

Horton House School

Hill Top Farm, Sutton Road, Wawne, Hull, HU7 5YY

Inspection dates	2–4 October 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Students make good progress in improving their literacy and numeracy skills, from low starting points on entry to the school.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning show considerable improvement over time as a result of strong leadership and consistent use of school procedures by the staff.
- The quality of teaching is good and enables students to achieve more than they thought possible on entry to the school.
- The school demonstrates exemplary rigour in attending to all aspects of the welfare, health and safety of students both in school and during off-site activities.
- The quality of leadership and management is good. Senior leaders and proprietors work together effectively to monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on students' achievement, and to identify suitable areas for improvement.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Not enough students make outstanding progress with their learning; some are capable of doing better.
- Occasional incidents of disruptive behaviour distract from the engagement and concentration of students in lessons.
- Strategies for the assessment of students' progress do not always pay sufficient attention to comparisons with national expectations.

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 inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- Six lessons were observed including all teaching groups in the school. Additional time was spent in visits to classrooms and other learning activities.
- Meetings were held with senior members of the staff, the proprietor and a group of students. Additional informal conversations were held with a variety of members of staff and students.
- A wide range of school documentation was scrutinised, including: policies and procedures; logs of premises and fire safety checks and; teachers' planning documents.
- The views of four placing authorities were considered; parents' and carers' answers to the online 'Parent View' questionnaire were not available as there were insufficient responses.

Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Horton House School opened in 2002 and is located in the village of Wawne, on the northern outskirts of Kingston-upon-Hull.
- It is a co-educational, day special school for students aged between eight and 19 years. There are currently 26 students on roll, aged eight to 18 years.
- Students are placed at the school due to behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties, some associated with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). They are funded by a number of local authorities and all have a statement of special educational needs.
- The vast majority of students have experienced disruption to their education prior to admission and a number have not attended regularly at their previous schools.
- Post-16 students on the roll of the school, have part-time placements in local colleges of further education and work placements. As a result, it was not possible to observe post-16 education on site during this inspection.
- The school aims to 'promote total education, whereby education and care combine to help children and young people achieve, manage their own behaviour, and secure for themselves a brighter future'.
- The school makes use of additional provision.
- The last inspection of the school was in May 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching in all lessons provides sufficient challenge to accelerate the rate of progress of higher attaining students.
- Ensure that strategies for assessment provide evidence of the extent of progress over time, and that analysis of data is compared with national expectations.
- Embed the range of opportunities for students to develop an understanding of, and respect for, those with different faiths, cultures and beliefs.
- Review the extent and nature of the premises available for the integration of students with ASD and associated learning needs.
- Ensure that all policy documentation is clearly applicable to the school, and distinct from the Company's care environment.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Students' make good progress with their learning as a result of consistent management of their behaviour, good teaching and a good curriculum. All students enter the school with levels of attainment below, or well below age-related expectations; a number have missed significant periods of previous schooling or have had poor attendance. The extent of progress made by the majority of students makes up much of the lost ground, but their attainment remains below national standards. Students' engagement in lessons is good and they make steady progress, including in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. Their achievement of entry level, and Level 1 and 2 qualifications broadly matches their abilities, but there is scope for raising aspirations for students who are in attendance for longer periods of time. Students with autistic spectrum disorders and associated conditions begin to make good progress with the development of their learning skills, and their ability to relate to others, as a result of patient and sensitive teaching and behaviour management.

Some students are capable of accelerated learning to enable them exceed national rates of progress and to catch up more of their previously lost time. Outstanding improvements in behaviour over time for a number of students contribute well to their readiness to learn. Low literacy and numeracy levels on entry to the school, together with a lack of confidence as a result of their previous limited achievements, restrict the extent of progress for some students. Students develop their basic skills, and make good progress across a range of subjects. Increasing numbers are achieving external accreditations but most require longer than the average amount of time to make up the lost ground. The school is currently extending the range and level of external qualifications available and this is appropriate for many students who begin to achieve success and raise their aspirations, often for the first time.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Behaviour throughout the school is good and has a positive impact on the quality of students' learning and personal development. For a number of students this represents outstanding progress from their starting points. Excellent strategies for managing behaviour are implemented consistently with high expectations communicated throughout the school. The use of daily behaviour targets and the open manner in which they are applied is outstanding, valued by students and having a positive impact on their attitudes and relationships. Staff are consistent in their management of individual students and support each other extremely well. Staff are patient and sensitive in their approach to managing particularly difficult behaviour among some students with more extreme behavioural and learning difficulties. Good use is made, for example, of the sensory room to establish a learning environment in which tranquillity is maintained and distractions reduced. The limited space and close proximity of teaching spaces on the upper floor impose limitations on the extent to which individual students' occasional outbursts and distracting behaviour can be managed effectively to maintain a calm working environment for all students.

Students make good progress in their moral and social development, with a significant reduction over time in serious incidents. They are increasingly reflective and able to accept personal responsibility for their behaviour. Students report that they feel safe in school and do not experience bullying; they are confident in the alertness and response of staff to any potential incidents which are not allowed to escalate. The school maintains comprehensive records of any incidents and how sanctions are applied; these confirm the students' positive views. Good attendance with little unauthorised absence contributes to the development of personal standards and an acceptance of the culture of the school. Good opportunities, suitably risk assessed, are provided for students to be involved in off-site activities, including the use of sports facilities in the local community and excellent outdoor educational experiences. The staff challenge prejudice and

negative attitudes to differences in the daily life of the school, and the curriculum places a suitable emphasis on students' spiritual and cultural development. Opportunities for students to develop an awareness of different beliefs and cultures are less well developed. Plans are currently being implemented to improve and coordinate this provision across a range of subjects with a clear commitment to ensure that all students develop an appreciation of diversity within the local and wider communities. Students are encouraged to consider their responsibilities to others, to understand the role of public institutions and services and to prepare themselves for life after school. The school ensures that a balanced approach is taken to the presentation and discussion of any politically sensitive issues.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and ensures that all students re-engage with learning and make good progress. All members of staff have a good awareness of students' individual abilities and difficulties with learning. Suitable strategies are used to establish a baseline in students' learning levels on entry to the school and to ensure that appropriate learning opportunities are provided. Lessons across the full range of required areas of learning are planned to an excellent standard with a consistent focus on planning to meet individual needs. In the majority of lessons, students work on individual assignments specifically planned to extend their current levels of attainment. Good relationships between students and adults, sensitivity to individual circumstances, together with a patient and encouraging manner characterise the quality of work in classrooms. Exemplary support is provided to assist students with their individual learning tasks and to ensure that they remain focused and on-task. On occasions, the focus on individual activities inhibits the pace at which lessons proceed and students are not always moved on to new, more challenging learning at the levels of which they are capable. The staff have developed good strategies for developing the learning of those students with complex learning needs. A suitable combination of group activities, together with intensive individual support for individual students, results in a learning environment in which students enjoy their work and are enabled to maintain their concentration.

Teachers make good use of a variety of resources, including the use of laptop computers, but many lessons lack visual impact with limited use of video clips, electronic presentations and the potential of interactive whiteboards. Individual subject teachers make effective use of regular assessment of students' progress and each has an overview of progress in their particular subject. This includes the use of external accreditation at Entry Level and Levels 1 and 2. Recent positive developments are extending the range of available accreditation available to include the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) and GCSE examinations. These are appropriate developments to raise the aspirations of a number of students who have the capability to respond to opportunities which extend their learning further. The school has identified the need to centralise data on students' progress across the full range of subjects and to ensure that standards are compared effectively with national expectations about the rate of progress which is possible even from low starting points.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good and provides a wide range of learning experiences which motivate and interest students enabling them to achieve well. There is appropriate breadth and range in the experiences provided and the number of individual subjects studied. The structure of the curriculum meets the requirements of students' individual statements of special educational needs. Learning in individual subjects is appropriately adapted to take account of gaps and difficulties in students' prior learning and there is a suitable focus on the development of basic skills. Effective, planned experiences in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, are complemented by a range of opportunities to study humanities subjects, art, music, cookery and woodwork. All students also learn French which is imaginatively integrated, for older students, within their cookery lessons. The curriculum is based on sound planning which takes account of suitable schemes of work and the requirements of external

accreditations.

External accreditation is used effectively to reward students' successes and to build their confidence appropriately. There is scope to move some students through the various levels of accreditation more quickly and the school's plans to increase the range of qualifications available have an important part to play in this development. Classrooms provide an inviting and welcoming environment with good use of visual displays, including the celebration of achievement through the presentation of students' work. The use of a sensory room is appropriately integrated into the learning experiences of particular students. There is a good variety of off-site provision, including regular opportunities to take part in a range of sports, together with personal interests such as horse-riding and rock climbing. These experiences are carefully targeted to meet individual needs and interests. Students particularly enjoy the challenge of an annual residential trip to take part in activities in a more challenging physical environment. The school provides suitable careers guidance and transition planning as students progress through Key Stage 4 and post-16 courses. There were no post-16 students on site during the inspection as the small number of older students were engaged in work experience placements and college courses. The school's records demonstrate that older students are mostly well supported in the transition from full-time schooling into their adult lives.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

Arrangements for students' welfare, health and safety are outstanding and ensure that the school provides a safe environment for effective learning. All regulatory requirements are met through the consistent development and implementation of comprehensive policies; good attention to staff training, risk assessment and routine safety checks; and staff awareness of all aspects of safeguarding. All the required checks on the suitability of staff are completed rigorously and entered into a single central register. Staff training for safeguarding, at the required levels, is completed in a timely manner and monitored effectively together with all aspects of staff training and development. Premises and fire risk assessments are completed and used as the basis for regular monitoring and review of safety. Thorough risk assessments are in place for all required activities both in school and off-site. Fire safety routines, including fire evacuations and routine testing of equipment, are monitored and recorded diligently. Students recognise that the school provides a safe environment and that staff ensure excellent levels of supervision. Excellent policies and procedures for the management of behaviour and the prevention of bullying are implemented consistently. All staff take on a wide range of responsibilities and contribute to the high expectations of an orderly community. The school is characterised by happy and open relationships in which students learn to appreciate each other and adults. Good attention is given to the development of healthy lifestyles through cooking healthy meals, regularly engaging in physical activities, and through aspects of the curriculum which deal appropriately with subjects such as personal relationships and the risks associated with substance abuse. Placing authorities express support for the positive routines established in the school.

Leadership and management

Good

The quality of leadership and management is good and this permeates decision-making, the management of behaviour and of the curriculum, and the procedures for monitoring and evaluation. Leaders enable students to achieve well. The staff and proprietors have a shared vision and sense of direction. School leaders have ensured that all regulatory requirements are met. There is clarity about the aims and plans for education and staff are ambitious for the students in their care. Comprehensive policies and procedures have been developed and are kept under suitable review. Student academic outcomes are good and leaders are aware that standards of achievement can be driven forward more rapidly in order to exceed national expectations, despite the difficulties which students present. Behavioural outcomes are good and managed very consistently. Good engagement by students results from the expectations communicated throughout the organisation. Senior leaders and proprietors have a good, realistic understanding of

what needs to be done for future development, as a result of good communication and listening to staff and students. The monitoring of the school is robust and excellent opportunities are provided for staff development. The premises are maintained well and provide a suitable learning environment, although the upper floor in particular feels a little cramped when full and circulation areas are tight. The school provides good information for parents and carers, including detailed annual reports. There is a suitable complaints procedure but this, in common with a number of policies and procedures should be simplified by separating out those aspects which relate specifically to the school from those applicable more widely across the company's care settings. Staff and students value the sense of community within the school and show high levels of commitment. The school has created a secure platform from which to continue to raise standards of achievement for all students.

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

Unique reference number	133640
Inspection number	422757
DfE registration number	810/6004

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.

Type of school	Day special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	8–19 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Joan Appleby
Headteacher	Steve Finney
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£25,000 – £40,500
Telephone number	01482 820112
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