

# Chelfham Senior School

## Inspection dates

22 January 2014

## Reason for inspection

Inspectors completed a full inspection of the school's care provision in September 2013 and found the overall effectiveness to be inadequate. Due to the failings identified, the Department for Education requested an unannounced emergency inspection of the school's education provision to focus on the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

## Conclusions

The overall quality of welfare, health and safety has declined since the last inspection and is currently adequate.

Incidents of physical restraint at both sites vary from month to month and, although comparatively high this term, they have declined from a peak earlier in the academic year. The school has reacted positively in response to recent inspection findings of the care provision. Staff use a new format for recording incidents of physical restraint. Written records are completed promptly and now record the duration of the measure of restraint and show that staff offer students the opportunity to be examined by a medical practitioner. These records also show that previous practice of using ground holds to restrain students has ceased and that staff are now using holds deemed less intrusive.

Senior leaders have begun to more closely monitor the behaviour management of students. They now meet regularly to review the frequency of all types of incidents and the measure of control or discipline used by staff. They have responded to student consultation and have provided recent training that encourages staff to listen to students during and after physical restraint. Incidents of students absconding from the site are declining and there have been no recorded incidents since June 2013 of students going missing during the school day.

Since September, the school has made changes to extend students' lunchtime to further develop their physical and social skills. Supervision is adequate. However, monitoring has identified that incidents, including the use of physical restraint, occur more frequently during the lunchtime period. The school's plan to improve the curriculum by providing a more structured range of enrichment opportunities at lunchtimes has not yet been fully implemented.

Staffing ratios during lessons are appropriate; small groups of students were observed working in a calm and purposeful environment. Teachers regularly shared the aims of the lesson so that students were clear about what was required and, as a result, responded confidently to teachers' questioning. Students preparing meals and cakes using a range of kitchen equipment showed a good awareness of hygiene and safety.

The school has developed clear procedures for organising trips and visits away from the school site and these ensure that students are appropriately supervised. Individualised risk

assessments are completed for each student on a trip but these are not consistently updated to reflect improvements in students' personal development and behaviour.

The required staff recruitment checks are in place and ensure the suitability of permanent and temporary teaching staff to work with children and young people. The necessary health and safety checks are completed. Fire risk assessments are up to date and fire-fighting equipment and portable electrical appliances are checked annually. Staff training in child protection, fire safety and use of physical restraint is updated regularly and complies with regulations. Admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with regulations and show that the large majority of students attend regularly.

## **Inspection team**

Mark Lindfield, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## **Information about this school**

- Chelfham Senior School opened in 1986. It is registered as an independent residential and day school for up to 63 boys and girls, aged from seven to 22, who have autism and emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- The school has dual registration as a children's home. The school occupies two rural sites near Tavistock in Devon.
- The previous inspection of the education provision was in September 2012.
- The most recent inspection of the care provision was carried out in November 2013.
- Currently, there are 35 students on roll. Most have additional learning and communication difficulties and exhibit severe emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a new Principal and a headteacher. The Principal was appointed in August 2013 and the headteacher took up the post in January 2014, two weeks before this inspection.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113616
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC036528
<b>Inspection number</b>	434025
<b>DfE registration number</b>	878/6039
<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>	
<b>Type of school</b>	Special school for students with autism and emotional and behavioural difficulties
<b>School status</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	35
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	25
<b>Proprietor</b>	Priory Central Office Priory House Randall's Way Leatherhead Surrey KT22 7TP
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Sharpe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jon Ascot
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26–27 September 2012
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£65,000
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£125,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01822 840379
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