

Philpots Manor School

West Hoathly, West Sussex RH19 4PR

Inspection dates

21–23 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have secured notable improvements in the school's performance since the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching has improved substantially during the past few years. As a result, most pupils make strong progress and achieve well.
- Skilful support for pupils enables them to make significant gains in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Strong relationships ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils respect adults and behave well.
- Highly effective leadership and skilful teaching in the sixth form prepares students exceptionally well for their future lives.
- The curriculum has recently been updated to enable pupils to make even better progress in English, mathematics and science. However, it is too soon for these changes to be fully established across the school.
- Leaders ensure that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Subject leaders have made a good start in their roles. They have established themselves well with the staff team and provide good-quality advice. However, their leadership roles are at an early stage of development.
- Leaders have introduced an accurate and reliable system for tracking pupils' progress. However, teaching does not always make sufficient use of the information to plan future learning. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could, particularly the most able.
- Sometimes teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are not as high as they should be, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Governance is underdeveloped. The proprietor and the newly formed advisory panel do not hold leaders to account for the school's performance rigorously enough.
- There are too few opportunities for staff to learn from existing strong practice in the school or from colleagues in other schools.

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.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on recent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, so that all groups of pupils, including the most able, are challenged and supported to achieve the very best outcomes, by making sure that staff:
 - have the highest expectations of pupils' learning
 - make the fullest use of information about pupils' progress to plan learning effectively for pupils of all abilities
 - have more opportunities to learn from strong practice within the school and beyond.
- Ensure that the recently updated curriculum in English, mathematics and science is fully established across the school.
- Strengthen leadership and governance by making sure that:
 - the proprietor and the advisory panel hold leaders to account rigorously for the school's performance
 - subject leaders' roles are developed fully.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have secured notable improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection, despite an unsettled period in the school's history and many staff changes.
- The deputy headteacher and interim headteacher work very well together. They share the same high aspirations for all pupils and provide strong leadership for the staff team.
- Effective staff teamwork underpins the school's work. Staff work well together, sharing information about pupils' progress, discussing ideas and making sure that pupils' achievements are celebrated. They have welcomed the renewed direction introduced by leaders during the past year which has accelerated the pace of development.
- Caring and respectful relationships are a notable strength in the school and provide pupils with a secure framework for their personal, social and academic development.
- The school teaches a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum. Courses and qualifications are used flexibly to appeal to pupils' individual preferences and to support them in their choices of further education or future careers.
- The school has extended the range of GCSE examination subjects available to pupils since the previous inspection. For example, pupils can now opt to study art, cookery and computing, as well as English, mathematics and science. As a result, more pupils are achieving GCSE qualifications, and in a broader range of subjects, than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school's good-quality sports provision makes a strong contribution to pupils' social development, as well as to their physical and emotional health. For example, early in the inspection the school's football team trained enthusiastically for a forthcoming match. The players' commitment, skill and teamwork secured them a well-deserved victory the following day.
- The school's curriculum makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about a number of world religions, and opportunities to develop pupils' personal skills are woven throughout learning and school life. For example, the work in some of the younger pupils' books includes pupils' perceptive comments about 'what makes a good friend'.
- The school promotes British values very well. Pupils learn about British history and its culture and explore British values through a wide range of activities. During the inspection, for example, the school's football team demonstrated a strong sense of fair play by lending their opponents a few of their own players. As their coach said, 'It was British sportsmanship at its best!'
- Leaders have recently updated assessment procedures to provide a more precise view of pupils' learning over time. They meet with staff regularly to discuss pupils' progress and to identify pupils' future needs. As a result, leaders and staff have a much clearer understanding of pupils' progress. However, it is too soon for the revised assessment procedures to be fully established in all year groups, and some teachers make better use of the information than others.

- Subject leadership has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The recently appointed leaders for English, mathematics and science have an accurate view of the quality of learning. They are clear about aspects of teaching which need further improvement and have the subject knowledge to support their colleagues successfully. Their leadership skills, however, are at an early stage of development.
- The subject leaders have recently revised the English, mathematics and science curriculum to ensure greater consistency of learning and to provide more opportunities for the most able pupils to excel. They have made substantial progress in updating teaching in light of these curriculum changes, particularly in mathematics. However, not all teachers are fully confident about teaching the revised curriculum plans.
- The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Leaders have eradicated an element of weaker teaching which has hindered pupils' progress in the past, and they continue to work constructively with the staff team to secure further improvements. Leaders have rightly identified the need to provide staff with more training opportunities, including opportunities to learn from strong practice in the school and in other schools, to support developments in their practice.
- Leaders make sure that the independent school standards are met.

Governance

- The proprietor has a sound view of the school's day-to-day work. He works constructively with senior leaders and with other members of staff. However, the proprietor recognises that governance has not held leaders to account for the school's performance rigorously enough or systematically enough in the past.
- The proprietor is aware of the need to strengthen leaders' accountability and has recently taken steps to improve governance. For example, external audits of aspects of the school's work have been commissioned and an advisory panel has been established to support the proprietor in checking the school's performance. However, it is still early days and the advisory panel is currently in the process of clarifying its roles, responsibilities and terms of reference.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's calm, orderly and attractive environment makes a strong contribution to pupils' well-being and to their enjoyment of school.
- Safeguarding procedures are well established and are followed consistently throughout the school. Adults are vigilant about pupils' safety and are clear about the correct procedures to follow if they have any concerns. They are attentive to pupils' needs and provide good levels of supervision around the school site so that pupils are safe.
- Strong relationships between adults and pupils ensure that any worries are quickly identified and addressed. Effective links with parents and agencies contribute well to pupils' safety and welfare.
- The school's well-qualified designated safeguarding lead is highly knowledgeable about safety issues. He provides strong leadership for safeguarding in the school and makes

sure that staff training is up to date.

- The school maintains detailed records of any concerns or incidents. The school makes good use of its secure and confidential online system to record any safeguarding incidents or queries and subsequent progress. As a result, the designated safeguarding lead and senior leaders are able to analyse and monitor any ongoing concerns, while staff receive daily updates about pupils' welfare when appropriate.
- The school's safeguarding policy meets statutory requirements and is made available to parents via the school's website or from the school office.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Improvements in teaching since the previous inspection have strengthened pupils' progress across the school. Teaching builds well on prior learning so that pupils make strong progress. Ongoing developments in teaching, assessment and the curriculum mean that the quality of teaching continues to improve.
- Pupils have often had an unsettled time in education prior to joining the school. Teaching focuses well on building pupils' confidence and resilience so that they develop the positive attitudes and self-belief needed to learn successfully.
- Teaching successfully identifies and addresses any weaknesses in pupils' learning which are hampering their progress when they join the school. Often teachers have to unpick and rectify misconceptions in pupils' understanding before moving learning on at a more rapid pace. However, with patience, care and understanding, teaching ensures that pupils go on to develop increasingly secure reading, writing and mathematical skills which contribute to their achievements in a wide range of subjects.
- Adults make sure that learning is relevant and purposeful so that pupils are interested and motivated to do well. For example, some of the younger pupils recently considered the use of materials in the school environment while studying the properties of materials. In the older year groups, teachers link course work to pupils' personal interests wherever possible so that learning is meaningful and engaging.
- Teachers regularly give pupils useful tips to support their learning. For example, during the inspection, pupils learned how to use a dry brush to control watercolour paint during an art lesson, while in a mathematics lesson pupils were reminded of the importance of showing their workings and explaining their answers. The work in pupils' books illustrates the positive impact this approach has on pupils' progress over time, as the tips and reminders gradually become an established element of pupils' everyday work.
- While the quality of teaching has improved considerably, small pockets of less effective teaching remain. For example, teaching does not always make sufficient use of assessment information to plan learning well enough for individual pupils' needs. While teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are higher than at the time of the previous inspection, the work set for pupils is not always challenging enough to deepen and extend pupils' learning fully, particularly for the most able pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Adults develop strong and trusting relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe, secure and appreciated. Bit by bit, pupils grow in confidence and develop an increasingly positive view of their future lives in education or work.
- The school has successfully developed a 'family' feel to lunchtimes, which are friendly, sociable and relaxed occasions. Pupils eat sensibly and politely, chatting amiably about their day and sharing ideas for activities.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how they can help to keep themselves safe. For example, they follow the school rules consistently when moving between lessons and around the site.
- Bullying rarely happens in the school. Strong relationships with adults ensure that pupils feel comfortable about asking for help, and adults are quick to respond to any concerns.
- Strong links with parents, agencies and colleges, combined with skilful support, enable pupils to learn with increasing success as they move up through the year groups. Most pupils want to do well and are keen to succeed. A few, however, are less positive about school. This is particularly the case where adults' expectations of pupils' learning are not as high as they could be and so pupils are less motivated to achieve well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils of all ages get on harmoniously together and behave well. They move between lessons and around the school site sensibly, quietly and safely. Adults and pupils routinely greet each other with interest, warmth and respect when they pass each other during the school day.
- The school secures notable improvements in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance over time. Adults respond to any incidents of challenging behaviour calmly, fairly and consistently.
- Most pupils work hard in lessons and listen carefully to adults. However, sometimes a few pupils lose focus during lessons and disturb their classmates' learning. Adults do not always respond fully enough when this is the case, so the pace of learning slows.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The quality of pupils' learning and their progress over time has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils make strong progress in a range of subjects, including mathematics and English.
- In mathematics, pupils use their mathematical knowledge to solve an increasingly wide range of problems as they progress. They record their workings with increasing clarity, demonstrating their reasons for the strategies chosen and explaining their answers

successfully.

- Teaching supports pupils' progress in reading well. Pupils develop secure comprehension skills, learn about a range of authors and enjoy reading. For example, during the inspection two of the younger pupils shared a book with an adult, happily discussing the story together.
- Weak writing skills and low self-esteem often hamper pupils' progress in English when they join the school. However, effective teaching ensures that they soon develop reliable punctuation, grammar and handwriting skills which enable them to make better progress.
- Pupils learn to write successfully for a range of purposes, such as story-writing, emails and debates. For example, pupils currently studying functional-skills qualifications in English recently wrote convincingly about their views of British citizens who have fought in Syria and want to return to Britain, drawing on newspaper articles and statements by members of parliament to support their assertions.
- Pupils are keen to succeed and take increasing responsibility for their learning. For example, they listen carefully to teachers' advice and work hard to improve their work. The work in pupils' books illustrates notable improvements in their knowledge and understanding over time as a result.
- Pupils learn how to use a wide range of media and techniques in art and textiles. For example, some of the younger pupils recently completed careful and sensitive paintings of flowers to illustrate their thoughts about summer, while some of the older pupils are completing impressive portfolios of high-quality art work for GCSE examinations.
- Some of the most able pupils achieve less well than they should. This is particularly the case where adults' expectations of pupils' learning are not high enough and, as a result, pupils' work is not completed in sufficient depth.

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- Students make very strong progress during the sixth form, both personally and academically. In 2018, all students achieved nationally recognised qualifications in a wide range of vocational and academic subjects, including GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics.
- The deputy headteacher provides extremely effective leadership for the sixth form. He and his team ensure that students benefit from consistently high-quality teaching.
- Leaders continually adapt teaching programmes to support individual students' abilities and aspirations. For example, students often study a combination of qualifications customised to their individual needs, and sometimes change courses if appropriate. Students currently in the sixth form are working towards a range of qualifications, including functional skills, BTEC National Diplomas and GCSE examinations.
- Teachers have the highest expectations of students' learning and behaviour. They provide skilful care and support for their students. As a result, students flourish. They behave exceptionally well and work very hard.
- The deputy headteacher and his staff team are committed to ensuring that all students are well prepared for life beyond school. They provide high-quality advice about post-18 options and work closely with pupils, parents, colleges and employers to ensure that

students have the best possible choices for their future.

- The carefully selected work experience has a significant impact on pupils' personal and social development. Pupils discover new skills and interests while participating in a wide range of opportunities, such as working in a local garage, volunteering with the National Trust, or serving in a local café.
- Staff make careful arrangements to support pupils in adjusting to life beyond the school. For example, they make sure that college tutors are fully informed about pupils' personal and social needs and about successful strategies used in school to support their learning. Members of staff often support students by accompanying them when they are attending interviews.
- Extremely effective care and support ensure that students manage the move from school to college or the workplace very well. Students go on to pursue options which include apprenticeships, further training, and courses in colleges of further education.

School details

Unique reference number	126141
DfE registration number	938/6219
Inspection number	10091641

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 special school
School category	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	12
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Steven Ogilvie
Chair	None
Headteacher	Darin Nobes
Annual fees (day pupils)	£58,539–£65,507
Telephone number	01342 810268
Website	www.philpotsmanorschool.co.uk
Email address	darin.nobes@philpotsmanorschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–21 September 2017

Information about this school

- Philpots Manor School is an independent day and residential special school which caters for up to 60 boys and girls between the ages of seven and 19 years. The school is located on the outskirts of West Hoathly village in a rural part of West Sussex.
- The school caters for pupils who have a range of social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Many also have specific learning difficulties. All pupils have an education,

health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs. All pupils have been placed in the school by a local authority.

- There are currently 48 pupils on roll, including 12 students in the school's sixth form.
- The school's ethos, values and curriculum are underpinned by the educational principles of Rudolf Steiner.
- The school does not use alternative provision. However, a number of pupils attend registered colleges on a part-time basis, including Brinsbury College and East Surrey College.
- Most members of staff have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher was not present at the time of the inspection due to ill health. An interim headteacher was appointed in February 2019.
- The proprietor is also the company director.
- The school does not have a governing body. An advisory panel was established very recently.
- The school's website was in the process of being updated at the time of the inspection.
- The previous standard inspection took place in September 2017.
- The school provides optional boarding provision for pupils on the school site. The boarding provision was not included in this inspection. A social care inspection of the boarding provision took place in February 2018, when the boarding provision was judged good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in a wide range of lessons and activities. All were observed jointly with the interim headteacher.
- The inspector met with a number of senior leaders, including the interim headteacher and the deputy headteacher. She also met with the proprietor, middle leaders and other members of staff.
- The inspector spoke with pupils during lessons, lunchtime and at other times during the inspection.
- The inspector analysed a sample of pupils' work, as well as looking at pupils' work during lessons.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including school improvement plans, safeguarding documents, policies, and information about pupils' behaviour over time.
- The inspector considered the views expressed by seven parents in Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. She also took account of three free-text parental comments.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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