

High Grange School

Independent school standard inspection report

DfE registration number	830/6003
Unique Reference Number (URN)	136954
URN for social care	SC441083
Inspection number	393261
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2012
Reporting inspector	David Muir
Social care inspector	Martha Nethaway

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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.^{1, 2}

The inspection of boarding provision 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 the government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

High Grange School is a residential special school located in large gated grounds on the outskirts of Mickleover, Derby. It admits up to 36 residential students aged from eight to 19 years old and is registered to provide education for up to 50 students. There are currently 20 students on roll and all have statements of special educational needs. Seven are resident for some time of the week. The school specialises in educating students with a statement of special educational needs, primarily those with autistic spectrum disorder and Asperger syndrome with their associated communication and behavioural difficulties. The school opened in September 2011. Residential students board in six spacious new houses around a grassed area. Education is provided in a purpose-built school adjacent to, but slightly separate from, these. The school building was completed in 2011. Students are referred through social services or education departments of local authorities. The school admits students from eight local authorities. The Rushcliffe Care Group is the proprietor of the school. The school's stated aims are that 'pupils will develop the skills they need to live as independently as possible; make real life choices and lead enriched and happy lives.'

This is the school's first education and first residential inspection since it was registered. This integrated inspection evaluated the quality of education and the residential experience, and the outcomes achieved in both settings.

Evaluation of the school

The quality of education is good and all of the regulations for independent schools are met. Although the school has been open for less than a year, it is successful in

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

⁴ www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

meeting its stated aims. As a result of good teaching and assessment, students rapidly become re-engaged in their education, make good academic progress and develop personal, emotional and social skills well. The progress that they make in improving their behaviour is outstanding. Provision for welfare, health and safety is outstanding, and arrangements for safeguarding are robust and rigorous in both education and residential settings. The overall effectiveness of the residential experience is good and all national minimum standards are met.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good. It meets all requirements and links education and residential provision together effectively and this means that students' personal development and learning are supported to a good level during the school day and beyond. Provision is highly personalised and is based on National Curriculum guidance and all areas of learning are taught. There is rightly a strong emphasis on developing students' academic, social and emotional skills, as these are usually underdeveloped on admission. A very wide range of educational and other visits take place regularly and they enrich the curriculum well. The curriculum is effectively structured so that autistic students' specific needs are met well. From the time they enter the school students make impressive and rapid progress in developing their readiness to learn and participate in lessons. A wide range of qualifications are available, and courses are appropriately matched to students' needs, aspirations and abilities, including National Open College Network awards, BTECs and GCSEs. This allows the school to provide curricular pathways which cover a range of interests, preferences and areas of learning. Students access courses in alternative local providers such as mainstream colleges, school and pupil referral units as appropriate.

Staff are consistent in their approach when dealing with students and, as a result, students rapidly develop trust in the adults who work with them. For some this is the first time that they have formed good relationships with adults, and the support and guidance that they receive helps to boost their self-worth and self-esteem. Residential students' social development is well promoted. They enjoy positive, inclusive and constructive relationships with staff and with each other. All students, including those in the residences, benefit from the holistic educational approach which includes personalised learning support, help and guidance which leads to good outcomes. The 24-hour curriculum is supported well by activities in the residences. For example, activities and visits to local places of interest, such as Derby city centre, all help to enrich learning outside of the school day and to broaden residential students' horizons.

Provision and outcomes are closely monitored by staff, who continually assess the progress made during lessons and in the homes. School staff keep assessment files which show the progress that students make. Over time, students develop independence and become less reliant on others to complete tasks. Strong procedures are in place for communication with the students' homes and the majority of parents and carers who returned their questionnaires fully support the

work of the school. However, in order to develop this area further and address an incident of negative feedback, the school has plans in place to develop a family liaison role on the staff.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Some teaching seen during the inspection was outstanding. Provision is not outstanding because outcomes are not consistently outstanding. Best practice, particularly aspects of teaching that are working well, is not always shared to further improve teaching quality. Structures for lesson planning are consistently implemented and take into account the needs, likes and dislikes of all students in the class. Throughout the school, in all subjects and key stages, teaching results in at least good progress in lessons. This is due to the good pace of teaching. In the best lessons seen, support staff showed that they are highly skilled in supporting the students' learning. However, this was not the case in all lessons, and sometimes students were not given enough time to process their thoughts and consolidate understanding. The better progress seen in lessons is achieved by staff providing a range of enjoyable activities, in short bursts of work, and being very skilful in knowing when to intervene and challenge students' learning and when to step back and allow time for reflection and independent working.

A strong example of teaching was seen in an anti-smoking lesson. Students were involved in a discussion, with visual prompts so that they could all contribute thoughtfully. When there was a reluctance to speak, the teacher skilfully used her tone of voice, body language and strong questioning skills to restart the discussion, which then regained momentum. They were fully engaged as the consequences of smoking encouraged them to think deeply about the negative impacts versus the peer pressure. Across lessons, teachers consistently link the aims with previous learning. Systems for monitoring progress provide a good guide as to the progress made by students' in lessons. This said, these systems are in their infancy and are not yet able to provide secure evidence of students' progress over time. Leaders have clear plans to develop this area and are currently researching commercial schemes to track students' progress robustly.

Students make good progress. They undertake a three month assessment period, from when they enter the school, and this provides the school with a base line and a strong bank of information and data on which to base their teaching and ensuing progress judgements. There is a strong emphasis on developing students' basic skills and many examples were seen of teachers developing literacy and numeracy skills effectively in a variety of lessons. Students gain confidence rapidly, particularly in their reading skills, in which they make good progress. Many were comfortable, and had enough confidence, to read their work out in lessons when asked. The school's records show that at least good progress is made by all students in areas of personal and social development.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The development of the moral and social aspects is especially strong. Students develop an excellent understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and respond extremely positively to the school's code of conduct. They are often involved in deciding the severity of sanctions. One example was seen during a lesson of a student who had previously displayed challenging behaviour. He insisted that his attitude warranted stricter sanction than the teacher wanted to give. He was able to justify why this was appropriate. Residential students are rightly proud of their achievement, progress and all-round development. They truly value the support, help and guidance that they receive. Both residential and day students' specific needs are recognised in planning and welfare arrangements and good attention is paid to promoting their individuality. They are strongly accorded equality of opportunity. All students, including those in the residences, are consulted, listened to and treated with fairness and equality. Lessons observed contained elements which helped students to further develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness well, and the school also addresses these issues through curriculum subjects such as personal, social, health and religious education. However, there are insufficient opportunities for students to meet people from cultures different to their own.

Student's behaviour is outstanding. They are making very good progress in managing their behaviour and anger. No disruption to learning was seen during the inspection. Behaviour improves impressively for all students as a result of the therapies, support and interventions which are provided. Behaviour is handled exceptionally well and consistently by all staff. Individual positive behaviour plans are very well devised. They meet the needs of all students, alongside the thorough and detailed risk assessments, and effective behaviour plans, for every student. A significant factor in the improvements made is that students are treated with the utmost respect at all times. The respect shown by residential and day students, to the rights of others, is well fostered. A main aspect which pervades all areas of the school's work is empathy. This is modelled well by staff and developed by students as a result. Guidance and support helps students to develop good social skills. Staff direct routines or activities positively so that students are able to experience success regularly. Staff successfully model consistent guidelines, communicate their expectation clearly and use praise regularly. As a result, students, particularly those in the residences respond well to familiar trusted staff. Students' attendance is above average and the majority said they like school now. This shows a remarkable turnaround in attitudes for these students who had been disengaged learners prior to attending this school.

Students' cultural understanding is suitably developed through cross-curricular themes such as 'Human Rights' and the 'Living in a Diverse UK' and in various taught units where students learn about world religions. There are many examples of visits which promote students' spirituality, such as a trip to National Memorial Arboretum and the Tara Buddhist Centre. Such provision helps students develop a sense of

respect and tolerance. Students have raised money for a range of charitable causes such as Red Nose Day and Children in Need. The school has an active student council, which helps students to understand democratic processes, and civic responsibilities, as they were all eligible to stand and campaign for election to the council.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. All of the required policies, including detailed guidance for child protection are in place and are implemented extremely well. Policies are robust, comprehensive and clear, and provide all of the necessary guidance for education and residential staff. The school's behaviour policy is very effectively implemented, and is instrumental in bringing about rapid and significant improvements in behaviour. All students, including those in the residences, benefit from the highly personalised programmes of positive strategies for self-control. As a result, students develop positive social relationships which increase their self-awareness and emotional stability. Provision improves students' communication skills, attention span and cooperation levels. Appropriate reference is made within the 'Appropriate internet use' policy to the use and abuse of new technologies and dangers of cyber-bullying. Direct work from the school nurse and keyworkers helps residential students to understand their health and well-being needs. They are additionally protected because medication is carefully monitored, audited and reviewed. Staff training is up-to-date in all areas of the school, including for child protection, and this means that all staff are suitably prepared for their roles and responsibilities. Robust risk assessments are in place and they accurately identify any risks associated with students, external visits or classroom or residential activities. Procedures to ensure that the premises and accommodation are safe are also robust. Very good attention is paid to fire safety, with regular fire drills and evacuations in place in both the education and residential settings. Smoke alarms are tested regularly and clear records are kept of fire alarm tests and checks.

All students confirm that they feel safe and secure. There is no evidence of bullying and the school has clear procedures in place should it occur. Staff carefully monitor the environment for residential students and observe any changes in patterns of behaviour. Safeguarding arrangements are robust. As a result, all students, including those in the residences are protected from harm and are provided with a safe environment in which to live and learn. They participate in a range of sporting and physical activities that keep them fit and ensure that they get enough exercise. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All of the required checks on staff and others are carried out to confirm their suitability to work with students. They are recorded appropriately in the single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The high quality accommodation is purpose built. Classrooms and other accommodation are of a good size and there are good quality generic and specialist teaching areas. The special educational needs of the students have been fully taken into account in the design of the building. There is plenty of space for outdoor recreation and sporting activities. There is also a good range of additional facilities which meet students' particular needs, such as individual teaching rooms, well equipped residential blocks, therapy rooms and communal areas. The school has plans in place to develop a more appropriate science laboratory. The quality of the residential accommodation, premises and facilities, is good. All bedrooms are for single occupancy with appropriate en-suite facilities. This helps to protect residential students' privacy and dignity. The premises are new and purpose-built and provide a safe and secure environment that enables good outcomes to be achieved.

Provision of information

The school's prospectus provides parents, carers and others with all of the required information. It is clear, accurate, detailed and up-to-date. As the school is in its first year of operation it has not yet produced a breakdown of qualifications gained by students and the destinations when they leave. Plans are in place for this information to be supplied when known. Parents and carers are provided with regular reports about the attainment and progress made by their children.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The education and residential complaints procedures meet regulatory requirements.

Leadership and management of the residential provision

Leadership, management and organisation of the residential provision are good. Outcomes, care and safety are also good. There are clear aims for residential provision which are effectively translated into practice. The provision is valued by students, parents, carers, social workers and commissioners. The residential provision is effectively and efficiently managed and is an integral part of the school; underpinned by clear routines and procedures and well-supervised practice. The residential provision runs smoothly. The ratio of staffing effectively matches the needs of students and they are well supervised. All staff have access to good quality training and this supports their professional development well. As a result, staff have the necessary skills to be able to meet the demands of residential life and students' needs. There is an active development plan that sets out areas for improvement. The provision benefits from the high quality reports from the external independent visitor. All areas related to the performance of residential provision are carefully scrutinised. Reports show insightful observations and model best practice. Effective quality assurance monitoring is taking place. Records relating to the care and support of residential students are comprehensive and clearly show achievement, progression and good outcomes. The school manages complaints and takes account of residential

students' views to improve the quality of their residential experience and care well. As a direct result of students' feedback improvements have taken place with meals, menu planning, activities and access to resources. Two-way communication between residential and education staff is of good quality. For example, effective hand-over procedures before and after school help smooth transition. The school is proactive in maintaining good communication with parents, carers and others. Where shortfalls are identified these are promptly rectified.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

National minimum standards

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated regulations.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- further improve outcomes for all students by ensuring that current improvements in the progress that students make are monitored closely over time, so that they are maintained
- use the best practice in the school to continue to support other colleagues to improve their teaching further by sharing experiences of what works well
- provide more opportunities for students to meet people from other cultures and backgrounds to better prepare them for life in multi-cultural Britain.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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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	✓			
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Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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Overall effectiveness of the residential experience

Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		✓		
Outcomes for residential pupils		✓		
Quality of residential provision and care		✓		
Residential pupils' safety		✓		
Leadership and management of the residential provision		✓		

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Residential special		
Date school opened	September 2011		
Age range of pupils	8–19 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 14	Girls: 6	Total: 20
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 4	Girls: 3	Total: 7
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 14	Girls: 6	Total: 20
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£68,000		
Annual fees (boarders)	£125,000		
Address of school	Hospital Lane Mickleover DE3 0DR		
Telephone number	01332 412777		
Email address	Jayne.thorneycroft@rushcliffecare.co.uk		
Headteacher	Marisa Kelsall		
Proprietor	The Rushcliffe Care Group		

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.

2 July 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of High Grange School, Mickleover, DE3 0DR

On behalf of the two inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like to thank you very much for giving us such an enjoyable and memorable experience and sharing your experiences of your school.

We found that your school provides you with a good education and your residential experience is good too. All government requirements are met for education and residential provision. The Principal and leadership team successfully ensure that you are well cared for at all times. All aspects of the residential experience are good. We found the school to be outstanding in the areas of behaviour and welfare, health and safety. It was clear during our visit, from your questionnaires and your comments, that you appreciate the staff and their hard work and that you enjoy school. Your improved behaviour and attitudes to your learning are exemplary and are clear strengths. Teaching is effective and you make good progress. You are cared for well in school and in the residences. Adults know in fine detail how to support you and make your time at High Grange successful. This means that by the time you leave school, you are better prepared and have developed a level of confidence and independence with which to go forward to the next stage of your lives.

I have asked the Principal and proprietor to improve some things by:

- further improving the monitoring of your progress over time
- asking staff to share the things they do well so that teaching gets better
- provide more opportunities for you to meet people from other cultures and backgrounds to better prepare you for life in multi-cultural Britain

You should be very proud of yourselves and the contribution that you make to the school. We particularly enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you about your experiences. Thank you all for the time you spent with us during the visit and I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Muir

Her Majesty's Inspector