

# Northeast Manor School

16 November 2016

Rodmell, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 3EY

## Overall outcome

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)*

- The shortfalls identified during the emergency inspection held in May 2016 focused on arrangements for individual pupils' risk assessments, consideration of pupils' views or concerns, and the ability of staff to understand a wide range of safeguarding risks. The proposed actions for meeting these shortcomings were found to be unacceptable when the school's action plan was evaluated in September 2016.
- Recent new appointments to the school's senior leadership team and governing body have brought about significant change in the way the school is led and managed.
- The previous action plan has been strengthened and is now more closely focused on addressing the key areas that need improving.
- A number of governors have joined the governing body since September, including the new chair of governors. Newly appointed governors have appropriate experience and already understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have wasted no time in beginning to hold school leaders to account. Consequently, improvements in provision, particularly those to ensure that pupils' welfare, health and safety needs are fully met, are clear to see.
- The interim headteacher, appointed in April 2016, has made sweeping changes to the leadership and management structure of the school, including appointing three new, full-time 'associate' headteachers. These senior leaders have specific responsibilities for key aspects of the school, including the school's boarding provision and safeguarding, student support and pastoral care, and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- New leaders and managers have put in place the systems and procedures required to address the shortcomings identified at the last inspection. Of particular note is the new 'communication passport', which contains specific information about each individual pupil in the school. This includes aspects of their social and emotional needs, as well as other key information, some of which has been contributed by the pupils themselves.
- Policies relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils are fit for purpose and take into account the latest guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This includes the school's safeguarding policy, which is published on the school's website.
- The school's single central record of staff checks is fit for purpose and administered in an effective manner. Procedures for recruiting staff are now sound.

- All staff have completed safeguarding training at a level appropriate to their individual levels of responsibility. They are aware of the school's policies relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- Staff are fully conversant with the school's systems and procedures to keep pupils safe, and much better informed about the specific needs of individual pupils than they were in the past. They are provided with regular updates and guidance regarding matters relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- School leaders ensure that the profile of safeguarding is given the highest priority by staff. This means that staff are now much more aware of the potential dangers and risks pupils at the school are exposed to. This includes non-teaching support staff who have also completed appropriate safeguarding training.
- Governors ensure that the school meets its statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and the protection of children and young people. Safeguarding is now a fixed item on the agenda at governing body meetings as part of the governing body's wider focus on health and safety. There is also a named governor who reports to the governing body on safeguarding. Appropriate safeguarding training has been arranged for the governors who have just joined the school.
- Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school and were able to explain very clearly what they would do if they had concerns for their own, or other pupils' safety. They also said that they feel the school is a happy and friendly place to be.
- During the inspection, pupils made clear references to systems and procedures recently introduced by leaders to ensure that pupils have different options to report any fears or concerns.
- The great majority of parents who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are safe and happy at the school.
- It is clear that the school's culture for safeguarding pupils has improved. One member of staff stated that things had, 'gone from one extreme to the other'. Another told the inspector that staff, 'now work as a cohesive team and ensure the pastoral care of pupils is given the right priority'.
- Because school leaders have ensured that the welfare, health and safety of pupils are given the highest priority, and the specific aspects of safeguarding that were found to be of concern at the last inspection have been addressed, this standard is now met.

*Paragraphs 8, 8(a) and 8(b)*

- During the last emergency inspection, shortcomings were identified in the safeguarding and welfare arrangements at the school's residential provision. The proposed actions for meeting these shortcomings were found to be unacceptable when the school's action plan to address the shortcomings was evaluated in September 2016.
- During this monitoring inspection, social care inspectors were simultaneously carrying out an inspection of the school's boarding provision. These separate inspections were aligned, but not integrated.
- The provisional findings of the aligned social care inspection indicate that the overall effectiveness of the school's residential provision is now good. This includes arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school.

- Because school leaders have addressed the shortcomings found in these paragraphs, this standard is now met.

*Paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b)*

- The last emergency inspection highlighted pupils' risk assessments as an area of concern. This applied particularly to the school's residential provision. The proposed actions for meeting this shortcoming were found to be unacceptable when the school's action plan was evaluated in September 2016.
- The school now has a written policy for risk assessments. The policy is fit for purpose. Furthermore, personal risk assessments are now in place for all pupils in the school. These are closely aligned to each pupil's communication passport, which also contains detailed and relevant information about their specific needs.
- General risk assessments, including, for instance, those for off-site educational visits or different buildings on the school site, are being updated on a priority-led basis. This is sensible considering the enormity of the task. This approach also ensures that risk assessments are more likely to be fit for purpose, rather than leaders and staff rushing to complete what would merely be a paper exercise. It should be noted that the last emergency inspection report indicated that general risk assessments were being completed 'proficiently'.
- Because the school has a written risk assessment policy and school leaders have ensured that individual risk assessments are now in place for each pupil, this standard is now met.

Part 6. Provision of information

*Paragraph 32(1)(h)*

- At the previous emergency inspection, it was found that school leaders were not providing income and expenditure information relating to pupils placed at the school by local authorities. The proposed actions for meeting this shortcoming were found to be acceptable when the school's action plan was evaluated in September 2016.
- The school is now able to provide detailed analysis of income and expenditure for each pupil. This includes the costs of learning support, including speech and language or occupational therapy, boarding and travel. Records are comprehensive and credible.
- Income and expenditure information is now available to local authorities that wholly or partly fund pupils at the school. This information is available annually or on request.
- Because the school provides annual accounts of income and expenditure for individual pupils who are funded by local authorities, this standard is now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

*Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- At the last emergency inspection, a number of independent school standards were found not to be met. Consequently, an action plan was drawn up to address the unmet standards. This action plan was judged to be unacceptable when it was evaluated in September 2016.
- As a result of the school's action plan being found to be unacceptable by the Department for Education, school leaders have further refined plans to address the unmet standards found at the last inspection. This has enabled them to take effective action in addressing the unmet standards.

- Because all standards previously identified as being unmet are now met, this standard is also now met.

## Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

### The school now meets the following independent school standards

- Paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b): 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 8, 8(a) and 8(b): arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
- Paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b): 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 appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- Paragraph 32(1)(h): 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<sup>1</sup>) 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 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c): the standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that: persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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<sup>1</sup> 2006 c.21. Section 7 was substituted by section 1 of the 2011 Act and section 7A was inserted by section 87 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (c.6).

## School details

Unique reference number	114645
DfE registration number	845/6028
Inspection number	10025690

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Independent
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	10 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	8
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	The governing body
Chair	Julie Toben
Headteacher	Janet Felkin
Annual fees (day pupils)	£20,817
Telephone number	01273472915
Website	<a href="http://www.northeast.co.uk">www.northeast.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:pa2headteacher@northeast.co.uk">pa2headteacher@northeast.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	18–20 November 2014

### 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 and/or disabilities. These include autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia and dyscalculia, as well as emotional, behavioural and social communication difficulties.
- The school 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 78 pupils on roll. A large majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are boys.
- Pupils are taught in small classes according to age and ability. A wide range of professional support, including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and counselling, is provided.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The interim headteacher joined the school in April 2016. The previous headteacher left in February 2016. There have been many changes in the senior leadership team since the emergency inspection held in May 2016.
- A number of governors have left since the emergency inspection held in May 2016. Three governors have recently joined the governing body, including a new chair of the governing body.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the previous inspection.
- The school's action plan to address the unmet independent school standards identified at the last inspection was rejected by the Department for Education in October 2016.
- As a monitoring inspection, this inspection was carried out without notice. The inspection focused on the unmet independent school standards identified at the last inspection.
- During the inspection, the inspector visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning. During classroom visits, he talked to pupils and assessed the quality of their work. The inspector was accompanied by the headteacher during classroom visits.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders (including the school's business manager), a group of pupils, and the chair of the governing body, accompanied by one other governor.
- The inspector met with social care inspectors who were carrying out an aligned inspection of the school's residential provision at the same time as this monitoring inspection.
- The inspector considered the views of parents by taking into account 21 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and two other written communications submitted by parents.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's safeguarding and other associated policies.

## Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector



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