

# Penn Hall School

Vicarage Road, Penn, Wolverhampton, WV4 5HP

## Inspection dates

28 February–1 March 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make outstanding progress in English and mathematics because every pupil is challenged to meet her or his full potential.
- Pupils use electronic speech generating devices and so significantly enhance their communication (speaking skills).
- Adapted wheelchairs and specially modified eating utensils enable pupils to move freely and to feed as independently as possible.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make rapid gains in communication using signs, pictures, switches and words.
- Sixth-form students gain excellent life and work-related skills alongside valuable qualifications (including very good GCSE passes in English and mathematics). All go to college when they leave school.
- Teaching is inspirational. Teachers know exactly what every pupil should learn next. They plan creatively to ensure that the needs of each pupil are met.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are sensitive towards one another. Their understanding of how to keep safe is excellent.
- Many pupils take responsibility to be advocates for promoting awareness of the needs of people with disability where they live.
- Pupils complex medical and intimate care needs are met exceptionally well.
- All leaders, including the governing body, are committed to helping all pupils to reach their potential.
- Thorough checking of teaching and ongoing training of teachers contributes to constant improvements for all pupils.
- The school provides outstanding support for pupils with physical difficulties in mainstream schools throughout Wolverhampton.
- The school meets the minimum standards for residential special schools. The effectiveness of the residential provision is outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by 13 different teachers. Twelve of these lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also heard pupils read from different classes, and looked at pupils' work when in class. Inspectors spent time with children in the residential accommodation.
- Meetings were held with school staff and the residential care team, outreach and family support staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, statements of special educational needs, individual education plans, care, move and feeding plans, the school's development plan, monitoring information, all of the documents and records required in residential special school provision, the appraisal policy, all safeguarding documents and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors examined 41 staff questionnaires.
- There were 41 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection. These views were taken into account by inspectors, along with the outcomes from a very recent parent survey (60 returns) carried out by the school. The social care inspector also examined comments made by parents about the residential provision.

## Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Russell Hinton

Additional Inspector

Peter Hylton

Social Care Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school makes provision for pupils with physical difficulties and complex medical needs. Since the last inspection there has been an increase in the number of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. All, except for a very few children undergoing assessment, have a statement of special educational needs.
- There is residential provision for up to six pupils. It is used flexibly and each year group has access to boarding on different weeks. During the inspection there were six Nursery and Reception aged children in the residential provision.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those from families where English is spoken as an additional language, are above average. These pupils are represented across all the disability and special educational needs groups in the school.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, which is extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals among others.
- The school does make use of alternative schools and locations to provide education for its pupils from time to time, but no such activity was going on during the inspection.
- Penn Hall provides outreach support to mainstream schools across the City of Wolverhampton in providing support for pupils with physical difficulties.
- The school has a wide range of awards including Enhanced Healthy Schools Status, 'Go 4 It' Award, Arts Mark Gold Award, IT Mark and Investors in People.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching for pupils with the most complex profound and multiple learning difficulties so that it is always outstanding by:
  - using knowledge of pupils prior learning consistently to plan activities in small steps at the correct level to move them on to new learning
  - making sure that teaching assistants always consistently make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning
  - regularly, as needed, massage pupils hands and stretch their fingers so that they can better reach out and use a switch independently and carefully position those with limited neck movement so that they can follow objects with their eyes and anticipate what is likely to happen next during story time.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with exceptionally complex needs. Often they are uncomfortable, unable to communicate and struggle to move freely. Helped to overcome these difficulties they quickly become ready to learn. Their progress in communication and personal development is outstanding.
- Attainment for sixth form students is very variable reflecting their wide range of needs. For one a grade B in mathematics GCSE, for another an Entry Level 1 qualification, dependent on where they started out. It is the same in English. However, the progress of each student is outstanding measured from their starting points. All achieve a wide range of qualifications, including valuable accreditation in vocational subjects. They are well-equipped to go on to college.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in reading and mathematics whatever their particular medical, disability or special educational needs. It is better than the rate of progress expected nationally for pupils with complex needs. Progress in writing although at least good is a little slower than in reading and mathematics, which is a measure of pupils' very severe physical difficulties.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties show that they anticipate what is going to happen, such as when the teacher squirts water at them during sensory story time. Other more-able younger pupils read text independently and with enjoyment. Those with limited movement are assisted with electronic equipment to help them reach their full potential.
- Writing is difficult for pupils with severe physical difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties. However, with thoughtful positioning to access a wide range of adapted switches to operate symbol and word programs on computers all make good progress. Pupils with freedom of movement in their hands and good arm muscle control write independently and spell words accurately.
- Progress is exceptional in mathematics. Pupils' mathematical development builds step by step, whatever their ability or needs. All, within capability, develop relevant skills such as using money to shop, asking for change, and telling the time. A few grasp the algebra and geometry skills required to be extremely successful in nationally recognised examinations.
- A few pupils slip backwards because of the severity of their medical conditions. Everything is done to help these pupils maintain their skills and achieve as much as possible. Regular morning sessions with a physiotherapist in the pool keeps them moving as freely as possible so that during the rest of the day they are included in the same activities as their friends. Specialist equipment helps pupils with hearing and sight impairment to make the same outstanding progress as their friends.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in moving and feeding independently. All develop outstanding self-advocacy skills within their capability, such as operating an insulin pump or learning to drive an adapted motor car. These skills are developed exceptionally-well during the time pupils spend as boarders in the residential provision (it is a quite unique rotating provision: one week Early Years Foundation Stage and the next week sixth-form students; all year groups have an experience of this provision).
- Through subjects such as independent living, pupils gain excellent numeracy and literacy skills as they weigh ingredients for cooking a meal and read the instructions to operate a washing

machine. Their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills are outstanding.

- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to speed up pupils' rate of progress in reading. Those pupils eligible for free school meals achieve equally as well as their friends who are not. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those from families who speak an additional language, are treated as individuals and receive support based on all of their needs. They make the same outstanding progress as their friends.

### **The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- Most teaching is outstanding. All teaching is good. Teaching of life skills is outstanding. Residential staff make an exceptionally valuable contribution to developing pupils independence. Without 'spoon feeding' pupils these staff challenge them to move independently; use the bathroom by themselves; and tidy their bedrooms.
- Flexible planning and imaginative use of resources means that the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is of a consistently high quality.
- Lessons in school are typified by high expectations and effective and probing questions, which deepen pupils' understanding. Space is given for pupils to respond using the means of communication most appropriate. In almost all lessons pupils are challenged to reach their full potential through activities planned using the teachers' knowledge of their prior learning.
- A magical ingredient of the teaching is the manner in which teachers successfully develop pupils' physical skills alongside developing their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, while bouncing freely on the trampoline pupils counting skills are developed; moving in a wheelchair they are challenged to follow a straight line; exercising their face muscles they are encouraged to sound out words accurately when reading.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently outstanding. It very successfully equips children with the necessary communication skills required to learn.
- In the sixth form teaching is outstanding across a wide range of subjects, including work-related options. It sparkles because teachers combine their outstanding subject knowledge and enthusiasm, all within the context of exceptionally positive relationships, to see students are well prepared for their examinations but are also totally engaged because learning is made so interesting and relevant for them.
- For example, in an information and communication technology lesson students gained facts about the ills of infringing copyright laws, but became animated in their discussion because they were so very interested in the content of the lesson.
- On rare occasions teaching assistants do not sufficiently challenge pupils who have profound and multiple learning difficulties. For example, exceptionally rarely they use a switch for a pupil rather than massaging the hands of the pupil and encouraging her or him to reach out and try to operate the switch independently.
- Exceptionally rarely, teachers do not successfully help every pupil with profound and multiple learning difficulties to anticipate what is going to happen next while telling a story. On a few occasions when such pupils point with their eyes at a puppet, they are not always then challenged to follow that puppet as the teacher moves it away from them. Sometimes teachers do not use information about what such pupils can nearly do to move them on quickly enough to

achieve that important next developmental step.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils love learning at Penn Hall School, including during the times they spend in the residential provision. This is because teachers and care staff very skilfully position pupils comfortably using specially adapted chairs so that they can reach the equipment they need to learn. They enable them to propel their wheelchairs and use their walking frames independently. As a result, all pupils enjoy the interesting and challenging activities set for them, whatever their particular difficulties.
- Behaviour is outstanding in the school and the residential provision. Pupils view the residential provision as 'home from home'. Pupils greet visitors warmly, some signing 'good morning'; others saying 'hello'; and yet others reaching out their hand for a 'give it five' accompanied with broad smiles. When in residence their behaviour is exemplary as they engage in a wide range of enjoyable activities on and off-site, which develop their social and communication skills.
- There are no fights, no racist or bullying incidents and no exclusions at Penn Hall. Incidents of challenging behaviour are related to children's particular difficulties when they first start school. For example, some Nursery-aged children, on entry, are frustrated at not being able to communicate. The speech therapy team helps these children overcome this difficulty and so their behaviour improves rapidly. During the inspection Reception-aged children were observed making independent choices in the residential provision.
- Pupils' knowledge of cyber and prejudiced-based types of bullying is outstanding. A number of pupils speak out for the rights of people with disabilities in the communities where they live and challenge any form of disability discrimination. Their understanding of difference is amazing and they are both sensitive to the needs of each other and 'steely' in speaking out against any type of prejudice.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and in the residential provision. They say, 'We can talk with a teacher or member of the care team about anything that troubles us'. Pupils express who they want to meet their intimate care needs either using words or, in the case of those with the most complex needs, using gesture. Pupils experience the same dignity in both school and the residential provision. In residence pupils see the independent visitor who comes in to check on their well-being regularly. They say, 'We are listened to'.
- Pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe at school and in the residential provision is outstanding. They know that if they propel their wheelchairs too quickly along the corridor they may knock a friend over. When using an adapted 'bike' those with freedom of arm movement put a helmet on without being prompted. Working in the garden they carry the rake with the sharp end pointed towards the ground and walk behind a log fire keeping a safe distance. They have an excellent grasp of how to keep themselves safe when using a computer.
- They understand that smoking can cause lung cancer and drinking too much alcohol can lead to liver disease. Their personal hygiene skills, healthy eating and good sleeping patterns are developed exceptionally-well when in the residential provision. All know about 'safe touch' and 'unsafe touch' and as they mature know about the importance of safe sexual practice.
- Attendance for most pupils is high. Absence is linked to lengthy stays in hospital or frequent off-site visits to specialist clinics.

**The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher's relentless drive to improve teaching means that even the outstanding teaching is getting better. Never complacent, where teaching is good action is taken to 'notch it up a gear'. This is why this is an outstanding school. There is no room for complacency.
- Targeted and tailored training is provided to develop individual teachers. They respond exceptionally well and so pupils' achievement and progress both academically and in relation to their specific physical needs are constantly getting better.
- The local authority provides excellent opportunities for teachers to improve their teaching. It buys in highly qualified and skilled consultants to work as coaches with teachers. This helps them improve significantly as does the 'inter-visitation programme' (whereby teachers are enabled to visit other schools where there is outstanding practice).
- The head of care provides excellent leadership and management of the residential provision. Robust systems and procedures result in the provision being outstanding in all respects. This is confirmed by pupils and parents who are delighted with the provision. It ensures pupils are safe, feel at home, and develop independence, while being supported with the utmost dignity and respect. The accommodation enables pupils to 'chill', but is designed to stretch them.
- The school has an accurate understanding of its outstanding practice, but also of what it could do even better. This is because senior leaders and the head of care analyse every aspect of the school's work thoroughly. Decisive actions are triggered by this analysis, which greatly benefit pupils. For example, analysis of reading results two years ago flagged up questions about whether pupils could achieve better in reading. A new approach to reading was launched, teachers were trained, and pupils' reading results have improved further as a result.
- Leadership at all levels is outstanding. The family liaison worker very effectively supports parents in helping their children to learn and become more independent. The outreach coordinator helps mainstream schools across Wolverhampton to meet the needs of pupils with physical difficulties very effectively. Subject, phase and specialist provision leaders using fibre optics (light), specialist swimming programmes and with knowledge of 'every type of switch under the sun' makes sure that pupils' wide and complex needs are exceptionally well met.
- The management of therapies is outstanding. Therapists work in an effective partnership to remove barriers to learning for pupils. Constantly thinking 'outside the box' they bend a spoon at a different angle to help a pupil and adjust wheels on chairs, always safely, to help pupils move more confidently and quickly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They gaze with amazement at the rich coloured bushes in the sensory garden and reflect deeply on how they can promote awareness of disability equality. Links with schools across nine different countries, learning to speak French, and the celebration of Eid and Diwali within school (when pupils experience dance and taste foods from different cultures) raises their awareness of cultural diversity.
- Leaders make sure that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed in every aspect of their learning and development. The school succeeds in achieving this. Discrimination of any type is not tolerated within this school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body supports and challenges the headteacher and head of residential care

exceptionally well. Governors are highly skilled and have a detailed knowledge of pupils' medical needs as well as their academic learning needs. They are actively involved in finding out the strengths of the school and what could be even better. They are involved in working on the improvements and have lead responsibilities covering every aspect of the school's work. They ask challenging questions about the achievement and physical development of the pupils. There is a robust policy to check on teachers' performance and no teacher can move up the pay scale if they do not accelerate pupils' learning. The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's performance is reviewed thoroughly, and rigorous targets are set for them. Governors make sure that safeguarding meets requirements both in the school and the residential provision. Risk assessments around handling and moving pupils are exceptionally robust as are procedures around meeting their complex medical needs.



## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
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>

Residential provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
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>	104417
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	043187
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	403775

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
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	79
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	12
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	6
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Janet Anderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Parry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558355
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