

Willow House

Halliwell Homes Education Centre, 120 Stanley Road, Cheadle, Stockport, Greater Manchester, SK8 6RF

Inspection dates	9–10 December 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- Pupils make good progress from low academic starting points. Most pupils have had a disrupted education prior to joining the school.
- Behaviour is good. Teachers manage behaviour very well so that any disruption in lessons is minimised.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly and is now excellent.
- Pupils say they feel safe as a result of the good systems leaders and managers have established to ensure their safety.
- The strong relationships and the emphasis on improving pupils' personal development are highly effective in promoting a positive learning environment.
- Teaching is good and improving. Adults know the pupils well and tailor the curriculum to engage them.
- The school is ably led by a new headteacher who communicates his vision for excellence to staff well.
- Leaders and managers have introduced systems to track pupils' progress and to monitor and improve the quality of teaching. This has had a direct impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders and managers ensure that all independent school standards are well met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not of a consistently high enough quality to ensure outstanding progress. Not all teachers and teaching assistants are fully involved in the performance management systems.
- The middle leader is not yet involved in the systems set up to evaluate the quality of teaching.
- Teachers do not receive individual targets to improve their practice or share good practice with others

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 one day's notice.
- The inspector observed lessons taught by three teachers. The inspector also looked at pupils' work with pupils and considered the case studies of four pupils.
- The inspector spoke to all the teachers, the headteacher, the lead teacher and pupils past and present. Responses from Ofsted's staff and pupil questionnaires were also taken into account. There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's on-line Parent View questionnaire to be considered.
- A number of documents were studied including schemes of work, school development plans, policies and school records of behaviour and incidents.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.

Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Willow House is an independent school which is owned and managed by Halliwell Homes. Attached to the school is Ivy Cottage Residential School which provides care for the pupils who currently attend the school.
- The school provides education for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties including those placed in a residential setting. It is registered to take a maximum of 15 girls and boys aged between 4 and 18 years. The school aims to reintegrate pupils to mainstream education within a two year period.
- Older pupils use local facilities for physical education.
- This is a small school. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils currently on roll are in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. One of the pupils joined the school two days prior to the inspection starting.
- The school was last inspected in June 2011. There has been a new headteacher appointed since the previous inspection. The headteacher is also the headteacher of the company's other schools.
- There is lead teacher who undertakes a middle leadership role.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the impact that leadership and management has on the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - including all teachers and teaching assistants in the process of monitoring and developing the quality of teaching and ensuring all teachers and teaching assistants have individual targets which are drawn from this monitoring and checks on pupils' progress
 - providing opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to share good practice
 - strengthening the role of the middle leader so that they are also making checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a clear vision for improvement and high expectations and these are communicated clearly to all staff.
- The headteacher has quickly established good performance management systems to monitor the work of the lead teacher. This has had a direct impact on the improvements made in teaching and learning. Pupils' progress is meticulously tracked every half term and carefully evaluated. Good links are made with all agencies and parties involved in the pupils' progress that ensure pupils' emotional wellbeing. Annual written reports and reports on pupils' welfare are thorough.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and all leaders and managers have a very clear idea of what the school needs to do to improve. The expectations are high and timescales for improvement are clearly stated and regularly reviewed.
- The school aims to reintegrate pupils into mainstream education within a two year period. The school is exceeding this target with the current average time of 10 months.
- The curriculum and schemes of work are well-planned by the lead teacher to ensure the curriculum is appropriate and engaging for the pupils on roll. The curriculum is enhanced by trips such as the one to Bramhall Hall and using the extensive grounds to take part in gardening activities. The curriculum also encourages pupils to plan their own events such as fundraising for cancer research. In food technology lessons pupils baked cakes and to raise money for charity.
- The curriculum ensures pupils become knowledgeable about different beliefs and cultures. The lead teacher uses personal experiences such as attending a Hindu wedding to prompt discussions with people of different religions to teach pupils tolerance and respect for the beliefs of others. Pupils learn about British institutions such as the Houses of Parliament, so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Carefully planned personal, social and health education lessons promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Lessons take place which teach pupils about valuing the opinion of others and how their actions affect others.
- The school's ethos of promoting good personal development means that equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted well. Any discrimination is tackled effectively.
- All staff are well trained and all are expected to complete a foundation degree course. This course complements the school's, 'Pillars of Parenting' ethos, which sets out to improve pupils' personal development. All staff feel well supported and appreciate the high level of training that they receive.
- The headteacher regularly monitors the quality of the lead teacher's teaching. Currently the quality of teaching of all teachers and teaching assistants is not being as carefully monitored. Middle leaders do not yet take part in any of the monitoring of teaching and learning on a formal basis. At the moment these observations do not lead to individual targets being set for teaching staff to improve their own performance.
- Teachers do not yet get the opportunity to share good teaching through discussion or observation.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

Regular meetings are held with the proprietors who support and challenge the headteacher by raising questions about the school development plan and the school's performance including outcomes for pupils. These meetings and regular sharing of information about the headteacher's careful monitoring means that the proprietors are very knowledgeable about the quality of teaching, performance management and the improvements made.

The proprietors support the school well with comprehensive training programmes for all staff and, alongside the headteacher, ensure all regulations are met. Financial accounting is secure and accounting requirements to the local authority are met.

The proprietors and headteacher make certain that the independent school standards are met and ensure their continued compliance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good. Teachers' management of behaviour is very skilled. The positive and calm school atmosphere is a real strength of the school in a situation where pupils' behaviour has the potential to be

volatile. Incidents of disruptive behaviour reduce while students are at the school and as a result they can be reintegrated into mainstream education.

- Any impact of inappropriate behaviour on learning is minimised because staff know the pupils well. Adults quickly change the group dynamics and move pupils to different classrooms if this means that behaviours can be quickly addressed and learning resumed. Relationships between adults and pupils are good.
- Behaviour incidents are carefully recorded and monitored. The improvement in pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils learn to apologise and be responsible for their own behaviour.
- Pupils are proud of how their behaviour has improved. Pupils also comment on how they like the school and how they like to wear the uniform.
- Attendance is excellent and the improvement for the majority of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are all aware of the system for rewards and sanctions. These are used well by adults during the day to support positive behaviour.
- Pupils use the quiet room very effectively as a way to control their own behaviour. Staff encourage them to use this room when they feel they need time to reflect or remove themselves from a potentially difficult situation. Pupils say it is a comfortable and safe place to be.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and the good relationships mean they say they are comfortable to speak to adults if they have any concerns.
- Pupils are very aware of how to keep themselves safe when not in school, such as when using the internet. They are also made aware of what is right and wrong and that they have the choice to say no, when appropriate.
- The school carries out the appropriate checks when recruiting all staff to ensure that pupils are safe. Pupils are well supervised at all times; there is a ratio of one member of staff to each child. Extra adults are always close by if needed. Leaders and managers review policies annually to ensure they are appropriate and effectively implemented to keep pupils safe.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good; pupils are engaged in their learning and make good progress.
- The lead teacher plans for all the lessons delivered to pupils. This is effective because these plans are communicated to the other teachers and teaching assistants clearly.
- Planning, which is followed carefully by staff, ensures that the different academic needs of the pupils are met. All adults know the pupils exceptionally well which enables them to effectively support their learning and maintain their engagement in activities.
- The teaching of literacy is good. Pupils work on daily literacy tasks which are planned to meet their exact needs. A range of literature and the topics covered encourages pupils to read widely and confidently. Progress in reading for many pupils is outstanding.
- Mathematics activities engage pupils and help them learn. Teachers question skilfully and pose complex mathematical problems.
- The range of activities such as computer work, food technology and visits enable pupils to gain a range of skills to support them in the next stage of their education. The depth and range of curriculum activities and the learning attitudes developed prepare pupils well for their reintegration to mainstream education.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons. Teachers are consistent in their calm, yet firm and positive approach. This approach quickly deflects potentially disruptive behaviour.
- Teaching assistants are well used to support learning. They are quick to adapt to changing situations and support good progress.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good as clear systems are in place. Pupils' work is always marked. Pupils gain very valuable feedback from teachers in lessons; they told the inspector about how teachers help them improve their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From low starting points, and a history of disrupted education, pupils make good progress in the short time they spend in the school. Good planning and highly individualised teaching supports this good progress.
- Attainment is below that of other pupils nationally, however, school data show that the gap is closing

quickly and some pupils reach standards that exceed that of other pupils of the same age in other schools.

- All pupils currently on roll in the school have a statement of special educational needs. Their needs are met well. Regularly reviewed individual education plans and regular progress review meetings ensure any pupil whose progress is in danger of slowing is quickly identified and effective action is taken. Staff who are involved in daily handover meetings between the education and residential provision for the pupils monitor any difficulties in learning that may arise from their emotional needs. This highly individualised care promotes good progress.
- More-able pupils make good progress as expectations are high and the work set makes them think hard. More-able pupils are very aware of the level they have achieved and what they have to do to get to the next level.
- The school ethos of supporting personal development promotes a positive attitude to learning that enables pupils to make progress where they previously struggled to do so.
- Progress in literacy is at least good and is often outstanding. Daily literacy lessons support good and better progress. Regular use of information technology for research purposes encourages good progress in literacy in particular. Pupils read well and confidently. Although presentation of work varies it is generally good and for some pupils it is exceptionally neat.
- Although progress in mathematics is good it is not quite as strong as in literacy. A published scheme is used effectively to make sure that work is set at the right level. Practical equipment and problem solving exercises are used well to support and reinforce the skills and knowledge learnt.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	136230
Social care unique reference number	SC008488
Inspection number	446247
DfE registration number	356/6035

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as inserted 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 school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	3
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Halliwell Homes
Chair	Karen Mitchell-Mellor/Andrew Constable
Headteacher	Mathew Hargreaves
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£19,500
Telephone number	0161 498 9852
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