

Northeast Manor School

Rodmell, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 3EY

Inspection dates

10–11 May 2016

Overall outcome

Unmet independent school standards identified

Reason for the inspection

- This inspection was conducted by Ofsted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools.
- The inspection was carried out with no notice.
- The last full integrated inspection took place in November 2014, when the school was found to require improvement. The last welfare inspection took place in October 2015, when this aspect of the school was found to have improved overall. A monitoring inspection took place in February 2016 to evaluate the school's progress in implementing its action plan. Her Majesty's Inspector found the school met the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements.
- Inspectors observed pupils and staff at work during the school day and in the residential accommodation in the evening. Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of staff, in the school and in the residential provision. Separate conversations were held on the telephone with the chair of the governing body and one other governor. A telephone conversation was also held with representatives of East Sussex local authority. Parents' views were considered through the 20 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Pupils' views were taken into account through three meetings and conversations around the school. A range of documents were scrutinised, including previous inspection reports; welfare, safeguarding and behaviour records; governors' minutes; curriculum information and policies and information on the school's website. The school's record of checks made on staff was examined.
- The purpose of this inspection was to check the school's compliance with Part 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils, Part 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, Part 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools, Part 6 – Provision of information, and Part 8 – Quality of leadership and management of schools.
- The purpose of the inspection was also to check the residential provision's compliance with Standard 5 – Residential accommodation, Standard 6 – Safety of children, Standard 11 – Child protection, Standard 12 – Promoting positive behaviour and relationships, Standard 13 – Leadership and management, Standard 14 – Staff recruitment and checks on other adults, Standard 15 – Staff deployment and supervision of children, Standard 19 – Staff supervision, training and support, and Standard 21 – Placement planning and review.

Main findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- A recent local authority safeguarding audit confirmed that effective policies and procedures are in place. Arrangements in school keep pupils safe when online. Supervision, teaching and personal advice support pupils to relate to one another happily and safely in school. Nevertheless, shortcomings remain in risk assessment arrangements and in staff awareness of the possibility of safeguarding risks.

- Poor record-keeping in the past limits staff in ensuring individual pupils' risk assessments take account of previous events and concerns. Sensibly, the designated safeguarding lead is reviewing all pupils' files to ensure that any unresolved incidents or events are identified and considered. Despite regular training, staff are not consistently understanding of the safeguarding risks pupils may face outside school due to pupils' special educational needs. These include the risks of exploitation or radicalisation, including through social media.
- Records of behaviour incidents, restraints and exclusions, and behaviour plans, do not routinely include the views of the pupils concerned or those who witnessed events. The school council meets infrequently. Overall, pupils' views are not considered or recorded effectively, to support the future care of individuals nor when wider services and improvements are planned. The newly appointed special educational needs coordinator ensures that pupils' views are recorded in pastoral support plans, but this good practice is limited.
- Risk assessments for staff working alone do not consider all likely events, for example the need to wait for a colleague to arrive when summoned, or of a pupil making an allegation.
- The school's behaviour policy is applied consistently by staff. Pupils value and respond well to the clear and spontaneous system of rewards and sanctions. The school environment, inside and out-of-doors, is calm and purposeful. Pupils move between lessons in an orderly way, arriving in good time. Inspectors observed no disruptive behaviour during lessons or around the school. Effective joint working by residential and school staff supports consistency in behaviour management and care for individual pupils.
- Pupils of all ages are confident that should bullying occur, members of staff would step in promptly to resolve the issue. Staff spend considerable time supporting pupils to respect one another and understand each other's differences. Pupils are helped to see that something they consider a joke may not be entertaining for others and may cause upset or offence.
- Staff supervision of pupils during social times, and when moving around the school, is organised and overseen effectively by the lead teacher for behaviour.
- The matron ensures that medical arrangements are efficient and caring. Pupils speak highly of this service. Pupils also speak highly of the food provided and care shown to them by catering staff.
- Risk assessments for educational visits are completed proficiently.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

- The effectiveness of staff selection, recruitment and record-keeping is secure and improving further. This is due to clear leadership from the interim headteacher, the efficiency of the school business manager and reliable oversight by the safeguarding governor. The business manager and governors have completed safer recruitment training. However, staff induction processes are weak and appointments are not made subject to the completion of a successful probationary period.
- Staff training varies in its scope and effectiveness. The programme for residential staff has not been reviewed in the last year to determine its effectiveness. However, staff report feeling well informed for their roles. The gap year students who assist residential staff are not well trained in behaviour management or enrolled on courses to acquire appropriate qualifications.
- The work of the designated safeguarding lead is not supervised as closely as it should be, although advice is readily available from the knowledgeable safeguarding governor.
- Teaching staff receive regular training in welfare and safeguarding, but their development in teaching, learning and assessment is more limited. The headteacher has recognised this weakness and plans to make improvements.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- The school site is well maintained inside and out-of-doors. A dedicated team ensure all required checks are undertaken, for example of fire equipment, alarms, water hygiene and gas and

electrical installations and equipment. Issues regarding the school's perimeter have been addressed effectively with the local council and national parks service.

- Classroom areas are in a suitable condition. Staff make effective use of smaller rooms for group sessions and individual therapies. Leaders' offices are suitable for their work and easily accessible to pupils. Corridors and public areas are kept safely clear.
- Boarding accommodation is of a suitable standard. The need for decoration in the boys' accommodation is recognised by the estates team. Arrangements for sharing are closely supervised and well reasoned.

Part 6. Provision of information

- The required information about annual income and expenditure relating to individual pupils is not provided to placing local authorities. All other required information is available on the school's website or on request.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- Governors have not ensured that all the independent school standards or national minimum standards for residential schools are met. Until very recently, governors did not provide the expected oversight, scrutiny, challenge and support to leaders. This is now improving.
- Governors have not ensured regular unannounced visits to the boarding provision. This has resulted in an absence of suitable reports evaluating the effectiveness of the boarding provision and highlighting areas of good practice. Pupils have not had regular opportunities to speak about any improvements they would like to see made. This lack of oversight has caused the provision to falter in its development. Consequently, inspectors judged aspects of National Minimum Standard 20 as unmet. Furthermore, pupils' placement plans are not robust and do not make it clear how boarding will benefit the pupil. The head of boarding has recently started a development plan but this is yet to be completed and implemented.
- Governors met promptly with parents and staff to reassure them in the light of recent changes to senior leadership. Governors made swift and suitable appointments to vacancies which arose.
- The safeguarding governor meets regularly with the designated safeguarding lead and is well informed about the school's procedures and any current concerns.
- The finance governor has worked effectively with the school business manager to review the school's finances and ensure these are on a firm footing.
- The headteacher is establishing reliable communication between staff through regular meetings and responds promptly and personally to parents' queries and concerns.

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

The school must take action to meet The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements

- Ensure 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 (paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b)).
- Ensure arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and that such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools (paragraphs 8, 8(a), 8(b)).
- Ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraphs 16, 16(a), 16(b)).

- Ensure that where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(h)).
- Ensure leaders demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)).
- Ensure leaders actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(c) 34(2)).

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools

- 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 (NMS 11.1).
- All children and staff are given an opportunity to discuss with a relevant adult (who was not directly involved) within 24 hours incidents of restraint, including reasonable force, they have been involved in, witnessed or been affected by (NMS 12.5).
- A written record is kept of major sanctions and the use of any reasonable force. Records include the information in Appendix 2 (use of reasonable force). The record is made within 24 hours and is legible. Children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records. The school regularly reviews any instances of the use of reasonable force and examines trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and learn in a way that will inform future practice (NMS 12.6).
- The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary (NMS 13.1).
- There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of residential and care provision in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff (NMS 13.2).
- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role (NMS 13.3).
- 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).
- All existing care staff have attained a relevant minimum level 3 qualification or have qualifications which demonstrate the same competencies. All new staff engaged from the commencement of these Standards hold these qualifications or begin working towards them within 3 months of confirmation of employment (NMS 19.2).
- The learning and development programme is evaluated for effectiveness at least annually and is updated if necessary (NMS 19.4).
- All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance (NMS 19.6).
- The governing body, trustees, partnership, or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who is independent of the management of the school, to visit the school six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the headteacher (or school equivalent) (NMS 20.1).
- Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include:
 - checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children;

- evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded;
 - assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and
 - opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish) (NMS 20.2).
- Written reports of all monitoring visits are provided to the headteacher (or school equivalent) and where applicable the governing body, organisation, or partnership. Reports are also provided to each member of that body (or the appropriate committee of that body), within two weeks and as written by the visitor without amendment or summary. Monitoring reports should be retained by the school and made available during an inspection (NMS 20.3).
- The school produces a written placement plan, agreed as far as is practicable with the child, the child's parents/carers and any placing authority for the child, unless the information is held elsewhere such as in the child's statement of special educational needs. The placement plan identifies the needs of that child that the school should meet and specifies how the school will care for the child and promote their welfare on a day to day basis. Where significant changes are made to the placement plan there is appropriate consultation. Where applicable the plan is consistent with the care plan of the placing authority for any child placed by a local authority. The placement plan is regularly reviewed and amended as necessary to reflect significant changes in the child's needs or progress in his or her development. Where feasible, children in the school are aware of the content of their placement plans, and confirm that the school is providing care for them that is consistent with the plans (NMS 21.1).

Inspection team

Siân Thornton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jennie Christopher	Social Care Inspector
Helen Humphries	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 special educational needs or disability. 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 East Sussex countryside.
- There are currently 89 pupils on roll, of whom 79 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.
- An interim headteacher joined the school at the end of March 2016. The previous headteacher left in February 2016.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

School details

Unique reference number	114645
Social care unique reference number	SC050107
Inspection number	10017840
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.

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	10–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form	6
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	28
Proprietor	The governing body
Chair	Dereck Wade
Headteacher	Janet Felkin
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2016
Annual fees (day pupils)	£20,817
Annual fees (boarders)	£28,329
Telephone number	01273 472915
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Email address	pa2headteacher@northease.co.uk

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