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

This is a non-maintained day and residential special school for children aged between 3 and 19 years. The school provides specialist education for children with neurological motor impairment, such as cerebral palsy, and associated sensory and medical needs. Children follow a conductive education curriculum. Most children stay on a short-break or flexible basis. Others stay for weekly boarding.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Following the full inspection from 16 to 18 June, Ofsted was made aware that a serious incident had occurred at the setting. This is under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, the inspector returned to the setting on 17 July to consider actions taken by the setting in response to the incident alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspection judgements.

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 June and 17 July 2026

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	**outstanding**
How well children and young people are helped and protected	outstanding
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	outstanding

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of last inspection: 17 June 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Summary of findings

Children flourish in this nurturing environment. This is because they are looked after by skilled and committed staff, who know them exceptionally well and who are aspirational about what children can achieve. Staff adopt a strong 'can-do' ethos that promotes sustained progress and independence for children. A vibrant environment, enriching activities, strong community engagement and excellent relationships with families further enhance children's wellbeing and lived experiences. A strong safeguarding culture is embedded, with confident and well-trained staff, ensuring that children are consistently safe, listened to and empowered. Leaders provide a clear vision and high expectations, driving continuous improvement through effective monitoring and partnership working. Children experience exceptional care, meaningful advocacy and sustained progress and life-enhancing outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children flourish because staff are highly focused, skilled and unwavering in their commitment to each child's wellbeing. Staff know children exceptionally well and have high aspirations, enabling children to achieve beyond expectations. This results in consistently positive outcomes.

There is a strong, positive ethos embedded across all aspects of the provision. Children successfully transfer the skills they learn, such as motor development, problem-solving and cognitive skills, into everyday life. Staff tailor approaches to each child. As a result, children make remarkable and sustained progress.

Nurturing staff adopt a strong 'can-do' attitude, empowering children to make decisions about their environment and make informed choices. This ethos opens up creative, aspirational opportunities for children to explore their interests and the wider world. Consequently, children develop impressive independence and self-advocacy skills. Children's voices are heard, understood and acted on.

Children benefit from a joyful, interactive environment where friendships are warm, familiar and rooted in shared laughter, with humour and positive peer interactions. A wide range of engaging activities is readily available because of the skilled and organised approach of staff.

Children have numerous opportunities to participate in community events, such as discos, and access local amenities. One child said, 'It's great to do things we normally wouldn't get to do.' Another child said that they 'like hanging out' with their friends and doing activities. This promotes children's emotional wellbeing and strengthens their social development.

Excellent communication with children's families ensures that they feel heard, understood and valued. Parents speak highly of the provision, noting that children are happy, eager to attend and continually improving in their cognitive and social skills.

The multidisciplinary oversight of children's health and wellbeing is exemplary. Detailed planning and seamless communication between health professionals and staff ensure that children's needs are met. This integrated approach safeguards children and supports their overall development.

Dietary needs are managed with precision and sensitivity by experienced staff. Children enjoy a varied menu and also have age-appropriate experiences, such as cafe visits and sharing takeaways. Carefully planned stays ensure that cultural and personal preferences are respected. This supports healthy routines, promotes social friendships and nurtures independence.

Children have extensive opportunities to express their views and shape their care planning. Staff use creative, innovative methods to ensure that every voice is heard and acted on. Advocacy is a strength of the setting, with numerous examples seen where children confidently assert their wishes. This empowers children and leads to meaningful improvements in their daily lives.

Older children transition successfully to further education and alternative provisions, equipped with the skills and confidence that they need. This demonstrates the long-term impact of the staff's high-quality support. Children leave the school with greater independence, confidence and opportunity.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

A highly informed and proactive safeguarding culture is firmly embedded across the provision. Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities, reinforcing the shared belief that safeguarding is a collective duty. This ensures that children remain consistently safe and well protected.

All staff demonstrate a deep understanding of, and responsiveness to, children's needs. Following the death of a child, staff responded with exceptional sensitivity and professionalism. Through swift action, strong multi-agency communication and a child-centred approach, timely support and resources were put in place to promote the emotional wellbeing of all children and staff.

Strong collaboration between residential and school teams enables swift, transparent information-sharing. Changes in children's needs or circumstances are communicated immediately, ensuring consistent and informed responses. This strengthens professional accountability and maintains effective safeguarding standards.

Children are supported to understand their medical needs where appropriate, promoting ownership of their health. Accurate recording and excellent information-sharing ensure that staff have the detail they need to minimise risks. This leads to safer practice and improved wellbeing outcomes.

New staff benefit from a comprehensive induction that equips them with confidence and competence. Rigorous oversight ensures that staff only assume responsibilities when fully prepared. This is a process that staff value. The result is a safe and skilled workforce, and reduces risks associated with complex care tasks.

There have been no allegations or complaints since the last inspection. Staff understand each child's communication needs. Children know how to raise concerns and feel confident doing so. This empowers children and ensures that concerns are addressed promptly.

Behaviour management is excellent because staff know children exceptionally well and have built trusting relationships with them. However, residential staff do not receive any formal training in applying de-escalation techniques or physical restraint. This risks staff not being able to act confidently and appropriately in situations when children are struggling to manage their emotions and are showing this through their behaviour.

Staff are highly trained in equipment use and mobility support. Competent and diligent staff assist children to understand their own equipment through collaborative care planning and health assessments. This ensures that children can safely navigate their own environment and avoid any potential hazards.

Health and safety is prioritised through rigorous oversight and scrutiny. The environment is kept safe. If any concerns arise, these are managed effectively and leaders ensure that there is minimal disruption to children's routines. Children's parents said that, when a health and safety matter was addressed recently, communication was excellent and they felt fully informed. This demonstrates strong risk management and a commitment to children's safety.

Maintenance issues are addressed quickly. Some areas of the building, such as children's bedrooms, require cosmetic improvement. Nonetheless, the overall quality of the environment supports children's needs.

Safer recruitment procedures are meticulous, and the single central record is thoroughly maintained. This significantly reduces the risk of unsuitable adults working with children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Changes in the leadership team have resulted in positive developments while preserving the deeply embedded ethos. Leaders and managers know the children exceptionally well. Despite being new in post, the principal has set clear values and

expectations for the residential provision, and staff transitions through promotion have been managed effectively. This ensures continuity, stability and a shared commitment to excellence.

The leadership team models unwavering commitment and nurturing values. Their collective focus on achieving the very best outcomes for children is evident across the provision. This drives a culture where high aspirations translate into exceptional progress for children, particularly in their independence and social and emotional development.

The head of care has benefited from a thorough induction, building on her extensive experience as the deputy manager of the service. Leaders have a clear, ambitious vision for the year ahead, reinforced by positive feedback from parents and children. This strengthens confidence in the direction of the service and supports sustained improvement.

Monitoring arrangements are effective, with leaders using a range of systems to evaluate staff practice and service development. This reflective approach and ability to self-critique are admirable, ensure continuous improvement and maintain high standards.

Leaders consistently role model excellent practice. Staff understand the statement of purpose and deliver it through informed, child-centred practice. This ensures that children receive care that is purposeful, consistent and aligned with the setting's values.

The collective knowledge, skills and experience of the team are impressive. Strong, transparent relationships, both internally and with external agencies, are excellent. This ensures that children receive exceptional, well-coordinated care.

A long-standing stable staff team strengthens leaders' ability to make informed assessments when considering residential placements. This stability enhances decision-making and ensures that children's needs are sensitively considered.

Staff access a wide range of training relevant to their roles. Specialist training is provided swiftly when required to meet individual children's needs. Staff value professional development and approach it with commitment rather than compliance. This results in a highly skilled workforce capable of delivering safe, knowledgeable and responsive care.

All staff receive practice-led supervision at least termly, along with an annual appraisal. Leaders have identified that the quality of supervision is slightly variable and are addressing this to ensure that safeguarding remains central. This supports staff development and the strong safeguarding culture.

The governing body is diligent in its approach and members have completed all necessary training to inform their role. The recent recruitment of governors with diverse expertise will bring Increased knowledge and experience

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

Points for improvement

- School leaders should ensure that staff receive appropriate training and support to recognise and deal with incidents of challenging behaviour and restrictive practice. This should include, as appropriate, additional training and support to enable staff to de-escalate potential confrontations between pupils and minimise the need for restraint. This training should include assistance in managing staff members' responses and feelings arising from working with children who have emotional difficulties that result in behaviour that challenges. Staff training should be regularly refreshed.
- School leaders should ensure that all areas of the accommodation are clean and well maintained.

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: Liz Brown

Type of school: Residential special school

Telephone number: 01403 782294

Email address: liz.brown@ambitoeducation.co.uk

Inspector

Jill Sephton-Wright, Social Care Inspector

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