

Philpots Manor School

West Hoathly, West Sussex, West Sussex, RH19 4PR

Inspection dates	17/06/2013 to 20/06/2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of residential provision and care	Good	2
Residential pupils' safety	Good	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- Residential pupils' well-being and safety is at the centre of practice. Residential staff clearly know and understand the needs of the young people in their care. Organisation of health provision is excellent.
- Residential pupils speak of feeling safe and of having their views heard and valued. Residential pupils make excellent progress during their time at the school, their confidence and self-esteem being promoted to a significant degree.
- There is a committed and experienced residential care team which is very well led and supported. They ensure that residential pupils have an excellent choice of meaningful and enriching activities.
- Residential pupils live in a comfortable and well maintained setting.
- Management of the school ensures that all aspects of practice are monitored with a view to improving the service and ensuring there is no complacency.

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. Time was spent in the boarding provision over all three days of the inspection. Inspectors attended lunchtime and evening meals as well as residential pupils' activities. Meetings took place with young people, senior members of staff, care staff, nurse, business manager, chef, independent visitor, a social worker, a member of the child and adolescent mental health service and a parent. Young people's views were sought by informal and formal meetings. Parents, police officers and local authority representatives were also contacted by telephone.

Inspection team

Paul Taylor	Lead social care inspector
Keith Riley	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

The school is an independent residential special school and further training centre. The school provides a holistic approach to education based upon the social and educational principles of Rudolf Steiner. It specialises in provision for children and young people of either sex between the ages of 9 and 19 years of age who have been unable to learn and develop within mainstream education. All students demonstrate some degree of emotional, behavioural, communication or learning difficulty. Students who board at the school live in small residential care groups in five separate houses within the grounds.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that communication between teaching staff and residential care staff is promoted further.
- Ensure that the boarding forum is formally introduced and implemented.
- Continue to seek residential pupils views on the quality of food.
- Consider improving access to Wi-Fi and internet for all residential pupils.
- Ensure that all strategies to manage risk, particularly with reference to residential pupils' behaviour, are formally evidenced and written down.
- Ensure that the school's process for recording of restraints is followed consistently.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Outstanding

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding. Residential pupils thrive in a nurturing and supportive environment. Some residential pupils have made remarkable progress during their time at the school, especially when bearing in mind their starting points. They report excellent relationships with their house parents. 'It's like a family' said one residential pupil. Another residential pupil reported that her houseparent 'is like a mum to us.'

Residential pupils benefit greatly from living in an environment where tolerance and understanding are embedded in the culture. An older residential pupil reports that one of the best things about the school is the diversity of everyone living there, he said 'They accept us for what we are.' Residential pupils live in an environment in which they are cared for by a multi-national staff team. This enables them to learn about different cultures and enriches their experience of residential living.

Residential pupils benefit greatly from a diverse and enriching selection of activities. Emphasis is placed on activities which encourage and enable the development of social skills and friendships. The reliance on computer games and games consoles as an activity is discouraged, with residential pupils being made aware of the great variety of stimulating activities available both in the school and in the wider community; including swimming, horse riding, art, music, weaving as well as football, basketball and walks in the surrounding countryside.

Residential pupils have their views and opinions valued and encouraged. They are all able to take part in regular meetings in their residential houses. As part of this process they are able to influence decisions in areas such as décor and activities. There is no larger forum which enables residential pupils from all the houses to meet each other in a formal setting to discuss their boarding experience. There are plans for this to be implemented.

Residential pupils benefit to a significant extent from the health care which they receive. Specialist support from health professionals is arranged for them and their immediate health needs are supported to an excellent standard by the school nurse. Residential pupils have their emotional well-being promoted to a particularly high standard.

All residential pupils have their transitions to adult life prepared for in an individual and detailed manner. They benefit significantly from careful preparation at a rate suitable to their vulnerabilities and level of understanding. As a result of this bespoke approach, residential pupils are being prepared for placements at college, university and work experience. This is an excellent outcome especially when considering some of the residential pupils' past histories and emotional fragility.

Quality of residential provision and care

Good

The quality of residential provision and care is good. Support offered to residential pupils by the care staff is sensitive, structured and nurturing. There are effective links between care staff and teaching staff, but these are not always consistently structured or built into the routine. Communication between teaching staff and residential staff is mostly based on being informed of specific events rather than how residential pupils are doing on a day-to-day basis. There is no formal handover time for residential staff or the care co-ordinator to teaching staff built into the daily routine. This has not had an impact on outcomes for the residential pupils, however, it would encourage improved communication between the two disciplines.

Care plans are of a good standard. It is clear that residential staff know the young people they

are caring for and what strategies and approaches to use to enable them to behave and develop. Strategies are developed by the residential staff and these are discussed with the residential pupils so that they feel involved in the process and can agree what works for them. Annual reviews clearly record each residential pupil's progress and development and include input from both parents and students. Parents report that contact with residential staff is very good.

Members of staff ensure that an excellent range of activities are available to the residential pupils. Having the residential pupils live at the school is seen as an opportunity to encourage wide interests and to use these to enrich their experience and develop their social skills and confidence.

Health needs are identified and met to an excellent standard. The school ensures that any specialist services are accessed for residential pupils. The school nurse is instrumental in monitoring specific health needs and in liaising with health care professionals to ensure that the pupils receive the service they need; for example, smoking cessation, speech and language therapy and appointments with child and adolescent mental health services. Additionally new systems introduced by the nurse, combined with training, has ensured that the administration and monitoring of medication has improved significantly.

The quality of the food meets residential pupils' needs including those with specific dietary requirements. They are offered a varied diet and menu; although residential pupils' opinion about the food is not particularly positive. Some residential pupils have said that the food has improved since they filled in questionnaires which sought their views. Additionally, residential pupils are able to prepare meals and snacks in their boarding areas and this ensures they have a good choice of food available.

Boarding areas are comfortable and well furnished. They are the subject of on-going refurbishment programmes and maintenance issues are responded to promptly. Residential pupils are encouraged to personalise their rooms with pictures and posters. This ensures that they invest in their living areas and feel that they have an influence on where they live.

Residential pupils have access to telephones as well as mobile telephones and can speak to their families and friends without any problems. Access to the internet is not consistent in all the boarding areas and this does mean that the residential pupils can have limited access to emails and other means of contact, such as video calls.

Residential pupils' safety

Good

Students' safety is good. Students are appropriately protected by staff application of robust child protection procedures and regular training for staff. The school works closely with the local safeguarding board in addressing any child protection issues, and they confirm that the school reports any concerns or allegations promptly. It is very clear that safeguarding the students is a priority for staff.

A robust recruitment process ensures that all prospective members of staff have the correct background checks carried out before they work at the school. Additionally, the school ensures that any adults living on site, but who do not work there, for example partners of staff, are also subject to background checks.

All incidents of bullying are dealt effectively and promptly. Residential pupils are aware that such behaviour is unacceptable and they trust staff to deal with any incidents when they occur. This includes incidents of cyber bullying or conflict which has arisen outside of school time, but impacted on dynamics and relationships when they return to school. Staff and residential pupils do not see bullying as an issue and any incidents are robustly examined and addressed.

There have been no incidents of residential pupils going missing from the school since the last inspection. There is an appropriate policy and procedure in place, which reflects the current locally agreed police protocol, and this can be implemented if the need arises.

Behaviour in the residential areas is of a good standard. Clear boundaries, routines and expectations ensure that residential pupils know what is acceptable and what is not. Unanimous feedback from residential pupils reports that they think the rules at the school are fair. Where sanctions are imposed, they are clearly recorded and the residential pupils are encouraged to have their views recorded on what they feel about the consequence for their actions.

The use of physical restraint in the residential areas is very rare. When this occurs a good record is made and the residential pupils are offered the opportunity to talk about what happened and have their views recorded. However, information about how issues have been resolved are not consistently recorded by the care co-ordinator. This does not impinge on the safety or well-being of the residential pupils, but it does not follow the school's agreed process.

Risk assessments of activities and the school environment are of an excellent standard and are conscientiously reviewed. While the individual needs and vulnerabilities of the residential pupils are known and protected to a high standard, risk assessments reflecting a specific form of behaviour for one residential pupil have not been completed. This did not affect the pupil concerned as all relevant parties are aware of triggers and strategies to ensure the pupil's safety. However, there is a reliance in this case on verbal communication rather than an evidenced formal risk assessment.

Arrangements for fire safety are rigorous and all residential pupils know what procedure to follow in the event of a fire.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Good

The leadership and management of the residential provision is good. The residential staff team share a common ethos and drive and are guided to a very high standard by the care co-ordinator. The underlying principles of the school are clearly contained in the prospectus, website and in the staff handbook. This ensures that all members of staff are aware of the structure, expectations and practice in the school.

Management of the school is reflective. Close scrutiny of the school's performance is achieved by senior members of staff, particularly the education and care co-ordinators. This evaluation of practice ensures that the school is constantly looking to improve on performance and outcomes. Additionally, regular reports written after visits from an independent visitor, give extra impartial insight and assessment. Improvements identified as being needed and which have been addressed include refurbishment of boarding areas and the need to expand the residential provision for girls. Residential staff receive regular supervision and training. All have a planned annual appraisal. They report increased good quality support and improved morale as a result of the clear leadership provided by the care co-ordinator. The supervision, encouragement and training which the residential team receives ensures that all members of staff are able to provide very good support to the vulnerable residential pupils in their care. It also ensures they have the knowledge and skills needed to perform their roles effectively.

The majority of pupils at this school are residential. This means that the boarding aspect is central to the function and drive of the service. The diverse needs and differences of the residential pupils are celebrated and enjoyed and this underpins the tolerant and accepting culture. Residential pupils' views are valued and encouraged and they are confident that they are listened to and taken seriously.

Parents report very good contact with residential staff and one stated 'I would recommend this school to anyone, my child has come on so well.'

The school has addressed the recommendations made at inspections; the school has ensured that the medication system has been improved, the young people have had their views sought with regards to food, and all residential pupils now have their views included in the records made after incidents of restraint and when sanctions have been imposed.

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	126141
Social care unique reference number	SC372592
DfE registration number	938/6219

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	Non-maintained
Number of boarders on roll	28
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	10 to 19
Headteacher	Ms Linda Churnside
Date of previous boarding inspection	07/11/2012
Telephone number	01342 810268

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