

# 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**

Ingfield Manor School is a non-maintained day and residential special school for students aged between three and 19 years. The school provides specialist education for students with neurological motor impairment such as cerebral palsy and associated sensory and medical needs. Students follow a conductive education curriculum.

Most students stay on a short-break or flexi basis. Others stay for weekly boarding. The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

### **Inspection dates: 14 to 16 March 2023**

**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:** 11 May 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

## Inspection judgements

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

Children are being looked after by staff who demonstrate a genuine commitment to improving children's life chances. Staff ensure that children experience good-quality, well-planned care, despite significant challenges with staff recruitment.

Staff are attentive and familiar with each child's personality and needs. Interactions between children and staff are warm and nurturing. As a result, children feel secure and cared for, which enables them to make good progress.

Children are treated with dignity and respect, and their views are valued. Staff are familiar with each child's methods of communication and enable children to influence all decisions about the way that they are looked after.

Children benefit from an effective wraparound service. Members of the senior leadership team work closely together, and staff work across both the residential and education provisions. There is a shared understanding of the progress that children make towards the targets set in their education, health and care plans. Children's success is celebrated and shared with their parents.

Staff are committed to helping children to live as independently as possible. Teaching practical skills to children is deeply embedded into practice. One child told the inspector that learning to put on their own socks and shoes had made a big difference to them. Other children have made significant progress in relation to developing their communication skills, learning how to make friends, maintaining healthy routines, and feeling able to express their wishes and feelings. This has improved their confidence and self-esteem. Managers and staff speak with pride when they describe the progress that children have made.

Staff understand and implement children's care and support plans, which are written in collaboration with children. As a result, staff are looking after children and keeping them safe in line with their preferences and are helping children to achieve goals that are important to them.

Proactive steps are taken to work in partnership with children's families. Several parents spoken to during the inspection said that their lives have been transformed as a result of their child having overnight stays. Parents were unanimous in their opinion that staff love looking after the children, are aspirational for what children can achieve, and give children access to a wide range of activities that they would not have if they did not come to stay at the school. Children's parents also said that managers and staff maintain effective and open communication with them.

The processes that staff follow when children begin to access the residential provision are thorough and thoughtful. Plans are adapted for children's individual

needs and circumstances. Managers and staff work closely with children's families and introductions are planned meticulously.

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

Children's safety is paramount in this school. Weekly senior leadership team safeguarding meetings enable effective information-sharing about children's current risks. However, this good practice is undermined by the systems that are being used to record safeguarding concerns. Managers have recognised this and have requested that senior leaders in the organisation seek to find a resolution. In the meantime, there is some potential for patterns and trends to be missed. In addition, some records do not fully describe the robust response to safeguarding concerns that has taken place in practice.

Managers provide regular, meaningful opportunities to embed learning from staff safeguarding training to ensure that staff stay alert to the signs that children may be at risk of harm. For example, designated safeguarding leads pose a 'safeguarding question of the week' to test staff knowledge; this helps to ensure that staff would respond appropriately to concerns so that children are kept safe.

In addition to the independent visitor arrangements delivered by an advocacy service, managers have arranged for an ex-staff member to become a voluntary visitor. They visit the residential service every half term and talk to the children about the care that they are receiving. Managers made this arrangement because they recognised that, due to the children's complex needs, it can be very challenging for them to speak to unfamiliar adults. Having a trusted adult to speak to if they are worried contributes to children's protection and sense of security.

Processes for managing health and safety matters and maintenance tasks are good. As a result, repairs are completed in a timely manner and the physical environment is safe and secure.

Safer recruitment practices are understood and implemented effectively. All necessary checks are in place to ensure that children are protected from unsuitable people working in the school.

A skilled healthcare team is focused on improving health outcomes for children. Healthcare professionals give children individualised support and provide expert input into children's plans, for example in relation to tube feeding and seizure management. They also provide good-quality training to the residential staff to ensure that they can competently carry out delegated health tasks.

The healthcare team is diligent in ensuring that staff are fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to the storing, administering and recording of medication. Medication errors are rare, and those that have occurred since the last inspection have been minor. When medication errors occur, they are taken seriously, investigated and acted on.

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

The head of care is passionate in her efforts to be a good role model and a trusted figure for the children and for the staff. She has a well-rounded view of the experiences of the children and the impact that the residential care provision is having on their outcomes.

Recruiting and retaining staff have been a challenge for leaders and managers since the last inspection, and they are being creative in their approach to addressing this. In the meantime, there is not a full staff complement, which is having a negative impact on the morale of existing staff.

All the staff spoken to during the inspection said that the most rewarding thing about working at the school is seeing children achieve something that may seem small but is significant for them. However, many staff feel frustrated that, during some shifts, they do not get the opportunity to spend enough quality time with children. Staff also reported that there are frequent occasions when there are not enough staff on duty to allow them time to complete online training course updates, and they have to do this when they are not at work.

Staff receive regular, meaningful supervision. Good-quality records of these sessions demonstrate that managers are assessing and auditing each staff member's performance. As a result, managers can be confident that staff fully understand how to meet children's needs in line with their written plans.

Leaders and managers demonstrate a commitment to ensuring continuous improvement. A new team leader role has been introduced into the residential staff team structure. This has created an opportunity for the development of the service. In one example, managers are starting to create digital scrapbooks with the intention of providing children with accessible reminders of their enjoyable experiences and the progress that they have made.

There is an embedded culture of welcoming feedback from external sources. Criticisms and comments about the service are seen as an opportunity to learn, reflect and improve.

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

### **Points for improvement**

- School leaders should ensure that safeguarding records are organised in a way that enables managers to identify and address potential patterns of concerns.
- School leaders should ensure that there are sufficient staff on each shift to fulfil the school's statement of purpose. Specifically, school leaders should ensure that staff have opportunities to spend more time with children and complete online training within their working hours.

### **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:** Nicola Dodds

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Helen Simmons, Social Care Regulatory Inspection Manager

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