

# LVS Hassocks

Welfare inspection report for a residential special school

---

<b>DfE registration number</b>	938/6267
<b>Unique reference number for social care</b>	SC388553
<b>Unique reference number for education</b>	135930
<b>Inspection dates</b>	08/12/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Liz Driver

---

<b>School address</b>	London Road, Sayers Commons, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9HT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01273 832901
<b>Email</b>	
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Sherwood

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided.<sup>1,2</sup>

## Information about the school

This is a non maintained residential special school currently registered for 40 residential and 18 day students aged between 8 to 19 years with communication, socialisation and imagination difficulties. The school offers weekly residential education and extended day education for pupils. Some learners will come within the category of autism spectrum conditions. The setting is owned by a charity and is one of three schools in the group. It is registered with the Department for Education.

At the time of inspection there are 48 pupils on roll; of these, 30 are residential and 18 are day pupils.

The school was last inspected in October 2010.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>outstanding</b>
Outcomes for residential pupils	outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	outstanding
Residential pupils' safety	outstanding
Leadership and management of the residential provision	outstanding

## Overall effectiveness

The key findings of the residential inspection are as follows.

- This residential special school provides outstanding residential provision.
- Pupils thrive within a nurturing environment which clearly focuses on their individuality.
- Pupils are fully supported and do make very good progress in identified aspects of their lives. They are fully supported by a multi-professional team of staff who all work together to achieve, and in many cases exceed, their potential.
- The setting's safeguarding arrangements are effective with clear policies and procedures that provide maximum protection for pupils.
- High levels of school attendance where pupils are supported by a range of multi-professionals available on site.
- Pupils engage in a wide range of activities both on and off site. They enjoy being involved in local and wider communities and the local community's use of a newly opened cafe run by pupils.
- There is excellent promotion of equality and diversity which runs throughout all care practices and documentation. All pupils are treated fairly and without prejudice.
- There is a strong and effective leadership and management structure that is committed to improving life chances for pupils.
- Accommodation is of an excellent standard and very suitable for the needs of the pupils.
- Health and safety arrangements are organised and known to pupils, for example

fire procedures.

- Excellent health provision is delivered by trained staff who liaise very closely with families and carers.
- The excellent dietary/food provision has seen changes since the last inspection. This includes the full involvement of pupils in their dietary needs and gaining life skills needed to plan, shop and cook meals.
- The school has fully addressed the two recommendations made at the last inspection. One recommendation was made at this inspection in relation to updating the missing person's policy. However, this shortfall does not have a negative impact on the well-being or safety of the pupils.
- This is an ambitious school that continues to develop its practice with ever improving outcomes for pupils.
- The school that has proposed an increase in the numbers of both day and residential pupils; this is currently being processed by the Department for Education.

## **Outcomes for residential pupils**

Outcomes for residential pupils are outstanding.

Residential pupil's development is outstanding. They live in a highly inclusive environment where respectful, sensitive and caring relationships between their peers and staff are forged and enjoyed by the pupils. Staff are extremely sensitive to individual needs and areas of difficulties. The staff team work closely with an ever increasing range of professionals available on site to provide a fully integrated service for pupils. As a result pupils develop at their own pace in areas identified and in many cases meet and/or exceed targets set.

The pupils feel safe at the setting. Parents who completed pre inspection questionnaires feel their children are safe at the setting. Behaviour management is individualised, clear and competently delivered by staff. At times, when pupils feel increasingly vulnerable, staff raise the level of support available, resulting in very good outcomes. Behaviour management is outstanding considering the individual difficulties pupils present. Residential pupils are respectful of their differences, support each other as their capabilities allow them to and receive constant support from staff.

The residential experience gives pupils the opportunity to develop independence skills at a pace they are able to manage. Participation in activities shows how much the pupils feel part of the residential community. The opening of the on site community café, where older pupils take a lead role, is bringing local people into the school. As a result pupils are gaining new skills that they can use in adult life and thoroughly enjoy and benefit from the experience. Overall a wide range of activities

are on offer both on and off site. Pupils stated they enjoy all the activities and are happy with the choices on offer. All activities are highly supported by experienced staff.

No pupil is assumed to be unable to communicate their views. The setting has numerous avenues for young people to voice their views and opinions, including the school council.

Residential pupils feel they are well cared for in relation to their health needs. Staff promote healthy lifestyles and encourage pupils to keep fit. The school's personal, health and social education programme covers areas such as sexual health, drugs, smoking and healthy lifestyles. Pupils expect and receive much support to address any health needs they may have including the administration of medicines. Residential pupils who may have intimate care needs are managed by experienced and sensitive staff that are fully aware of both pupils and staff's vulnerabilities. Pupils make very good progress with areas such as personal hygiene and healthy eating.

Residential pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their life after school. The post-16 service provides an outstanding balance between independence and support. Pupils enjoy their experience of increased independence and the opportunities it gives them. All pupils engage in further education, employment or training, many travelling off site to local colleges to access suitable courses. This is an area that continues to be developed by the school and the addition of a separate kitchen in the residential area would enhance independence skills further.

## **Quality of residential provision and care**

The quality of care is outstanding.

Residential pupils receive excellent pastoral provision with input from a developing therapy service of professionals who work together. With an increase in both day and residential pupils the school needs to continue developing the therapy team to maintain the current level of individualised care provided. The current level of support delivered together with the fully integrated approach to care results in excellent progress for pupils. Pupils benefit from the excellent working partnerships between the care staff and academic staff; there is no separation between the two roles and staff experience working in both education and residential. The overall result is a highly coordinated provision with appropriate and consistently high aspirations for the pupils.

Residential pupils enjoy a range of extra curricular activities; these are all risk assessed and highly supported by staff, providing enjoyable and safe activities. Pupils have opportunities to experience activities in the local and wider community; they also learn social skills through interaction with peers and adults beyond the school setting. The opening of the on site café run by the post 16 year old pupils as a business has had a very positive impact on pupils. Local residents in the community

visit the café for coffee and cakes and buy bread and cakes made by the pupils. A delivery service complements the café, delivering produce to the local community. The café has enabled pupils to develop skills required for adult life, with some pupils exceeding their social skills potential.

The school's residential provision actively supports pupil's educational progress. The setting has three approaches to learning; whole health learning, connected learning and real world learning. Whole health learning focuses on healthy eating, exercise, massage and relaxation to help pupils develop strategies for managing times of increased stress. Connected learning helps pupils make sense of their experiences and develop strategies for success in all areas of life. Real world learning allows the learner to follow a curriculum that is innovative in its approach and focuses on employability with strategies to get a job and sustain work. This positive and well thought out approach enables staff to meet the needs of the pupils and prioritise developing their functional ability and independence skills.

Residential pupils have a clear say in the running of the residential units. Those with poor communication skills are equally enabled to voice their opinions; no one is deemed unable to have a voice. The setting has numerous avenues for pupils to give their views and opinions including the school council, link work sessions, informal meetings and attendance at annual reviews. There is excellent use of different communication methods that also ensures all pupils have a voice and understand what is happening or asked of them.

Staff place the well-being of pupils at the centre of their practice with high standards of practice consistently applied. Clear strategies, assessments and imaginative practice enable new ways to support pupils and for them to make progress in all aspects of their lives, for example improving behaviour and hygiene matters. Individual targets set are achievable and fully understood by pupils.

Residential pupil's placement plans and care plans are detailed and show individual life stories and how pupils can be supported to make progress. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in the planning and review of their care wherever possible. Each pupil has a link worker who provides individual guidance and support. They regularly make time to talk to the pupils. Parents confirmed that communication between the school and home is very good; this is mainly achieved through a home/school book. Link workers also aim to make telephone contact with parents weekly to give an update on their child's week at school. The school contributes appropriately to all statutory reviews and enables young people to be part of the reviews, where appropriate.

The medical provision for pupils who are ill is very good. Pupils benefit from all round and robust care provision provided by committed and sensitive staff. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver first aid. Medication administration procedures have been improved since the last inspection with robust procedures in place to reduce the risk of errors occurring. The school is currently recruiting a

qualified nurse to develop the service.

Residential pupils live in accommodation that is of a high standard with a good number of washing and toileting facilities. Residential pupils are able to personalise their rooms; they like their accommodation and feel comfortable.

Residential pupils have experienced a change in catering management since the last inspection. Pupils are provided with an excellent standard of healthy and nutritious meals. Dietary requirements are delivered by two experienced and enthusiastic chefs who use fresh local produce delivered on a daily basis. Menus are nutritious, varied and appealing. Meal times are sociable and calm with both staff and pupils eating together. Staff are aware of young people who need extra support or encouragement at meal times. Together with the chefs, they gently encourage each pupil to take their time to make individual choices. Pupils expressed extremely positive views about the food. The setting meets environmental health standards and was last inspected in September 2009 by the Environmental Health Service. Pupils can undertake a National Vocational Qualification award in catering, delivered by a fully qualified chef who has much experience in teaching adults and young people with special needs. Post-16 pupils are supported in preparing their own suppers as a small group, which they enjoy.

## **Residential pupils' safety**

Safety is outstanding.

Residential pupil's safety is at the heart of everything the school provides. Policies and procedures adhered to in practice provide enhanced protection. Pupils feel safe at the setting and all parents feel their children are safe at the school.

Pupils are protected by the school's thorough recruitment procedures. Residential pupils are further protected by robust procedures for the vetting and supervision of all visitors.

Residential pupils are cared for by staff that are fully trained in child protection procedures appropriate to their roles and receive regular refresher training. Staff are alert to possible concerns and refer concerns to one of the two trained and experienced designated members of staff who take the lead in child protection. , Clear and robust procedures are in place if any concerns are raised.

Staff understand the individual needs of pupils and know what children consider to be appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. Sometimes the behaviour of pupils may appear to be bullying due to their difficulties in communication, socialisation and imagination. Pupils can find it difficult to socialise appropriately with others and may have problems communicating with peers, sometimes making comments which are inappropriate but which are merely stating the obvious. Staff are aware of learner's difficulties when dealing with accusations or observations of bullying. Staff have

training on bullying during induction week, plus specific weeks focussed on anti bullying procedures. A termly review of incident sheets helps identify patterns of behaviour. The school acknowledges that pupils' difficulties do not mean they are incapable of bullying; learners are helped to understand that just because they do not understand a social rule or have problems socially, it is still not acceptable to bully whether it is intentional or not.

Procedures are in place if a young person goes missing or is absent without authority. Although the procedure does not make reference to the local protocol for Runaway and Missing from Home and Care procedures, this does not impact on the well-being or safety of pupils.

Residential pupils benefit from attending a school where health and safety matters are effectively managed and addressed. The environment is safe and subject to routine checks including fire checks. Regular fire evacuation drills take place and pupil's conformity in evacuations is excellent. Pupils are themselves very well informed of health and safety matters and will highlight any shortfalls to staff. The setting is secure. Additional security measures have been put in place since the last inspection, for example fencing along the bridle path.

## **Leadership and management of the residential provision**

The leadership and management of the residential provision is outstanding.

There are clear aims for the residential provision. These aims are translated into practice and exceed them in many ways, especially in relation to outcomes for pupils.

There is a culture of celebrating and empowering each pupil to uniquely achieve their potential. Residential pupils respond well to the supportive, nurturing environment which stimulates their personal development. They successfully engage in a wide range of activities which contribute to their educational learning. This provides them with fulfilling and realistic experiences that they can take into their adult lives.

Overall, the management of the setting is strong with experienced and committed senior staff who work hard to ensure young people enjoy their time at the school. Pupils are cared for by a staff team that is sufficient in number to meet the current needs of the young people. The team is being expanded to care for the needs of the school's increasing pupil population. There is a range of experienced and less experienced staff of a good gender and age mix. Staff show an excellent understanding of pupils' needs and difficulties and are consistent in their practice, calmness being a main trait. Training is provided in all mandatory areas such as fire, child protection and behaviour management. To improve further, the school plans to enrol new staff on the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction and diploma. Pupils are at the heart of the innovative, person centred planning, which fully reflects their individuality.

Residential pupils thrive within an environment which promotes their well-being and gives them stability and happiness. There is an excellent promotion of equality and diversity. This runs throughout all care practices and documentation. The service is continually evolving to meet the needs of the pupils and increasing numbers of both day and residential pupils. The headteacher and senior staff monitor the setting, its practice and development in a well organised and robust manner. There is very good understanding and implementation of the new national minimum standards. The residential provision meets all standards apart from one which does not have any negative impact on the well-being or safety of pupils.

Residential pupils know how to raise a concern or complaint and feel confident in doing so. All complaints are handled quickly, effectively and are very low in number.

The school has fully addressed the two recommendations made at the last inspection. Pupils are now encouraged to write their views when sanctions are applied; for more able pupils the school has introduced a behaviour insight form which is completed with staff support. The form enables pupils to look at the reasons for their behaviour from their own perspective, what they were hoping to achieve by displaying the detailed behaviour and what they think the sanction should be. Staff find this is having a very positive impact on individual behaviours. All newly employed staff now receive training on physical interventions in a timely manner.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for any pupils who may be missing. Staff are well informed of these policies and procedures, taking correct action if a pupil does go missing. Pupils know which areas are out of bounds. All records are stored safely and securely.

## **National minimum standards**

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools.

- The school's procedures are compatible with the local Runaway and Missing from Home and Care (RMFHC) protocols and procedures applicable to the area where the school is located. Where children placed out of authority go missing, the Head of Care follows the local RMFHC protocol and complies with and makes staff aware of any other processes required by the placing authority. (NMS 15.7)

## What should the school do to improve further?

- continue to develop the on site therapy team in line with increasing pupil numbers (NMS 3.5)
- consider an additional kitchen facility for older pupils in the residential accommodation and in relation to independence training (NMS 2.8)
- incorporate the Children's Workforce Development Council's induction and diploma modules into training for new staff. (NMS 19.2 19.3)

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



08/12/2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of LVS Hassocks**

Inspection of LVS Hassocks

It was good to come and visit your school and spend time looking around, listening to you and seeing what you do and how you are looked after.

Your school is very well run by a team of excellent staff who do everything they can to help you enjoy your time at the school and prepare you for adult life. The headteacher is an excellent manager and she has an excellent team of staff who work with you all.

I was very pleased to see the opening of your café and enjoyed the cake and coffee I had. I was especially pleased to talk to some local people who live in the village and hear how much they enjoy coming to the café. I also enjoyed seeing the chickens and heard of the plans to have more animals.

The school works hard to keep you safe. All staff are checked to make sure they are safe to work with you. They have training to make sure they know how to keep you safe at all times.

I know there have been some changes since I last visited such as the appointment of two new chefs. The food you get is lovely and suitable for your growing needs. I was pleased to hear that some of you are learning cooking skills.

As a result of my visit I have asked the head teacher to consider a few things, for example, an additional kitchen in the post-16 accommodation area.

You live and attend an excellent school where staff work very hard to make sure you achieve the best you can and gain the skills you will need as adults.

Overall I am very happy with the school. Thank you for being so welcoming.

Yours sincerely

Liz Driver (Social care inspector)

Yours sincerely,

Liz Driver