

Philpots Manor School

West Hoathly, West Sussex, RH19 4PR

Inspection dates 11–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Students' personal development and academic progress are good, because the school is very effective at re-engaging students in learning and of finding creative ways of enabling them to succeed.
- The governance of the school is strong and holds senior leaders to account through the rigorous checks which are undertaken.
- The school is led by a dedicated team that shares its' vision of enabling all to achieve well.
- Most students, staff and parents agree that the school provides a safe place to learn.
- Students' achievement is good, because strong leadership employs effective systems to ensure that teaching and learning are good.
- A creative and well-planned curriculum enables students to enjoy learning. It builds their self-confidence well to enable them to tackle more difficult tasks.
- Well-trained staff help students to overcome their difficulties so that their behaviour is good and they can make good progress academically.
- Very good respectful relationships between staff and students build a strong sense of community.
- The school leader is passionate about extending the range of opportunities that enable students to experience success.
- The sixth form is good. Students appreciate being treated as adults and the additional opportunities offered to them.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not always challenge all students, and in particular the more able, to make outstanding progress.
- The school is not making regular checks throughout the year on the quality of education provided off site.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets 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.

Information about this inspection

- The educational provision only was evaluated during the inspection of this co-educational residential special school.
- The inspection was carried out at one day's notice.
- The inspector observed 13 lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the education coordinator who leads the education provision in the school.
- Meetings were held with all the senior staff and with the Chair of the Management Committee, who is a director of the company that owns the school. The inspector spoke with other staff, including the nurses and care staff who work with the students during the school day. She also talked to students about their work, and had lunch with different groups of students in their residential houses.
- The inspector collected information from 13 parents who had completed Parent View and collated information from 27 questionnaires from staff and 13 from students.
- A telephone conversation was held with an officer from a local authority that places students in the school.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's documentation and evaluated the effectiveness of its implementation. She examined in detail school records, such as the behaviour logs, bullying incident mapping, attendance, and student achievement data. The safeguarding documentation and complaints were considered in depth. She looked at students' work and heard students read.

Inspection team

Angela Cook, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Philpots Manor School is an independent day and residential special school that caters for up to 60 boys and girls between the ages of seven and 19 years. It is located in a rural position on the outskirts of West Hoathly, West Sussex.
- The school caters for students who have a range of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many also have specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
The school uses an holistic approach, underpinned by the educational principles of Rudolf Steiner. The school has adapted the Waldorf Steiner curriculum to provide a tailored curriculum for each student.
- The headteacher in this school is called the education coordinator. The school has a flat management structure in line with the Steiner model. The management group, which is responsible for the running of the school, is chaired by a director of the company that owns the school. The Chair of the Management Group provides governance for the school. Teachers are invited to join a body called the College, which provides advice to the management group. There are no middle managers.
- Some students attend local colleges, such as Plumpton, Brinsbury or Central Sussex College, on a part-time basis.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 33 students on roll, 12 of whom were girls aged from 10 to 19 years of age. All students have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. All have suffered from disruption to their education in the past.
- All students are placed by local authorities.
- The last inspection of the school's education provision was in February 2011. The boarding provision was last inspected in June 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of leaders and managers by:
 - making more regular checks on the quality of students' learning in the off-site provision so that their progress can be evaluated more accurately
 - analysing data on student progress more carefully to identify any different rates of progress for individuals and groups of students
 - quickly addressing any weaknesses found following checks on students' learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement further by:
 - extending the range of questions asked by teachers so that all students are challenged to think more deeply about what they are learning
 - ensuring staff make better use of information on students' progress to plan the tailored programme for each student so that all, especially the more able, are challenged to do as well as they can.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- Dedicated senior leaders are keenly aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. The latter are pursued vigorously. The vision for the school is clear to all. Good systems are in place to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the school.
- Senior leaders work successfully to manage the constantly changing needs of the students. All matters relating to health and safety in the school are meticulously checked. An external review of safeguarding procedures provides a rigorous, annual evaluation. Policies are clear, relevant and implemented effectively. The implementation of the educational provision required in students' statements of special educational needs or their education, health and care plans is checked carefully and evaluated in detail at their annual reviews. Information sharing during the school day between teaching and care staff promotes a safe working environment for all.
- The management structure, which is in line with the Steiner model, gives staff a role in managing the educational provision. Committed staff are effectively engaged in the decision-making process, which results in nearly all staff being proud of their school community.
- The tailored programme for each student is planned carefully to include the interests and strengths of each, so that they can all experience success. A wide range of courses and opportunities for qualifications is provided. These include GCSEs, A levels, Entry level qualifications and learning to drive. The school endeavours to meet each student's aspirations. Practical activities such as horse riding are keenly prized. A range of therapies is provided to support the personal development of each student.
- British values are woven effectively through the curriculum. The school promotes a strong spiritual and moral awareness that encompasses tolerance towards different faiths and cultures. Students support and work with the local community; for example by running cake sales for charities and planting oak saplings in the village that have been grown by the school. Students participated in a democratic election of the school council. Staff provide good role models that support the development of moral values. Respect for, and an understanding of, difference pervade much of the school day and are embodied in the school's ethos.
- Although new processes for checking student progress have been implemented, data is not yet analysed in sufficient detail to ensure that the more able students are consistently challenged in all areas of the curriculum. There is limited analysis of data to show any patterns of progress, either for an individual student or for groups of students.
- Older students have the opportunity to study at a variety of local colleges. The safety of students is managed carefully. The school's teaching assistants, who support the students in college, provide some feedback on these students' progress. However, more regular checks on the quality of students' learning are needed so that their progress can be evaluated more accurately.
- The local authority confirms that the school works closely with local agencies to ensure that any complaints or safeguarding concerns are dealt with speedily and effectively. The open and transparent approach of the school means that when any issues arise they are dealt with well and 'lessons learnt' are used to improve practice across the school.
- Most staff and parents believe that the school is well led.
- The education and care staff make regular checks on behaviour throughout the day in order to intervene where necessary. This timely intervention means that matters are dealt with quickly and issues can be speedily resolved.
- Senior leaders have begun the process of appointing a new careers guidance professional to work with students in Year 8 and above to supplement the school's own provision and that offered by the local authority.
- Staff performance is managed carefully to ensure that students are consistently provided with high quality teaching. A range of training opportunities is offered to staff, a few of whom would like to see these extended further.
- **The governance of the school:**
Governance is strong and ensures that the senior leaders are held to account for improving the quality of the students' learning. The dedicated Chair of the Management Group reviews the school's checks on data, systems and processes, and uses the information to challenge the school effectively. He works in the school two days each week, overseeing the finances and recruitment, and rigorously monitors the quality of safeguarding, students' outcomes and teaching. Strengths and weaknesses of the school are shared and understood. Plans are instigated to remedy any shortcomings.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. This is because staff build strong relationships with students and are particularly adept at pre-empting any issues. The curriculum is planned carefully so that students are engaged and enjoy their lessons and can focus on learning. The large staff group is well trained in successfully supporting the students to begin to take responsibility for managing their own behaviour. Very careful logging of any incidents throughout the day ensures staff are aware of individual students' behavioural issues and their current needs. Detailed checks on records of poor behaviour, coupled with clear hand-over times between care and teaching staff, help staff to diffuse sensitively any behavioural problems.
- A minority of parents, staff and students indicate that the school does not manage students' behaviour well. However, the school's records indicate that serious incidents of poor behaviour have been reducing over the last three years. This reduction is due in part to a more proactive approach with other agencies. The fact that some of the students have matured and are now able to manage their behaviour more effectively has also contributed to the falling trend.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Effective staff training ensures that all are alert to any issues relating to welfare, health and safety. Meticulous checks, including any off-site provision, inform senior leaders about issues that need to be addressed. Any complaints and safeguarding issues are investigated rigorously.
- Students' attitudes to learning are positive and students are keen to come to school, which is confirmed by good rates of attendance. Almost all parents confirm that their children are happy at school.
- Students say that although there is some bullying it is dealt with effectively by staff. All students have people that they can turn to if there is a problem. Almost all parents and staff believe that the school deals effectively with any bullying issues.
- Although anti-bullying training was provided for all staff at the beginning of the school year, the education coordinator is planning to follow this up with more detailed training. She is aware that, very occasionally, homophobic or other inappropriate sexual language is used by students. Matters that may give rise to bullying are considered in a variety of curriculum areas. For example, homosexuality was discussed when learning about Benjamin Britten's music.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- The committed teaching team provides a number of excellent opportunities for learning, not only academically but also socially, physically and emotionally. A strong spiritual sense also pervades learning at times, so that students are encouraged to reflect on their, and others', needs.
- Teachers and teaching assistants continuously seek ways to improve the experiences of the young people. They have high expectations of the students and creatively find ways to make learning relevant and build on students' interests.
- Progress data is not used consistently well in all lessons to ensure that each student is challenged effectively across the curriculum, especially the more able. Questioning does not always encourage the more able students to think more deeply about their work. This means that some students do not make as much progress as their peers because they are not challenged sufficiently in every lesson.
- Nearly all parents confirmed that they think their child is taught well at the school. Students say they enjoy school.
- Teachers stay with their group of students as they move up the school until they reach 14 years of age. This enables strong, respectful relationships to develop that engender a safe learning environment in which each learner is valued. Staff know their students extremely well and this is reflected in the teachers' comments in the annual reports to parents, where strengths are thoughtfully balanced with clear areas for development.
- Reading levels vary widely in each class. Sensitive support, coupled with age-appropriate reading materials, is used effectively to encourage reading for pleasure. Additional testing of students' skills in reading and spelling is used to identify any who require further support.
- Students' work is marked thoughtfully so that students are motivated to work well. Ongoing feedback is provided so that students know how to improve.
- Staff help students to become more independent and support them effectively when they attend courses at local colleges. The quality of teaching off site is good, which is reflected in students' good

achievement.

- The well-planned curriculum consolidates students' learning and incorporates a wide range of opportunities for students to develop their basic skills. This means that students are practising their literacy and mathematics skills many times a day in a wide variety of contexts.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- All start from a lower level of attainment than would be typical of students of the same age nationally. The cohorts taking GCSE examinations each year are small and outcomes vary considerably depending on the different abilities and needs of the students, with some taking longer to complete a course. About 10 students take a number of GCSE examinations each year, and some, which in 2012 and 2013 was over half, achieve a grade of A* to C. Students also take a variety of Entry level examinations and achieve well. Students are supported to re-take an examination if they wish. In the last two years two students have successfully achieved an A level at grade A to C.
- Students' individual education plans clearly identify academic and social areas for development, which inform teachers' planning. A sample of students' annual reviews clearly demonstrates good academic progress.
- The more-able students make good progress in-line with their peers, but they are not always challenged effectively enough to make even better progress. Barriers to learning are removed for each individual, so that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Much careful planning of individual timetables enables students to begin to re-engage with learning and start their educational journey once again. On joining, many are disaffected with education and suffer great anxiety when faced with situations that are similar to ones in which they have failed in the past. For many, this re-engagement with learning is a slow process and represents great achievement. Developing their social skills so that they can interact with each other and overcome the stresses and tensions of the day is managed very carefully. The 'family' lunchtimes, when all students return to the residential houses for their meal around a big table, promote good relationships and a strong sense of 'belonging'. Day students are fully integrated into the residential lunchtimes. Any discrimination is tackled very effectively by staff. The personal development of the students is a strength of the school.
- The great majority of young people who embark on courses in the local colleges successfully achieve their accredited qualification and are able to embark on a career.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form is seen as a continuation of the school, but with the provision of additional opportunities for learning, such as work and college placements. Each student's activities are carefully risk assessed, and, when the young person is seen to be sufficiently responsible, they are provided with greater freedoms, such as being allowed to move around the school more independently.
- Work experience, tailored to each student's needs, is planned thoughtfully with them in order to support their aspirations. Recent work experience has included working as a farm hand milking cows, and working in a veterinary practice, a café and a bank.
- Where appropriate, students are supported to attend a local college where they study adult courses that result in accredited qualifications. The courses are chosen carefully with the student, who is fully supported by staff from the school. Recent courses have included metal working and dog grooming.
- Students in the sixth form said they felt they were treated more as adults and appreciated the additional opportunities offered to them, such as the chance to gain the experience of working with adults in a workplace environment of their choice.
- When asked about the school, one sixth former said, 'I absolutely love the school.'

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	126141
Social care unique reference number	SC372592
Inspection number	446390
DfE registration number	938/6219

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted 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.

Type of school	Steiner Waldorf residential and day special school for students with social, emotional, behavioural and communication difficulties
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	8
Number of part time pupils	1
Number of boarders on roll	24
Proprietor	Philpots Manor School Ltd
Education Co-ordinator	Linda Churnside
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 February 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£57,320–£65,000
Annual fees (boarders)	£57,320–£65,000
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