

# 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 communication difficulties. The ethos of the school is based on the social and education principles of Rudolf Steiner. The residential pupils live in houses within the school grounds.

**Inspection dates:** 27 to 29 November 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 **good**

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

**Date of previous inspection:** 3 December 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## **Inspection judgements**

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

Residential pupils, who previously have often experienced significant difficulties at school, respond to the individualised support provided and make important progress. They appreciate the friendly, nurturing environment. One residential pupil commented, 'It's like a family. No, it is my family.'

The residential staff have a genuine interest in the welfare and well-being of the residential students, who are positive about their experiences. Parents acknowledge the valuable contribution that the residential provision has made to their child's progress. A parent stated, 'The staff have worked wonders with him. Now he has social skills and is much more confident.'

Residential pupils have opportunities to put forward their suggestions through the student council, to improve their experience. Individual key-work sessions and informal consultations with the residential staff are also ways for them to express their views and opinions. Residential pupils stated that the staff are always available to talk to if they have any concerns. However, there is no independent person who the residential pupils may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school.

Developing and extending the residential pupils' independence skills is an important part of residential life at the school. Everyday routines include tasks to help them develop practical daily living skills. The staff also focus on building the residential pupils' confidence and resilience to be able to cope in the adult world and maximise their future life chances.

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

Relationships between the staff and the residential pupils are positive and are the foundation of the support the staff provide. Structure, routines and clear boundaries help the residential pupils to develop a sense of safety, protection and trust. Staff model appropriate interactions, supporting residential pupils individually to help them improve their social skills, build their independence skills and their confidence.

Staff know the residential pupils very well. They recognise the specific vulnerabilities of residential pupils and address these on an individual level. Through thoughtful and sensitive support from the staff, the residential pupils respond. Their behaviour in the residential provision is excellent. The staff are trained in providing physical support when necessary, but this has not been required in recent times. The staff use a restorative approach to help residential pupils understand the natural consequences of negative behaviour, rather than using sanctions. The staff are confident and skilled in de-escalating potentially difficult behaviour at an early stage and in helping residential pupils to manage their emotions.

Placement plans, and risk assessments identify residential pupils' individual needs and the risks associated with their behaviour. However, some of these are not up to date. Placement plans do not always provide the staff with clear, easily accessible guidance on how to support individual residential pupils to help them achieve their targets in their education, health and care plan. Lone-working risk assessments are not in place for all of the residential houses.

An experienced designated safeguarding lead (DSL) manages safeguarding concerns. He is determined to strengthen the culture of safeguarding within the school, to embed the principle that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that residential pupils are safe. A new system for reporting concerns about residential pupils has been introduced to ensure that the staff are engaged fully in the process of identifying concerns about a pupil and providing comprehensive information. The DSL is supported by deputies who are experienced in safeguarding matters and are undertaking training for the role. Appropriate referrals are made to external safeguarding agencies. However, in relation to one serious safeguarding matter, Ofsted was not updated with significant information in line with the school's policy.

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

There have been changes in the senior leadership team since the last inspection. A new care coordinator has been in post since April 2019. He is suitably qualified and experienced and leads a team that knows the residential pupils very well and understands their specific needs. Senior leaders and managers are committed to creating a positive culture in which the staff support residential students to do as well as they can and to develop the skills they will need in the future.

Residential staff appreciate the support that managers provide. However, they are not receiving regular and effective supervision which focuses on residential pupils' experiences, their needs and their plans. They do not currently have opportunities to discuss the emotional impact of supporting the residential pupils with complex needs or reflect on their practice.

A newly formed advisory board is providing an increased level of challenge and scrutiny of the senior leadership team. Detailed and constructive reports by an independent visitor assist managers in monitoring the quality of the residential provision.

Leaders and managers are keen to continuously improve the outcomes for pupils across the school. Some policies are in the process of being updated, particularly the safeguarding policy and behaviour management policy, to ensure that all pupils are protected and supported effectively.

## **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:

- 19.6 All staff have access to support and advice for their role. They also have regular supervision and formal annual appraisal of their performance.
- 15.9 Where only one member of staff is on duty at any time, a risk assessment has been carried out and recorded in writing, identifying any likely risks to children, staff and members of the public.
- 2.2 The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school who children may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. This person may be known as the 'independent person'. Children are informed who this person is, and how to contact them and they are easily accessible. Children are also provided with one or more appropriate helpline(s) or outside contact numbers, including the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England, to ring in case of problems or distress.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure leaders implement policies fully, particularly in regard to informing Ofsted of significant safeguarding in line with the school's safeguarding policy.
- Ensure all placement plans and risk assessments are up to date and clearly identify for staff the residential students' individual needs, targets and the support strategies required.

### **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:** SC372592

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Kirstie Hayes (interim)

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Jan Hunnam, Ofsted inspector, social care



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