

# Northeast Manor School

Rodmell, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 3EY

**Inspection dates** 18–20 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management	Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils	Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision	Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience	Adequate	3

## Summary of key findings

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Mathematics teaching is not good enough to ensure students make good progress and achieve the standards they are capable of. GCSE results in mathematics are too low.
- Teachers do not always provide well-pitched activities to challenge the very most able pupils. Systems to ensure students act upon marking and advice from teachers are not fully established.
- Middle leaders do not play a sufficient role in driving the improvement of teaching or learning within their departments.
- Senior leaders have not responded to the weaknesses in mathematics achievement and teaching with enough focus or urgency. They have not ensured that records relating to welfare and safety matters are sufficiently detailed to promote the protection of students and staff.
- Governors do not challenge the school robustly. They do not hold a precise enough view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The overall effectiveness of the residential provision is adequate. Systems and practices to identify and manage risk are not always detailed or used effectively to minimise risk by members of the residential staff team.
- Leaders of the residential provision have not ensured that all staff are adequately trained or knowledgeable about the range of students' needs.
- The school does not meet all of the independent school standards or national minimum standards for residential special schools.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leadership has been significantly strengthened recently. The new leader of pastoral care has had a big impact on improving behaviour. A highly experienced special educational needs and disabilities coordinator is equally bringing about a range of improvements.
- Teaching in most subject areas is consistently good. In some subject areas, teaching is consistently outstanding.
- Recruitment processes are robust.
- Students achieve well in many subjects. They participate in a wide variety of clubs and activities which further supports learning.
- Behaviour is good. Students usually work hard in lessons and help each other willingly. Most students attend school well. They say they feel safe.
- Relationships between adults and students at school and in the boarding provision are generally excellent. Students and staff are happy at school. New staff are making a positive contribution to the school.
- The small sixth form is good. Learning and care are totally individualised. Students are effectively supported to access a range of courses at local colleges and to learn from meaningful work experience.

### **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

- The inspection was carried out with half a day’s notice.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders including the designated child protection officer, the head of boarding, the director of operations and the head of pastoral care. Meetings were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body, middle leaders, teachers who are new to the school, house parents and care staff.
- Telephone discussions were held with parents, the local authority designated officer and the governor responsible for safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed practice in each boarding house, as well as evening activities. They attended a handover meeting and were taken on tours of the premises led by students as well as staff. Inspectors checked sleeping arrangements, washing facilities and the medical room. Particular emphasis was given to how the shared bedrooms are managed and the overall ratio of boys to girls.
- Inspectors observed teaching in 18 lessons across the school and looked at students’ workbooks. The head of teaching and learning accompanied an inspector on many of these visits. Inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to lessons. Some of the younger students read aloud to an inspector.
- A wide range of documentary evidence relating to education and welfare was scrutinised. This included individual child protection records and the safeguarding policy, records of behaviour management and analysis, risk assessments, the missing person policy, placement plans, the lone working policy, fire and maintenance records. Recruitment records, including the single central register and training certificates, were scrutinised. Information relating to students’ progress and attainment, as well as evidence of the monitoring of teaching, was also evaluated.
- Inspectors met with groups of younger and older students, as well as with the school council and boarders’ forum. They spoke to students informally throughout the inspection including at breakfast, break and lunchtimes and in the evening. Many students, both day and boarding, expressed their views to inspectors.
- Inspectors considered the views of all day and residential students by conducting a point-in-time survey during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 34 responses to the on-line survey Parent View, as well as three emails to the lead inspector from parents.
- Inspectors considered the views of 64 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire. In addition, six staff requested to speak in person to inspectors regarding their experiences of working at Northease Manor School.
- At the request of the Department for Education, this inspection paid particular attention to all matters relating to the safeguarding and welfare of students. This included checking the quality of provision and support for girls who are in the significant minority of the school population. Other concerns raised previously, including the effectiveness of working relationships between staff were also re-examined.

## Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Veronica Young	Additional Inspector
Helen Humphreys	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Keith Riley	Social Care Inspector
Liz Driver	Social Care Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Northease Manor School opened in 1963. It is set in expansive grounds within a rural location. The school is a co-educational independent day and weekly boarding special school for children aged between nine and 18 years. The school also offers flexible boarding arrangements.
- The school provides education and residential provision for potentially able students who have a wide range of learning disabilities and special educational needs. These include autistic spectrum disorders, dyslexia and dyscalculia, as well as emotional, behavioural and social communication difficulties.
- There are currently 93 students on roll, of whom 33 are resident. Approximately 80% of students are boys. A similar proportion of students have a statement of special educational needs.
- Students are taught in small classes according to age and ability. A range of professional support, including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and counselling, is provided.
- Some students study part-time courses at Plumpton and South Downs Colleges.
- The last full inspection of education took place in 2011 and the previous inspection of residential provision took place in February 2014. An emergency inspection considered aspects of education and residential provision in June 2014.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics by improving the quality of mathematics teaching, so that is consistently good or better, and by implementing the existing plans to promote numeracy across the curriculum.
- Further improve the quality of teaching by:
  - ensuring that learning activities are well planned and based on assessment evidence so that all groups of students, particularly the most able, are appropriately challenged
  - providing planned opportunities for students to respond to teachers' marking and feedback.
- Improve the school's work to keep students safe and secure by:
  - ensuring individual pupil's risk assessments are detailed and result in a demonstrable reduction of risk
  - ensuring all records relating to welfare and safety are sufficiently detailed so that they can be used to protect students and staff, including when lone working, by providing clear guidance on e-safety, missing from care and forming adolescent relationships
  - ensuring key staff, including governors, are adequately trained and knowledgeable in matters relating to safeguarding and for the range of disabilities the school accommodates.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - implementing a management system to ensure that all regulatory standards are met including ensuring the statement of principles clearly shows the range of disabilities the school accommodates
  - ensuring leaders adequately prioritise all necessary actions and improvements associated with safety and welfare
  - ensuring middle leaders access appropriate training and have a clearly defined role in raising the quality of teaching and learning and achievement in their subject areas
  - ensuring senior leaders implement swift and effective action to address weaknesses they identify as part of their monitoring procedures
  - ensuring governors hold leaders to account more rigorously, particularly including for variations in students' achievement.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
  - A suitable statement of the school's principles and practice is available to parents and staff, is made known to children through an appropriate method of communication and is seen to work in practice.

The statement describes the overall purpose of the school and describes any theoretical or therapeutic model underpinning the practice of the school. It also explains the ethos and philosophy of the school, and provides an outline of provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. (NMS 1)

- The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (as referenced in 'Residential Special Schools National Minimum Standards'). (NMS 11)
- The school's procedures are compatible with the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols and procedures applicable to the area where the school is located. Where children placed out of authority go missing, senior leaders follow the local RMFHC protocol and comply with and make staff aware of any other processes required by the placing authority. (NMS 15.7)
- Staff are equipped with the skills required to meet the needs of the children as they relate to the purpose of the setting. Training keeps them up-to-date with professional, legal and practice developments and reflects the policies, legal obligations and business needs of the school. (NMS 19.1)

■ **The school must meet the following independent schools standards.**

- Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (Paragraph 7)
- Arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders and arrangements have regard for the national minimum standards for residential special schools. (Paragraph 8)
- The proprietor ensures that information provided includes a statement of the school's ethos (including any religious ethos) and aims.(Paragraph 24(2)(d)
- The proprietor ensures that information provided includes particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, misbehaviour and exclusions. (Paragraph 24(3)(a)

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management

### require improvement

- Leadership of safeguarding across all areas of the school, including the governing body, is developing. It has been strengthened by the very recent appointment of a new designated teacher for safeguarding, as well as a governor with safeguarding experience. However, the effect of these appointments has not yet significantly impacted upon practice.
- There is a statement of principles and practice that outlines the aims of the school. It does not clearly state the range of needs and disabilities the school is currently catering for, in particular students with health and emotional needs. Consequently, placing authorities may be uncertain about the services and facilities that are provided. The lack of clarity in the statement of principles is a breach of the national minimum standards and the independent school standards.
- The school's action plan, arising from the emergency inspection of June 2014, was initially deemed not fit for purpose. It has been improved and is now fully suitable. Actions are being implemented in accordance with the timescales set. A number of written records have improved significantly since the last inspection. However, some established practice to keep students as safe as possible, such as the use of washing facilities at particular times, is not recorded in a written protocol. This could place students at risk in the event of staff changes.
- School leaders check the quality of teaching and learning frequently. They hold a precise view of the strengths of departments, faculties and individual teachers. Actions taken to improve students' literacy skills have been conspicuously successful. The comparatively poor achievement in mathematics has not been addressed with sufficient urgency. As a result, students' achievement in mathematics remains behind their achievement in other subject areas.
- Staff undertake regular training. Recent training for teachers has resulted in consistent approaches to the teaching of reading and to the marking of students' work. Whilst training for residential staff also takes place regularly, some care staff are not trained in the school's programme for managing challenging behaviours. Training has not ensured care staff possess sufficient understanding of the individual needs or disabilities of all students. The national minimum standard in this regard is therefore not met.
- The headteacher conveys her vision for the school with passion and integrity. Staff employed at the school all speak positively of the support they receive from all leaders and particularly from the headteacher. Former staff, spoken to as part of the inspection, say that they were dissatisfied with the leadership of the school. One ex member of staff reported feeling bullied and under duress not to discuss her concerns. Current staff describe an open supportive culture, with senior leaders working well together to put the needs of students at the heart of all that they do. Performance management systems, for all staff, are well established.
- Recent changes at a senior leadership level have rapidly secured positive change. The head of pastoral care has reviewed and implemented strategies for behaviour management. Consequently, incidents of negative behaviour have halved. The special educational and disabilities coordinator has ensured that teachers are absolutely clear about the individual learning needs of all students. Individual education plans, care plans and statements of special educational needs are being systematically and thoroughly reviewed with all relevant agencies. The majority of parents, and all students, who expressed a view said that the right support is now being provided.
- Middle leaders do not consistently take enough responsibility for raising achievement in their subject areas. Although plans exist to develop their roles, they have not, to date, undertaken a formal role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. They have not undertaken any management training.
- The school effectively promotes equality of opportunity. Expectations of students' responsibilities and participation in school life, as house captains or as members of the boarders' forum, are high. Relationships between different groups of students, such as girls and boys, are fostered well and managed safely. Discrimination is not tolerated by anyone in the school community.
- The school offers an extremely broad curriculum, including vocational options and a full range of academic subjects that prepares students well for higher education. Students benefit from a strong personal, social, cultural, health and citizenship education programme which prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Religious education includes a variety of faiths.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural sense through assemblies, enrichment activities and the wider curriculum. Accompanied walks in the local countryside offer the chance to develop a sense of awe and wonder in the natural world.
- Students receive excellent guidance for their future careers all of the way through school. In conversation with inspectors, students shared their ambitions for the future, which included becoming a tree surgeon,

a software engineer and a photographer. Job fairs organised by the school offer excellent opportunities for students to talk about the world of work with a range of professionals.

#### ■ **The governance of the school:**

The governing body includes members with highly relevant expertise, such as in education and finance. The recently appointed safeguarding governor has swiftly improved a number of policies. These policy changes are too recent to have resulted in improved practice. There is a clear vision for strengthening governance, including thorough induction, completing an audit of skills and implementing training in due course.

Governors are fully supportive of the school and some visit very frequently. They are not afraid to level challenge where they know it is needed. However, governors do not have a precise enough picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including regarding the quality of teaching and the variation in students' achievement. Not all governors are sufficiently aware of what constitutes good leadership of welfare and safety. Consequently, the overall level of challenge from the governing body has been insufficiently rigorous.

The school budget is closely managed. Pay rises are awarded in accordance with performance management reviews, and governors are prepared to withhold salary progression. School buildings are maintained to a high standard and are scrupulously clean. New computers and laptops have been purchased and installed.

Governors provide appropriate channels for parents to express concerns or to share good ideas through the Parent Forum. The governing body is reviewing its membership criteria and intends to recruit a parent governor to the current vacant post.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **require improvement**

#### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of students is good. No examples of disruptive or challenging behaviour were seen during this inspection. Outside lessons, students usually chat confidently, yet politely, to all adults as well as to each other. In lessons, students generally settle quickly to learning tasks and work hard independently, with a peer or with an adult.
- Good behaviour is promoted successfully in school and when students attend off-site provision. A system of positive rewards, including praise and the collection of merits is routinely used. Students (and staff) eagerly await the Friday Celebration Assembly to see who has won the weekly certificates and prizes. There is minimal use of sanctions or restraint and physical interventions are rare.
- Students are proud of their various positions of responsibility and the range of contributions they make to school improvement. The school council meets regularly to discuss matters raised by students. As requested, new lockers are due to be installed shortly.

#### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.
- All boarders and day students report feeling safe, including during the night time. Students say they feel comfortable sharing concerns with any member of staff and that relationships between staff and students are harmonious. Staff ensure students receive the individual support they need, such as access to a counsellor they have come to trust.
- Students attending off-site provision receive additional help that promotes their safety well. Students are assisted with travel arrangements and are closely accompanied at college until they are confident to move around the building or attend learning sessions independently.
- Inspectors did not identify any student as being at risk. Boarders are not at risk due to room sharing arrangements. Room sharing is carefully considered with students and parents consulted. Students from different age groups do not share bedrooms.
- The majority of safeguarding incidents are dealt with effectively. School leaders consult appropriately with other agencies, including the local authority designated officer (LADO), Children's Services, Community Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the police. As a result, school staff are able to provide timely and helpful advice to students and families.
- Some policies lack detail, such as how emerging student relationships are to be handled. There is agreement with parents about managing the content on mobile devices that are brought into the school. However, the policy for e-safety lacks detail, including about who is permitted to access what and how this will be managed.



- Staff are trained in safeguarding and child protection. However, there are no current formal links with the local safeguarding children's board. Key staff, including the designated child protection officers, demonstrate weaknesses in documenting actions and outcomes. Although staff are able to describe how they reasonably concluded a student is not at risk, systems for assessing, recording and reducing risk are not all sufficiently detailed
- There is a clear policy for countering bullying. Students have confidence in the staff's ability to take appropriate action. Staff tackle issues swiftly and effectively. Reports are collated on bullying incidents; however, notes are very brief. The opportunity for effective analysis to understand patterns and trends and prevent further incidents is therefore limited.
- Students are usually cared for in the boarding houses by one member of staff. The lone working policy indicates that this will be assessed by a risk management process. There was insufficient evidence at inspection to indicate that all risks had been assessed and deemed manageable with minimal staffing. Inspectors did not consider that any student currently boarding was at risk, as effective contingency arrangements are in place. Students are clear on the areas that are out of bounds, especially the staff accommodation. The lack of appropriate detail in individual pupil's risk assessments constitutes a breach of national minimum standards and independent school standards.
- No student has been reported missing from the school for a very long time. The policy and procedure was fully revised during the inspection. No links had been made between missing children and child sexual exploitation, demonstrating insufficient knowledge of current practice or local protocols. The compliant policy has not been shared with staff or governors and is not implemented. Therefore, the national minimum standards and independent school standards in this respect are unmet
- Every effort is made to ensure that the school and boarding house provide a safe environment. Systems to ensure the safety of the building are extremely effective. Risk assessments identify hazards and strategies to manage them. External contractors certify key equipment as being safe.
- Improvements in the recruitment and selection procedures mean that staff are now recruited safely. The single central register meets the national minimum standards and statutory guidance. The school has undertaken a comprehensive review of staff files to ensure that all are complete and up to date.
- The governors, headteacher and designated teacher for child protection have not undertaken the specific training provided by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. Although safeguarding is a standing agenda item at three meetings per year, the minutes indicate that this is usually an update and not to set any strategic direction for safeguarding or to hold designated teachers to account. The school accepts that their previous practice of expecting the LADO to provide a quality assurance function is inappropriate.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching in mathematics has not resulted in students securing good progress over time. Year 11 GCSE results in 2014 saw a decline on results of the previous year. Monitoring information shows that the school has identified the need to improve teaching in mathematics as students in all year groups make comparatively slower progress than in other subjects. A number of actions to address this situation are planned or have been commenced. However, these actions are too recent to have made a positive impact on students' progress.
- Teaching in English is typically highly engaging. Teachers have thorough subject knowledge and engender a love of words. Many students use extensive vocabulary with accuracy. Lessons are planned in detail. Resources, including laptops and interactive whiteboards, are used to promote students' active participation. Students are taught in ability groups. Additionally, teachers refine questions and tasks so that each student can acquire new knowledge and skill at a good pace.
- Teachers and students understand that confident literacy skills are key to success in many other areas. Teachers of all subjects have contributed to improved standards in reading and writing by undertaking additional training, by providing opportunities for students to practise reading and writing and by raising their expectations of what students can achieve.
- The quality of teaching overall has improved and is continuing to improve further. The leader of teaching and learning has ensured that expectations of teachers are clear and that agreed systems are consistently implemented. For example, teachers convey high expectations of students, consistently make clear to students what they are learning about and ensure learning is reviewed at the end of each lesson.
- Teachers do not always ensure that most able students are sufficiently challenged. In some lessons observed during inspection, including in mathematics, students spent time completing tasks that were very easy for them. In such cases, opportunities to secure good progress were lost.
- Students' work is marked regularly, frequently in detail. Most often, comments made by teachers provide



clear advice to students about how they can improve their work further. However, systems for students to respond to marking are inconsistent. For example, in one English set there was evidence of a genuine dialogue about learning, whilst in another, although work was marked in the same detail, there was little evidence of students responding.

- Much teaching in school results in students making good progress. In some subject areas, including geography, photography and physical education, teaching leads to outstanding progress and achievement. For example, in a theoretical physical education lesson, students began the lesson knowing little about the actual meaning or causes of a range of injuries including sprains, strains and stress fractures. At the end of the lesson, without support from an adult, students explained to an inspector what these terms meant and how the injuries might have been caused.
- The therapy team members are expert at their roles. They are highly qualified and experienced. They work with students to improve social skills, communication, behaviour and physical development. Along with these improvements, students gain in overall confidence which, in turn, supports their learning further.
- Academic and boarding staff work closely together to ensure there is good personal support to foster academic progress. Hand over meetings at the beginning and end of each school day ensure important information, including about students' well-being, is conveyed to relevant staff. Care staff give students support with homework tasks and engage them in many activities and trips that promote learning. Staff from all departments run popular clubs, trips and activities which contribute to students' wider learning. Students spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme.
- There is a good and improved climate for learning at Northease Manor. The atmosphere is usually calm, and suffused with positivity. Teachers are passionate about the students and the school. Positive relationships abound. There is a sense that, with the right support, anything is possible!
- Students' varying special educational needs are carefully planned for. The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator has ensured that all teachers know precisely the challenges faced by different students. Barriers to learning are identified and ways to overcome these barriers suggested. This information is recorded in a written document within teachers' planning files and is readily to hand. Teachers are suitably qualified, trained and equipped to teach these students.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students of all ages typically make too little progress in mathematics. This is demonstrated in the range of school monitoring information as well as in observations of learning. Consequently, the standards students achieve are not high enough. In 2014, 23% of students achieved a C grade or above in their GCSE mathematics. This is below what could reasonably have been expected for this group of students as demonstrated by their targets set by the school and by their greater success in science and English.
- In most subject areas, including history and music, students make progress at a good or rapid rate. Progress is clearly demonstrated in workbooks and artefacts, as well as in the school's tracking data. As a result of this good progress, students go on to achieve well from their individual starting points, achieving GCSEs in a wide range of subjects. Almost exclusively, when students leave the school aged 16, they continue in further education. Some students go on to study successfully at university.
- Students achieve well in English. In a Year 10 lesson on persuasive writing, students demonstrated their understanding of techniques including emotive language and rhetorical questioning. In 2014, there was a significant increase, to 68%, in the proportion of students gaining an A\* to C grade GCSE in English. This figure was above the national average.
- A systematic approach to teaching reading has been implemented with great success. Younger students read confidently to an inspector, employing learnt strategies to tackle lesser known words. The role of literacy coordinator has been introduced and has successfully guaranteed an emphasis on developing students' key skills across the curriculum. Raised standards in reading and writing are enabling students to make better progress in many other subjects that have a strong reliance on literacy skills.
- In science, students demonstrate a thorough command and understanding of complex scientific vocabulary. Year 8 students were observed carrying out practical investigations on radiation. In these lessons students articulated why liquid in different environments cooled at different rates. Good progress was made.
- Frequently, students learn best in subjects that have a practical element to them and produce work of an exceptional standard. Artwork, including drawings and paintings on display in the art department and around the school, is worthy of being in any gallery.

- Sixth form students who attend courses at Plumpton and South Downs Colleges achieve well. Courses are carefully matched to students' interests and abilities. Teaching assistants from the school attend the colleges to provide consistent and appropriate support. Students' progress is carefully tracked by the colleges and the school. This data confirms students' good achievement.
- All students in the school are known well. The small number of students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable than others are identified in school tracking information. Extra support, such as counselling, occupational or speech and language therapy, is provided without question. Case studies, as well as students' individual feedback, demonstrate the positive impact of this support on students' levels of confidence and self-esteem. These students make academic progress at a similar rate to their peers.
- Personal, social and health education is highly valued by the students. Learning about and practising social skills and developing increasing independence are vital for students' successful transition to further education and life beyond school. Students' progress in these areas, as well as their effort and behaviour, is also closely tracked, and additional support provided when necessary.
- Under the direction of the assistant headteacher with responsibility for teaching and learning, a rigorous system of assessing, monitoring and evaluating students' progress has been established. On entry to the school, students undertake a range of assessment activities which provide detailed information from which learning targets can be set and progress monitored. As a result of careful scrutiny, senior staff and teachers know exactly which students are at risk of underachievement and in which subjects. Additional support is targeted where it is most needed. For example, specific training has recently been undertaken and implemented to address individual students' gaps in mathematics knowledge and understanding.
- School data are analysed to compare the progress of different groups of students, as well as to compare progress in different subject areas. For example, the progress of groups such as girls and boys and those with autistic spectrum disorders, dyscalculia or dyslexia are evaluated. Data, scrutiny of work and observations of learning show that, despite their low numbers, girls progress and participate equally with boys. Students from all backgrounds and with all types of need, including social and emotional and behavioural difficulties, make similar good progress in most subject areas. This demonstrates the school's success in fostering positive relations and in promoting equal opportunity.
- The school's monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as observations carried out during inspection, indicate that targets and activities set for the most able students have not always been sufficiently challenging. Consequently, this group of students has not always made maximum progress. This matter is being addressed, with an enhanced focus on the planning for this group.
- 'I am immensely impressed with my daughter's progress over the past year since she has been at Northease,' wrote one parent in an email to the inspection team. The majority of parents responding to the school survey on Parent View agreed that their children are making good progress.

### The sixth form provision

### is good

- The small sixth form provides individually tailored education programmes for students who need extra support to develop their independence skills and to access college courses.
- Supported by school staff, who know them very well, students attend vocational and work preparation courses at two local colleges. Work experience placements are established, giving students a genuine opportunity to practise their social and practical skills. In school, students' studies include life skills and information technology programmes. As a result of the individual and precisely planned approach to each student's education, monitoring records and work demonstrate that students make good progress and achieve well in their learning and personal development.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good and the quality of teaching is effectively monitored. Although the colleges are not held rigorously to account, school staff have a precise view of the quality of education provided. Changes that are required to help students progress are negotiated. Students participate fully in reviewing their own learning experiences and are able to influence which areas of learning or work experience they pursue.
- Wherever possible, students are supported to complete accredited courses that are supportive of their next steps in learning and the responsibilities of adult life. Communication with parents is frequent and informative. Care taken with transition planning is ensuring that future learning programmes are matched to the individual needs and interests of each student.
- Students in the sixth form behave very well. Their attendance at school is good. Students have genuine appreciation of the support they receive from all school staff, and generally tackle learning with enthusiasm and commitment. Strong regard is given to ensuring students' welfare and safety as they take greater steps towards independence. Students report feeling happy and safe in school and also in boarding. Students have trust in the adults they work with and also in their peers. They are confident of

accessing support whenever it is needed.

<b>Outcomes for residential pupils</b>	<b>are good</b>
<b>Quality of residential provision and care</b>	<b>is good</b>
<b>Residential pupils' safety</b>	<b>is adequate</b>
<b>Leadership and management of the residential provision</b>	<b>are adequate</b>

- A range of extra-curricular activities underpins and supports academic studies. Residential students can choose from a number of activities on site, such as computer club, sports or drama. Likewise, they can choose to go off site to experience dry skiing, swimming or horse riding. Students have the opportunity to develop their social skills as well as their academic skills during boarding time. Although there are fewer girls than boys in the school, they are not at a disadvantage. Girls speak very positively of their care and the options available to them for evening activities.
- The quality of accommodation ranges from adequate to good. There is an appropriate plan for continuous refurbishment. Evidence of improvement since the last inspection includes the re-decoration of rooms, provision of new mattresses and the building of a conservatory.
- Education and care staff work closely together to ensure the health needs of students are met. Their physical and emotional needs are of primary importance. Accident forms have been revised to show clearly the follow-up action taken after any accident and who has been consulted. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection in the management of medicines in boarding. There is now effective monitoring by senior managers. The emotional and mental well-being needs of residential students are effectively met. Residential staff ensure there is swift and robust action taken, including referral to outside agencies such as CAMHS, for any emerging concerns.
- Students enjoy positive and harmonious relationships with each other. Physical boundaries between students of different ages are implemented, when necessary, to ensure safety. For example games of football may be organised for students of particular ages only and bedrooms are not shared between students from different year groups. One student said, 'We all look out for each other.' Students feel comfortable with staff and say they can approach them with any concerns or worries. They have a strong affiliation to their boarding environment. Their confidence and self-esteem improve as a result of their boarding experience.
- There are good arrangements for health care. First aid procedures have been considerably improved. Systems are now in place to provide a written audit trail of action taken in an emergency, for example an accident requiring a check-up at the local hospital. A student welfare officer and head of pastoral care ensure the physical, mental and emotional health needs are met to a good standard, including referral to health professionals when necessary. Residential students have access to an independent listener who they can contact directly about any personal issues.
- New staff undertake relevant induction and training. They have access to resources to underpin their learning. Staff are fully supported in their role by the head of boarding, which includes formal supervision.
- Monitoring visits to boarding are carried out unannounced by an independent visitor. There is close scrutiny of records, with good analysis of practice. Clear judgements are made with an action plan compiled to address any shortfalls. This process is helping to secure better provision and outcomes for residential students. Monitoring visits now include all the checks specified in the national minimum standards.
- Arrangements for catering are very good. Students have a choice of healthy options and are able to contribute to the menu. All dietary needs, due to medical or religious reasons, are accommodated.

## What inspection judgements mean

### School and residential provision

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053).

Grade characteristics for the judgements made on the school's residential provision can be viewed in the *Evaluation schedule for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools* which is also available on the Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110096](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110096).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114645
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SCO50107
<b>Inspection number</b>	446382
<b>DfE registration number</b>	845/6028

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.

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent
<b>School status</b>	Independent residential special school]
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	93
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	5
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	33
<b>Proprietor</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Boys
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carmen Harvey-Browne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 May 2010
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£20,352
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£27,696
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 472915
<b>Email address</b>	office@northease.co.uk

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