

Northeast Manor School

Rodmell, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 3EY

Inspection dates

2 February 2016

Overall outcome

Independent school standards met

Context of the inspection

- The inspection was undertaken at the request of the registration authority for independent schools to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan.
- The inspection was unannounced and focused on the education provision.
- A notice was served on this school by the Department for Education (DfE), following the last integrated inspection which took place in November 2014. The school was judged to require improvement overall, with leadership and management, the behaviour and safety of pupils, the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils all requiring improvement. The sixth form was judged as good. The school submitted an action plan to the DfE and this was judged to require improvement.
- The inspector was asked to review the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan and to check that parts 3, 6 and 8 of the independent school standards are now met.
- This was the first monitoring inspection of education provision since the school was found to require improvement. A social care inspection was carried out by Ofsted in October 2015.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and head of pastoral care to discuss the progress made since the previous inspection. He met with the head of therapeutic intervention, and a group of middle leaders, and spoke with the Chair of the Governing Body on the telephone. The inspector completed short visits to classrooms to see pupils learning and undertook two observations of mathematics lessons, all jointly with the deputy headteacher. He scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of the governing body, records relating to behaviour and safety and a recent report into safeguarding arrangements completed by East Sussex County Council. A scrutiny of pupils' work was undertaken.

Main findings

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- The previous inspection found that staff and governors were not always sufficiently trained and knowledgeable in matters relating to safeguarding and for the range of disabilities the school accommodates. Inspectors also found that the school's work to keep pupils safe and secure was not strong enough because risk assessments and records relating to welfare and safety were not always as detailed as they needed to be.
- Analysis of the school website, discussions with senior leaders, including the head of pastoral care, the Chair of the Governing Body, minutes of governing body meetings and scrutiny of documentation all show that this previous shortfall has been rectified.
- Leaders have taken effective action. For example, there is now a member of the governing body who is very knowledgeable about child protection and safeguarding. He has worked very closely with the head of pastoral care to ensure that all aspects of the work of the school are underpinned by clear and up-to-date safeguarding policies. These fully take into account the latest advice from the DfE.
- Staff are now appropriately trained. There are clear safeguarding procedures. Staff are now much more rigorous in the records they keep. There are strong working relationships with other agencies, most notably East Sussex local authority. Risk assessments are more thorough and so leaders now take more appropriate action to reduce risk.

Provision of information

- The previous inspection reported that the school's prospectus was not up to date. For example, it did not signpost the name and contact details of the proprietor. Nor did it make clear the range of disabilities the school was serving.
- As a result of the implementation of their plan, leaders have ensured there is much clearer information about the proprietor available on the school website and in the prospectus. The proprietor of the school is the governing body. The statement of principles has been amended and has more accurate information about the range of needs the school is serving.
- The school website is well maintained and includes useful information for parents, as well as covering all statutory requirements. For example, there is detailed information about the curriculum, the outcomes achieved by pupils, links to the reports completed by Ofsted about the school and the school's safeguarding and complaints policies.

Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- The senior leadership team has responded positively to the findings of the previous inspection report. They have ensured that those who have leadership and management responsibility have the skills and knowledge needed to bring about improvement. This is particularly well demonstrated in the progress made in the welfare, health and safety provision by the head of pastoral care and associated team members. Consequently, there are now much stronger management systems to ensure regulatory standards are consistently met. However, over the last two years there have been regular changes in staffing, both at senior and operational levels. This means the improvements that have been made are not fully secure. The headteacher has rightly acknowledged the need to ensure greater staff stability in the future.
- The effectiveness of the governing body is improving. Recent additions to the team have brought much-needed expertise and knowledge. For example, the safeguarding lead on the governing body is a retired police officer with expertise in safeguarding and inter-organisational working. Consequently, through his work with the head of pastoral care, safeguarding has the high priority that is needed. Governors now receive more useful information from leaders about provision in the form of reports and presentations. There are also new parent governors on the governing body. They provide useful challenge to leaders about the progress being made and how well pupils are learning. Governors could be more rigorous by providing greater challenge to leaders about why pupils do better in some subjects than others.
- Middle leaders are beginning to make more of a difference at the school, but there is still more to be done. Their roles are now more clearly defined. The profile of their work has been raised since the recent restructuring of middle leadership to include faculty leads. Middle leaders now make much better use of assessment information to analyse how well pupils are learning in their areas of responsibility and use this to plan improvements. Some middle leaders are also getting the opportunity to support those in their faculties or departments by observing them teach and providing feedback. However, this is not as widely established as it needs to be. Middle leaders do not always get enough opportunity to review practice in other schools or attend training to enable them to perform their roles even more effectively.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning have improved. This is reflected in the improvements made to middle management and is supported well by the work of the deputy headteacher. Leaders have rightly identified the need to adapt the way they observe teaching and learning. For example, they make much better use of assessment information and the work in pupils' books to make judgements about the quality of teaching and learning.
- The improvements made to leadership have started to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching. Leaders have rightly focused on the link between questioning, feedback and assessment and how these support pupils to make better progress. They have strengthened the use of assessment by teachers and so there is now improved challenge for the most-able pupils. Where teaching is stronger, these developments are having more of an impact, for example in art and English.
- Achievement in mathematics has been improved, but not at a fast enough rate. Results in 2015 were higher than those achieved in 2014, but they remain much lower than the results achieved in other subjects and the targets leaders have set for the school. Two thirds of the teaching

team in mathematics changed in the summer of 2015. This meant that the faculty lead had a whole new team to lead and develop. As a result, some of the work she had already done had to be revisited. This demonstrates the vulnerability of the improvements made caused by the lack of staff stability.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about this school

- Northease Manor School is a co-educational independent special school which provides for potentially able pupils who have a wide range of learning disabilities and special educational needs. These include autistic spectrum conditions, dyslexia and dyscalculia, as well as emotional, behavioural and social communication difficulties.
- The school opened in 1963 and offers day and weekly boarding for children aged between 10 and 19 years. The school also offers flexible boarding arrangements. It is set in open grounds within the rural East Sussex countryside.
- There are currently 92 pupils on roll, of whom 71 have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs. The majority of pupils are boys.
- Pupils 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.
- The last full integrated inspection took place in November 2014, when the school was found to require improvement. The last social care inspection took place in October 2015 and this part of the school was found to have improved overall.

School details

Unique reference number	114645
Social care unique reference number	SCO50107
Inspection number	10006748
DfE registration number	845/6028

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.

Type of school	Independent
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	10–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	7
Number of boarders on roll	35
Proprietor	The governing body
Chair	Dereck Wade
Headteacher	Carmen Harvey-Browne
Date of previous school inspection	18–20 November 2014
Annual fees (day pupils)	£20,817
Annual fees (boarders)	£28,329
Telephone number	01273 472915
Fax number	01273 472202
Email address	pa2headteacher@northease.co.uk

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