

Philpots Manor School

West Hoathly, West Sussex, West Sussex, RH19 4PR

Inspection dates	24/03/2015 to 26/03/2015	
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	4
Outcomes for residential pupils	Adequate	3
Quality of residential provision and care	Adequate	3
Residential pupils' safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management of the residential provision	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is inadequate because

- The school has failed to comply with three national minimum standards. These relate to: the safe handling of medication; the safety of pupils; and monitoring of the residential provision. It is also recommended that managers: improve the décor and furnishings within residential houses; work with staff to improve staff morale and relationships; ensure physical intervention records are consistently completed; and improve the analysis of bullying data.
- The safety of pupils is a concern at this school. Pupils say they feel safe but practice means that staff do not have a good understanding of effectively safeguarding pupils. Medication is not always secure or always given as prescribed.
- Residential pupils make adequate progress with regards to their education, emotional wellbeing and independence skills. Residential pupils enjoy their residential experience, particularly with regards to making strong friendships.
- Care staff work closely with parents to promote good parenting skills and consistent approaches. Most care staff have a good understanding of how to promote the health and wellbeing of residential pupils.
- The leadership team do not understand the strengths and weaknesses of the boarding provision as there is insufficient monitoring carried out.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

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 was announced on the morning of the start of the inspection. The inspectors visited the residential accommodation, spoke to residential pupils and staff, including key staff with responsibility for the residential provision. The inspectors also observed practice in the residential provision and scrutinised school policies and records. The inspectors were able to gather information from Parent View as 14 parents responded to Parentview.

Inspection team

Joanne Vyas	Lead social care inspector
Liz Driver	Social care inspector

Full report

Information about this school

Philpots Manor School is an independent residential special school and further training centre that offers weekly boarding during term-time. The school ethos is to provide a holistic approach to education based upon the social and educational principles of Rudolf Steiner. It specialises in provision for children and young people of either sex between the ages of 7 and 19 years of age who have been unable to learn and develop within mainstream education. All pupils demonstrate some degree of emotional, behavioural, communication or learning difficulty. Pupils who board at the school live in small residential care groups in six separate houses within the grounds.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the school's process for recording of restraints is followed consistently.
- Improve the décor and furnishings within each of the residential houses.
- Consider and implement ways to improve staff morale and relationships within the care team.
- Improve the way bullying incidents are analysed to ensure managers can have a good understanding of patterns and trends.
- **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.**
 - Prescribed medicines are given only to the children to whom they are prescribed. Children allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so. (NMS 3.8)
 - 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 Headteacher (or school equivalent), governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school carries out, and records in writing, once each year: a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision for boarding pupils, in relation to: its Statement of Purpose, its staffing policy, the placement plans for individual children; and an internal assessment of its compliance with these Standards. Where appropriate such a report may be incorporated within a review of the whole school. (NMS 20.4)

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for residential pupils

Adequate

Outcomes for residential pupils at this school are adequate. Residential pupils say they like living at the school and appear happy. One said, 'I love it here.' The relationships between care staff and residential pupils appear to be strong which helps pupils to feel safe and secure. A pupil said that the staff are 'amazing', and another said, 'it's like a family.'

Residential pupils develop their self-esteem, confidence and independence skills. They make good friends at the school. They enrol at colleges and have high aspirations. One residential pupil explained that she would like to be an equine vet when she leaves school. However, some boarding practice such as the writing of lines is outdated and may impact on residential pupil's self-esteem and confidence.

Residential pupils have good health. They enjoy physical exercise such as football and dodge ball but also eat healthy meals. They have access to qualified nurses and a therapeutic team to help them with their emotional health. However, care staff have a lack of understanding with regards to the use of asthma inhalers which could impact negatively on the health of residential pupils.

Residential pupils who have self-harm behaviours make good progress. A residential pupil said when talking about why she has not self-harmed for some time, 'Its improving because I've got people here to help me.'

Residential pupils prepare well for leaving school. They have good opportunities for practicing their independent living skills such as helping out with chores around the houses and independent travel. This helps them successfully transition into adulthood. The school also make good links with local colleges which help pupils succeed when they leave school.

Quality of residential provision and care

Adequate

The quality of residential provision and care is adequate. Most staff have a good understanding of the needs of the residential pupils. Placement plans provide good information about residential pupils and risk assessments have an adequate level of detail in order for care staff to understand the risks pupils encounter and how to reduce them.

Medication, in general, is managed safely. Controlled drugs are kept secure and separate to the medication within the houses. Controlled drugs are administered by qualified nurses and other staff who administer medication receive training in the safe handling of medication. However, medication is not securely stored or administered as prescribed in one of the residential houses. Both preventative and reliever inhalers have been given to a residential pupil at the same time rather than being given as prescribed. This demonstrates a lack of understanding by the care staff of how the medication is used.

Staff work closely with families and carers to ensure better outcomes for residential pupils. Staff contact parents and carers on a regular basis as well as visit families in their own home to promote consistency and good parenting skills. Residential pupils have good contact with their families while staying at the school.

Residential pupils experience a wide range of activities both on and off site. These are properly risk assessed to ensure their safety. Residential pupils enjoy board games, football, dodge ball and trips out shopping, to the cinema and swimming to mention just a few.

The school has six residential houses currently in use. All of these are looking old and tired in

terms of décor and furnishings. For example, there are holes in settees, beds and bedding are poor and in one house tape has been used to prevent drafts and fix a vacuum cleaner giving the house a shoddy feel. Furthermore, in one house there was a dirty towel used regularly by residential pupils. These issues aside, the houses do feel homely and residential pupils like them, especially their bedrooms which are highly personalised.

Food remains an issue at this school but pupils are asked for their feedback on the meals provided and changes are made. Residential pupils sit down with staff for their meals. Mealtimes are a sociable and relaxed occasion. Residential pupils are encouraged to try new foods to extend the foods that they like and therefore promote a healthier diet.

Residential pupils' safety

Inadequate

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that allegations of a child protection nature had been investigated by the school after consultation with the local authority designated officer. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection.

The safety of residential pupils at this school is inadequate. Investigations into safeguarding concerns are not rigorous as the views of pupils are not robustly sought and considered. Furthermore, conclusions to safeguarding investigations are not robust and allow pupils to continue to be exposed to potentially harmful situations.

Allegations from pupils of inappropriate physical interventions or contact with staff have sometimes been treated as complaints rather than safeguarding concerns. Therefore, the relevant lead agency has not always been informed. On these occasions, the school has conducted its own investigations but there has not been the proper external oversight and therefore child protection investigations are not always open and transparent. On one occasion, a senior leader was dismissive of a pupil who raised a safeguarding concern regarding physical intervention. This attitude may discourage pupils from making any future disclosures and therefore, potential abuse may go unchecked.

Residential pupils mostly sleep in single rooms. However, some pupils have slept in each other's rooms or beds with the knowledge of some staff but no clear agreement of managers. This practice makes it difficult to ensure vulnerable children are properly safeguarded.

Residential pupils do not go missing from this school. However, staff have good procedures to follow should pupils go missing. Furthermore, residential pupils are generally well behaved in their house groups and so physical intervention is rare. Records of physical intervention are generally good. However, staff do not consistently record whether a pupil is offered medical attention. This means staff may make an assumption that the child does not require medical intervention.

The behaviour management methods have been applied inappropriately by some staff in ways that may be demeaning to the recipient. This may impact on residential pupil's self-esteem and confidence. Most staff, however, provide clear rules and boundaries but are also nurturing and have a good understanding of each pupil's emotional health and well-being.

Bullying behaviour does occur at this school. Staff are quick to stop any bullying behaviour they see. The leadership team analyse bullying data for patterns and trends but this is not comprehensive, for example, it does not state the type of bullying exhibited. This does not help the school to examine patterns and trends.

Safe vetting procedures help to protect pupils from unsuitable adults. Visitors sign in and out of the school and are supervised at all times during their stay. There are good health and safety procedures which also help to protect pupils. Furthermore, fire safety procedures are good. Residential pupils clearly know how to evacuate the buildings if the fire alarm should sound.

Leadership and management of the residential provision Inadequate

The leadership and management of the residential provision is inadequate. The leadership team are small in number but experienced managers. Staff are qualified and experienced. The core staff team have been working at the school for many years. This provides residential pupils with stability and consistency. However, some staff feel unsupported and morale is currently low. The staff team is fractured. The leadership team have been slow to respond to this appropriately, such as by providing mediation meetings between management and staff. Staff feel intimidated by managers and which may have delayed or prevented them whistleblowing. This is of great concern as staff should be able to confidently and openly discuss practice with the management team so that they are able to put the safety and well-being of pupils first.

Staff are provided with a good training programme which helps them to understand issues around autism, safeguarding, first aid and health issues. Most training is internal but health issues such as self-harm and the use of an epi-pen tend to be delivered by the school's nurse who is qualified and very experienced.

Complaints are managed efficiently and effectively. However, some complaints have safeguarding elements to them and these haven't been referred on to the appropriate lead agency.

The leadership team provide some monitoring and evaluation of the conduct of the school. An independent visitor visits the school every half term and provides well-written reports to the school that offer significant challenge. These are clearly reviewed by the leadership team and actioned accordingly. However, no-one in the school with responsibility for carrying on the school carries out, and records in writing, a review of the operation and resourcing of the school's welfare provision or an internal assessment of its compliance with the national minimum standards. Therefore, there is insufficient monitoring by the proprietor of the management of the boarding provision.

Most recommendations from the last inspection have been met. There continues to be issues around the food for pupils but pupils are regularly consulted. Changes are made as a result of consultation. The school still does not consistently record physical intervention.

Most parents who responded to Parentview are happy with what the school provides for their children. However, 7% of those responding felt that their child is not happy or safe at the school. 14% said that their child is not well looked after at the school or that their concerns are responded to well. 11% of parents who responded strongly disagreed that the boarding provision is well organised or managed well. However, 93% of parents agreed that they would recommend the school to other parents.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

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

This inspection 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 residential special school
Number of boarders on roll	26
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to 19
Headteacher	Ms Linda Churnside
Date of previous boarding inspection	17/06/2013
Telephone number	01342 810268

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