

Northeast Manor School

Northeast Manor School, Newhaven Road, Rodmell, LEWES, East Sussex, BN7 3EY

Inspection dates	13/05/2013 to 16/05/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Outstanding	1
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- This is a very well-run school that reflects upon practice with a view to improving outcomes for residential pupils.
- Residential pupils thrive in an environment where their individual vulnerabilities and strengths are recognised. Issues related to diversity and difference are celebrated and seen as an opportunity to learn from each other.
- The safety of residential pupils is promoted to a good standard and they report feeling safe living at the school.
- Staff are enthusiastic and strive to offer residential pupils different activities and experiences which increase their self-esteem and confidence to an excellent degree.
- Strong relationships and approachable members of staff enable residential pupils to be confident in expressing their opinions and also, confident that they are listened to.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

Information about this inspection

The school were notified of the inspection four hours before it commenced. The inspection lasted over a period of four days. Time was spent in the boarding provision. Lunchtime and evening meals were attended as well as activities. Residential pupils met with the inspector both formally and informally. Key members of staff were met as well as governors and parents. Contact was also made with the Local Authority Designated officer (LADO). Numerous records were examined.

Inspection team

Paul Taylor

Lead social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Northeast Manor is a residential special school for pupils aged between 10 and 17 years of age. The school is an independent co-educational establishment, which is situated near Lewes in East Sussex. The school offers educational 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. The school has four boarding houses, one of which is for girls and the remaining three are for boys. The school offers both full and flexi-boarding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consider how to increase the role of the independent listener.
- Ensure that the recording of bullying incidents includes how they have been resolved.
- Ensure that all sanctions are recorded in the promptly in the correct central recording system and not just in the boarding diaries.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupils enjoy their overall experience of living in the residential provision of the school and speak very positively about this. The positive experience helps them to learn and develop new social skills as well as to grow in confidence and develop their self-esteem. They receive sensitive care and support from a stable staff team. Staff ensure that they receive consistent routines and boundaries. Strong and very positive relationships are established between residential pupils and staff. One residential pupil said, 'I have friends now.' Comments made by parents regarding their children's progress included, 'my son has a future now', and 'this school has changed my son's life.'

The inclusive nature of the whole school community ensures that residential pupils partake in activities, education and social interactions in a safe and nurturing environment. This has led to remarkable progress for the majority of pupils.

Behaviour is of a high standard. Residential pupils are seen to be tolerant and supportive of each other. The atmosphere developed in the boarding areas is one of acceptance of each other's behaviours and that difference is to be enjoyed and celebrated.

Unanimously positive feedback was received from residential pupils about their boarding experience. Residential pupils benefit from having an excellent variety of activities which encourage their growth, confidence and enrich their life experiences.

Residential pupils have numerous opportunities to voice their opinions and to make their feelings known. They have formal forums such as the boarding council, as well as informal opportunities, such as meeting with governors, tutors and residential staff. Their views are able to influence choices in menus, activities and décor in the boarding areas. One residential pupil commented, 'they do take us seriously'. While the details of the independent listener are available to residential pupils, no one has approached her for a number of years. The school is considering how to develop the role to ensure that the independent listener is more actively involved in the residential pupils' lives.

Residential pupils benefit from having their emotional and physical health promoted to an excellent standard. They have all their medical needs met and receive support and input from medical professionals where needed; for example, from speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. They are encouraged to live active and healthy lifestyles and have numerous opportunities to do so.

Residential pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of life. There is a strong focus on residential pupils being "world ready". Programmes are developed at a rate with which individual residential pupils are able to cope, in line with their individual abilities and vulnerabilities. This means that they become more independent and develop confidence in their own abilities. For example, residential pupils are sensitively prepared to move on to college or in some cases, work experience.

Quality of residential provision and care

Outstanding

Excellent support is provided by a committed team of residential staff. Pastoral support offered to residential pupils is extremely nurturing. One residential pupil reported, 'they have a connection with us'.

Excellent levels of communication are maintained across the school, which ensures that

information is shared easily between education and residential staff. Such an approach leads to residential pupils receiving consistent support, care and guidance in all areas of school life.

The school provides prospective residential pupils and their parents with good quality information about the level of care, support and services. The induction programme for new residential pupils ensures that they receive a level of support which helps them settle in successfully. Staff pay extra attention to new residential pupils to ensure that they are supported during what can be an anxious time. During this period, staff are conscientious in contacting parents in order to assure them of their child's safety and well being. One parent commented, 'communication is fantastic; my son's houseparent is just the best'.

The school provides residential pupils with an excellent range of enjoyable, extra-curricular and leisure activities, both within the school and in the wider community. They are fully consulted about which activities in which they wish to participate. The particular talents and interests of residential pupils are fully recognised and promoted. Furthermore, there are opportunities within the school's structure to develop their leadership and inter-personal skills; for example, when taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

When some residential pupils need extra support, there are specific plans in place. These plans are reviewed and discussed regularly to ensure that they are relevant and up to date. The plans enable residential and teaching staff to provide the support and supervision each pupil needs. This approach nurtures and encourages the residential pupils' growth and development.

A member of staff is responsible for the oversight of health matters and medication. This is done very effectively and with an eye for detail. The approach ensures that each residential pupil's needs are met rigorously and conscientiously. Recording of medication is subject to robust auditing and this ensures that each residential pupil receives the correct doses at the correct times. The school supports pupils and parents in accessing specialist professional help if that is needed; for example, from speech and language therapists or a counsellor.

Residential pupils are offered a healthy and varied menu. Healthy living is encouraged and this is provided by ensuring that young people have access to health care, encouraging exercise and a healthy diet. All individual dietary preferences are catered for with specialised menus and meals, whether these are based on religious, health, cultural or behavioural needs.

Residential pupils are currently accommodated in one of four boarding areas, based on gender. These are maintained to a good standard. Accommodation is homely, clean, tidy and comfortable. The school maintains a rolling programme of refurbishment and redecoration to improve the overall standard of accommodation. The houses provide residential pupils with suitable communal space, together with bathing and toilet facilities, to meet their individual and collective needs. Residential pupils are able to personalise their individual bedroom spaces.

Strong communication and close working arrangements are well established between residential staff and parents of residential pupils. These ensure that parents are kept fully informed about their child's progress and well-being. Residential pupils are able to contact their parents and loved ones using their own mobile telephones or the school telephones.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

The school has effective systems to ensure that residential pupils' safety is promoted to a good standard. Robust recruitment procedures are implemented effectively, which ensures that only adults who have been checked as being appropriate to work with children are employed.

The safeguarding of young people is a priority within the school. Designated persons are in place

to take the lead for child protection. All staff receive up-to-date training in safeguarding and display a sound understanding of key policies and protocols. Staff are proactive in promoting and protecting the welfare of young people and effectively implement the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. They are all aware of what procedures to follow in the event that they have concerns about a residential pupil's safety or well-being. Practice is reviewed and amended if there are incidents. This reflective approach ensures that staff awareness is heightened.

Bullying is taken seriously and residential pupils report that it is not a problem. One residential pupil commented, 'it is stopped before it turns into bullying'. Incidents of bullying and conflict are addressed, although how they have been resolved is not always clear in the staff team's recording system.

Residential pupils are seen to behave well and to respond to patient and clear staff direction. Specific behavioural management plans and strategies are put in place if individual pupils need them. Residential pupils report that the rules are clear and that they are treated fairly. Sanctions are not imposed very often and include early bedtimes and loss of free time. The school does not always record sanctions promptly. This can make monitoring difficult for senior members of staff.

The use of physical restraint is rare in the school. There have been no incidents where it has been used since the last inspection in September 2012.

The school has an appropriate policy and procedure in place and to use in the event that a pupil is missing or absent from the premises without permission. This has not had to be used for a number of years.

Residential pupils say that they feel safe living at the school and that they have a number of individuals to whom they can speak if they are worried about anything.

The safety of the school and boarding provision is monitored effectively. Fire precautions and fire equipment are checked on a regular basis. Fire drills are held regularly and all residential pupils receive an induction which includes fire safety and evacuation. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed, updated and endorsed after auditing by senior members of staff. These risk assessments include environmental checks as well as on-site and off-site activities. Strategies to manage risk and how to support young people are written into placement plans when needed. The premises are secure and the school has comprehensive systems in place to ensure that the safety of all pupils is maintained to a good standard.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Outstanding

The management and leadership of the school is outstanding. The ethos of the school promotes individuality and difference and nurtures a culture of mutual respect. Excellent standards of care practice demonstrate a clear determination to support young people to be the best they can be.

The head teacher is supported by a committed, well established and experienced management team. Her direct leadership provides a robust oversight and a clear vision for the future of the school as a whole. The residential provision is an integral component of life at the school and staff continually strive to enhance the care and welfare provided to residential pupils. One parent commented, 'they have a drive and enthusiasm which I haven't seen anywhere else.'

The boarding staff are very well led and supported. They meet regularly and are able to identify swiftly any residential pupils who need additional attention or support. All members of staff have appraisals and take part in training to ensure that they have the skills and competencies to deliver excellent standards of care. Daily meetings assess where additional staffing is needed in order to maintain the correct levels of supervision and safety.

The reflective approach used by the management team and board of governors ensures that boarding practice is assessed and monitored. Visits of the boarding areas by one of the governors on a half-termly basis further underpin the monitoring and evaluation. These visits include listening to comments made by residential pupils. As a result of this approach, improvements are made in areas such as décor, planning for the school's future and reviewing key policies such as safeguarding.

All key records, such as complaints, risk assessments and major sanctions are scrutinised and endorsed by senior members of staff, to ensure that they are current and relevant. There is an excellent method of reviewing and monitoring of policies and procedures which ensures that they are all up to date.

The whole staff team are acutely aware of the specific needs and behaviours, as well as vulnerabilities of all the pupils. They work closely to ensure that residential pupils feel valued and supported. Parents report as having excellent communication with the school. This is by both regular telephone contact and weekly reports to parents if needed.

Residential pupils and their parents are provided with appropriate information on how to complain. Residential pupils confirmed that they know how to complain and that there are always sufficient staff available who they feel comfortable talking to about any concerns or worries they may have. There have been no complaints received since the last inspection.

Residential pupils report feeling proud of their school and that they are listened to and respected. Some residential pupils said, 'we are taken seriously', and 'it's a safe place to live'.

Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed the safeguarding policy and outlined governors' roles in monitoring this area. Additionally, child protection is a fixed agenda item in governors' meetings. The school has also reviewed restraint training with a view to introducing new training. This is because the use of restraint is so rare; for example, there has been just one incident in two years.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	114645
Social care unique reference number	SC050107
DfE registration number	845/6028

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.

Type of school	
Number of boarders on roll	44
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	10 to 17
Headteacher	Mrs Carmen Harvey-Browne
Date of previous boarding inspection	25/09/2012
Telephone number	01273 472915
Email address	office@northeast.co.uk

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