

# Elemore Hall School

Pittington, Durham, DH6 1QD

**Inspection dates** 6–7 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The majority of students make good progress in all subject areas. By the time they leave the school students attain well in mathematics but not as well in English.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Sometimes students' behaviour is outstanding. They feel safe, work together well and are supportive of each other.
- Staff have a wide range of good teaching skills but miss opportunities to extend students' English skills further. Teachers work effectively with support staff and all know the students and their needs very well.
- Good leadership, management and governance have ensured all areas for improvement made at the last inspection have been met. They ensure all staff work together well. These aspects demonstrate an improving school which is clearly placed to improve further.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good and frequently outstanding. There is a consistent positive, respectful and productive ethos in the school. The benefits to individual student's personal development are noteworthy.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students do not attain as well in English as they do in mathematics.
- Opportunities are missed across the school to extend students' writing.
- The school must ensure that it meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools which have not been met.

## Information about this inspection

- This was an integrated inspection with a social care inspector who judged the quality of the school’s residential provision. Joint working arrangements took place throughout the inspection between the two teams and school staff. The findings of the residential inspection are included in this report.
- There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). The inspection took account of the parent surveys previously carried out by the school. The lead inspector also received a response from one parent about the quality of provision at the school.
- The inspectors observed 10 lessons, one of which was a joint lesson observation with the headteacher. The lead inspector also completed an extended learning walk with the headteacher.
- The views of staff were noted through meetings with them and by scrutinising the questionnaires they returned. Discussions were also held with members from the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- Documents concerning, for example, attendance, safeguarding, students’ progress and attainment and how the quality of teaching was assessed by leaders were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Michele Crichton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Ellwood	Additional Inspector
Leonard Hird	Social Care Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Elemore Hall School has planned places for 72 secondary-aged students who have a statement of special educational needs because of severe social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many students also have additional complex learning difficulties. Students can join the school at any point between Year 7 and Year 11.
- The school offers day and extended day places to boys and girls and weekly boarding places to boys only. Around 35% of students board on two, three or four nights per week.
- Students come from all over the local authority although most predominantly from the north and the east of the county. Students attending are mainly of White British heritage. Typically, 10% of students are in the care of the local authority. There are currently five girls on the school roll. This is approximately 8% of the population and is typical. The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- Since the last inspection, the school has added the Children, Rights Respecting School Award to its existing range of accreditations and is now also a FruitFull school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Narrow the gap in students' attainment between mathematics and English.
- Improve students' achievements in English, especially in their writing, by:
  - all staff taking every opportunity for all students to write in a variety of ways
  - ensuring there are meaningful links made across all subject and curriculum areas
  - providing a variety of relevant and interesting reasons for students to write.
- The policy complies with relevant legislation and guidance and is understood by staff and children. (NMS 12.2)
- Staff receive appropriate training and support to recognise and deal with incidences of challenging behaviour or bullying. This training should include assistance in managing staff members' responses and feelings arising from working with children who have emotional difficulties which result in challenging behaviour. Staff training is regularly refreshed. (NMS 12.3)
- There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with children, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors, and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with children. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or convicted of, any offence. (NMS 14.3)
- Consistently, and accurately record residential staff professional supervision sessions.
- Destroy all historical paper copies of CRB certificates held on file.
- Consistently monitor and review objectives in placement plans of residential pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students have frequently experienced many disruptions in their life and education prior to joining the school. This results in very low literacy and numeracy skills, a history of little engagement with learning and very poor attendance.
- From very low starting points students make good progress during their time at the school. So much so that by the time they exit Elemore Hall every student, regardless of need, gains some form of accreditation. This ranges from entry level or GCSE, depending upon their abilities.
- Throughout the school, students' English, especially their writing skills, lag behind the accelerated progress and relatively good attainment made in other subjects.
- Attainment in mathematics is a strength. Year-on-year more students are entering this subject at GCSE level. The grades they achieve in this subject are on an upward trend. Although more students are achieving accreditation in other subjects, English has yet to catch up with the positive developments in mathematics at GCSE level.
- Pupil premium funding is very effectively used to promote reading across the school. Close tracking of all learners indicates outstanding outcomes for some students, and at least good for the vast majority. Evaluations also show that students have more positive attitudes to reading and some slight improvements to their writing. This is a new initiative from September 2012 and needs a longer time to embed and for improvements to be secure.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Frequently, the love and relevance of learning has to be re-established with students and this can take time. Teachers and support staff achieve this by strong teamwork and by getting to know each individual student very well. These high quality relationships are used to encourage students to persevere with work, even when they find it challenging.
- Lessons are well planned, show good pace and are interesting. For example, in a good science lesson students analysed their own DNA through highly imaginative but practical resources. Students are usually well behaved, listen well and make a positive contribution to their learning whenever they can.
- In an outstanding Bushcraft lesson students learn to build fires, cook and make shelters. All students work together exceptionally well. The questions, answers, vocabulary and ways to record information in a meaningful way are of the very highest quality.
- Students' English, especially their writing abilities, lag behind the accelerated progress and relatively good attainment made in other subjects. Opportunities are missed by staff to extend students' English skills further, especially in their writing.
- There are limited learning activities for students to write and record in a variety of formats. The work set for them frequently requires one word or very simple sentences to answer. There are also too few opportunities for students to write at length.
- Feedback during lessons and the marking of students' work are detailed and personal. This ensures each student understands what they have to do to improve further.
- Homework is regularly set for everyone. There are opportunities for both residential and day students to receive additional support with their work should they want this.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of students behave exceptionally well in lessons and around school. Staff have high expectations of all students at all times.
- The majority of students attend well. A small number of students distort the overall figure for

the school. Much work is done with this small number of students and their families to change attitudes, value regular attendance and understand the impact they can have on life opportunities.

- Staff use praise skilfully and behaviour management is consistent. Consequently, as trust and relationships develop, students settle into good routines for learning and the school environment is calm.
- Students speak of how much they appreciate the staff who support and respect them even when they find it difficult to cope and their behaviour lapses. This is a view shared by all students across all parts of the school's provision.

**The leadership and management are good**

- A systematic monitoring programme is in place where all aspects of teaching, additional support, student achievement and equal opportunities are critically reviewed. This ensures that all students, regardless if male or female, residential or non-residential, achieve the best they can.
- Senior leaders scrutinise the quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities for students during every lesson observation. At each daily assembly, themes are raised for students' to reflect upon. Throughout the school day students regularly discuss their points of view with staff during breaks or over lunch.
- The curriculum is good. It is skill-based and prepares students effectively for the next stage of their education. The school has a good track record for securing training opportunities or employment for students when they leave Elemore Hall.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- The school works in close partnership with the local authority and additional agencies. As a consequence, attendance rates have improved since the last inspection.
- Parents are happy with the provision and outcomes for their children. This is typical of parents' attitudes known through reviewing and responding to the regular school surveys and questionnaires.
- A parent contacted the inspection team directly to praise all staff. The parent related that his son had been excluded many times from mainstream schools but since attending Elemore Hall his child has made rapid progress in his learning. He feels the school really listens to what his child needs and consequently his son is doing really well.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body ensures a good balance of support and challenge to leaders at all levels, as demonstrated in discussions regarding performance management, for example. Governors understand the differences emerging between students' mathematics and English attainment, although actions to rectify this discrepancy are still at an early stage of development. The governing body is rigorous in their review of the appropriateness of the curriculum for all students. Governors know this through regular visits to attend the activities and events that take place at Elemore Hall. A member of the governing body is involved in every new teaching appointment that is made to maintain the high quality of teaching. Governors also regularly review information concerning the quality of teaching.

<b>Outcomes for residential pupils</b>	<b>are good</b>
<b>Quality of residential provision and care</b>	<b>is good</b>
<b>Residential pupils' safety</b>	<b>is adequate</b>
<b>Leadership and management of the residential provision</b>	<b>are good</b>

- Residential students are developing positively through the culture adopted at the school to genuinely care and have concern for others. Students confirm that they feel very safe and well looked after by the residential staff team. They report that they can speak to any member of staff or if necessary outside agencies regardless of the time, if they have a problem.
- The school has clear policies and practice on behaviour and discipline. Very few sanctions are given. Residential students' individual needs are well met by an experienced and well-qualified staff team. All of the residential staff team have appropriate qualifications in the administration of first aid and medication. Medication is securely stored, recorded and administered.
- The behaviour of residential students is good and there are an extremely low number of recorded incidents occurring during residential time. Members of staff actively encourage students to lead healthy and active lifestyles. Trained staff offer advice on topics such as smoking cessation, sexual health and healthy eating.
- Members of staff continue to develop the quality of individual's care and placement plans. However, some of these plans have not been reviewed in a timely manner. It is essential that these plans are regularly reviewed and documented to ensure that individual student's progress can be monitored.
- Residential students are well protected by the school's recruitment processes. However, there have been no appropriate checks undertaken or written agreements put into place on non-employees over the age of 16 who live within the school's boundaries.
- The strong leadership and management of the residential unit ensure that residential students receive very good levels of care and support. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The monitoring of regular supervision meetings takes place between the senior management and members of the care staff team to ensure consistency of practice. There is a need, however, to be more consistent in the recording and monitoring of this process so that staff can develop and improve their practice. There are small lapses in monitoring of the historical documentation held on file in the school.
- Residential staff receive training in safeguarding and behaviour management. To further empower staff, this training should take greater account of homophobic and cyber-bullying.
- The school's 24-hour curriculum is good. Residential students are fully involved and committed to a well-prepared and diverse programme of activities.

## What inspection judgements mean

<b>School</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

<b>Boarding/Residential provision</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Description</b>
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114337
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC040508
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	401426

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	62
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	17
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Colin Hilliary
<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Royle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 3720275
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 3721529
<b>Email address</b>	elemore@durhamlearning.net



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, 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'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

