

# Elland House School

Unit 7, Roman Road, Royton, Lancashire, OL2 5PJ

## Inspection dates

25–26 June 2013

## Overall effectiveness

**Adequate**

**3**

Pupils' achievement

Adequate

3

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Adequate

3

Quality of teaching

Adequate

3

Quality of curriculum

Adequate

3

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Adequate

3

Leadership and management

Adequate

3

## Summary of key findings

### This school is adequate because

- Students make expected progress from their individual starting points. Some students do not engage sufficiently in the planned lessons and this leads to their learning and progress slowing.
- Students' specific difficulties, together with the limited progress they make in writing, restrict their confidence and their ability to demonstrate their learning in other subjects.
- Following a period of considerable change in staffing and organisation, teaching and learning are beginning to improve.
- Teaching is adequate rather than better because the grouping of students, and the timing and location of lessons have not been flexible enough to meet the needs of every student. Additionally, the work of residential care workers, who attend lessons with the students in their care, is variable and some do not contribute to the learning in lessons.
- The proprietor and education manager have not checked sufficiently on the learning and progress of all students in lessons. Consequently, the planned approach to lesson delivery has not been adjusted to deal with the students who do not always engage in learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- The new education manager and the lead teacher are committed to improving teaching, learning and the progress of students.
- Students' attendance at school improves significantly when compared with their previous school placements.
- The education manager has a clear view of the school's current performance and areas for improvement. Consequently, many new systems have been established. It is too soon to judge the impact of these initiatives.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

## Information about this inspection

- The education manager was notified of this inspection on the day before the inspection began.
- The inspector observed two lessons taught by one teacher, and looked at students' previous work and assessments of their progress.
- Meetings were held with the school's education manager and other members of staff, and the proprietor. Policies were scrutinised for welfare, health and safety, the curriculum, and teaching and assessment.
- Responses to questionnaires from students and staff were considered.

## Inspection team

Amraz Ali, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a small special school that is registered to admit up to 20 boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 years, who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is part of the Timeout company which provides care in a number of children's homes in the north west of England.
- The school is located in a two-storey building on a small industrial estate situated in a residential area of Oldham.
- The number of students on roll fluctuates throughout each year. Some stay for a short period and others for much longer periods. All students have special educational needs and almost half have a statement of special educational needs. All students are in the care of their local authority. Currently, all five students are in residential placements in homes run by the company.
- At the time of the inspection, one of the students was being educated at home under the direct supervision of the education manager and residential care workers.
- It is common for students to have been out of school for long periods prior to attending Elland House School.
- The school opened in 2006. Its last full inspection was in January 2010. Monitoring inspections took place in November 2010 and November 2011. The most recent found that good progress had been made in addressing the regulatory failures. Since the previous inspection, almost all students and staff have changed.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and achievement by
  - adopting a more flexible approach to the grouping of students and the timing and location of lessons
  - ensuring that all residential care workers have appropriate skills to support students' learning
  - providing more individual support to students
  - using information and communication technology more effectively in lessons and as part of individual learning programmes.
- Improve students' confidence and ability in writing by
  - identifying each individual's specific difficulties in writing
  - planning an individual programme of support to help each student to overcome their specific difficulties.
- Improve the engagement of the small number of students who do not take part in all lessons even when they are on the school site.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that the education manager and proprietor regularly monitor the work of the staff and the learning of students.

## Inspection judgements

### Pupils' achievement

#### Adequate

Students' achievement is adequate. Over the past two years, students left school with a range of Entry Level and Level 1 and 2 qualifications that helped them to secure college places. Students make adequate progress overall in their basic English and mathematics skills, but their rates of progress are very variable. The amount of progress that students make from their individual starting points is directly affected by their attendance, attitudes to work and the quality of teaching. Over the last 12 months, students have experienced a great deal of change and this has affected their progress. For some, progress has stalled because of their lack of engagement in lessons. Senior leaders are aware that students' rate of progress has fallen and have begun to put steps in place to remedy this, for example by improving planning, assessment and tracking. As yet, the impact of this action has been limited.

Students' work folders show that, since the start of this term when a new teacher joined the school, their achievements are adequate. Work is clearly related to improving their individual basic skills and covers a range of English and mathematics topics. Although some work is of a low level, including that in literacy and numeracy, it demonstrates that students are making adequate progress overall. Students' achievement in writing is not accelerating fast enough to make up for gaps in their skills and knowledge. Some students are very reluctant to write anything. Many students have specific difficulties that are adversely affecting their confidence and their ability to demonstrate successful learning across the curriculum.

### Pupils' behaviour and personal development

#### Adequate

Students' behaviour and personal development are adequate. Students' complex social, emotional and behavioural needs mean that all have experienced difficulties in their previous school placements. However, although records indicated that their behaviour has improved when compared to previous school placements, some students still display challenging behaviour. When incidents occur, staff manage these appropriately and support each student to regain their calm. Staff have worked effectively with residential care workers to improve students' attendance at the school. However, although much improved, rates of attendance remain well below average and the punctuality of some students is poor. Once at school, the extent to which each actually engages in the planned lessons is variable. Although some have successfully engaged in education and have taken examinations, this is not the case for all. Some see school as a place solely for socialising and they all do not value the work done by adults to help their learning.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is adequate overall, with some strengths in their cultural development. Opportunities are provided to develop students' knowledge of, and attitudes towards, cultures and beliefs that are different from their own. For example, one student talked about her visit to India and the food there. In one lesson, students engaged in lively discussions about take-away food and how this had been influenced by many cultures. Students are taught about key elements of British identity, including the wide range of faiths and cultures represented in Britain. Discussions on a wide range of relevant topics help students' to develop an awareness of what is right and wrong and the choices that they can make as citizens within a democratic society. Staff take care to avoid partisan views, for example when discussing current affairs.

### Quality of teaching

#### Adequate

The quality of teaching is adequate. Despite recent improvements in planning, so that activities and targets are identified for each student, teaching is not yet good enough to ensure students'

good achievement. This is because levels of engagement and participation in lessons are very variable and some students do not undertake all of the planned activities. Where students are engaged, they enjoy the topics they discuss and the things they are finding out about. For example in a personal, social and health education lesson, students talked animatedly about the different types of take-away foods that they enjoy eating. Lessons do not always start promptly and purposefully, and although they are on the school site, some students fail to join their lessons.

The teachers are calm, patient and non-confrontational. They routinely provide students with much praise and encouragement. Each student is accompanied during the day by one of their residential care workers. Although some of these additional adults make a positive contribution to managing behaviour and to the learning of students in lessons, others do not support students sufficiently in their learning. In part, this is due to the varying levels of skills that these adults have and their limited understanding about the learning needs of students. Where students are new to their care placements and to the school, they have work set for them to undertake at home as part of their induction. This is then done under the supervision of teachers and residential care workers. There are early signs that this is having some positive impact. However, teachers are not flexible enough in their approach to the grouping of students or in the delivery and timing of lessons. This limits the support they can give to individual students who are not coping with the demands of lessons on the school site.

Arrangements to improve students' basic skills are adequate overall. Some students have specific difficulties with writing and this presents a specific barrier to their achievement. Although staff are aware that some students do not like writing, their specific difficulties have not been identified. As a result, there is no effective support to enable all students to improve their skills and confidence in writing. Students' academic attainment and progress are assessed across a range of subjects using an online system. This provides teachers with a picture of what students can do and where there are gaps in students' learning. Students' personal development, focusing on their emotional, social and behavioural needs, is reviewed frequently. All students have at least three individual plans which are set and reviewed each term. Targets for what they need to work on next are drawn up each term. However, these reviews and targets are not always aligned well. Students state that the most effective support they receive is provided on a one-to-one basis. However, changes in staffing and the deployment of staff mean that this type of support has recently been limited. There are good quality resources to support teaching and learning, including text books. A small computer suite provides an ample number of computers. However, the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning and as part of individual learning programmes is underutilised.

### Quality of curriculum

### Adequate

The curriculum is adequate. It meets all requirements and makes available a suitable range of subjects with accreditation and examinations for students of different abilities. Appropriate emphasis is given to English and mathematics within weekly timetables and this contributes to the adequate progress made by students. Each Friday sees students given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of outdoor sporting or adventurous activities, such as rock climbing and team sports. Students talked very positively about their recent experience of kayaking. The personal, social and health education curriculum covers a range of topics that support students' personal development such as bullying, discrimination, sexual health and exploitation. Students are taught about what makes up the 'British identity', along with a range of public services and institutions in England today. They are taught about their own and other cultures and a very positive aspect is that some recent students went on a study visit to India, which has contributed very effectively to their personal development.

**Pupils' welfare, health and safety****Adequate**

Students' welfare, health and safety are adequate. Although all regulatory requirements are met, and there are some good systems and procedures in place, students' behaviour and the limited impact of the school's work to encourage a healthy lifestyle mean that this standard is adequate overall. There are good systems and procedures in place to ensure that the learning environment is maintained to a reasonable standard and students are supervised appropriately. However, this does not ensure that all students' behaviour is always appropriate around the school. Consequently, some students indicate that the behaviour of other students means that they do not always feel safe. There are clear and effective procedures for addressing bullying. Students say that instances of bullying are dealt with promptly. Students are taught about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and diet. They are taught about the consequences of using tobacco and other substances. However, this work has had only limited impact on encouraging students to lead healthy lifestyles and almost all still smoke.

Risk assessments for fire, general health and safety and outside visits are good. Fire drills, evacuation procedures and fire appliances are tested and checked regularly. An appropriate number of staff hold first aid qualifications. Attendance registers are marked accurately. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff, including the designated person for child protection, have received the right level of training about child protection. All the required checks on the suitability of staff to work with children have been made prior to their appointment and they are recorded, as required, on a single central register.

**Leadership and management****Adequate**

Leadership and management of the school are adequate. Improvements since the last inspection mean that all the regulations for independent schools are met. The recently recruited education manager has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Consequently, there is a clear plan for improvement, which includes the introduction of a wide range of new routines and systems for lesson planning, and the assessment and tracking of students' progress. The quality of teaching is beginning to improve. However, the impact of these recent changes has been limited. Students' learning and achievement are variable and remain adequate rather than good. The education manager and education staff realise that there remains much work to be done if improvements are to be secured rapidly.

The many recent changes of personnel at the school, and for some students in their residential placements, have brought some uncertainty and short-term difficulties. This has been reflected in students' behaviour and levels of engagement in planned learning. Although staffing is now more settled, it is taking longer than leaders anticipated to get all students' learning back on track. Although the proprietor monitors the school's work through her regular contact with students, the extent to which she and the education manager have observed at first-hand the impact of the many changes of staffing has been limited. Consequently, they have not always fully appreciated the need to take swift action to remedy difficulties.

The premises and accommodation are maintained to a suitable standard. The main classroom and smaller classrooms provide an appropriate amount of suitable space for the number of students for which the school is registered. Displays of students' work give a good sense of the school's values and its work, and provide a good environment for learning. The school prospectus provides parents, carers and local authorities with a suitable range of useful information. The policy and the procedures for handling complaints have recently been amended and now comply with regulations.

## What inspection judgements mean

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

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131751
<b>Inspection number</b>	420182
<b>DfE registration number</b>	353/6013

This inspection was carried out 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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent
<b>School status</b>	Independent Special School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	5
<b>Number of part time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Janet Lumb
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Ingram (Education manager)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 2011
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£26,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 628 3600
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