

# Ingfield Manor School

Ingfield Manor School, Ingfield Manor Drive, Five Oaks, Billingshurst, West Sussex  
RH14 9AX

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential special school

A national private organisation runs Ingfield Manor, a day and residential, non-maintained special school for students between the ages of three and 19 years. It provides an educational service to students who have neurological motor impairments, such as cerebral palsy. Many of the students have additional complex medical conditions. Support is delivered through conductive education and the school has a long association with the Peto Institute. Most students board on a 'flexi' basis and have short stays at the school. Others, who board on a weekly basis, return home at weekends.

**Inspection dates:** 24 to 26 September 2019

**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 **requires improvement to be good**

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

**Date of previous inspection:** 11 December 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Staff are extremely attentive to students. They offer as wide a range of choices as possible and ask the students for permission to assist with things, such as cutting up their food. Staff are very adept at gauging the level of support individuals need at any one time so that students get to do as much as possible for themselves.

Staff encourage students to participate as far as they are able in decisions relating to the residential provision. An active school council has made suggestions that leaders and managers have acted on. There is an impressive level of student involvement in planning activities. This includes staff assisting two students to phone a bowling alley and book lanes for the group.

The staff tailor admission arrangements to suit each student. They prepare students well, whether this is with a slow introduction or an urgent move. Staff quickly get to know individual students and their needs.

Staying away from family is, as one mother said, 'A massive thing for children and parents.' Carers spoken to were very happy that they had taken this step and said that their children were benefiting from and enjoying the residential provision. Placements help to keep families stable and to maintain relationships that have been under considerable strain.

All students profit from the opportunities to socialise with their peers and to experience care by different people to their families. One new residential student was keen to tell his friends and family what he had been doing while he was away. Some students make significant progress; examples include establishing better sleep patterns leading to a student no longer having absences, and managing the sensory environment, thereby reducing anxiety levels. Both examples result in students being more open to learning. Parents and professionals say that students are calmer, happier and communicate more.

The policy of staff working across the school and the residential provision provides continuity of care and allows the integration of strategies, including therapeutic interventions, in both settings. Students benefit from the consistency and predictability of this approach and make better progress as a result.

Observations by staff in the school and residential provision have led to changes in the help given to students, which have been of great benefit, such as identifying that a student would benefit from a different type of switch for his computer to make it more usable. It is this kind of close understanding shown by the staff that led a parent to say, 'I get the feeling my child is treated very specially. I really trust them.'

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

Safeguarding policies and training underpin staff practice. All those spoken to knew how to respond if they had a concern about the safety of a student, but not everyone was aware of who they could turn to outside the organisation if they did not think managers were taking effective action.

Staff's excellent care practice helps to keep students safe, informed by thorough procedures and training, such as undertaking delegated healthcare tasks and giving medication. The involvement of a qualified pharmacist gives an additional layer of professional oversight to that of the registered nurses. The latest audit concluded that this is 'a very well organised team who are dedicated through and through, providing an excellent and caring service to their students'. Staff take precautions to protect students who are vulnerable due to their need for personal care. These include effective induction processes and oversight by colleagues.

Appropriate safer employment policies are in place, but records are lacking to demonstrate that staff always follow these in regard to obtaining a full employment history. Records are also lax around other issues, such as reasons for not being able to obtain references from a last employer. This does not mean that unsuitable people have been employed, but that insufficient attention has been paid to accurate and full recording of the means to avoid this happening.

The independent visitor combines her role with that of an independent person, designated as someone from outside the organisation who students can speak to about concerns. However, students able to speak with the inspector did not recognise her photograph or know who she was. There is no information on display that explains the role of the children's commissioner. This means that students are not fully assisted to readily access such support if they are able to benefit from it.

Haphazard recording of fire checks and actions taken in response to a fire safety audit have hampered effective administration, and information has not always been available when required. A fire safety inspecting officer concluded that the school was compliant with regulations but commented 'the recording let them down'.

Managers are now monitoring health and safety matters systematically across the school, with a recently instituted committee overseeing the work completed and a schedule for audits of specific areas. The provider has made considerable expenditure commitments to enhance the safety and quality of the environment.

The principal and her team know about the progress that students are making, even if it is very gradual, and the reasons why this may fluctuate for some. They take steps to help the students to stabilise their health or emotional well-being to optimise their potential.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good**

Leaders and managers have reviewed the school's complaints policy, leading to more student-friendly written information being available. However, many students are not able to make complaints as part of a formal process by communicating verbally or through signs and symbols. The policy review has not addressed the issue raised at the last inspection of the need to provide guidance to staff on when to deal with a student's dissatisfactions, made known through the student's behaviour, as complaints. This means that the oversight and subsequent opportunity for organisational learning may not be at the appropriate level.

Documents that cover the division of responsibilities between the company board, the governing body and the principal do not specifically include the residential provision. Nevertheless, the principal and senior managers consider the independent visitor's informative reports and follow up her recommendations. The governing body minutes have no record of discussing these nor any evidence of providing challenge regarding the residential provision. This means that they are not performing the role of being a 'critical friend' or assisting managers to improve the quality of care.

There has been a lack of consistent and coherent record-keeping in regard to fire safety and recruitment. Management monitoring has not identified the shortfalls and so remedial action has not been taken until regulatory bodies have uncovered these.

A new premises manager is setting up an ordered and comprehensive system to record health and safety and fire safety matters. The introduction of an electronic monitoring system aims to give managers ready access to information to quality assure a range of compliance issues, including health and safety, complaints and safeguarding. Some of these have yet to be utilised and the system does not readily allow users to interrogate the information in regard to the residential provision separately from that for the whole school. The recommendation regarding the monitoring of matters included in the National Minimum Standards Appendix 3 has therefore been restated.

The provider has recently confirmed the current principal in post, having been the interim and, before that, the head of care. She and the interim head of care have a fervent commitment to the welfare of students and a capacity to develop strategies to address weaknesses.

The staff are positive about the principal's open management style, as she takes account of their views. Members of staff commented on the strength of team-working; one said, 'They are amazing, secure places to work in.' This enables the staff to meet the physical and emotional challenges of their work with greater resilience.

There are strong communication channels between residential staff and others. Parents are particularly appreciative of emails and phone calls telling them about how

their child is doing. This helps them to feel confident about their child's well-being and the level of care provided.

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

### **Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools**

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools:

- 13.1 The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.
- 14.1 Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 18.1 The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory requirements.

### **Recommendations**

- Provide students with information in an appropriate format about the children's commissioner and publicity about the role of the independent person. NMS 2.2
- Develop a clear recording system for the monitoring of areas highlighted in Appendix 3 of the national minimum standards and demonstrate compliance with relevant regulations. The school should ensure these records are available to the appropriate regulatory bodies. NMS 13.9
- The school's electronic monitoring system readily identifies those incidents or events that occur in, or relate to, the residential provision, particularly the record of complaints. NMS 18.2

## **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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:** SC014584

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Mrs Nicola Dodds

**Type of school:** residential special school

**Telephone number:** 01403 782 294

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## **Inspector**

Chris Peel, social care inspector



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