

Tadley Court

Tadley Common Road, Tadley, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG26 3TB

Inspection dates

5–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

4

Pupils' achievement

Good

2

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

2

Quality of teaching

Good

2

Quality of curriculum

Good

2

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Inadequate

4

Leadership and management

Inadequate

4

Overall effectiveness of the residential experience

Inadequate

4

Summary of key findings

This school is inadequate because

- The daily supervision of a very few students is not good enough to secure their safety.
- Although the risks associated with students' behaviour are understood, some of the actions taken by leaders to ensure the safety of all students are not effective.
- The proprietors and senior leaders have not ensured sufficient improvement in the residential provision since the last inspection.

The school has the following strengths

- Students make good progress in their academic and personal development. The students are taught well. The curriculum is matched well to their complex and challenging needs.
- Residential students are happy, well cared for and enjoy their experience. Their needs are well understood by all staff. Most have made good progress in communicating their feelings because of the good relationships they have with staff.

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 does not meet the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection of education and residential provision was carried out with one and half days' notice. This was also a welfare progress monitoring inspection.
- The inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by 11 different teachers, of which six were joint observations with the headteacher. Discussions were held with leaders and managers, teachers, residential staff, therapists and with students. An inspector met with two parents and a representative from one of the placing authorities.
- A wide range of residential and school documentation was viewed, including care plans, schemes of work and teachers' lesson planning, records of students' progress, examples of students' work, and policy documents.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed in questionnaires from 15 members of staff.

Inspection team

Jonathan Palk, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Maire Atherton	Social Care Inspector
Emeline Evans	Social Care Inspector
Lesley Farmer	Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Tadley Court is an independent residential special school providing care and education for young people aged between five and 19 who have autistic spectrum disorders with highly complex behavioural, learning, physiological and psychological difficulties and disabilities. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The residential school is owned and managed by Priory Education Services who are part of the Priory Group.
- There are 54 students on roll. Twenty seven are residential students.
- Some post-16 students attend alternative provision at local further education colleges.
- The school is located in a woodland area on Tadley Common, Hampshire.
- The last welfare inspection took place in February 2013 and a full integrated inspection of education and boarding provision in October 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- **The school must meet the following independent school standards:**
 - Ensure arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7).
 - Ensure arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders and that these have regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools (paragraph 8).
 - Ensure that school staff are deployed in such a way as to ensure the proper supervision of pupils (paragraph 15).
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standard for residential special schools:**
 - Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards') (NMS 11).
- Improve the guidance for teaching physical education so that it shows the progression in skills to be taught and assessed.
- Make sure that all lessons have the most suitable resources available to assist students in developing their oral and reasoning skills.
- Ensure that environmental risk assessments are robust and provide a current evaluation of any potential risks, including fire safety matters, with any action identified undertaken promptly.
- Ensure that monitoring visits by independent visitors examine closely the risk assessments and individual care plans for residential students.
- Clarify the roles and key responsibilities of each of the members of the senior management team to ensure comprehensive and robust accountability.
- Develop an evidence-based approach to self-evaluation.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students achieve well. Processes for assessing and moderating progress have strengthened with the introduction of a system geared more specifically to the needs of students with complex autistic needs. The new systems build well on the old and allow for a more precise planning of students' communication, literacy and numeracy needs. The careful attention staff give to tracking the progress of students' personal development and life skills, and adjusting experiences to suit these, is thorough. In this respect, the residential provision and good links with parents and carers contribute to the students' good progress.

Regular assessment using performance (P) levels or level descriptors means that the school has a good knowledge of each student's current attainment when compared to national expectations. Sixteen of the 21 students who have been with the school for their secondary education exceeded the higher expectations in English, from well below average starting points. The picture is even stronger in mathematics. Most of the students who leave in Key Stage 5 are on National Curriculum levels and access further education literacy and numeracy courses.

Annual review reports and students' work also show good progress. Individual education plans, determined by multi-professional teams, parents and carers, incorporate targets based on the needs associated with autistic spectrum disorders. These education and therapeutic targets are now incorporated into teaching plans and monitored diligently by senior staff. The targets give the teachers or senior management enough information to guide further interventions so that students are well prepared for their future placements.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Behaviour and personal development are good. The majority of students have made good progress in managing their behaviour. Consequently, the school and boarding houses are generally calm and purposeful. Students respond well to the good teaching and engage positively in lessons and activities in the residential home. They learn to tolerate, to participate, and in some cases to initiate and to lead. Residential students make choices in how to keep themselves fit and healthy in line with their level of understanding.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Those who have significant difficulties in understanding others learn to work together. They learn to manage their behaviour so that they reduce the amount of distress they cause each other. They understand where they can go to be safe and keep others safe when they feel frustrated or are unable to express themselves adequately. The sensible use by students of the quiet rooms to prepare themselves for rejoining classes contributed to ensuring other students made good progress in their lessons.

Students assert that bullying is rare. They are well informed about types of bullying, such as cyber bullying. There is evidence of the anti-bullying strategy displayed on walls around the school. They know who they can turn to if they experience difficulty and say all adults are supportive. Students have formed good friendships with each other and good relationships with staff. Young people who are regularly attending college and work placements say how much these have helped them acquire social skills and prepared them for later life. A young person described staff as 'amazing' because they have helped her recognise when and why she might get angry and upset. A parent or carer was delighted to report the significant reduction in challenging behaviour displayed by her child since attending the school and how this has improved the quality of their family life.

Attendance and punctuality are good. Work experience enables students to be in adult

environments and to overcome new challenges in different situations, for example shadowing a chef or working in a hotel. Students have a good understanding of public institutions and services in modern Britain. In their residential homes they learn how to take care of themselves, for example by making their beds and attending to their personal hygiene and laundry. They also learn to help each other and have consideration for others, demonstrated by clearing tables at meal times. The school ensures that students are presented with balanced views when contemporary issues are considered.

Quality of teaching

Good

The teaching is good. Teachers' planning is consistent and thorough. It takes account of targets and individual behaviour and therapy plans. Each activity is bespoke to the wide range of learning needs within each class. In the very best learning, teachers skilfully ensured that all the students had a part to play in the learning. As a result, learning is good and students' response is positive.

Teachers consistently show a secure knowledge and understanding of autistic students' needs. They give enough time to help students respond to questions or prompts and to acquire new vocabulary. They work extremely well with support staff to manage and deflect behaviour that might get in the way of learning. Lessons are carefully structured so that students know what to expect. This means that students engage and work cooperatively with staff in a variety of different activities. In the best lessons, there is clear evidence of progression for each individual in the particular subject; for example, in a mathematics lesson students were challenged to recognise the characteristics of three-dimensional shapes and, when using these to create a plan view, were encouraged to name and group them correctly. The teacher's language was clear and unambiguous. Exemplary support from assistants in lessons is focused when necessary on returning the student to learning as quickly as possible. Pace is maintained so that challenge remains high without stress or unnecessary pressure on students. There is good use of pictorial communication systems and signing for those who have little or no means for communicating orally.

The use of personal timetables provides the security that some students need to start engaging with the tasks and also helps with reinforcing the rewards that are used to help students stay for longer periods on learning. The school has introduced a systematic approach to teaching reading and writing and this is undertaken skilfully. In one particularly effective lesson, the teacher was well prepared to encourage turn-taking in reading the story. The good social interaction and sensitivity encouraged respect for each other's efforts.

Some lessons are not always fully equipped with resources to support good learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson there was not enough preparation to help students articulate their methods for multiplication. Where activities are not well sequenced, the teaching does not ensure all students are participating at their level and this reduces engagement.

Quality of curriculum

Good

There is a good curriculum. The collaboration between teaching, residential and therapy staff is a strong factor in getting the provision right both in the school and residential houses. The detailed personal, social and health education (PSHE) policy underpins the main aims of the school. Students experience a range of creative opportunities, for example through art, craft, drama, music and sensory stimulation. Students participate in a wider curriculum that includes activities such as go-karting, kayaking, trips for beauty treatments, rambling and cycling, which are led by the care staff who work in very close liaison with the teaching staff.

The curriculum is not yet outstanding because physical education is not planned well enough,

particularly for those students who do not receive occupational therapy as part of their statement requirements. The acquisition of numeracy and information and communication technology skills is limited by problems with connectivity and not a lot of use is made of available media beyond whiteboards and computers. The on-site facilities for activities are limited, both within the residential provision and on the school grounds. This has been recognised and is included in the current development plan.

The curriculum is well structured. There is effective challenge based on a good knowledge of students' needs. Students aged 14+ access an approved qualification through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), which is proving effective in providing academic life skills and promoting independence and communication. In addition, it provides students with regular and purposeful work in the local community. Students are involved at an early stage in decisions about accredited courses, and vocational and work-related experiences. Where appropriate, the school provides well-judged opportunities for work experience and links with external providers as part of the progression plans for all students.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Inadequate

The provision for students' welfare, health and safety is inadequate. While the risks that students pose to themselves and others are well understood, the actions taken to manage these effectively are not always carried out with sufficient urgency. There is a range of risk assessments which relate to individuals, activities and the environment. Some are comprehensive and effectively identify risk management strategies that provide students with good levels of independence. Others are weaker and do not demonstrate effective evaluation of the potential risk, for example the assessment of the perimeter fence or areas that should be accessible only with a key. Records of incidents both serious and minor are maintained diligently by staff. These are not monitored with enough rigour, and the resulting amendments to students' care and behaviour plans are not always adjusted effectively. Some safeguarding risk assessments, such as levels of supervision, have not been modified in the light of students leaving the premises without permission. These have put a very few of the residential students at considerable risk. As a consequence, students' welfare, health and safety are compromised.

Staff are well trained in using non-aversive behaviour management approaches, retaining the respect as well as the safety of individuals. Since the last inspection there has been a full review of the use of physical intervention and restrictive practices. This has led to comprehensive changes and substantial improvements in the approach to behaviour management.

Recruitment procedures are robust and ensure that only suitable people are employed to work at the school and residential home. Leaders have improved communication with the local safeguarding officer and referred concerns appropriately. This was not timely in one case because the referral was made to other parties before the local safeguarding officer. Staff can outline the action taken as a result of internal investigations, but reports are not properly summarised with a detailed evaluation of actions taken and the outcome.

There is generally a robust approach to health and safety and fire requirements. Routine checks and servicing checks are undertaken but some fire doors were found to propped open during the inspection.

The school is inclusive and ensures all students are able to achieve. Individually tailored induction and transition programmes are prepared and carried out for students. This ensures a smooth transition for each student at different points in their education. There are effective and personalised induction procedures and transition plans for residential students moving into boarding. Care plans and individual education plans are individualised, detailed and comprehensive, providing staff with the information they need to deliver the tailored support required.

Expectations are clear and students who have significant and complex needs perceive the school as a safe place to learn, which enables them to make significant progress in their ability to access learning. A full range of policies focusing on the different learning difficulties ensures that students'

needs are met sensitively. Students are clearly at ease in the school and respond positively to the respect shown by staff. Attendance is monitored carefully and, when students with medical needs require treatment, very good support is given to minimise disruption to their education.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that a serious incident which occurred at the school since the previous inspection is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incident were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Leadership and management of the school and the residential provision are inadequate as a result of failings to keep all students safe. The school has responded positively to address the shortfalls identified following the last social care inspection in February 2013; however, that relating to safeguarding has not been fully met.

The headteacher, along with the school's proprietor, is taking decisive action to embed a culture of high expectations of students' academic achievement and their personal development. In the short time the headteacher has been with the school, she has strengthened the quality of teaching and the curriculum to deliver these aims. The school's priorities are well understood by all the staff. The review and monitoring of this is at an early stage, and success indicators are too broad and not clearly stated. The self-evaluation of boarding is overgenerous and fails to show how it supports development and improvement. Not all monitoring records include routine evaluation of risk assessments and residential students' individual care plans. Managers are not evidencing the judgements they are making about provision, outcomes and care.

Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and are accountable for students' progress and the quality of care and teaching. However, there are some overlapping areas and checks on safeguarding are not systematic enough. The school has four designated child protection officers and it is not clear who is taking the lead role in investigating cases; this results in failings to keep all students safe. There are effective systems in place for holding staff to account. There is regular checking on the quality of lessons and also checks on the students' work to ensure teachers are accountable for the attainment of their students. Systems for ensuring that staff care and teach to their best are strong and include training packages for staff where improvements are required.

The premises provide a satisfactory and safe environment for learning that meets requirements. Policies and procedures for keeping students safe are closely followed although there are some shortfalls in some documentary evidence, for example, a failure to provide a robust and accessible audit trail of actions taken to respond to safeguarding concerns and any learning points arising.

The proprietor and managers have the confidence of the parents, carers and students. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken the lead on developing students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding with a particular focus on developing independence and respect for others. For example, there is a weekly programme of personal, social and moral education that includes contemporary issues and understanding the differences between people. These subjects are followed up in tutor time. The information provided for parents, carers and others, together with the school's complaints procedures, meet requirements.

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

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	131531
Social care unique reference number	SC0676447
Inspection number	422725
DfE registration number	850/6085

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	5–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	27
Proprietor	Priory Education Services
Principal	Phil Jonas
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2010
Date of previous social care inspection	6 February 2013
Annual fees (day pupils)	£60,000–£105,756
Annual fees (boarders)	£122,000 - £180,000
Telephone number	0118 981 7720
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