

# Philpots Manor School

West Hoathly, 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:** 3 to 5 December 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:** 6 February 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- Senior leaders and managers are highly competent, experienced and dedicated to continuously improve standards of care and support for residential pupils.
- Analytical and evaluative monitoring by senior leaders leads to significant changes, resulting in improved outcomes for pupils.
- High-quality, detailed and comprehensive plans and risk assessments guide staff to provide effective individualised, nurturing support and help keep residential pupils safe.
- Safeguarding residential pupils is at the heart of the staff's practice. Comprehensive training for staff and effective systems for identifying and responding to concerns promote residential pupils' welfare. A sharp focus on educating pupils to keep themselves safe is evident.
- Residential pupils form positive relationships with staff. They develop a sense of safety, protection and trust in the staff through thoughtful and consistent support.
- Residential pupils enjoy their experience. They make good progress in many aspects of their lives. Their confidence and self-esteem develop, they learn how to socialise and make friends and their behaviour improves.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- The fire risk assessment has not been reviewed by a suitably qualified specialist assessor.

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

### **Recommendations**

- Consider engaging a qualified expert to review the fire risk assessment.

## Inspection judgements

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

As a result of highly individualised, nurturing care and support, residential pupils make good progress. Working collaboratively with staff across the school, including therapists, residential staff use their in-depth knowledge of each residential pupil to ensure that support advances their development.

Parents acknowledge the valuable contribution that the experience of boarding at the school has made to their child's progress. One parent commented that she has seen 'an improvement in her son in everything'. Parents noted positively how residential life provides opportunities for pupils to make friends, become involved in activities and learn to socialise. Residential pupils who have had previous negative school experiences are enjoying their time at school and growing in confidence.

Residential pupils have access to excellent support for their health needs. A qualified nurse compiles thorough and comprehensive health plans covering all aspects of each residential pupil's healthcare needs. The staff have a continuous focus on the well-being and emotional health of residential pupils. They are attuned to the particular moods and behaviour of residential pupils and closely monitor their mental health. Effective support is provided in the school, with referrals to external specialists when necessary. Senior leaders recently led an initiative to raise awareness of the importance of emotional well-being, dedicating a week at the end of the summer term to activities focusing on healthy living and well-being for staff and pupils. This focus has a positive influence on pupils' learning and academic progress.

The views of residential pupils are important to staff. The active student council provides a forum for pupils to put forward their views through their representatives. Important consultations with residential pupils occur in regular key-work sessions. Staff are responsive to their views and opinions, demonstrating that they are listened to and valued.

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

Protecting residential pupils, and educating them to keep themselves safe, is a priority for staff. Staff know the residential pupils very well. Detailed, comprehensive care plans and risk assessments identify residential pupils' individual needs, with specific guidance for staff to implement support to protect them and help them progress.

Effective safeguarding measures promote the welfare of pupils. Staff are well trained and confident in their safeguarding role. Concerns about pupils are promptly passed on to the experienced team of designated safeguarding officers, who meet daily to review current safeguarding matters. Consultations and referrals to external safeguarding agencies are appropriate, timely and of good quality.

Information for pupils on how to keep themselves safe is continually repeated. Staff re-visit issues such as using social media safely and provide support for parents to help them understand and control the risks associated with using the internet.

Extremely positive relationships between the staff and the residential pupils are at the heart of behaviour management strategies. The residential pupils develop a sense of safety, protection and trust in the staff, through their thoughtful and consistent support, and respond positively. Individual behaviour management plans focus on proactive early intervention to de-escalate potentially difficult and challenging behaviour.

Senior leaders closely monitor pupils' behaviour. The analysis and evaluation of incidents have resulted in a change in the training model for behaviour management. Senior leaders have recognised the need for a different approach in supporting pupils with increasingly complex needs. New training for staff focuses more on understanding pupils' behaviour to implement effective support and reduce the necessity for physical intervention to manage negative behaviour.

There are systems in place to monitor health and safety within the residential provision. The fire risk assessment has been internally reviewed but there has been no assessment from an external specialist with the necessary expertise to ensure that all measures are in place to protect pupils and staff.

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

All staff share a commitment to support residential pupils to fulfil their potential and become active, independent young people. The care coordinator, who is passionate about her role and deputy care coordinator are committed to ensuring that the staff team provides opportunities for residential pupils to receive high-quality care, appropriate emotional support and opportunities to develop their social skills and independence.

The strong and effective senior leadership team strives continuously to improve the experience of pupils in the school. Currently its focus is on developing staff's understanding of pupils' behaviour. It is driving forward a change in culture to support pupils more effectively through recognising the meaning of pupils' behaviour and understanding what they are trying to communicate through their behaviour.

Analytical and evaluative monitoring by the care coordinator leads to significant changes, resulting in improved outcomes for pupils. Recently, the pupils have been carefully matched in groups during break times so that the support they receive during these times can more effectively meet their needs. Consequently, there has been a decrease in incidents of challenging behaviour and the necessity for physical intervention.

The skilled and experienced staff receive constructive support from managers.

Through training, regular reflective supervision and collaborative working with school staff and therapists, staff are continuously looking at ways to improve the care and support they provide for residential pupils.

The proprietor of the school continues to oversee the school with a dedication to on-going improvement. With the commitment of the highly competent senior leadership team, the support provided for pupils is constantly under review. Senior leaders are intent on introducing new initiatives to promote pupils' experiences. A new model of support for behaviour is being introduced, with a sharper focus on understanding the behaviour of pupils. Raising awareness of emotional well-being and mental health has been a positive development. Also, the attention to ensuring that new pupils are gradually introduced to the school, and to residential life at the school, is helping to maintain the progress and stability of existing 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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## **Inspector**

Jan Hunnam, social care inspector





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