

# 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 with 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.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020. This residential special school was last inspected in September 2019.

### Inspection dates: 11 to 13 May 2021

**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 previous inspection:** 24 September 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

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

Children benefit from the positive relationships that they have with the adults who care for them. Adults are attentive and attuned to the children's needs. They are skilled at developing nurturing and warm relationships with the children. As a result, the children enjoy care delivered by well-informed adults.

Children make exceptional progress as a direct result of their overnight stays. A genuine 24-hour curriculum focuses the children on learning new skills. They are helped to fulfil their own goals, such as communicating their wants, extending their speech and physical movement or learning to master the power wheelchairs.

Children who stay overnight have been introduced through the school. Overnight stays are well thought out and planned in partnership with children and parents. Gradual introductions to the residential setting ensure that the children are familiar with the adults and surroundings before they take the step to stay the night. Consequently, they are well prepared to stay at school, and enjoy their sleepovers with their friends.

The children enjoy their stays. They are teenagers first and foremost, and have fun socialising together and enjoying activities in the extensive grounds. The woodland campfire area is popular, as is hide and seek and a multitude of craft, art and gaming opportunities. Children were observed to be having great fun, in both group activities and their own interests. A parent said, 'They [adults] treat the children as teenagers first, promoting their interests, giving them excellent social opportunities and stretching their learning of important life skills along the way.'

The multi-professionals approach, from the point of referral and assessment, provides a clear baseline from which services are identified. The school has developed its own bespoke assessment framework that is worthy of wider dissemination. It takes into consideration the nuances of children's development, feeding into their plans and monitoring outcomes.

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

Safeguarding is a top priority at this school. The children know how to tell the adults when they are not happy or have a worry or grumble. Any concerns are taken seriously, and relevant consultations take place with external safeguarding partners. Children's views are threaded through investigations and included in outcomes. The adults also report safeguarding concerns. In response, clear investigations take place and adults are held fully accountable if practice falls below the expected high standards of care. New systems for the reporting and recording of safeguarding

concerns enable greater managerial oversight and scrutiny. This further supports the effectiveness of the safeguarding culture.

Governors provide an additional layer of effective scrutiny. They are trained in safeguarding and regularly sample safeguarding incidents. Leaders and managers have safeguarding firmly on their agenda and multi-professionals' meetings take place weekly to review any concerns. As a result, safeguarding practice is transparent and helps to keep the children safe.

A culture of acceptance and inclusion enables the children to explore their identity. One child requested a vegetarian diet. The care and health teams worked together to ensure that the child's wishes were met while balancing their nutritional needs. Another child requested increased privacy around personal care. The staff's response was sensitive and ensured that the child's request was met while maintaining safety.

Medication errors are rare. When they have occurred, the learning is used to inform changes in practice. For example, on one occasion, a child's rescue medication was dispensed with the wrong label, preventing the medication being separated. Staff contacted the pharmacy to rectify this so that it was available at home and the school. This is a good example of the culture of learning at the school and how this improves practice.

The perimeter of the grounds now has closed circuit television (CCTV) to deter uninvited visitors. The cameras face the perimeter and do not intrude on the privacy of the children. A clear policy is in place regarding the use of and access to the CCTV. Routine servicing and maintenance of equipment further ensures that the environment is safe.

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

The vision of the leadership team is aspirational and shared by all who work at the school. Both the principal and head of care have many years of experience working at this school. They maintain their respective professional registrations in occupational therapy and nursing. Managerial oversight and monitoring systems are effective and identify shortfalls. For example, a recent audit of the single central register has resulted in some minor gaps being addressed.

New staff spoke highly of the quality of induction and training. All staff spoken to felt well supported and guided by the leaders and managers. While they acknowledged the challenges of continuing to run the service during a global pandemic, they described morale as high and take pride in the progress that the children continue to make.

Leaders and managers demonstrated tenacity in continuing to provide a service during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Careful risk management plans were implemented and the principal's efforts were key in securing vaccinations for the staff. Routine

testing for the staff team continues and this further reduces the risk of infection for the children who are using the service.

The home is suitably equipped with the specialist equipment that the children require. However, there are homely touches which add a welcoming feel. The children's photos are displayed on an acorn tree to give them a sense of belonging and their rooms have personalised bedding and pinboards. However, the children's photos in their own files have not been updated since 2019 and photos of their stays are not regularly collated. This is a missed opportunity to keep the children's visual records of their stays up to date.

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

### **Recommendation**

- The school should ensure that the children's photos are kept up to date, including records of their overnight stays.

### **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**

Sarah Olliver, Social Care Inspector

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