

LVS Hassocks

London Road, Sayers Common, Hassocks, West Sussex BN6 9HT

Inspection dates

26 March 2015

Overall outcome

The independent school standards considered during this visit are being met

Reason for the inspection

- The inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education following a complaint received about leadership and management, staffing ratios, communication with parents and carers, and provision of information.
- The proprietor seeks a material change to the school's provision in terms of increasing the number on roll from 78 to 100, with 50 day students and 50 residential. The proposed change was considered during this inspection visit.
- Inspectors were asked to report against the regulations contained within Parts 1, 6 and 8 of the independent school standards. The boarding provision was inspected at the same time and is reported upon separately.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- An unannounced emergency inspection visit which took place in June 2013 was requested by the Department for Education in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school regulations for promoting good behaviour, the prevention of bullying, the provision of information for parents, carers and others and the implementation of the school's complaints procedures. It was found that a number of the regulations were not met. An action plan was submitted by the school and evaluated as satisfactory in July 2013. A full integrated inspection of education and boarding provision took place in September 2013. At this time, the boarding provision was found to be good while the education provided was judged to be adequate. The inspection found that the school had implemented its action plan and all but one of the regulations were met. In January 2014, a progress monitoring inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school had made in meeting the one outstanding regulation, relating to provision of the complaints policy. At this time it was found that the school had made good progress and met all the regulatory requirements.

Main findings

- The curriculum statement details the school's commitment to enabling children with a diagnosis of autism to access the National Curriculum and other 'training provision' that is 'meaningful, relevant and appropriate'. Underpinning its core beliefs is the need 'to provide learning pathways that lead to employability'. There is a strong emphasis on developing students' literacy, communication, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, which form the basic foundation upon which other subjects are layered. Three core strands within the curriculum, 'Whole Health Learning', 'Connected Learning' and 'Real World Learning', are designed to address and meet the specific needs of learners. The curriculum is currently under review to ensure that the provision meets learners' needs more exactly; it is to include more work-related

accredited courses.

- Schemes of work have a strong emphasis on developing students' personal and communication skills. The adoption of a range of appropriate practical and academic courses ensures all students are afforded the opportunity to gain nationally accredited qualifications that recognise and record their progress and achievement throughout their school career.
- In all areas of the school visited, levels of staff supervision were appropriate. Teachers and teaching assistants were working together with individuals and small groups of students.
- Scrutiny of students' books shows that marking is regular and appropriate with teachers providing clear advice on how to improve the work. Students' progress files are comprehensive and provide a further insight into their learning and achievement.
- The behaviour of students observed both in and out of lessons and when moving around the school was consistently appropriate. Students are good-humoured and polite towards each other, staff and visitors.
- Commercial systems are in place to track and monitor students' progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The deputy headteacher is currently reviewing existing assessment arrangements, and is examining new assessment systems specifically designed to capture students' academic, behaviour and personal development more effectively. Handover records from education to residential staff show an account of each student's day.
- The school has many systems in place for providing information to parents, carers and relevant authorities. Parents and carers receive weekly reports, bi-weekly newsletters, termly reports on their children's progress and achievement, and various updates published on the school website. In addition, parents and carers have the opportunity to receive briefings from the headteacher and to make their views known at the termly Parent Council meetings.
- Records and procedures relating to the reporting of incidents of behaviour, individual student action plans, 'cause for concern' records and annual reviews of statements and education, health and care plans show that appropriate channels of communication between staff and parents and carers, and staff and local authorities are in place. Leaders are currently strengthening the school's procedures for the recording of complaints received from parents or carers.
- The quality of teaching is monitored regularly by senior leaders, including the Director of Special Needs. In addition, the school improvement partner visits once a term to review the quality of provision and to conduct joint lesson observations with senior leaders and to moderate judgements.
- The headteacher has recently completed an audit of staff's qualifications and experience, examining in particular their training in autism. This analysis shows that all staff have qualifications, experience and training in autism. In addition, the school's training and development calendar indicates regular opportunities for staff to share good practice and consider the latest developments in teaching and supporting students with autism.
- Leaders actively promote the well-being of students by ensuring that appropriate and up-to-date policies for anti-bullying and promoting positive behaviour, for example 'practice and guidance for understanding behaviour difficulties', are in place and implemented consistently.
- A new two-storey teaching block is being constructed. The new accommodation, with six classrooms, a food technology room and a multi-purpose social area, is likely to be

sufficient for the proposed increased number of students on roll.

- The proprietor, headteacher and school leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are consistently met and that students' welfare is safeguarded.
- The inspection of boarding provision, conducted at the same time as this emergency and material change inspection visit, found that the school met all the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

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

The school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements and the national minimum standards for residential special schools. The standards are likely to continue to be met if the proposed material change is implemented.

Inspection team

David Scott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Hunnam

Social Care Inspector

Information about this school

- LVS Hassocks is a residential special school located on a site that was formerly a religious retreat and convent set in very extensive grounds in a rural area near Brighton. The proprietors, the Licensed Trade Charity, have overseen a very extensive building and refurbishment programme that has enabled rapid expansion to take place.
- The school is registered for eight- to 19-year-olds with a maximum number on roll of 78 students. There are currently 78 students on roll; of these, 39 are day students. All students attend full time.
- All students have special educational needs associated with autism and all have a statement of their special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Students are placed by a large number of different local authorities.
- The school's aims are: 'to enable learners to realise their full potential and become independent individuals who are successful learners in charge of their learning; confident individuals in control of their feelings; responsible citizens in control of their actions'.

School details

Unique reference number	135930
Social care unique reference number	SC388553
Inspection number	463150
DfE registration number	938/6267

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

The inspection of boarding 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 boarding schools. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Independent
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	8–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	16
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	39
Proprietor	The Licensed Trade Charity
Chair	Anita Adams
Headteacher	Kira Brabenec
Date of previous school inspection	17–19 September 2013
Annual fees (day pupils)	£38,550
Annual fees (boarders)	£59,130
Telephone number	01273 832901
Email address	info@lvs-hassocks.org.uk

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