

LVS Hassocks

London Road, Sayers Common, Hassocks, BN6 9HT

Inspection dates

17 June 2013

Reason for inspection

This was an unannounced emergency inspection visit at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) following concerns raised with the Department relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety in school, including issues related to behaviour and bullying.

The purpose of this inspection visit was to examine the school's compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards (England)) Regulations 2010.

Conclusions

The school has a written child protection policy, now made available to parents and carers on the school's website, but this does not follow guidance by including a definition of what constitutes abuse. All staff, including the designated person, are trained at the appropriate level in child protection, so that they know what expectations are. However, the designated person is not currently liaising effectively with the local safeguarding board, within reasonable timescales, to determine what action to take, and agree who should undertake investigations, when child protection or behaviour management concerns arise. All the required vetting checks on the suitability of staff have been completed and recorded in a single central register.

The anti-bullying policy does not comply with the latest central guidance. It does not identify the different signs and symptoms of bullying. Although the school has a suitable behaviour policy, this is not implemented effectively. In the sample of the lessons observed, management of behaviour was inadequate. Time was wasted and staff were not deployed effectively to support pupils' learning. Records of sanctions imposed upon pupils are suitably kept, but records of physical restraint are inconsistent and are often incomplete. Some physical restraints are not properly recorded. Senior leaders have signed off some physical restraint reports that do not contain a full description of events and/or outcomes. Pupils' views are insufficiently recorded. The management of the school checks the behavioural incidents, but these are not monitored effectively to identify any potential trend or patterns so as to bring about improvement in pupils' behaviour.

Policies and procedures for risk assessments on trips, the premises and resources are in place. Fire equipment and electrical appliances are checked regularly to ensure they are safely operational. Fire drills are undertaken. First aid and administration of medicines are well managed by suitably qualified personnel. The attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the regulations.

There is an omission in the school's written complaints policy in that it does not ensure that the records indicate whether the complaints were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing. In addition to this, the procedures outlined in the school's complaints policy have not always been followed and not all complaints have been fully investigated. The school has not, in practice, provided for a formal complaint to

be made in writing when parents and carers are not satisfied with the response to an informal complaint. It has not made provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint when parents and carers are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint. The school has not ensured that where there is a panel hearing of a written complaint, there is provision that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school. It has not made parents and carers aware that they may attend the panel hearing and, if they wish, be accompanied.

The school has amended its admission register in response to the findings of the last inspection, but this visit has found that the admission register does not record the pupils' next educational destinations, as required. The school now provides local authorities with an annual account of income and expenditure for each student placed by them.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school requires improvement and must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 ('the Regulations').

In order to meet the requirements in full, the school should:

- ensure that teaching utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly paragraph 3(h)
- ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State paragraph 7
- ensure that the behaviour policy is implemented effectively paragraph 9
- ensure that there are effective procedures to prevent bullying which have regard to the DfE guidance paragraph 10
- ensure that all incidents relating to physical restraints are recorded appropriately and acted upon to bring about improvement in pupils' behaviour paragraph 16
- ensure that the admission register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 paragraph 17
- update and republish on its website or send to parents and carers of its pupils (and of prospective pupils on request) a copy of the safeguarding policy paragraph 24(1)(c)
- ensure that the complaints procedure provides for a formal complaint to be made in writing if parents and carers are not satisfied with the paragraph 25(e)

response to an informal complaint

- ensure that, if the parents and carers are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint, there is provision for the establishment of a hearing before a panel appointed by the proprietor of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint paragraph 25(f)
- ensure that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, there is provision that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school paragraph 25(g)
- ensure that the procedure allows for parents and carers to attend the panel and, if they wish, to be accompanied paragraph 25(h)
- provide for written records to be kept of all complaints, indicating whether they were resolved at the preliminary stage or whether they proceeded to a panel hearing. paragraph 25(j)

Inspection team

Fatiha Maitland, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- LVS Hassocks is a residential special school located on a site that was formerly a religious retreat and convent set in very extensive grounds in a rural area near Brighton. The proprietors, the Licensed Trade Charity, have overseen a very extensive building and refurbishment programme that has enabled rapid expansion.
- The school was registered in April 2009 for a maximum of 50 pupils aged between 11 and 16 years. In 2010, the school was registered for eight to 19 year olds with a maximum number on roll of 58 pupils. In December 2011, the school received a material change visit and was allowed to accommodate 28 day pupils and 50 boarders.
- There are currently 70 pupils aged between eight and 19 years; of these, 42 are boarders and 28 are day pupils. There are nine pupils of primary school age and 49 pupils of secondary school age all of whom attend full time. There are also 12 post-16 pupils who are taught separately, including one pupil who attends the school on a part-time basis. One pupil is looked after.
- All pupils have special educational needs associated with autism and all have a statement of special educational needs. Twenty nine local authorities currently place pupils in the school.
- The school's aims are: 'to enable learners to realise their full potential and become independent individuals who are successful learners in charge of their learning; confident individuals in control of their feelings; responsible citizens in control of their actions'.
- The educational and residential provisions were inspected in October 2010, when the boarding provision was judged to be of outstanding quality. The education provided was judged to be good, but three regulations were unmet. The admission register was incomplete as it did not include an alphabetical index of all students, the address of the school last attended and an emergency telephone number of the parent(s) or carer(s) with whom the student normally resided. The school did not publish on its website, or send to parents and carers, a copy of its safeguarding children policy. The school did not provide local authorities with an annual account of income and expenditure for each student placed by them.

School details

Unique reference number	135930
Inspection number	424002
DfE registration number	938/6267
<p>This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.</p>	
Type of school	Independent
School status	Residential special school for autism and associated needs
Age range of pupils	8–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Number of part-time pupils	1
Number of boarders on roll	42
Proprietor	The Licensed Trade Charity
Chair	Annette King
Headteacher	Sarah Sherwood
Date of previous school inspection	December 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£30,810
Annual fees (boarders)	£46,200
Telephone number	01273 832901
Email address	sherwoods@lvs-hassocks.org.uk

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