

Manor House School

Stane Street, Slinfold, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0QX

Inspection dates

6 July 2022

Overall outcome

The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7–7(b), 32(1)(c)

- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy which includes the latest government guidance and is published on the school's website. There is a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) supported by three deputies. All have the appropriate level of training. Leaders keep their knowledge about safeguarding up to date through participating in various local safeguarding networks, including the company's DSL forum and the local authority network. Leaders now have a specific link with a local authority representative to support staff's understanding of local safeguarding risks and pupils' specific risks.
- Staff are well trained in safeguarding. In addition to annual training, staff undertake several different online training modules and attend face-to-face refresher training throughout the year. Daily morning and afternoon briefings with staff always consider safeguarding risks. Leaders are responsive to pupils' needs and put in place extra training should any new safeguarding risks emerge for specific pupils.
- Leaders have revised their behaviour and safeguarding processes and record-keeping systems. A new electronic system, in which all staff are trained, allows for the thorough recording of concerns, and the actions taken to support pupils. Leaders use this system well to track individual pupils' well-being, as well as to monitor any emerging whole-school issues. For example, the proprietorial body monitors the use of restrictive physical intervention in the school to check that it is used appropriately and minimally.
- Leaders are alert to the specific risks to safety that pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs may have. A thorough programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is both proactive and reactive in teaching children about potential risks. In addition, the local police community support officer (PCSO) visits regularly to educate pupils about local dangers such as county lines and child criminal exploitation.

- Leaders have considered carefully the potential impact of admitting more pupils to the school. For example, they have increased the number of deputy DSLs and ensured that these meet weekly to consider the safeguarding needs of the school's pupils.

Paragraph 11

- There is a suitable health and safety policy in place. This sets out the requirements for the regular maintenance and checking of the site and for the reduction of risk. Leaders monitor the policy through an annual audit carried out by an external company. Appropriate certification is in place for the site, including for the refurbished spaces around the school. This includes for electrical, gas and water systems.

Paragraph 12

- Leaders have ensured that the relevant fire safety checks and certification are in place. There are appropriate mitigations to reduce the risk of fire spreading and to allow for escape, including fire doors, smoke detectors, fire alarms, emergency lighting, emergency exits and a clear muster point away from the school building. Leaders are prepared to write separate plans to support any pupils who might need extra help to evacuate the building.

Paragraph 14

- There is likely to be adequate supervision. Leaders have appropriate plans to increase the number of teaching, support and therapy staff to meet the needs of the extra pupils on site. Leaders make sure that several staff are on duty outside the school to facilitate the calm and safe arrival and departure of pupils. Throughout the day, high staff-to-pupil ratios ensure that pupils are well supervised. Leaders intend for class sizes of six pupils, each supported by a teaching assistant and teacher. Additional staff will support any extra behaviour and welfare of pupils. This allocation is entirely appropriate given the high level of need presented by pupils' special educational needs.

Paragraph 16

- There is an appropriate risk assessment policy in place, supported by a range of individual risk assessments for the site, for each pupil and for the activities pupils do. Leaders have reviewed their off-site risk assessments and procedures so that they are robust. Plans clearly describe how to minimise risks for pupils to help keep them safe. On-site risk assessments consider the newly refurbished spaces such as the climbing frames and gym facilities. Leaders review pupils' risk assessments regularly and are rightly responsive when a pupils' presentation of needs changes.
- The school is likely to meet the relevant standards in this part should the material change be implemented.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2)–18(2)(e), 18(3), 19(2)–19(2)(d)(ii), 19(3), 20(6)–21(3)(b), 21(5)–21(6)

- The proprietor ensures that staff are recruited safely. Leaders have safer recruitment training. They understand and follow appropriate processes to recruit safely, including asking questions about safeguarding at interview and checking references before

employment. Appropriate systems are in place to check staff suitability to work with children. These are recorded on the well-maintained single central record.

- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is implemented.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 23(1)–24(1)(b), 24(2)–29(1)(b)

- There is ample space in the school to accommodate the increase in number of pupils to 45. Leaders intend for there to be three classes for primary-aged pupils and at least four for secondary-aged pupils. There are additional learning spaces for pupils of sixth-form age. Further classrooms are dedicated to science, food technology, art, computing and hair and beauty. For physical education there is a hard court outside, a gym and an indoor games hall. There are break-out spaces for pupils to use when they need to and therapy rooms for pupils who need additional targeted support to meet their SEMH needs.
- Outside, there is plenty of space for pupils to relax and play, including on the new adventure playground. A large dinner hall can be used by pupils in shifts.
- The school is well lit inside and outside, and acoustic conditions are appropriate.
- Leaders have ensured that there are separate toilet and washing facilities for girls and boys, with hot and cold water for washing. There are also changing and shower facilities for older pupils. Medical accommodation contains a bed and sink, and is close to a toilet. There are suitable, labelled drinking water facilities.
- Leaders have ensured that the school premises are maintained to a high standard. A full-time site manager supports the day-to-day maintenance of the site. Leaders regularly check the premises. Windows and doors in the upper floors are kept secure so that pupils cannot access the balcony attached to one part of the building.
- The standards in this part are likely to be met if the material change is granted.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1)–34(1)(c)

- Representatives of the proprietorial body have strong experience of leading special schools. The proprietorial body makes sure that a range of methods are used to ensure effective oversight of the school. Governance is provided by a group of local headteachers from schools within the Outcomes First Group. The chair of governors, who is also the regional director, is experienced in special educational needs and/or disabilities. The executive headteacher reports termly to governors on all aspects of the school, including finance, curriculum, behaviour, personal development, safeguarding and well-being. In addition, the central organisation monitors specific aspects of school improvement using external professionals. Weekly communication between the proprietorial body, regional director and the school is in place to ensure the school runs smoothly. The regional director visits regularly to check the accuracy of the school's reporting and the quality of provision.
- The executive headteacher is experienced in leading special schools. She oversees the work of the school well and has been instrumental in ensuring that there is a calm, safe and positive ethos around the school. Other school leaders display a similar

passion for ensuring that the needs of pupils with SEMH are met through the education provided in the school. Leaders have considered carefully the impact that extra pupils will have on the safe and secure running of the school. They have set out the school site and organisation of classes appropriately well to allow for the increased numbers on site.

- The school was judged to require improvement at the last inspection. It is clear that leaders at all levels have paid close attention to the areas needing to improve in this school, including the recording of safeguarding information and improving the oversight of the curriculum.
- The standard in this part is likely to be met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school is likely to meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that are relevant to the material change.

School details

Unique reference number	131139
DfE registration number	938/6255
Inspection number	10225455

This inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's likely compliance with the independent school standards relevant to the material change that the school has applied to make.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent special school
Proprietor	Outcomes First Group
Chair	Richard Power
Headteacher	Lyndsey Jeffries
Annual fees (day pupils)	£58,150
Telephone number	01403 790939
Website	www.acornmanorhouseschool.co.uk
Email address	manorhouse@acornmanorhouseschool.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	29 June to 1 July 2021

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal	Inspector's recommendation
Age range of pupils	7 to 18	7 to 18	7 to 18
Number of pupils on the school roll	33	45	45

Pupils

	School's current position	School's proposal
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Mixed
Number of full-time pupils of compulsory school age	33	45
Number of part-time pupils	0	0
Number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	33	45
Of which, number of pupils with an education, health and care plan	33	45
Of which, number of pupils paid for by a local authority with an education, health and care plan	33	45

Staff

	School's current position	School's proposal
Number of full-time equivalent teaching staff	12	15
Number of part-time teaching staff	0	0

Information about this school

- Manor House School is an independent special school which caters for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Most have been permanently excluded from other provisions and many have had sustained periods out of education. Several pupils have also been diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.
- At the time of the inspection, the school had exceeded the maximum number of pupils on roll that they are registered to admit.

- Since the last inspection, the interim executive headteacher has been appointed to the substantive post. The previous interim headteacher has left the school. The previous assistant headteacher has been appointed as the new substantive headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- The material change inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education. The purpose of the inspection was to establish if the school would be likely to meet all the relevant independent school standards if the proposed material change is implemented. The material change intended is to increase the number of pupils to 45. All pupils will have an education, health and care plan for social, emotional and mental health needs. This is the first material change inspection in respect of this particular change that the school has applied to make.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, other school leaders and staff. She also met with the regional director who is also the chair of governors. The inspector held a telephone conversation with the chair of the proprietorial body. The inspector toured the school site and scrutinised a range of documents, policies and plans, including the single central record.

Inspection team

Catherine Old, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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