

Northeast Manor School

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

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Inspector	Liz Driver

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

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, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{1,2}

Information about the school

Northeast Manor is an independent co-educational special school for pupils aged between 10 and 17 years of age. The school is situated near Lewes in East Sussex. The school offers education and boarding provision for able and potentially able pupils who have a range of specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder, dyscalculia, and social and communication difficulties. Currently there are approximately 100 pupils who attend the school of which 40 are boarders; boarding is provided on a weekly basis only. The last inspection was carried out in March 2011.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

² www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	outstanding
Outcomes for residential pupils	outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	good
Residential pupils' safety	outstanding
Leadership and management of the residential provision	outstanding

Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision at Northease Manor School is outstanding. Children enjoy the experience of boarding and make extremely good progress in their personal, social, and educational development.
- Provision for safeguarding the welfare of residential pupils is outstanding. The safety and well-being of children is paramount with robust policies and procedures supporting staff. There is a trained and experienced designated member of staff taking the lead responsibility for safeguarding.
- Children feel safe within the residential provision, bullying is not identified as a problem by the residential pupils.
- Relationships are both respectful and professional: children generally mix well and gain greatly from the activities on offer after school time. Pupils and staff show a high regard to different cultures and backgrounds.
- The school cares very well for the children's health with sensitive and caring staff who are appropriately trained.
- The food provision is varied, healthy and of a very high quality and enjoyed by the children. Specific cultural dietary requirements are met.
- The very good quality of the premises is continually being upgraded with development plans for the future.
- The boarding houses run extremely smoothly on a daily basis and children receive sensitive and professional care and support from staff.
- The strong leadership of the school has a positive impact on both staff and children. Close support from the governors ensures all aspects of the school are

regularly monitored.

- The three recommendations made at the last inspection have been addressed with an excellent outcome for the boarders. At this inspection two national minimum standards are not fully met, however they do not present having a significant effect on the wellbeing or safety of the residential pupils.
- There are numerous opportunities for children to contribute their views, and know they are taken seriously.

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outcomes for are outstanding. The experience of boarding enables children to develop independence and social skills in line with their individual needs and capabilities. By the time they leave, children are able to make informed choices and are prepared for post-16 years of age life choices in relation to their individual capabilities and skills. Many go onto higher education, others into employment or training. The school continues to develop individual targets for children and associated processes to evidence their individual achievements. This will work alongside increasing the opportunities for students to learn life skills. When fully developed, this will show the impact and progress of support being given in boarding time. Children enjoy very positive, constructive, and mutually respectful relationships with staff. Children feel that bullying is not a problem within the residential provision and commented that any minor incidents are quickly addressed with excellent outcomes. Parents also feel there are no bullying concerns.

Children feel very well looked after when they are ill, and spoke very positively about the welfare officer who is easily accessible. Children comment that they have adults they can talk to about things worrying them and feel they are listened to and helped. Parents are extremely happy with the progress their children make in regards to both education and social skills learnt at the school. The boarding houses have a strong community spirit: boys and girls of all ages integrate well and form strong friendships. There is an atmosphere of calmness which enhances children's wellbeing. Children clearly enjoy the wide range of activities on offer after school which helps them to integrate and develop new skills and try new experiences. Boarders behave well. They are extremely polite and well mannered, respect one another and the staff who look after them. They generally accept as fair the sanctions which result from any misdemeanours the number of which is very low due to high standards of behaviour.

Avenues such as the school council and the boarding forum enable young people to express their views. They feel they are listened to and understand the reasoning as to why some of their suggestions cannot be implemented. Where possible the school responds positively to suggestions and ideas such as providing specific rooms for computer games in the evenings, improving suppers, and introducing a tuck shop. Any worries or concerns raised by children are taken very seriously with quick and

robust action taken if indicated.

The catering department adds significantly to children's health status with very healthy menus and much fresh food on offer daily. Boarders enjoy the meals very much and feel they are very fortunate to have such good food. Children acknowledge there have been improvements to suppers. The large amount of outdoor space enables activities, such as football, where young people are encouraged to keep fit. The school's health care arrangements are highly effective in promoting and maintaining their physical and emotional health. Children enjoy their time at the school; they engaged positively in the inspection and raised no areas of concerns.

Quality of residential provision and care

The quality of the residential provision and the care provided for residential pupils is good. Children benefit from sensitive pastoral care and there are effective arrangements for providing support to those new to the residential provision. Communication across the school is very good and contributes very successfully to a coordinated approach to working with individual pupils. The links between care and academic staff are good and the care team provide good support for the personal, social and academic development of residential pupils. The care staff team are enthusiastic and skilful at working with the varying needs of the children. They are highly supported by the head of boarding who very closely oversees their work on a daily basis.

Children's health is protected and promoted well by very good healthcare arrangements. Children are registered at a local medical centre and have access to a male or female doctor and other healthcare professionals as needed. Health arrangements are very well organised with clear records kept and regularly updated. There are good arrangements for the safe storage and administration of all prescribed medication and homely remedies. Staff are trained to administer medicines safely. The current consent forms used does not identify consents to administer first aid. Detailed records are kept of all accidents and first aid administered. The school does not have in place consents from parents for the administration of first aid although they do for other medical interventions. Appropriate healthcare plans are in place for boarders with conditions such as allergies and diabetes, and these are implemented sensitively. Children confirm that they are cared for appropriately when they feel unwell and that there are very good facilities and effective procedures for checking on young people who are ill. The school's programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is appropriate to the setting and young people it cares for. Guidance from external agencies and invited speakers covering topics such as smoking, drugs and alcohol abuse and sexual health is gained.

There are well-grounded systems in place that ensures children's achievements are celebrated. This covers academic, behavioural and social achievements. Children are encouraged to participate in their annual reviews and to express their own views and

opinions.

Children are provided with a high standard, nutritious, balanced and varied diet. The school caters appropriately for their religious and cultural needs, vegetarian preferences and any special diets. Food is in plentiful supply and of excellent quality. Children have ready access to drinks, fruit and other snacks. Catering staff are appropriately trained and qualified. The Catering department has received the highest award from the local environmental health department. Mealtimes are conducted in a social, relaxed and congenial atmosphere. Children are very happy with the range, quality and quantity of food provided, with many going back for seconds and very little waste being observed.

Boarders benefit from living in a pleasant and well-maintained environment. Boys and girls are accommodated in separate houses. Recent improvements include redecoration and refurbishment with the last house due to be completed later this year. New furniture has added to the homely and modern feel of the houses. Young people are able to personalise areas of their bedrooms. There are suitable facilities to enable organised and private study to take place, generally in `prep` time with good computer access. The residential environment and the wider school premises provide a safe and secure environment for residential pupils. A maintenance team is employed to make sure that any maintenance issues are dealt with quickly.

Children can easily contact friends and family. They have their own mobile telephones for use after school time and can also access landline telephones in the boarding house. Internet access is available with safety blocks in place. The school is proactive in regards to cyber bullying with close monitoring and staff training around awareness. Contact details for children to contact the Children's Rights Director are not made available, although other help lines are notably visible.

Residential pupils' safety

The school makes excellent provision to safeguard boarders' welfare. Boarders feel safe and parents also confirmed they feel their children are protected from harm. The school operates a robust recruitment policy and allows only members of staff and volunteers for whom the necessary checks have been conducted to have contact with the boarders. The recruitment records are comprehensive with improved procedures in place to check gaps in employment as part of the vetting of staff. Protecting children has high priority and all staff have received up to date training at the appropriate level. The head of boarding is the designated child protection lead with the head teacher supporting him.

The school is proactive in raising awareness of bullying issues through its PSHE programme. All forms of bullying are taken seriously and prompt action is taken to eliminate it when it occurs, although there are very few incidents of bullying. There is a suitable anti-bullying policy, effectively implemented, which includes information on

cyber-bullying, harassment and racial discrimination. Children report that bullying is not a concern and say they feel safe in the boarding houses. Their parents confirm that they are confident that staff deal with it effectively.

Staff are skilled and successful in promoting positive developments in children's behaviour and in managing that which is challenging. Children enjoy excellent relationships with staff and feel fairly treated by them. Sanctions are rarely used and there have been no incidents of physical interventions within the residential provision since the last inspection. Recording formats are robust and plans in place to further develop which will enable the effectiveness of sanctions or physical interventions to be monitored.

Every effort is made to ensure that the school and boarding houses provide a safe environment. Children are protected from the risk of fire by effective fire safety precautions. Fire drills are held regularly in boarding time and all fire equipment is regularly checked. There is an appropriate health and safety policy. Risk assessments have been undertaken to minimise the risk to boarders who participate in sports and off-site activities and to help the young people understand and manage risk. Premises are secure. Buildings and equipment are checked regularly and well maintained. Recent upgrades to the water systems have taken place providing children with safe water temperatures, as identified at the last inspection. The last inspection also asked the school to ensure that all the findings of their fire risk assessment were implemented; this has also been addressed.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

Leadership and management of the school's residential provision is outstanding. The strong leadership and robust monitoring of the school's practices have enabled the school to continually develop its practices and procedures. The aims and objectives for residential children are very clearly stated and are being met successfully. The three recommendations made at the last inspection have been suitably addressed with very good outcomes. The school has a clearly defined development plan which covers boarding and runs through to 2014. The board of governors are supportive of the head teacher, her staff team and of her plans for the future.

The care staff team are young and enthusiastic and work very closely with the head of boarding. Links between the residential and educational provision are very good and care staff contribute significantly to the achievements of pupils, and to their personal and social development. Staffing levels enable the needs of boarders to be met at all times and there is an excellent programme of professional development which staff benefit from. Staff are supervised although they are not always recorded.

Monitoring of the school by an independent visitor is regular with reports submitted to the head teacher, head of boarding and governors for comment and action where indicated. All policies and procedures are reviewed regularly ensuring they remain up to date with changes in legislation and practices.

A wealth of information about the school and its boarding facilities is available for both children and parents. The rules of the boarding house are well understood and are operated consistently by boarding staff. There is careful attention to the promotion of equality. Diverse needs are catered for sensitively and this results in fair and equal treatment for all children and an atmosphere of tolerance and respect.

Individual case records are stored securely and provide a comprehensive overview of a child's time spent in the residential provision.

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.

- A child's file may include the information in Appendix 2 (Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards) - 'individual records'. (NMS 22.2)
- The school has, and implements, appropriate policies for the care of children who are unwell. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, administration of medicines and dealing with medical emergencies. The provision of accommodation for children who are unwell has regard to any requirements set out in regulations relating to school premises. (NMS 3.6)

What should the school do to improve further?

- continue to develop individual targets for children and associated processes to evidence their individual achievements. This will show the impact and progress of support being given in boarding time.
- continue to develop the recording of staff supervisions
- further promote the contact details of the Children Rights Director
- continue to develop and increase the opportunities for students to learn life skills

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



05/10/2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Northease Manor School

It was great to come and spend time with you all and carry out the inspection of the boarding at Northease Manor School.

I would like to say a big thank you for being so welcoming and for taking the time to speak with me and for completing the questionnaires.

I was particularly pleased to see how happy you are at the school and how much you enjoy the activities on offer. I was very impressed with the pizza's I saw being cooked and the film making in progress which I enjoyed watching.

It is clear that the staff care for you very well and that you enjoy the staff's input. I was pleased that you felt safe and protected at the school and also that you can talk to staff if you had a worry or concern. Its good that you do not experience any bullying and are respectful of each other.

You are provided with nutritious and very good quality food which you said you enjoy. I took on board that you felt the suppers had improved and continue to improve.

I did talk to the head teacher about the areas you talked to me about; the annoying press button showers, more xbox and play stations rooms and having a shared common room for girls and boys of all ages. The head teacher said she would respond to you about these suggestions.

Overall you are provided with an outstanding level of care; from health care to nutrition to activities through to the accommodation. Staff make sure you are safe and live in a safe environment. The school recruitment procedures means that checks are carried out to make sure staff are safe to care for you.

I wish you all the best for the school year ahead.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Driver