

Ticehurst Hospital School

Ticehurst Priory Hospital, Ticehurst, East Sussex TN5 7HU

Inspection dates

25–27 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders are committed and resolute. Their combined energy and drive has ensured rapid improvement in the short period of time since the school opened.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and insightful and ensures that development planning focuses on the right areas for improvement.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and ensures positive outcomes for most pupils. This is impressive when the highly acute and complex needs of pupils are taken into consideration.
- Those responsible for governance know the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and provide excellent support for school leaders.
- Staff are very positive about the school and work as a collegiate team to provide a high degree of care for pupils.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are respectful to staff and visitors. Their attitudes to learning are mostly positive.
- The school's sixth form provision provides students with good support and bespoke programmes of learning.
- Communication between academic and clinical staff is extremely effective and ensures that pupils' social and emotional needs are catered for very well.
- Safeguarding is effective. Procedures and daily routines are reviewed constantly so that the school environment is a safe place to be.
- The school's curriculum is effective and meets the needs of pupils well. Leaders have plans to develop the curriculum offer further, so that outcomes for pupils improve to become outstanding.
- Leaders and teaching staff monitor the progress of pupils well. Recent improvements in systems to track academic progress need time to embed.
- Senior leaders and those responsible for governance have ensured that all of the independent school standards are 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'), the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the recently revised system to track pupils' academic progress quickly becomes a fully effective tool to monitor outcomes and plan next steps in learning.
- Extend the range of the school's curriculum offer so that it fully meets the academic and pastoral needs of all pupils, by:
 - making better use of facilities and resources available at the school and in the wider community, including developing learning opportunities in the outdoor environment
 - providing a wider range of suitably qualified and experienced staff to facilitate high-quality teaching and learning across as broad a range of academic and vocational subjects as possible.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Senior leaders have high expectations and aspire for the school to become a centre of excellence. Their determination and drive have ensured that the school has improved rapidly in the relatively short period of time since it opened. The capacity for further rapid improvement is clear to see.
- Teaching and support staff share the vision of leaders. They work as a collegiate team to ensure that pupils are provided with the best care and guidance available. High-quality leadership and management ensure that staff understand their roles and the important part each of them plays in providing for the very complex needs of pupils.
- Leaders ensure that the professional development of staff is given a high priority. This includes members of staff who aspire to become school leaders eventually. Due to the context of the school, training to ensure the safety and social and emotional development of pupils is ongoing and constantly reviewed to ensure best practice.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment extremely well. They know where classroom practice is strong and intervene effectively where improvement could be made. Self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is thorough. Improvement planning focuses on the right things.
- Communication with other professionals is a particular strength. Staff from different professional backgrounds with varied areas of expertise work closely with school leaders and teaching staff to ensure that pupils are ready to learn. This multidisciplinary team approach has an exceptionally positive impact on outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders monitor and measure pupils' progress in a number of ways. Assuring pupils' well-being and developing the social and emotional aspects of learning are given a high priority. Leaders also understand that with the right support and guidance, pupils can make strong academic progress, especially those who attend the school for longer periods of time.
- The school's curriculum is fit for purpose. Pupils receive a bespoke package of learning while at the school. Students in the sixth form benefit from a number of subject specialists, including in mathematics, English and science, in order to provide the support required to continue their studies towards A-level qualifications.
- Ensuring that pupils follow an appropriate curriculum pathway during their short stay at the school, typically 12 weeks, is a constant challenge. Many pupils are simply not able to access a full timetable during their time at the school, although others cope more readily with a wider range of subjects.
- Leaders know that they need an uncompromising approach to provide the expert staff and resources to enable the curriculum to support outstanding outcomes for all pupils. This is particularly the case with the vocational strands of the curriculum, or in the school's extra-curricular offer, including extending learning into the local community.
- Despite pupils' very complex needs, leaders ensure that the wider curriculum supports pupils in understanding the views of others. Tolerance and respect are at the heart of every aspect of the school. The school's duties under the Equality Act 2010 are taken

seriously. Discrimination of any kind is not accepted by both pupils and staff alike.

- School leaders and those responsible for governance are effective in ensuring that all of the independent school standards are met.

Governance

- Governance of the school is strong. Those responsible for governance hold leaders to account effectively. This means that the quality of education has sustained an upward trajectory since the school opened.
- The proprietor monitors the school's performance in a number of ways. Quality assurance is undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced professionals. Systems to monitor progress and identify areas that need to be developed are sound and have an excellent impact on improving all aspects of provision.
- Those responsible for governance know the school very well. They carry out their statutory duties with enthusiasm and an impressive energy. Working partnerships are strong, creating the motivation and capacity for leaders to run the school in a highly effective manner.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school complies with all elements of the independent school standards regarding the safety of pupils, including publishing a suitable safeguarding policy on its website.
- Procedures to keep pupils and staff safe are the first priority of leaders and those responsible for governance. All aspects of safeguarding are kept under constant review because of the high risk associated with pupils' complex needs.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Staff understand pupils' particular needs well. A consistent approach to all aspects of safeguarding and a strong culture among staff to ensure that pupils feel protected and cared for mean that most pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Daily routines are sound. Communication with other professionals is strong and helps staff to anticipate problems before they arise. This is especially the case between teaching staff and healthcare professionals from the attached hospital ward. Daily updates ensure that key information flows both ways between the ward and the school. Weekly meetings review all aspects of provision, as well as the impact attending school is having on pupils' health and welfare needs.
- All staff are trained at an appropriate level. This includes specialist training to ensure that staff are able to keep themselves safe and to understand the complexities associated with the needs of individual pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching staff know pupils very well. Induction procedures for pupils are strong and allow staff to assess their academic and emotional needs as soon as they arrive at Ticehurst, leading to personalised timetables and a relatively smooth transition into school.

- Not all pupils are ready to access the classrooms when they arrive at the school. Teaching staff liaise closely with medical colleagues to ensure that attendance at school has a positive impact on pupils' health and well-being. This ensures minimum disruption to learning in classrooms and positive outcomes for most pupils.
- Subject specialists are available to teach a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. During the inspection, a science specialist provided good-quality support and guidance as a pupil revised molecule polarity for her upcoming GCSE science examination. Pupils express confidence in teaching and support staff to deliver high-quality learning experiences. Evidence seen in pupils' work showed this to be the case.
- On occasion, teachers work together to deliver joint lessons, for instance, combining English and music lessons. Pupils enjoy this approach, which also creates capacity for teaching staff to share good practice and makes the curriculum more accessible and engaging.
- Where the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is strong, most pupils make good progress. This is especially the case in core subjects. However, some teaching does not challenge pupils enough and they become disengaged from learning.
- Most pupils' relatively short stay at the school means that staff are constantly assessing progress and planning learning opportunities for an ever-changing cohort of pupils. On the whole, they do this well. Recent changes to the system that allows staff to monitor progress need time to embed to become fully effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The social and emotional aspects of learning are afforded high priority. The well-being of pupils is constantly monitored so that they feel cared for and classrooms remain safe and productive places.
- Staff place great emphasis on ensuring that pupils are ready to learn. Daily routines to ease pupils into the classroom environment are effective. Communication between clinical staff on the adjacent hospital ward and teaching and support staff within the school ensures that the welfare needs of pupils are met well.
- Generally speaking, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and relish the sense of normality that this provides for them. However, because of the complexity and acuity of their health needs, there are occasions when some pupils struggle to engage fully in learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. During the inspection, classrooms were calm and purposeful places where pupils showed respect to each other and to teaching and support staff.
- Staff are experienced and intuitive. They are skilled at recognising the early signs of pupils disengaging from learning or becoming emotionally distressed. This means that the

chances of minor situations escalating are reduced greatly.

- Attendance at the school is dictated by a number of factors, including advice from clinicians. Most pupils attend daily, although some pupils' severe health needs mean their attendance is limited. When this is the case, school staff are able to provide work for pupils to undertake on the ward if this is deemed appropriate.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils make good progress when they attend school. Outcomes are measured in a number of ways. For many pupils, academic progress is dependent on them being able to overcome their complex health needs to access learning. When this happens, it is clear that pupils make discernible progress and achieve well.
- Leaders and staff track pupils' outcomes carefully. Small numbers of pupils mean that every individual is monitored closely. Pupils are also expected to assess their own learning and achievement over time, helping leaders to build an accurate picture of progress within cohorts and different pupil groups. Because of the low numbers, it is not possible to report meaningfully on the outcomes of key groups.
- Individual 'progress profile reports' enable staff to monitor pupils' willingness to engage with learning, as well as a range of other social and emotional attributes, including levels of communication. The system to monitor progress against 'academic learning targets' has been reviewed recently to give teachers more scope to measure progress accurately. The rationale behind the changes is sound. The system now needs time to embed before its impact on improving outcomes can be fully assessed.
- School leaders carefully monitor the transition of pupils leaving the school. For many pupils, this means returning to their 'home' school. In some cases, students in Years 12 and 13 arrive at Ticehurst not having been in education, employment or training prior to joining the school. In such cases, staff work in partnership with other professionals to find college placements, voluntary schemes or other appropriate routes to enable students to access further education, training or employment.

Sixth form provision

Good

- The school's sixth form provision is good. Many of the school's broader strengths apply equally to this part of the school. This includes leadership and management, which is outstanding.
- Students make good progress in the sixth form. Staff with specialist subject knowledge provide good-quality support and guidance and are keen to motivate students so that time spent at the hospital school is used productively.
- All students continue to develop their English and mathematics skills at whatever level is appropriate to them during their short stay in the sixth form.
- The breadth of the curriculum available to students in the sixth form is kept under constant review. Full or part-time staff are able to cover a good range of subject requirements. A number of other strategies, including bought-in tutors, are used to extend subject options for students. School leaders have set expansion of the curriculum

offer, including vocational strands, as a key priority for improvement.

- Impartial careers guidance and information are available to students in the sixth form, although many students will be following a programme through their 'home' schools. However, leaders know that good-quality advice is crucial to many students during their stay at Ticehurst, especially for those who may need to defer examinations or delay their next steps in education, training or employment.

School details

Unique reference number	142925
DfE registration number	845/6062
Inspection number	10033965

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	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	21
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	14
Proprietor	Priory Education Services Ltd
Chair	John Steward
Headteacher	Patricia Wilson (Executive Headteacher)
Annual fees	£33,250
Telephone number	01580 202262
Website	www.priorychildrensservices.co.uk
Email address	patriciawilson@priorygroup.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Ticehurst Hospital School is an independent day school which provides the educational provision for pupils attending The Priory Hospital, Ticehurst. Pupils attending the school have severe and acute health and psychological needs.
- The school was registered by the Department for Education in May 2016 and is one of a number of educational settings run by Priory Education Services Ltd. This was the first standard inspection since the school opened.

- The school is led by an executive headteacher who took up her position in September 2016. The executive headteacher is also responsible for two other Priory Group schools. The school also has a head of school, who is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of the school in the absence of the executive headteacher.
- The school provides for up to 26 pupils aged between 12 and 18. During the inspection there were 21 pupils on roll. The number of pupils on roll fluctuates weekly. Most pupils attend the school for a twelve-week programme. Some pupils attend the school for longer or shorter periods of time, depending on their needs.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first full inspection carried out since the school opened in May 2016.
- The inspector carried out a number of classroom visits during the inspection, some accompanied by senior leaders. During classroom visits, the inspector assessed pupils' work and talked to them about the progress they were making.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, representatives of the proprietor and those responsible for governance, a consultant psychiatrist, teaching and support staff, a small representative group of students, and one parent. A telephone conversation was held with a school leader from one student's home school.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and as they moved around the school.
- There were no responses to the online Ofsted parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents and policies, including those regarding safeguarding and other aspects of the independent school standards. Minutes of meetings of those responsible for governance, notes of visits by the proprietor's quality improvement leader, the school's own self-evaluation, improvement planning and information about pupils' outcomes were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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