

Holly House Special School

Church Street North, Old Whittington, Chesterfield, S41 9QR

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics because these subjects are taught well.
- Behaviour is good and pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- Skilful support from teachers, teaching assistants and external health professionals help pupils to overcome their emotional difficulties and become confident learners.
- The effective leadership of the headteacher, other leaders and managers, and the governing body has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools. Parents are delighted with the support that the residential provision makes for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not make sufficient use of what they know about what pupils know and can do to set them new work at the correct level of challenge.
- A few pupils in Key Stage 3 do not attend as regularly as they ought.
- Marking of pupils books is thorough but teachers do not always follow up on the points of improvement they give to pupils quickly enough.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed eight lessons taught by five different qualified teachers and an unqualified teacher. All of these lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team. The lead inspector also conducted a detailed work scrutiny in partnership with the headteacher and one of the deputy headteachers. In addition, the lead inspector listened to pupils read in English lessons and across a number of other subjects.
- Meetings were held with staff (including care staff and the school’s cook), pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors examined pupils’ handling and behaviour plans, statements of special educational needs, pupil progress data, attendance data, exclusion data, restraints data and re-integration figures to mainstream schools at the end of Year 9. They also examined teachers’ planning, the school’s improvement plan, monitoring of teaching and learning information, a wide range of policies including the appraisal policy and all safeguarding policies, and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors examined six Ofsted questionnaires completed by staff.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. However, the social care inspector and lead inspector spoke with some parents and carers by telephone. In addition, the inspectors examined the school’s recent parental survey data.

Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael McCleave	Social Care Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school makes provision for pupils with severe behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Almost 50% of the pupils on roll are supported by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs for their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Many have additional complex needs including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, attachment disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, pathological demand avoidance disorder, autistic spectrum disorders and communication and language difficulties.
- Although designated as a mixed gender school, all of the pupils currently on roll are boys.
- Prior to admission, almost all pupils have had a disrupted education and have been excluded from mainstream schools.
- There is a special nurture provision that supports pupils from neighbouring mainstream primary schools who are at risk of permanent exclusion and also recent arrivals into the school who are in the most vulnerable circumstances.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is above the national average. This is the additional government funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals, from service families or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are White British and none speak English as an additional language.
- The school makes residential provision for up to six pupils a night. There is a rotating programme of different pupils on different nights during the week to maximize support for all pupils to benefit from the provision. This provision was inspected as part of this inspection.
- The school does not make use of off-site alternative provision for its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in all subjects by ensuring that:
 - all teachers make effective use of what pupils already know and can do to plan work at the correct level of challenge to move them on more rapidly with new learning
 - all teachers follow through on the comments they make on how pupils can improve their work when they mark their books so as to ensure that pupils make those improvements speedily.
- Improve the attendance at Key Stage 3 by 10% by July 2015 by:
 - establishing the reasons why pupils do not attend regularly through one-to-one discussions with them
 - working with these pupils, their parents and carers, and the education welfare officer from their home area to draw up and implement plans to help pupils improve their attendance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment on entry is different for each pupil. Typically, it is below average because pupils have gaps in their learning. As pupils settle, they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from low starting points. Achievement is good in English and mathematics. Standards are rising but remain below average for most pupils because of their low starting points and complex needs.
- In their first year in this school, most pupils make better than expected progress in reading, comprehension and spelling because of the high quality support they receive. This tapers off for a few pupils by Year 9 because their attendance at school is not as good as it should be.
- The school's progress information, which is rigorously checked by the local authority, and examination of pupils' books demonstrate good progress over time for most pupils in both English and mathematics.
- Occasional glitches occur for certain year groups in mathematics. For example, Year 6 pupils did not achieve as well as they ought to have done in the national mathematics test for 11-year-olds in the summer of 2013. This was because some of them were not as secure in their methods of calculation as they ought to have been. Since September 2013 these pupils (now in Year 7) have received additional support with their number work in mathematics and the gap in their achievement is narrowing significantly.
- Across both key stages most pupils achieve well in English. Most make better than expected progress from their low starting points in this subject. Examination of their English books shows many examples of good quality writing and evidence of good progress over time.
- Pupil premium funding is targeted individually on a pupil-by-pupil basis so as to remove obstacles of disadvantage that would otherwise get in their way of learning. For some it pays for the ingredients they need to participate in food technology lessons and for others to go on residential outdoor activities where they develop new physical skills. Primarily, it is spent on specific literacy and numeracy support for eligible pupils. These pupils make the same good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as those who are not eligible for this funding. Some children looked after by the local authority are among the highest achieving in the school.
- The few minority ethnic pupils receive the same level of support and the same good quality programmes as their peers, and so make the same good progress.
- The most-able pupils achieve so well that by the end of Year 9 they return to mainstream schools and work alongside their peers confidently.
- Progress made by pupils with the most complex mental health needs is variable. Some are enabled, as result of the support they receive, to bounce back from the periods of ill-health they experience and achieve well. This is not the case for all of them.
- The few pupils who lapse into trouble are well supported by the Youth Offending Team. Most successfully turn their lives around and continue with a meaningful education.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their physical and sporting skills. Every pupil participates in sport on a regular basis. Pupils develop the skills required for rock climbing and

kayaking and participate in competitive team games against other schools.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is typically good at both key stages, including in English and mathematics. The senior leadership has an accurate view of the quality of teaching.
- Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. Classroom displays are attractive. Activities are carefully chosen to stimulate pupils' interests as well as develop their skills. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils' learning. These factors contribute successfully to pupils' good enjoyment of, and enthusiasm for, learning.
- Because teaching assistants know individual pupils so well, they are able to manage their behaviour skilfully. On the rare occasions when a few pupils start to lose concentration on their work, teaching assistants swiftly bring them back to purposeful learning.
- Teachers assess pupils carefully when they join the school, including those who enter part way through a key stage, to find out what they know and can already do. This enables teachers to provide tailored support to individual pupils and so successfully speed up their learning of new mathematical skills, and improve their reading and writing.
- The teaching of reading is good across all subjects. Pupils follow recipes accurately when in cooking lessons and are really interested when given the opportunity to follow a bicycle maintenance manual in the workshop. Every day pupils are given the opportunity to read with staff. Those found to be lagging behind are given extra support and so catch up quickly.
- The teaching of writing is good. In a good English lesson in Years 7 and 8, the teacher made learning exciting by getting pupils to draw on the text of a fascinating story they had read to produce creative pieces of writing. At the same time, they were encouraged to focus on improving their grammar.
- Mathematics teaching is equally as good and so pupils learn well in this subject. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils were challenged through effective questioning by the teacher to explain a number of calculations and justify their answers when learning about how analogue and digital clocks work. Similarly, in a good Year 7 mathematics lesson pupils were challenged to remember always to count the underneath side of a three-dimensional shape when describing its properties. By the end of this lesson, every pupil grasped that a net is a two-dimensional template of a three dimensional shape: each student was excited by this moment of discovery in their learning.
- Learning continues to be productive in the evenings for pupils when they stay overnight in the residential accommodation. All activities, such as off-site trips to go skating, promote their reading and problem-solving skills as they work out in small groups how to get to a particular venue.
- Marking of pupils work is thorough and detailed. Pupils are given clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. Occasionally, teachers do not follow up these required improvements quickly enough and this slows pupils' learning.
- In a few lessons, pupils become a little frustrated when they spend too long working on a skill that they have mastered confidently and are ready to move on to new learning. In these lessons the work is too easy for them, yet in a few other lessons the work set is too hard. This occurs

when teachers do not make sufficient use of their knowledge of pupils prior learning to set work for them at the correct level of challenge.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils arriving at Holly House have experienced difficulties in managing their behaviour in their previous schools. Often they have not fully participated happily in learning for a long time.
- Teachers skilfully support pupils in working through their negative feelings about school. A nurture classroom environment helps those pupils who lack confidence when they enter the school. Consequently, most pupils begin to see a purpose in learning and soon want to succeed.
- Parents are full of praise for the way that the school and care staff in the residential provision have turned around their children's attitudes to learning and transformed their behaviour, contributing to positive changes at home as well as in school.
- Pupils greatly appreciate how the school has supported them in managing their feelings of anger. As one pupil said, 'I would not be where I am today if it were not for this school'. Other pupils nodded in agreement. Pupils value the rewards they receive for good behaviour.
- Classrooms are calm and orderly. Pupils respect the school site and look after the high quality displays of their work on show in the corridors. Lunchtimes are happy, family-based occasions where pupils and staff eat together and pupils learn valuable social skills.
- There is a small amount of challenging behaviour on occasions, reflecting the nature of pupils' difficulties. However, instances of bullying and racism are rare. Spontaneous flares of violent aggression are exceptionally rare. Such instances are tackled swiftly and positive outcomes result. Fixed-term exclusions have fallen year-on-year over the past three years, as have the number of physical restraints.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and have immediate access to an adult they trust both in the residential accommodation and while in school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of cyber and prejudiced types of bullying. They know how to keep safe when using a computer and when riding a bicycle. They understand the harmful effects associated with smoking and the misuse of drugs. Older pupils have a clear understanding of the risks associated with unsafe sex.
- Attendance at Key Stage 2 is above that nationally for special schools. That is not the case at Key Stage 3 because of the persistent absenteeism of a few pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good leadership for the school. He has communicated his high expectations to staff and pupils alike. A strong learning culture has been established and all staff have embraced the school's vision of the highest achievement for every pupil.
- Improvement since the last inspection has been good. All leaders have a clear understanding of how to improve the school further and a deep commitment to do so.

- A huge amount has been done, and successfully so, to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' behaviour and achievement since the last inspection. Frequent checks on teachers' work and regular key stage meetings to discuss pupils' progress mean that teachers are held to account for the effect their work has on pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders closely analyse data to make sure all pupils make as much progress as they should. Where necessary, they re-align the support provided to give all pupils equal opportunities and to avoid any possible discrimination.
- Training for teachers has made a valuable contribution to their skills, particularly in the use of questions to deepen pupils' understanding and in the teaching of mathematics. Subject leaders for English and mathematics and the key stage co-ordinators make a good contribution to school improvement.
- The management and co-ordination of work with outside agencies to help remove barriers to learning for pupils with additional needs is good.
- The programmes of work meet pupils' academic and personal needs well. There is a laser-sharp focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. A wide range of interesting activities is provided so as to broaden pupils' horizons and contribute to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Learning is enriched by many trips out and visitors into the school. The 24-hour curriculum makes a valuable contribution to the learning of the pupils who are in residence for part of the week.
- The school makes good use of the primary sport funding to extend the range of activities on offer and provide further coaching for pupils to promote healthy lifestyles, enhance their physical well-being and improve their performance.
- The school works in an effective partnership with parents and carers. Those who spoke with inspectors by telephone are highly thrilled with the way in which the school has helped their children.
- The local authority provides good support for the school and has an accurate view of its effectiveness.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The effectiveness of the governing body has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is now very knowledgeable about the school and has high expectations about its future development. Governors set a positive atmosphere for learning and work ceaselessly to ensure that pupils get the best possible education. Through the committee structure, put in place since the last inspection, governors ask challenging questions of school leaders about pupils' progress.
 - Through regular visits to the school the Chair of the Governing Body collects information directly. This feeds into governors' awareness of the quality of teaching. Governors are crystal clear that only effective teachers are rewarded. There is a clear and agreed approach to check how well the headteacher performs and to set him targets aimed at improving pupils' achievement. Governors know how pupil premium funding is spent and check rigorously on the impact it is having on the progress of pupils for whom it is intended. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively and ensure that the school meets all requirements in the way it safeguards pupils.

Outcomes for residential pupils	are good
Quality of residential provision and care	is good
Residential pupils' safety	is good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	is good

- The residential provision makes a positive impact on improving pupils' social, emotional and educational development.
- Pupils enjoy their residential experience. They participate enthusiastically in a wide range of enjoyable activities such as fell walking, rock climbing, camping and film nights in the residential accommodation. They make good use of the school's gym on the nights they stay in the residential accommodation. Through these pursuits the residential pupils improve their physical fitness.
- As a result of the patience and calm approach taken by the care staff, pupils learn how to modify the way in which they respond to situations that previously they would have reacted to angrily. Because pupils feel valued by the care staff, they develop a tolerant understanding of their peers and other adults.
- Care staff work closely with their school colleagues to ensure a seamless service for the pupils. This ensures that pupils' care and educational needs are met in a consistent way.
- Parents and carers are thrilled with the positive impact the residential provision has on their children. As a consequence of this provision, parents and carers see significant improvements in the self-confidence and behaviour of their children. Parents' comments include 'This is a fantastic school' and 'We cannot thank the teachers and residential staff enough for what they have done for our children'. Teaching and residential care staff communicate effectively with parents and carers to ensure that they are kept fully informed about the progress of their children.
- The residential accommodation is well maintained and provides pupils with a warm, welcoming place to stay. Safety is good. All care staff are well qualified, trained and competent in the management of safeguarding.
- Good quality care plans that provide clear information about the needs of each pupil and how they will be met are in place. They provide clear guidance for care staff to help them best meet the needs of the pupils.

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

Unique reference number	131322
Social care unique reference number	SC056234
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	431174

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.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	7–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Number of boarders on roll	6
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Pacey
Headteacher	Peter Brandt
Date of previous school inspection	30 March 2011
Telephone number	01246 450530
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