backgrounds; none are children looked after by a local authority. There are 105 pupils in residence at the school. The school is a Catholic foundation, but is not closely affiliated with the diocese.

Many pupils have statements of special educational needs. The school offers residential, day and extended school care and after school clubs. Some of its pupils have had disruptions to their education and history of non-attendance at maintained or special schools. They are taught in small groups and have access to a range of professionals such as therapists, and boarding staff. The school has been inspected previously.

The school aims to meet the pupils' specific needs on an individual basis in order to enable them to access the widest possible curriculum and to maximise their potential.

## Evaluation of the school

More House provides an outstanding quality of education for its pupils. This is because teaching and assessment are outstanding and everyone knows what the needs of each individual are and ensures that these are met well. The quality of the boarding at More House is also outstanding.

Pupils have developed an excellent attitude to school life and their attendance at school is good. This is a good improvement on what some of their experiences have been before coming to this school. They enjoy being at school and say that the school helps them when they have problems and gives them suggestions to work out how to solve them. Pupils are actively encouraged to engage in their own learning, for example by talking about their preferred learning style. As a result, they have a

growing confidence to socialise with each other and a belief in their own abilities to do well. They leave the school better prepared for their future education and adult lives than would have been originally forecast for them. The quality of care, welfare and guidance for students is outstanding; behaviour is exemplary. The quality of the accommodation is outstanding and very well adapted to meet the needs of all the pupils. The school meets all of the regulations and has addressed well the recommendations from the last inspection.

## Quality of education

The school provides an outstanding curriculum which meets the needs of all pupils, many of whom have statements of special educational needs for learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Schemes of work show plans which will challenge pupils as individuals. Each pupil has an individual education plan and timetables are designed around each pupil's specific needs. The teachers' planning and the organisation of groups are organised in a way which enables pupils with similar learning styles to work and learn together and build on prior knowledge and understanding.

The curriculum is rich and varied with off-site residential visits and evening and weekend programmes for boarders. This results in pupils becoming well-adjusted individuals with high levels of self esteem. This fact is much appreciated by parents who are extremely positive about what the school has achieved for their sons. As one said, 'it is an exceptional school with exceptional staff'. As a result, many pupils choose to go onto higher education, an aspiration many would not have had before they started at the school. Pupils are taught life skills including courses on healthy living, how to stay safe, how to study and how to look after themselves as independent adults once they leave the school. Many of the older pupils are involved in either voluntary work or summer holiday jobs which enable them to appreciate what it is like in the world of work. Pupils are offered a range of choices that they can make at the age of 16 which include working, training or further education.

Pupils make outstanding progress from below average starting points when they join the school. Many have met with difficult experiences at previous schools but demonstrate outstanding attitudes to learning because lessons set by teachers have high expectations and are very well planned and resourced. Pupils are developing their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills exceptionally well. They can take part in a science investigation and use equipment with great confidence. Some of the art, design and drama work is of a very high quality. Pupils know how to stay fit and well and join in team games and sports, competing with outside schools.

There are extremely good relationships established between pupils and teachers which encourage outstanding behaviour and support very positive attitudes. All teachers are skilled at challenging pupils to do their best and overcome their difficulties. They use good teaching techniques such as plenary sessions, 'hot seating', role play and character referencing to interest and motivate pupils in

lessons. Pupils are developing very good skills in art, drama, English and mathematics. Pupils with greatest difficulties in learning are given special tuition in how to improve their listening and concentration skills so that they can become better learners. This is a highly effective approach that helps pupils outstandingly well.

Assessment on entry and through the school is thorough and each pupil is monitored individually and tested at the end of Key Stage 4 and again in sixth form examinations if they choose to. The results here show that pupils make outstanding academic progress over the time spent at school. Pupils do particularly well in their GCSE examinations and in 2008 72% gained five good grades, a remarkable achievement. At the end of term their progress is reviewed and shared with their parents and funding local authority, if appropriate. Annual reviews of pupils' progress are carried out on all pupils. The sharing of information between teaching and boarding staff is also excellent ensuring that all staff know the individual needs of all the pupils at the school and can give them their best support and guidance.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The excellent extra-curricular provision, combined with outstanding teaching, in an inclusive family atmosphere, encourages pupils to attend well and enjoy their time at More House. The school provides pupils with a good grounding in public services and institutions in England; an ethos of internationalism underpins the work of the school. Pupils benefit from involvement in a range of charity work, including the support of Shia school in Tanzania. 'Flexi Friday' provides excellent access to activities such as the 'Preparation for Life Programme' and the Young Enterprise Scheme where pupils gain a good insight into financial issues that will impact in later life. Although work experience no longer forms part of the school curriculum, pupils are encouraged to gain this experience during the summer vacation. There is a strong sense of community involvement. Many pupils participate in performances for the local community. Behaviour is outstanding because pupils show respect for one another, their teachers and all other adults and demonstrate self-discipline. This makes a positive contribution to the exceptional progress they make. Pupils are charming, polite and excellent ambassadors for More House.

### Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's attention to the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is outstanding. Comprehensive policies and procedures are in place to safeguard pupils' safety and welfare. All staff have regular training to keep up to date with child protection matters. Fire procedures and risk assessments for educational visits are robust and pupils feel safe in and around school. First aid policies and procedures are well organised and pupils with 'at risk' medical conditions are identified before starting at the school. Sporting activities are a regular feature, although boys comment on a

lack of competitive fixtures with other schools. Catering facilities are excellent and provide pupils with opportunities to make healthy choices from an extensive menu.

The headteacher and his staff are committed to promoting and encouraging communication through the school council and there are many examples of where pupils' requests have been responded to, for example, the provision of improved toilet facilities. Pupils' pre-inspection questionnaires showed overwhelming support for the school, painting a very positive picture. One response saying 'All teachers are kind' represented the views of the vast majority.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school keeps the required single, central register and checks all staff to ensure their suitability to work with children.

### School's premises and accommodation

The school has been imaginative in the way in which it has extended and developed its site and premises so that it provides an attractive learning environment. Boarding houses are all in a good state of decoration and excellent use is made of all areas for teaching and after-school activities. The school's extensive school site has some difficult terrain and the school's disability access plan takes this into account. All new buildings and toilet facilities have appropriate access for all.

### Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides extensive information for parents, both on entry and as their sons progress through each school year. Members of staff are readily available to deal with any queries. The headteacher takes personal responsibility for each boy's academic review, whilst maintaining close contact with families. Parents receive regular written reports about their sons' progress and consultation meetings take place both formally and informally. Those who responded to the parental pre-inspection questionnaire expressed overwhelming satisfaction with all aspects of their sons' school lives.

### Procedures for handling complaints

The school has full procedures in place for dealing with complaints. These are available to parents on request.

### Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The school's overall management structure and the strong sense of community that exists within the school contribute effectively to the protection and promotion of the boys' welfare. Ofsted received 91 survey responses from boys at this school who indicate that they are well cared for. They know how to make a complaint or who to

talk to if they are unhappy. The boys indicate that they are well looked after if they feel ill. They are familiar with house rules and can easily contact family and friends. Very positive comments were made regarding relationships with staff.

There is excellent provision at the school for identifying, managing and reviewing both the routine and specific health needs of the boys. Excellent, well devised health care plans, underpinned by applicable policies and procedures, ensure that their wellbeing is promoted. Medical consents from parents and an abundance of staff who are suitably qualified in first aid ensure that emergency treatment can be given. Efficient systems are in place to manage and administer medication with related records maintained appropriately. The school nurses provide excellent support to boys, both on a physical and emotional level. Boys commented most favourably about the care and support given by the nursing staff. Boys' health is enhanced by the school's commitment to healthy eating and the provision of nutritious and varied meals. Staff have an excellent understanding of the individual boys' needs and the many special dietary requirements are well catered for. Continuous consultation with boys ensures that their likes and dislikes are incorporated within the extensive menus. There are robust systems in place for protecting the boys from harm and neglect. Staff attend regular training on child protection. In addition, two of the senior management team are dedicated child protection officers.

Stringent processes are in place for managing behaviour. These include the effective use of the 'Behaviour for Learning' system. There are excellent examples of how this system enables boys to work through issues and difficult situations in a positive way. Good quality training is provided for staff on behavioural management. The boys say they feel safe at this school. One boy in particular said they are well looked after. The boys respond well to behavioural management systems, in particular, the reward system which is well received and celebrated. Bullying is not tolerated. Anti-bullying is promoted transparently throughout. The boys have access to an independent visitor and the school's chaplain. Details of external organisations, such as Childline, are displayed near payphones in boarding houses. The quality of information issued to the boys and involvement in initiatives, such as Anti-Bullying Week, are exceptional. Good systems are in place for ensuring that staff employed are suitable. Overall health and safety systems are outstanding. Relevant policies and procedures are in place and subject to periodic review. Health and safety checks are very well maintained. The boys are familiar with key health and safety processes such as fire safety procedures.

The school's residential provision is highly active in supporting the boys' educational progress at the school. This is achieved with the assistance of an enthusiastic and dedicated staff team. The management and provision of after school activities, prep and learning opportunities are unquestionable. The school exceeds expectations for providing extra curricular activities. External opportunities include Duke of Edinburgh award programmes. The boys are thrilled with additional programmes which are available. These include popular activities such as rifle shooting, judo, golf and yoga.

The methodology used for engaging boys in consultation processes about their welfare and wellbeing is extraordinary. All boys are highly respected as individuals. This takes into account methods of communication and ability to contribute to group discussions and decision making processes. A document titled 'Personal Profile' is maintained by the boys. This is an excellent example of how each boy could track and monitor their development over time. The record is devised over the course of a term and includes key topics with supporting goals such as friendships, academic work, sport, extra-curricular activities, expressive arts and other areas. One boy said they like having stories read to them by the house mistress. Admissions procedures are very thorough. Good quality records are maintained which demonstrates the effectiveness of these procedures. The sixth form boys benefit from the school's commitment to developing learning opportunities for independent living. Recent initiatives include the implementation of an enrichment programme. Activities include cultural visits, work experience, careers advice, social engagements and a range of in house clubs. In addition, staffing resources now include the recent appointment of a post sixth form liaison officer who boys can contact once they have moved on from the school. A dedicated programme for sixth formers is in place and developing. This covers key provisions such as a pastoral programme, boarding, extra support and academic studies.

The overall quality and improvement to boarding provisions is exemplary. One boy is of the opinion that boarding provisions at this school are fantastic. The school is forward thinking in its approach towards the development of the premises. Boarders are enjoying the benefits of a recent extensive refurbishment programme, in particular, St Anthony's boarding house. This includes additional boarding provisions for the older age group, replacement bedroom furniture, replacement doors and windows and redecoration throughout. The grounds of the school are maintained to a very high standard. Recreational provisions are continuously expanding. Out-buildings are well resourced and essential to the boys' continuous learning. One boy describes the school as being awesome. Another boy said this is the best school he has been to.

All boys, parents and significant others are well informed of life at the school. For example, the school's prospectus is widely available and a welcome pack is issued to all boys on admission. Key information is accessible via the school's website. Effective systems are in place for parents to keep abreast of their sons' progress via restricted access to the school's database. The boys are thriving as a result of the support they receive from experienced, well qualified and dynamic staff teams. These include two well balanced academic and boarding staff teams. Both teams are consistent and persistent for ensuring the best outcomes for all boys. There are excellent training opportunities available to the staff team. Sound systems are in place for the management and supervision of staff. The deployment of staff ensures maximum safety of the boys at all times. Rotas are well planned and daily activities are well managed and supervised. Effective procedures are in place for ensuring the safety of boys at night. These include sleeping-in and on-call arrangements. All boys and staff benefit from a very dedicated and strong senior management team. The



Head of Boarding is suitably qualified and has extensive experience. A very high percentage of boys indicated via survey responses that they have an excellent relationship with the Head of Boarding. All boys through discussion indicated that they have very good relationships with all staff employed by the school. Self evaluation and monitoring systems are effective. An annual review of the school's performance is carried out. The management of the school is overseen and monitored by a well established governing body. These monitoring processes include outcomes for boarders.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

The school meets the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.

## What the school could do to improve further

There are no recommendations.

## Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education	✓			
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs	✓			
How well pupils make progress in their learning	✓			

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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### The quality of boarding provision

Evaluation of boarding provision	✓			
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## School details

Name of school	More House School
DCSF number	936/6420
Unique reference number	125403
Type of school	Day and residential special school for pupils with specific learning difficulties and /or speech and language difficulties.
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1939
Age range of pupils	8 -18 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	326
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	1
Number of boarders	105
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	130
Annual fees (day pupils)	£10,800-15,150
Annual fees (boarders)	£17,400-23,550
Address of school	Moons Hill Frensham Farnham Surrey GU10 3AP
Telephone number	01252 792303
Fax number	01252 797601
Email address	schooloffice@morehouseschool.co.uk
Headteacher	Mr B Huggett
Proprietor	The Gard'ner Memorial Ltd
Reporting inspector	Linda Kelsey HMI
Dates of inspection	1-2 October 2008