

# Philpots Manor School

West Hoathly, West Sussex, West Sussex RH19 4PR

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

This independent residential special school offers education and residential provision for pupils, irrespective of gender, between the ages of seven and 19 who have social, emotional, behavioural or mental health needs and social communication difficulties. The ethos of the school is based on the social and educational principles of Rudolf Steiner. The residential pupils live in four separate houses within the school grounds.

**Inspection dates:** 6 to 8 February 2018

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 1 February 2017

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- The highly competent senior leadership team is committed to continuous improvement and providing the residential pupils with high standards of care and support.
- Analytical and evaluative monitoring by the head of care results in decisive and effective action to promote positive outcomes for the pupils.
- Robust safeguarding systems are embedded to promote the welfare of pupils.
- There is a sharp focus on ensuring that all the needs of the pupils identified in their education, health and care plans are met. The therapy provision has been extended. Comprehensive care plans clearly guide the staff to provide the necessary support to advance the pupils' development.
- The deputy care coordinator has a pivotal role in addressing the well-being and welfare needs of the pupils. Her knowledge, professionalism and drive have been instrumental in improving the opportunities for the pupils to achieve positive outcomes.
- The staff team provides sensitive and thoughtful support tailored to the pupils' individual needs. The pupils develop positive and meaningful relationships with the staff and make significant progress in all aspects of their lives.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- The residential accommodation is now a rather outdated environment.
- There is not a clear audit trail relating to the debriefing of staff following incidents of physical intervention.

## **What does the residential special school need to do to improve?**

### **Recommendations**

- Consider investing in the major refurbishment and modernisation of the residential accommodation.
- Ensure that there is a clear audit trail relating to the debriefing of staff following incidents of physical intervention.

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The residential pupils are positive about their experiences and are making significant progress in many aspects of their lives. They respond to nurturing, individualised care and support with clear routines and boundaries, and their behaviour, social skills, independence skills and emotional health improve.

The residential pupils develop positive relationships with the staff, who are patient, tolerant and sensitive. The staff know them well and provide consistent and predictable support to help them manage their day-to-day lives.

The deputy care coordinator (health and well-being) is a qualified nurse and works proactively with the staff to monitor the residential pupils' physical and emotional health and ensure that they improve and maintain their health. The residential pupils benefit from the expertise of external, specialist health professionals who provide training and guidance for the staff. The recently expanded team of therapists contributes well to a multi-disciplinary approach, which addresses the pupils' complex needs and improves their access to learning and their educational progress.

Preparation for adulthood is an integral part of the pupils' residential experience. The residential pupils develop their daily living skills at a pace carefully considered by managers. As residential pupils approach the next stage in their lives, they are given opportunities to take more responsibility for themselves so that they are well equipped to face the challenges of the transition to adulthood. The residential pupils who are reaching this stage demonstrated that they have plans and hopes for their futures and are looking forward with confidence and optimism.

Senior leaders and the staff value the opinions of pupils. Regular house meetings provide the residential pupils with a forum to contribute ideas and suggestions relating to their residential experience. The school council has recently been reinstated. Managers are keen for the pupils to have more involvement in reviewing policies. Recent meetings have covered such topics as their views on the relationship and dating code, school rules and suggestions for using the money raised at the school's Christmas fair. Collaboration with the pupils at this level, prior to policy reviews, demonstrates to the pupils that their views are important and the managers and the staff respect their opinions.

The residential pupils live in accommodation that is warm and comfortable. However, the accommodation is dated and does not have a modern feel to it.

## **How well children and young people are helped and protected: good**

High-quality care plans, incorporating the pupil's needs and targets identified in their education, health and care plans (EHC plans), guide the staff team in implementing specific strategies to promote each pupil's development. There is a focus on ensuring that all the pupils' needs that are identified in their EHC plans are met, and therapy provision has been extended and is now clearly detailed in care plans.

The staff have detailed knowledge of each residential pupil and their particular difficulties and vulnerabilities. They provide sensitive and thoughtful support tailored to the pupils' individual needs. Knowing that the staff respond to their needs, the residential pupils develop positive relationships with the staff and accept the support offered.

The head of care closely monitors the behaviour of individual pupils who are causing concern. From identifying patterns and trends and implementing appropriate support strategies, incidents requiring physical intervention by the staff are decreasing. The residential pupils have detailed behaviour management plans and risk assessments giving the staff clear guidance with which to manage risk with an emphasis on proactive early intervention to avoid the escalation of challenging behaviour. Parents are involved in the risk assessment process to ensure that all relevant information is available to support the pupil. Records of incidents involving physical intervention are comprehensive but do not show a clear audit trail relating to the debriefings for the staff following the incident.

The work of the deputy care coordinator (health and well-being) has resulted in considerable developments in the health and well-being provision for the pupils. In addition to extending the availability of a range of therapies, she is focusing on addressing the emotional and mental health needs of the pupils, promoting healthy lifestyles and working with the staff to help them understand the meaning of the residential pupils' behaviour. She is working in partnership with parents to ensure that the pupils receive the appropriate level of support to make progress. The staff team also communicates effectively with parents and carers so that they can provide targeted support for the residential pupils to address their specific difficulties.

The head of care, who is the designated safeguarding lead, has continued to embed robust safeguarding systems. The team of designated safeguarding officers is knowledgeable, suitably trained and effective in its role. The designated officer reported positively on how safeguarding issues are managed and stated that she 'has no concerns about their safeguarding practice. Consultations and referrals are appropriate, timely and of good quality'. Safeguarding arrangements promote the pupils' welfare. The staff are well trained, alert and confident in their safeguarding roles.

The young people say that they feel safe and are confident that the staff take any bullying issues seriously and resolve the matters promptly.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

The strong leadership team is committed to continuous improvement. The head of care and the deputy care coordinator (health and well-being) are ambitious and dedicated to ensuring that the residential pupils receive high-quality care, emotional support and opportunities to develop their social skills and independence. Their expectations of high standards are translated into practice, guiding the staff team to identify and meet each of the residential pupils' specific needs.

The head of care clearly recognises the strengths of the residential provision and the areas for development. Analytical and evaluative monitoring results in decisive and correct action to promote positive outcomes for the pupils. Embedded in the quality assurance system are detailed annual welfare reports with specific action points to develop best practice. Notable recent improvements are the explicit focus on implementing all the education, health and care plans effectively, with the associated introduction of comprehensive care plans and the introduction of structured activities during lunch breaks as a response to high levels of incidents at these times.

The senior leadership team and the staff team have stepped up to the challenge of improving provision for pupils across all aspects of the school. The competent staff team works cohesively and appreciates the resolute support from managers through appraisal, regular supervision and ongoing discussions to improve the support for the residential pupils. Training and induction are comprehensive, with a sharp focus on extending the staff's understanding and awareness of current safeguarding risks.

The proprietor of the school demonstrates a tireless passion and commitment to school improvement and achieving positive outcomes for the pupils. Utilising the skills of the professional and highly competent senior leadership team effectively, he is bringing an increased level of scrutiny and oversight to the evaluation of the quality of the residential provision. He has undertaken safeguarding training to enable him to monitor the effectiveness of systems used within the school to protect pupils.

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help,

protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

## **Residential special school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC372592

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Darin Nobes

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Jan Hunnam, social care inspector (lead)  
Liz Driver, social care inspector



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