

LVS Hassocks

London Road, Sayers Common, Hassocks, BN6 9HT

Inspection dates 17–19 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Adequate	3
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Adequate	3
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Adequate	3
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is adequate because

- Although students make good progress overall during their time at the school, the quality of teaching is too variable. Not enough teaching is good. Too frequently, students are not challenged enough in lessons.
- There have been recent improvements in the assessment of students' learning, but this is not yet sufficiently well developed so that it is informing teachers' planning.
- Leaders and managers check the quality of teaching regularly, but their feedback is not always helpful to teachers so that they can take immediate action to improve their teaching.
- Leaders and managers, including the Education Committee, have identified some appropriate areas for improvement and have maintained a positive team approach; however, they are not always systematic in identifying and tackling priorities.

The school has the following strengths

- Students, often with a significant history of disrupted education, learn to like school, engage with learning and develop good skills for their future.
- Safeguarding arrangements and the promotion of students' welfare, health and safety are good. Students are cared for well.
- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is good. Residential students are extremely well prepared for adulthood. They develop a strong sense of their own value and self-esteem.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Information about this inspection

- This was an unannounced inspection. Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons. The majority of the observations were carried out with senior leaders. Breaktimes and lunchtimes were observed. The social care inspectors spent time with students in the residence in the evening.
- Documents relating to the school and the residential provision were examined, including the school’s development plan and students’ individual plans, books and files. Inspectors closely scrutinised documents related to the management of behaviour, bullying, child protection and safeguarding. They explored recent concerns that had been sent to the Department for Education and the school’s progress since the last unannounced inspection.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of staff. A telephone conversation was held with the Chair of the Education Board. Inspectors took account of the 27 responses on Ofsted’s online Parent View, 23 questionnaires from staff and 23 from students. Inspectors also considered correspondence that was received from parents and carers.

Inspection team

Stephen McShane HMI, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Clemetina Olufunke Aina

Additional Inspector

Diane Thackrah

Social Care Inspector

Janet Fraser HMI

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Full report

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 to take place.
- The school is registered for 8–19-year-olds with a maximum number on roll of 78 students. There are currently 75 students on roll; of these, 28 are day students. All students attend full time.
- All students have special educational needs associated with autism and all have a statement of special educational needs. Students are placed by a large number of different local authorities.
- 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. An unannounced emergency inspection took place in June 2013 due to concerns relating to students' welfare, health and safety in school, including issues related to behaviour and bullying. A number of regulations were then found not to be met.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that lessons are planned that take full account of accurate assessment information and the prior learning of students
 - making sure that activities are challenging and lead to effective learning
 - ensuring that feedback to teachers following lesson observations results in rapid improvement.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that roles and accountabilities of leaders are clear and they have the necessary training and skills to carry these out
 - ensuring development planning is more systematic and clearly linked to improving the outcomes and achievement of students
 - making sure that the Education Board has more detailed information so that it can more systematically challenge senior leaders.

The school must meet the following independent school standards

- Ensure that the complaints procedures 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 judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students make good progress over their time at the school as a result of a good curriculum, strong support for their personal development and adequate teaching. Before arriving at LVS Hassocks, many students have had disruptions in their learning and very negative experiences. Through the sensitive approach of staff, they become interested and re-engage with learning. They become much more confident. From varying starting points, they build well on their reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills. The youngest students are developing their handwriting, early reading and counting skills. The older students achieve a range of appropriate qualifications in English and mathematics, and work-related qualifications in areas such as catering, animal care and horticulture. The few students who have now left the school are successfully continuing their education at a range of different colleges. Annual review reports demonstrate that students are making good progress across different subjects and addressing the key areas highlighted in their statement of special educational needs.

The outcomes for residential students are outstanding. These students thrive. They make excellent progress socially. Through regular routines they develop important skills which make them well prepared for adulthood. They enjoy their residential experience and parents and carers are very positive about it.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students make good progress in managing their behaviour and this is key in supporting their good achievement. They develop respectful relationships. They respond to requests and instructions. They develop positive attitudes to learning. There is very sensitive approach to students by a wide range of staff in school and the residential provision. Students are relaxed and say they feel safe. One student told inspectors: 'It's my home away from home. I feel safe and comfortable here.' There is an in-depth understanding of individual needs. Team focus meetings and the work of specialist therapists lead to good plans and effective approaches to support the improvement of those who demonstrate the most challenging behaviour. There is clear evidence of a significant reduction in the number of occasions these students require adult intervention. Students learn very effectively to tolerate change and difference. They are clearly aware of the needs of each other and grow to understand their own difficulties and those of others. Many can reflect on the substantial progress they are making and value the staff's expertise in supporting them. Different activities during the day and the evening with a good programme of educational visits and visitors to the school give students good opportunities to learn about different aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. These build on effective personal, social and health education that informs students about life in democratic Britain and ensures that the school takes practicable steps to ensure students receive balanced presentation of different viewpoints.

Quality of teaching

Adequate

The quality of teaching is adequate overall, though variable across the school, with a proportion that is not yet good. In all lessons observed, there were very strong relationships between adults and students. There is a high staff ratio. While teaching makes an adequate contribution to students' progress, it is the safe and secure environment that makes an important contribution to students' good achievement. Teaching, however, is not consistently informed by the available assessment information on students. This means that in too many lessons there is only one activity provided and support staff are expected to help the student complete it. These activities are not sufficiently well matched to the needs of the students or build on their prior learning sufficiently. Therefore, the students, even though it appears they are busy and complete the task, are not challenged and do not make enough progress in these lessons. Good teaching observed included a

good match of activities to students' needs, appropriately challenging questioning with precise explanations appropriate to individuals, and helpful prompts. These led to very purposeful engagement and active contribution from interested students who acquired new knowledge. Assessment of work, marking and feedback to students are very variable. Some work is regularly checked and compared with other pieces of work so an accurate level can be assigned and progress monitored. Other books are unmarked and assessment inaccurate. Therefore, the opportunity for teachers to adapt their teaching or for students to build on learning is lost.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum provides a wide variety of good experiences that supports the overall good achievement made by students and provides good opportunities to make progress in literacy, mathematics and vocational skills. It is underpinned by close collaboration between residential staff, therapists, teachers and learning support assistants. Good care plans in the residential provision clearly set out the needs of the students and promote their development well. The curriculum is tailored to individual needs so that it incorporates specialist approaches to support the learning of those with autism as well as the opportunity to study for external accreditation. There is a clear progression on offer to students through the school. This is particularly evident in the carefully staged opportunities to experience the world of work. Students can take responsibility for tasks within the school and this leads to independent work experience with local employers or courses at a local college. The school's excellent Oast café is an important part of this. Students have the opportunity to work in the café with the support of therapists and teaching staff. Detailed attention is given to working on individual targets in an environment which demands high standards and offers real challenge to students. A wide variety of small group and individual activities in the residential provision means that students have a large number of opportunities to pursue individual interests or take part in the local community. Ongoing review of the curriculum is in place to ensure that it continues to meet the changing needs of the students.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

Welfare, health and safety are good. National minimum standards and independent school regulations are met. Students are well cared for. Leaders have acted quickly to remedy failures in regulations that were identified at the recent emergency inspection. A high priority is given to keeping students safe. Safeguarding and child protection are given high priority. Suitably trained and experienced staff take the lead and carry out procedures well. Appropriate risk assessments are in place including discussions with students to develop their awareness of safety rules. The school has robust staff recruitment practices that are well established to safeguard students. The school has a single central register for recording checks on the suitability of staff, including residential staff, to work with children. Students are very clear that staff will sort out any concerns that they have and any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly. Leaders are currently reviewing behaviour policies to evaluate the effectiveness of current approaches to managing behaviour, ensure that any inconsistencies are clarified and improve record keeping further. There is good communication with parents and carers that ensures that individual health and care needs are well met. Staff are flexible and responsive to changing needs of the students. Residential students benefit from living in a well-maintained and pleasant environment that promotes their privacy and independence. Effective induction procedures, particularly to the residential provision, mean that students settle into school life quickly. The school has strong links with other agencies such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Leadership and management

Adequate

Leadership is adequate as teaching is not consistently good. Leaders and managers, including the Education Committee, have overseen a substantial increase on student numbers and ensured that

achievement remains good. Leaders carry out regular performance management and observe teaching to ensure quality and arrange further training. They have taken strong action when it has been necessary. Some of the observations, however, do not focus enough on the impact of teaching on learning. Therefore, the feedback to teachers is not always helpful to ensure rapid improvement in the quality of their teaching. The senior leadership team have rightly reorganised to increase their capacity. A new structure is in place with some new staff appointed. They have identified appropriate issues that need improvement, but currently these are not planned systematically to ensure that they are completed quickly, and the intended impact on learning and progress is unclear. The Education Committee of the Licensed Trade Charity keep in close touch with the school. They receive regular reports and are supportive. However, they do not always have precise enough information so they can ensure that development priorities in the residential provision and school are being tackled quickly and systematically. Staff are confident in the school's management team. They receive good induction and ongoing training. They value the support they receive.

Communication with parents and carers is strong when focused on the needs of individual students, and this means that staff and parents and carers work together in partnership. There have been recent concerns from parents and carers concerning communication about whole-school issues. The headteacher and Education Committee have rightly recognised this and taken steps to meet with the parents' focus group. The leadership of the residential provision is good. The running of boarding is smooth and contributes to residential pupils being well cared for. Staff are highly committed and effective, and employed in sufficient numbers, and receive very good support from management which allows them to work effectively with residential students. All required policies are in place and implemented effectively, and record-keeping is generally good. This helps to ensure that young people's welfare is promoted.

The very attractive school premises are well maintained. The extensive grounds give good opportunities for pupils to learn and play outdoors. The majority of independent school regulations are met, although the school does not ensure that there is a clear record of the outcome of complaints.

Outcomes for residential pupils	Outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	Good
Residential pupils' safety	Good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Good

What inspection judgements mean

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

School details

Unique reference number	135930
Social care unique reference number	SC388553
Inspection number	422809
DfE registration number	938/6267

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school. The inspection of residential provision 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	Independent
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	8–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	47
Proprietor	The Licensed Trade Charity
Chair	Anita Adams
Headteacher	Sarah Sherwood
Date of previous school inspection	December 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,950
Annual fees (boarders)	£55,150
Telephone number	01273 832901
Email address	sherwoods@lvs-hassocks.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

