

Northeast Manor School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Kevin Whatley / Elaine Southall
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Date of last inspection	12 December 2006

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Northease Manor is an independent co-educational special school for pupils aged between 10 and 17. The school offers education and boarding provision for able and potentially able pupils who have specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia. Approximately 80 pupils currently attend the school with around half of these being weekly boarders. The school is situated near Lewes in East Sussex being contained within its own grounds in a beautiful rural setting. Many of the buildings date from the Tudor period with newer structures being constructed to complement the overall ambience of the school. The main boarding facilities are provided in three separate parts of the school. The two boys boarding houses are situated in the main house and a nearby purpose built residential unit, with the girls accommodation is situated in a separate purpose built boarding house.

Summary

The inspection took place over the course of two days during the autumn term. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors. The school ensures the physical and emotional health care needs of boarders are met in a comprehensive and holistic manner. Excellent medical care is provided and boarders have their individual issues addressed in a sensitive and professional fashion. Boarders are kept safe from the risk of harm or abuse and staff are knowledgeable in respect of key child protection matters. Incidents of bullying, negative and challenging behaviours are rare. The need for physical intervention is minimal, whilst inappropriate behaviours are suitably addressed. Excellent support and guidance is provided to boarders to attain their educational goals. Boarders are encouraged to voice their concerns, wishes and requests. Parents and carers are suitably consulted in the placement of their children and are kept very well informed of their progress. The senior management team support and encourage boarding at the school.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

N/A

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils who board at the school are provided with a varied choice of food that is prepared using fresh ingredients. The main meal of the day is at lunchtime, when the whole school eats together. Boarders also have a hot meal at supper. Fresh fruit and vegetables are offered as part of balanced and well planned menus. Boarders felt food at the school is plentiful and tasty. The health needs of the boarders are carefully identified through detailed information given by their parents when they join the school. All boarders return home at weekends, and the matron and care staff liaise closely with parents in managing their health needs. Parents retain responsibility for routine health issues and optical and dental checks. Staff at the school support the boarders in visiting local healthcare services for emergency treatment in agreement with parents. Boarders stated that they have their health care needs met. It is clear that the medical centre offers boarders a holistic and caring setting. Pupils are provided with excellent specialist individual support and guidance to address their particular emotional, behavioural and learning

needs. This includes the services of two counsellors, a speech and language therapist and an occupational therapist. The administration of medication is monitored and safely stored to ensure that the boarders' health is protected. All records are up to date, detailed and in good order. The robust systems in place at the school, with the Matron and care staff working closely with parents, ensure that the health needs of the young people who board at the school are met.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Confidential information is suitably stored, whilst boarders said they have their privacy respected. The school provides suitable information to ensure boarders know how to make a complaint. Complaints are addressed in a robust and sensitive fashion and are very low. Boarders said their views and concerns are listened to. One complaint had been recorded in the concerns book and did not contain an outcome. No complaints have been received by Ofsted since the last inspection. Boarders are adequately protected from the risk of harm or abuse. Clear policies, procedures and training, guide staff in child protection matters. Robust recruitment practices ensure all required checks are completed prior to staff being employed. All adults living on the school site have appropriate checks completed. School staff undertake child protection training with the head of care also being the child protection co-ordinator. Boarding staff are aware of key child protection issues and protocols. Boarders noted that there are no major issues in regard to being bullied and staff clearly know what matters to be aware of. Boarders said they felt safe at the school. No child protection matters have been reported since the last inspection. The school do not currently have a central log for recording child protection issues. Boarders are encouraged to develop and maintain appropriate models of behaviour. Positive actions and attitudes are appropriately rewarded. Boarding staff were observed applying consistent and appropriate responses to the behaviour of pupils. Boarders state they understand the school ethos and culture and feel it is fair. Parents are consulted in respect of what they feel should be acceptable behaviour. Appropriate boarding related sanctions are in place and these are used sparingly. Negative behaviours which occur during school time are addressed within school and are not carried into boarding periods. Staff record boarding related sanctions appropriately, though there is not a central log. Episodes of violent, aggressive or absconding behaviour are minimal as is the need for physical intervention. There is no central log for recording absconding behaviour. Staff are trained in an appropriate model of physical restraint; though the school's policy on the use of physical intervention does not relate explicitly to the model being adopted. No boarders raised concerns that the use of physical intervention was inappropriate or concerning. Boarders and staff alike are generally well protected from environmental risks. Suitable health and safety checks are carried out with regular fire safety, gas and electrical tests and servicing being completed. Activities outside of the school are suitably risk assessed, though not all areas of the living environment are specifically risk assessed.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Excellent individual support and guidance is provided to boarders to assist them to engage fully in their education. Pictorial timetables are displayed in each boarding house to assist pupils who may have difficulty comprehending written text alone. Clear and regular communication between the education and boarding departments ensure that boarders have their individual issues addressed in a holistic and consistent fashion. The ethos of the school means boarding

is highly valued with a 24 hour curriculum supporting boarders to attain their educational goals. Boarding staff have considerable insight into the needs of the pupils in their care and respond to such needs appropriately. Boarders feel they can talk to staff whenever they need to. The school provides considerable professional input for boarders who require specialist support or guidance. Open and regular communication with parents ensures the individual and changing issues of each boarder are known and planned for.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Boarders are a valued and integral aspect of everyday school life. Boarders feel they are adequately listened to. Such groups as the school council and indeed the boarders' forum allow pupils the opportunity to express their views, concerns and wishes in a formal manner. A cross section of boarders are voted onto each forum by their peers with participation being seen in a positive fashion. It is clear that the school promotes the involvement of boarders in the day to day running of boarding provision. Boarders have their needs suitably assessed and recorded. Stand alone care plans are not used by the school. The educational, emotional and social care needs of each boarder are contained within individual education and health plans. These plans when coupled with the boarders' main file provide sufficient assessment and planning to address the needs of each pupil boarding at the school. Boarders say they have their particular needs met. Boarders are assisted to maintain contact with families and friends. Many boarders have their own mobile phones which they can use after the school day. In addition an adequate number of payphones are provided for boarders. Boarders go home at weekends.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

School uniform is worn during lesson time with boarders being able to change into their own casual clothing the rest of the day. Boarders benefit from living within a very clean, tidy and hygienic environment. Boarding houses are well maintained offering a good standard of décor and furnishings. Each boarding house is gender and age specific, though all girls who board at the school live together. Boarders can choose to personalise their own bedroom areas and many do so with posters and photos. Boarding areas are furnished in a young person friendly manner with sufficient personal and communal space available including a small gym and games room. Boarders have use of the games room in the evening, though some of the items found here, such as the pool table and television, are somewhat old and worn. The boarding houses offer an adequate number of toilet and bathing facilities which protects the privacy of pupils.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Detailed information is readily available which outlines the aims and objectives of the school in general with particular emphasis on boarding provision. Each boarder is given a pupil handbook that contains all relevant information such as the complaints procedure and anti bullying policy along with the schools overall ethos. Pupil guides are produced in a joint pictorial and written format to assist those with literacy difficulties. Boarders feel they are given good and accurate information about the school before they board there. Consistent, open and regular communication across the whole school ensures the needs of each boarder are well known and responded to. Boarding staff are experienced, committed and caring and understand the needs of each pupil in their care. Relevant training and professional development opportunities are

made available to boarding staff. Boarding staff feel they are very well supported in their roles by the head of care and head of school. The manner in which the school is managed supports the boarding culture and ensures pupils who live at the school are seen as a pivotal part of Northease Manor. The head of care has a comprehensive understanding of boarding issues and of the boarders themselves. It is clear that all aspects of boarding provision are suitably monitored, though no defined written monitoring record is kept.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the recording of complaints and concerns is consistent and where appropriate separately documented (NMS 4.3)
- establish a centralised process for recording child protection matters (NMS 5.4)
- establish a centralised process for recording matters where boarders may leave the school without permission (NMS 8.6)
- establish a centralised process for recording matters when boarding sanctions are given (NMS 10.9)
- ensure the school's policies and procedures regarding the use of physical intervention relate solely to the method of restraint currently being adopted (NMS 10.2)
- ensure a new environmental risk assessment is completed (NMS 26.3)
- consider developing the games room facilities and environment (NMS 13.1)
- establish a clear and obvious record for the in house monitoring of boarding provision (NMS 32.2)

Annex

Annex A

National Minimum Standards for residential special school

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children live in a healthy environment and the health and intimate care needs of each child are identified and promoted (NMS 14)
- children are provided with healthy, nutritious meals that meet their dietary needs (NMS 15)

Ofsted considers 14 the key standard to be inspected.

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children's privacy is respected and information about them is confidentially handled (NMS 3)
- children's complaints are addressed without delay and children are kept informed of progress in their consideration (NMS 4)
- the welfare of children is promoted, children are protected from abuse, and an appropriate response is made to any allegation or suspicion of abuse (NMS 5)
- children are protected from bullying (NMS 6)
- all significant events relating to the protection of children in the school are notified to the appropriate authorities by the head of the school or designated person (NMS 7)
- children who are absent without authority are protected in accordance with written guidance and responded to positively on return (NMS 8)
- children are assisted to develop appropriate behaviour through the encouragement of acceptable behaviour and constructive staff responses to inappropriate behaviour (NMS 10)
- children live in schools that provide physical safety and security (NMS 26)
- there is careful selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers, and monitoring of visitors to the school to prevent children being exposed to potential abusers (NMS 27)

Ofsted considers 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 26 and 27 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- the school's residential provision actively supports children's educational progress at the school (NMS 12)
- children have ample opportunity to engage in purposeful and enjoyable activities within the school and in the local community (NMS 13)
- children receive individual support when they need it (NMS 22)

Ofsted considers 12 and 22 the key standards to be inspected.

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way the school is run; no child should be assumed to be unable to communicate their views (NMS 2)
- children have sound relationships with staff based on honesty and mutual respect (NMS 9)
- children experience planned and sensitively handled admission and leaving processes (NMS 11)

- children have their needs assessed and written plans outline how these needs will be met while at school (NMS 17)
- in accordance with their wishes children are able and encouraged to maintain contact with their parents and families while at school (NMS 20)

Ofsted considers 2, 17 and 20 the key standards to be inspected.

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children can wear their own clothing outside school time, can secure personal requisites and stationery while at school, and are helped to look after their own money (NMS 16)
- children about to leave care are prepared for the transition into independent living (NMS 21)
- children live in well designed and pleasant premises, which provide sufficient space and facilities to meet their needs
- children live in accommodation which is appropriately decorated, furnished and maintained to a high standard, providing adequate facilities for their use (NMS 24)
- children are able to carry out their personal care in privacy and with dignity (NMS 25)

Ofsted considers the key standard to be inspected.

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- children, parents, staff and placing authorities have access to a clear statement of the school's care principles and practice for boarding pupils (NMS 1)
- children's needs, development and progress are recorded to reflect their individuality and their group interactions (NMS 18)
- there are adequate records of the staff and child groups of the school (NMS 19)
- children are looked after by staff who understand their needs and are able to meet them consistently (NMS 28)
- children are looked after by staff who are trained to meet their needs (NMS 29)
- children are looked after by staff who are themselves supported and guided in safeguarding and promoting the children's welfare (NMS 30)
- children receive the care and services they need from competent staff (NMS 31)
- children and staff enjoy the stability of efficiently run schools (NMS 32)
- the governing body, trustees, local authority, proprietor or other responsible body monitors the welfare of the children in the school (NMS 33)

Ofsted considers 1, 28, 31 and 32 the key standards to be inspected.