

# School URN No. 136230

Independent school standard inspection report

---

|                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| DfE registration number       | 356/6035         |
| Unique Reference Number (URN) | 136230           |
| Inspection number             | 366898           |
| Inspection dates              | 28-29 June 2011  |
| Reporting inspector           | John Coleman HMI |

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 copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

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

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

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)

No. 090070

© Crown copyright 2011



## **Purpose and scope of the inspection**

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Information about the school**

This is an independent special school and is part of the Halliwell Homes Group which operates children's homes in the north west of England. It is registered for 15 places for pupils aged from 11 to 18 years. An application has been made to the Department for Education for a material change to this registration so that the age range is from 4 to 18 years; this was included as part of the inspection and the judgement is included in the evaluation below. There are currently four pupils on roll aged from 9 to 16 years, one of whom has a statement of special educational needs. All pupils are in the care of the local authority and reside in the Halliwell Group's homes, one of which is on the school site. The home is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted and did not form part of this education inspection. This is the school's first inspection since being registered in September 2010.

The school provides education for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties (BESD). Pupils often join the school after a history of exclusion and long-term absence from mainstream schools. The school's primary aim is to re-motivate pupils in the learning process to enable successful re-integration.

## **Evaluation of the school**

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Pupils make good progress in their personal development and satisfactory progress in academic learning. The school successfully meets its aims by ensuring pupils make significant improvement with regard to their social, emotional and behavioural needs. As a result, pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Leaders and managers provide well for pupils' welfare, health and safety which are good. Arrangements for safeguarding meet all the requirements. The material change request is recommended for approval. The school meets all but two of the independent school regulations.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

## Quality of education

The curriculum and other activities are satisfactory in meeting the range of needs and interests of pupils. The time available for the core curriculum meets the basic minimum expected for schools and the full range of required experiences is provided. All pupils receive teaching in the Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) together with lessons in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Added to this are individually tailored programmes for each pupil. Underpinning the curriculum provision is the school's approach to improving pupils' personal development based on the 'Pillars of Parenting' (POPs) model of care. Pupils in Key Stage 4 complete GCSE courses which may include English, mathematics, biology, sociology and childcare. Other externally accredited courses are available including the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) in data administration and religious studies. Post-16 pupils are able to combine part-time studies with apprenticeship placements. For example, one pupil spends three days per week undertaking an apprenticeship in hairdressing and two days per week in school studying English, mathematics and sociology.

Pupils in Key Stage 2 receive a well-matched curriculum based on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The school is well placed to respond to the needs of such younger pupils as requested in the material change. The curriculum for all pupils includes cross-curricular work based on regular visits to places of educational interest. For example, pupils visited Jodrell Bank observatory and learned about space and the planets. Pupils gain much from these experiences as it brings learning to life. However, the planning for these trips to contribute to the wider curriculum, such as by providing opportunities to write, is underdeveloped. Extra-curricular activities are provided in the home settings which extend opportunities for learning to a 24 hour curriculum and include sport, dance, gym and cadets. The pupils speak appreciatively about these opportunities and the activities do much to enrich the curriculum.

Overall, the effectiveness of teaching and assessment in meeting the full range of pupils' needs is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is widely variable. Lessons are delivered by a combination of school teaching staff, agency teachers and teaching assistants. The teaching assistants work in both the home and school settings. Teachers' plans show broad outlines of areas of learning and identify suitable resources such as text books and software computer programmes. These plans do not specifically detail the intentions for pupils' learning of skills, knowledge or experiences. In some lessons, this results in mundane tasks as pupils complete routine questions from texts with little input from the teacher to fully explain the learning. For example, opportunities are lost for teaching the correct vocabulary such as 'exchange' or 'decimal point' in mathematics lessons. At the start of lessons teachers often focus on behaviour management and quickly move into the main activity. This fails to consistently capture pupils' interest and engagement. The strengths of teaching are in the effective support and guidance provided once the lesson activities are underway. These are greatly aided by the secure trusting relationships between teaching assistants and pupils. Teaching assistants are

knowledgeable about pupils' individual behavioural and emotional needs. Consequently, for the most part pupils concentrate and complete the work set.

Pupils are rigorously assessed on entry to the school in respect of their clinical, emotional and behavioural needs. Assessments of their learning needs are also completed but do not always provide robustly accurate information. Clear targets are set for pupils to improve their personal development using the key features of the POPs and these are regularly monitored and evaluated using the support of external agencies where appropriate. This makes a good contribution to pupils' improvement. Targets for academic learning are too often broadly based upon behavioural expectations rather than on specific skills and knowledge to be learned.

Examples of work and observations of lessons show that pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs also make satisfactory progress. In the short time since opening, the school has successfully enabled one pupil to reintegrate back into mainstream education. In some lessons pupils make good progress due to the good one-to-one support and guidance provided by staff. For example, in a mathematics lesson the teaching assistant used very effective questions to develop a pupil's thinking about patterns in timetables. Motivated by the promise of a game of snakes and ladders, the pupil's concentration and application was good and sustained. Occasionally, in some lessons, pupils refuse to engage in learning and much time is lost so that progress is hindered.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most pupils enjoy school. Pupils develop their self esteem and confidence due to consistent praise by staff and regular celebration of their achievements. They make satisfactory progress in gaining the basic skills needed for their future economic well-being. A clear moral code is applied well and consistently so that pupils fully understand what is expected of their behaviour. Pupils' behaviour improves and, along with their attitudes to learning, is satisfactory overall. Occasionally, inappropriate language is used and there is some refusal to complete activities in class. Staff manage such occurrences well, showing patience and sustained perseverance when insisting that pupils do as asked. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their social skills through the wide range of extra-curricular activities and many trips and visits. As a result, pupils make good gains and become increasingly independent and confident in themselves. Pupils' cultural development is aided by the study of topics such as 'family dynamics' and 'racial conflict' in subjects such as sociology. Opportunities are provided for pupils to experience different cultures, for example through visits to restaurants, but links and partnerships with other cultures in Great Britain and internationally would benefit from further development to give pupils a fuller appreciation of cultural diversity. Attendance rates are significantly improved compared to the historical pattern of

pupils' attendance before starting at Willow House. However, the attendance of a small minority of pupils is unsatisfactory and this hinders their academic progress.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. Robust risk assessments are carried out and arrangements for safeguarding are thorough. Staff have up-to-date and appropriate training in first aid and child protection. Suitable policies are in place to help ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff. Supervision of pupils is vigilant. Pupils say they feel safe and are looked after well by the staff. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles through their ecology work which includes growing their own vegetables in the garden. They make healthy choices with the guidance of staff as seen in the choices made for lunch during the inspection. There are good levels of participation in sport. A health programme provides education about the dangers of drugs and about personal and social relationships. A mentor system supports any pupils in danger of becoming vulnerable. The fire service offers a programme teaching pupils about the dangers of arson. Also, the community police officer makes regular social visits. Through these activities, pupils develop a good understanding of emergency service work. Good and effective use is made of external agencies such as the child psychologist to support pupils. The school meets the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995, as amended. The school's attendance and admission registers do not meet requirements.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

Arrangements to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors meet all requirements and checks are recorded on the single central register as required.

## **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school provides three well-furnished and attractive classrooms on the ground floor. Pupils' work is used well to motivate and reinforce learning by being displayed in classrooms and corridors. Computer access to the internet is available in one classroom. Furnishings and fittings are of a good standard and the proprietor has recently added smaller chairs and tables to cater for younger pupils to support the application for the material change. Outdoors there is an extensive grassed area with a vegetable garden, trampoline and picnic table. Overall, the premises make an effective contribution to pupils' provision for learning. There are some inadequate security arrangements at the school. These have been brought to the attention of managers who have pledged to make immediate improvements.

## **Provision of information**

The school has a comprehensive prospectus which provides a range of information for parents and carers. It includes all the policies which are required to be made available. This is the first year of opening and so annual reports and information about pupils' performance have yet to be published. The required information is readily available and managers have plans to send it out to parents and carers in the very near future. Similarly, annual reports to placing local authorities are in hand to be sent out as appropriate.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's policies and procedures meet all the requirements.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>3</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for welfare, health and safety of pupils (standards in part 3) and must:

- put into place attendance and admission registers which fully meet the requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- rectify all inadequate security arrangements at the school (paragraph 23 (d)).

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning by:

---

<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made)

- ensuring that lessons are planned with clear step-by-step intentions for pupils to learn skills and knowledge
  - capturing pupils' interest and engagement at the start of each lesson by preparing exciting and captivating starter activities
- 
- establish more links and partnerships with schools in other national and international settings to broaden pupils' understanding of, and empathy with, other cultures
  - improve the planning for weekly trips and visits so that they make an improved contribution to pupils' learning across the curriculum.



## Inspection judgements

|             |      |              |            |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

### The quality of education

|  |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| Overall quality of education   |  |  | ✓ |  |
| How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils |  |  | ✓ |  |
| How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs         |  |  | ✓ |  |
| How well pupils make progress in their learning  |  |  | ✓ |  |

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

|  |  |   |   |  |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development |  | ✓ |   |  |
| The behaviour of pupils  |  |   | ✓ |  |

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

|  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils |  | ✓ |  |  |
|--|--|---|--|--|

## School details

|   |                                  |          |          |
|---|----------------------------------|----------|----------|
| <b>Status of school</b>   | Independent                      |          |          |
| <b>Type of school</b>   | Special (BESD)                   |          |          |
| <b>Date school opened</b>   | 1 September 2010                 |          |          |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>  | 4-18                             |          |          |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>   | Mixed                            |          |          |
| <b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>                              | Boys: 0                          | Girls: 3 | Total: 3 |
| <b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>                              | Boys: 0                          | Girls: 1 | Total: 1 |
| <b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b> | Boys: 0                          | Girls: 1 | Total: 1 |
| <b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>                          | Boys: 0                          | Girls: 4 | Total: 4 |
| <b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>                                       | £18,000                          |          |          |
| <b>Email address</b>  | willowhouse@halliwellhomes.co.uk |          |          |
| <b>Headteacher</b>  | Mrs Jennifer Raynor              |          |          |
| <b>Proprietor</b>   | Halliwell Homes Limited          |          |          |