

Northeast Manor School

Northeast Manor School, Newhaven Road, Rodmell, LEWES, East Sussex, BN7 3EY

Inspection dates

13/10/2015 to 15/10/2015

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good **2**

The quality of care and support

Good 2

How well children and young people are protected

Good 2

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement 3

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The school has made significant progress in a number of key areas since the last inspection. Leaders and governors have worked hard at tackling the weaknesses found on previous inspections and there is a strong commitment to further improvement.
- Safeguarding policies and practice have been reviewed and substantially strengthened since the last inspection. They operate effectively to keep children and young people safe.
- Staff across the school work closely and collaboratively and are aware of the individual needs of the children and young people. Relationships between staff and students are strong. Children and young people are supportive of each other and enjoy their time in the residential provision.
- Children and young people make good progress both academically and personally. They make good use of the wide ranging opportunities offered to develop their skills and interests. As a result, they build their self-esteem and grow in confidence.
- There have been major changes to the senior leadership team, governing body and the head of boarding since the last inspection. These changes have resulted in improvements to policies and practice but have not yet had an opportunity to be fully implemented. A detailed development plan for boarding is not in place and the staffing arrangements for the residential provision are in need of review.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the care plans and target setting in the residential provision.
- Review the policies and practice regarding behaviour management to ensure that there is clarity and more written information regarding the use of sanctions in the residential houses. Also, ensure that the sanctions records include more detail and the restraint record includes information regarding effectiveness.
- Review the staffing of the residential provision to include the role of the gap students.
- Ensure that the complaint records hold all the information regarding the action taken and the outcome.
- Ensure there is a detailed development plan in place for boarding.

Information about this inspection

Ofsted carried out this inspection unannounced at the request of the Department for Education. Inspection activities included: observation of boarding practice over two evenings; formal group meetings with boarders; informal discussion during shared meals; meetings and discussions with the head teacher, head of boarding, head of therapeutic care; head of pastoral care and behaviour who is also the designated safeguarding lead at the school; director of operations; student welfare officer/nurse; compliance officer; residential staff; gap students; chair of governors; telephone discussions with the governor with the safeguarding lead and a new governor; contact with the local safeguarding authority. All three boarding houses were visited and the accommodation was seen and there was scrutiny of a wide range of policies and records. Responses on Parent View were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Lucy Martin	Lead Social Care HMI
Lolly Rascagneres	Social Care HMI

Full Report

Information about this school

Northeast Manor is a co-educational, independent day and weekly residential special school for children aged between 10 and 17 years. The school also offers flexible boarding arrangements for individual pupils. The school provides educational and residential provision for potentially able pupils who have a range of specific learning disabilities: including dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD, dyscalculia, and social and communication difficulties which may include Asperger's syndrome and autistic spectrum disorder. The residential accommodation for young people is provided within three separate boarding houses; two houses accommodate boys and one house provides accommodation for girls. The school is located near Lewes, East Sussex.

At the time of this inspection there were 27 children and young people resident in the three boarding houses.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

The children and young people make good academic and personal progress at the school. One young person said 'I was predicted at my previous school to get all low grades but have achieved above expectation at this school and so I feel I have definitely been helped to progress with my education.' Other students describe the help they receive from staff to support them to develop socially. One young person said that before coming to the school they could not look or speak to people but the support they have received means they are now more confident and can socialise and talk to others. Parents also recognise the progress that their children make at the school and in boarding, particularly socially and in building their confidence and self-esteem.

The children and young people enjoy boarding and the varied activities on offer both on and off the school site. All children and young people go home at weekends but one said 'I look forward to meeting up with my friends back at school. I can't wait to get back.' There are good relationships between staff and children and young people. They enjoy each other's company and have fun together. Respect for each other's differences is universally shown. Children and young peoples' views are routinely sought and they can give examples where their views have made a difference.

The safety of children and young people is given high priority. Safeguarding procedures and practice have strengthened since the last inspection and there are effective arrangements in place to protect children and young people from harm. There are clear written guidelines regarding relationships between the young people and staff have a good understanding regarding issues such as e-safety.

The behaviour of the children and young people is good and well managed. One young person said staff 'support me to control my behaviour so I can withdraw for a time, listen to my music and this calms me.' Incidents requiring sanctions or physical restraint are rare and are monitored. Young people say that incidents of bullying are addressed quickly by staff and issues are resolved.

The residential accommodation is varied in style and appearance but all is well maintained and comfortable. There are opportunities for older young people to gain independence skills such as cooking and staff work collaboratively throughout the school. Medication is managed safely and regularly monitored.

There have been a number of changes both within the senior leadership team and the governing body and in addition, there is a new head of boarding. Monitoring of practice has taken place but there needs to be further time to ensure that the monitoring is sufficiently challenging and that there is a defined plan for the further development of boarding at the school. Residential staffing levels are minimal and include the use of two gap students. Review is needed to ensure that these staffing levels ensure the best outcomes for the children and young people.

The quality of care and support

Good

The children and young people feel well supported by the residential staff. They enjoy each other's company and say that staff listen to them. Staff know the young people well and work closely and collaboratively and there are good handover processes throughout the day when teaching and residential staff meet together to share relevant information which is also recorded. This ensures that the children and young people are well supported by a number of staff who know their needs well.

Children and young people new to the school have a two day 'taster' which includes an overnight stay in one of the boarding houses for those planning to be residential. Parents and young people are met on arrival by staff and the young person has a 'buddy' assigned to them. At the end of the two days the residential, education and therapy departments share information which provides a base line regarding the student's emotional, behavioural, social and linguistic abilities. This is a useful tool in demonstrating the progress children and young people make as they move up the school.

The children and young people are accommodated in three boarding houses divided by age and gender. The accommodation is varied in style and age but all is comfortable and well maintained so that the young people feel relaxed. Most young people have single bedrooms but those who share have written risk assessments in place and the arrangements have been discussed with parents.

Children and young people enjoy the varied choice of activities on offer, both on and off the school site. These include dry slope skiing and horse riding as well as drama, film and computer clubs on the school site. A number of activities take place daily and teaching staff as well as residential staff take part. Children and young people talk about how these activities give them pleasure and an increased sense of self-esteem and well-being.

The food is enjoyed universally by the children and young people. There are good relationships with the kitchen staff who know individual likes and dislikes well. The food is of good quality with a salad bar available as well as hot food choices both at lunchtime and in the evening. Mealtimes are sociable occasions where staff and young people sit together.

The children and young people keep in contact with parents using their electronic devices and are also able to use the office phone. Residential staff write an e-mail to parents every Thursday and contact them on other occasions when necessary. The school held an open day during the inspection which was well managed and enabled prospective parents and students to look round and gain a better understanding of what the school provides.

Children and young people's health needs are well supported by the student welfare officer/nurse who takes prompt and effective action where concerns are identified relating to a young person's health, safety and wellbeing. Referrals are made to outside agencies if required. Medication is managed well with clear systems in place for the

safekeeping, storage and administration of medication. An appropriately qualified professional assesses staff competence to administer medications and facilitates staff training in this area.

Meetings take place in the boarding houses where children and young people give their views regarding routines, rules and activities. The young people were able to give examples where they had been listened to, for example the introduction of a cookery club and events leading up to Christmas.

There are a number of plans in place to support the young people such as behaviour support plans, health and welfare plans and education, health and care (EHC) plans. Each child and young person who is resident has a boarding care plan but the content is minimal. Some young people have targets set but these are not measurable and there is no indication how the boarding care plans and targets fit together with the plans undertaken by other departments within the school. This is an area for further development.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

The school has made significant improvements to their safeguarding policies and practice since the last inspection. Children and young people feel safe and know who to go to if they have concerns or worries. When asked what makes them feel safe one young person replied 'because of what they have here like e-safety things, blocks on computers, door alarms. They do fire practices, although I don't like the evening ones. We know that people are here to help us and keep us safe.'

Since the last inspection the new designated safeguarding lead has been committed to developing safeguarding practice at the school and has worked closely with the safeguarding governor and the compliance officer to develop a range of safeguarding guidance. This includes a revised safeguarding policy, the policy around young people going missing, relationships and behaviour management policies. There are deputy designated safeguarding leads in each department and all have undertaken advanced safeguarding training. Governors have had training and other staff have attended training regarding e-safety, extremism and child sexual exploitation. Staff are able to describe the difference the training has made to their practice.

The staff recruitments processes are robust and ensure that only suitable people are employed to work at the school.

Partnership arrangements with safeguarding agencies have improved with clear links with the local authority and a wider independent schools safeguarding group in East Sussex. Substantial work has taken place to develop a safeguarding audit document which is comprehensive in content. The impact of all these changes has meant that concerns are responded to more promptly, staff are clearer regarding their responsibilities and children are safer as a result.

Positive behaviour is consistently promoted through innovative schemes such as the sending of postcards to young people by departments and the senior leadership team.

Children and young people behave well with few sanctions or incidents requiring a physical intervention and say that staff support them to improve their behaviour. One said 'I had a real problem with my behaviour before, I got angry, but I received weekly counselling over a year and support from a therapist and this really helped me. Now my teachers and all staff and I know what to do when I am feeling stressed so I keep control. Staff here have helped me.' Trends and patterns of behaviour are monitored and some pupil have behaviour support plans which detail the support and intervention needed. A point for improvement is that the behaviour policy does not include the sanctions in use in the boarding houses, this would enable greater transparency. Both the sanctions and restraint records would benefit from more detail, for example recording the duration of the sanction and in the restraint record, this refers to information regarding the effectiveness of the measure.

Bullying is quickly and effectively dealt with and appropriate records are maintained. Children and young people said that incidents are addressed by staff and 'teachers are hot on this and if they see this behaviour they come down on the person and will not allow it. We all know what will happen'.

The school site and accommodation provide children and young people with a safe and secure environment. Health and safety is taken seriously with routine checks regarding fire, electrical and gas safety which are well recorded. Regular fire drills take place in boarding time and the school employs an external company to carry out annual fire risk assessments. Risk assessments are undertaken regarding the environment and activities which are regularly reviewed. Staff have received training in the compiling of risk assessments in the last year which has ensured that these assessments are consistent in content.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

Requires improvement

There has been some instability in the leadership of the residential provision. The previous head of boarding started the role in September 2014 and left in July 2015. A new head of boarding was quickly recruited but is only a few weeks into the role and has not had direct experience or training for this type of school which will take time to achieve. The senior leadership team and the governing body have undergone key changes in the past year. They are in a stronger position as a result but their work has not had time to be fully implemented and there is no development plan in place for boarding or a real understanding of any weaknesses.

The monitoring of the residential provision is undertaken by the chair of governors and this has been strengthened with governors each assessing a number of the national minimum standards. The governing body is increasing in number and there is a commitment from the new chair of governors for the governing body to be more challenging. A governor's development day is shortly to take place but the impact of these changes has not had time to be effective.

The staffing of the three residential houses is minimal. Each is staffed by a residential house parent (including the head of boarding) and the three residential members of staff are supported by two gap students. The responsibilities of the gap students are clearly

defined but they have responsibilities which are very similar to professional members of staff. These staffing levels have been in place for some time but are in need of review to ensure that the young people have sufficient support and supervision from competent members of staff and allow the best outcomes for children and young people.

Residential staff, including the gap students, receive regular supervision which is recorded. Since the last inspection, a number of staff training events have taken place to ensure that the residential staff understand the special needs of the students. Training undertaken includes areas such as autism, dyslexia and dyscalculia which staff say has helped them better understand the children and young people and has improved practice. Other training has included e-safety, medication and risk assessments. There have been a mixture of internal and external training which has also included courses run by the Boarding Schools Association. New staff undergo a thorough induction which includes time spent in the classroom and the therapy team to understand how the different areas of the school operate.

The school responds appropriately to concerns or complaints and maintains records. Not all the information regarding the action taken and the outcome is consistently held together and this would enable better monitoring of trends and patterns.

There were four failed national minimum standards at the last inspection and a number of areas for further improvement. All have been met. Leaders and governors have worked hard at tackling the weaknesses found on previous inspections and there is a strong commitment to further improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

Judgement	Description
Outstanding	A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
Good	A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.
Requires improvement	A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.
Inadequate	A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

School details

Unique reference number	114645
Social care unique reference number	SC050107
DfE registration number	845/6028

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	Residential Special School
Number of boarders on roll	27
Gender of boarders	Mixed
Age range of boarders	7 to18
Headteacher	Carmen Harvey-Browne
Date of previous boarding inspection	18/11/2014
Telephone number	01273 472915
Email address	office@northeast.co.uk

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