

Woodlands School

The Woodlands, Church Lane, Edenfield, BL0 0QL

Inspection dates 18–20 November 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 experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties and have had difficult previous school experiences. Pupils' attendance here is excellent and they are able to learn and make progress.
- Teaching is good and is well focused to develop pupils' literacy, communication and mathematical skills. Pupils make good academic progress in relation to their starting points and achieve well.
- Pupils' progress is checked on a regular basis and interventions are reviewed to enhance further progress.
- Strong teamwork contributes to a nurturing and caring environment. All staff know the pupils very well and are very sensitive to the needs of all pupils.
- Leaders and managers are ambitious to create a positive school environment where pupils can progress exceptionally well both personally and academically.
- Leaders and managers have established the school well in a short period of time. They ensure that pupils' behaviour and safety are good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Behaviour and attitudes in school are not yet outstanding. Induction procedures for new staff and ways to help them develop their skills in improving pupils' behaviour are not yet fully embedded.
- Learning resources do not always excite and attract pupils' interest in learning so that they are motivated to achieve outstandingly.
- Marking in pupils' workbooks does not always tell them how well they are doing and the next steps to take in order to improve.

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 schools standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed seven lessons, taught by three teachers, looked at pupils' work, met with the headteacher and groups of pupils and spoke to staff.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's on-line Parent View questionnaire to be considered. However, responses from pupils and staff questionnaires were taken into consideration.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation including schemes of work, teachers' planning, records of pupils' progress, monitoring reports of teaching, and school improvement plans.
- The inspector checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The school has dual registration as a children's home and an inspection of the care provision took place at the same time, which is reported on separately.

Inspection team

Shellie Barcroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woodlands School is an independent school which opened in December 2013. This is its first inspection.
- The school is owned and managed by Halliwell Homes, which owns residential accommodation for pupils attending its schools, where all the pupils live. The headteacher oversees two of the company's other schools.
- The school provides education for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. It is registered to admit up to nine girls and boys in the age range of six to 14 years. There are currently six pupils on roll, four of whom have a statement of special educational needs. There are no disabled pupils.
- The school is based in a large two-storey, detached house and is situated in a quiet area behind a church in a residential part of Bury in Lancashire.
- The school aims 'to provide the best quality of education and care through a vibrant curriculum which fully prepares children for their future economic well-being and nurtures outstanding personal development'.
- The school's key focus is to reintegrate pupils back in to mainstream education within two years of admission.
- The school uses local sports facilities for physical education and games.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fully embed procedures for the induction of new staff and ensure that they develop the skills needed to improve behaviour to outstanding.
- Ensure that learning resources always excite and attract pupils' interest in activities so that they are motivated to achieve outstandingly.
- Ensure that marking in pupils' workbooks always tell them how well they are doing and indicates the next steps that must be taken in order to improve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The quality of leadership and management is good, resulting in good improvements in teaching and pupil progress since registration.
- The proprietor has ensured all independent school standards are met and policies and procedures are up to date, promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils well. Detailed risk assessments are in place and health and safety checks are completed.
- Leaders and managers have established the school well since registration.
- The school's self-evaluation is detailed and thorough, accurately identifying the strengths and areas needed to improve the school. The headteacher oversees two other schools and is currently developing a new staffing structure, including a middle management tier.
- Monitoring of lessons, planning and marking is carried out well on a regular basis. Regular meetings are carried out with teachers to review and identify new targets to enhance their personal development. Staff feel very well supported and say there are very good opportunities to improve their personal and career development. Teaching assistants are encouraged to do a higher-level course to support their role.
- The staff team at this school are new and are from a variety of educational settings. Most of the team are on a supply contract until the new department structure is agreed. The school has recently developed a clear induction programme for new staff to help them to become familiar with school policies and procedures. Induction procedures also include elements of training in many respects, for instance behaviour management. On-the-job training is provided and this is complemented by external courses. However, induction procedures for new staff and ways to help them develop their skills in improving pupils' behaviour are not yet fully embedded. As a result, staff do not yet possess the skills needed to improve behaviour and attitudes further.
- Leaders have good support from a team of staff, most of whom have been at the school for only a short period of time. The full team are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve their best, particularly in relation to improving their literacy, communication and mathematics.
- The headteacher has high expectations for pupils' academic achievement to enable them to return to mainstream education and not be at a disadvantage. The headteacher and the staff regularly review the interventions which are in place and necessary to help pupils achieve and catch up after a history of disrupted education.
- There is a variety of subjects on offer appropriate to the age range and needs of the pupils. These include academic, technical and sporting opportunities as well as learning about safety matters; all subjects are underpinned by clear schemes of work.
- The school's therapeutic approach to personal development is increasingly helping pupils to settle into school and records show that pupils become more and more focused in their learning as time goes on.
- Leaders have developed generally good opportunities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They recognise that although pupils' moral development is sound, pupils do not always appreciate the impact of their behaviour on others. Clear plans are in place to remedy this.
- All of the requirements regarding complaints procedures and the provision of information for parents, carers and others are met. Parents and carers are kept informed of their child's progress through reports on a half-termly basis and at annual reviews. Other opportunities are offered for parents and carers to speak to teaching staff and look through their child's work.
- **The governance of the school:**

The headteacher has a close working relationship with the proprietors. Proprietors share the headteacher's high expectations and hold the school to account for the quality of its work. The proprietors review the headteacher's evaluation of the school's successes and areas for further improvement. They have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and how well it is improving and contributing to pupils' good achievement.

Regular meetings are held with directors and other heads of services to ensure a systematic approach across all areas of the company to, for instance, the implementation of policies and procedures and reviewing pupil progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good, although their attitudes and conduct in school are not yet consistently

better than this.

- All pupils enter the school with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and exhibit very challenging behaviour. Most pupils who are placed at the school have a history of negative school experiences, having been at high risk of permanent exclusion.
- The school takes pride in being an inclusive school and does not exclude. The pupils have started the school at staggered times throughout the year and more recently there have been new admissions. These pupils are still settling in and routines are not yet fully established. This has caused some unsettlement for all the pupils in the school and there have been some recent incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- Attendance is excellent and staff work hard to promote a positive climate for learning. When pupils are in lessons and focused, good academic progress is made.
- Leaders acknowledge that staff have had insufficient time to fully embed their skills in improving pupils' behaviour further so that it becomes outstanding.
- Although spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally good, pupils' behaviour towards each other is not always as courteous as it could be. Staff supervise the pupils well and work hard to re-engage pupils back into lessons when disruption occurs. Pupils generally respond well to staff.
- Although the current staff team are relatively new to the school, they have established strong teamwork within a short period of time and all staff are highly committed to promoting positive behaviour.
- In the short time the pupils and staff have been at the school, some positive relationships have been built up and staff know the pupils very well. This enables pupils' confidence and self-esteem to develop well.
- Pupils say that they enjoy the enrichment opportunities that are on offer. These include going cycling, trampolining and visits to a castle and the local fire station.
- There is a detailed behaviour policy and a system of rewards and sanctions in place. Implementation is still being embedded and staff are improving in this regard as they develop their skills in managing pupils and using rewards to best effect.
- Pupils learn about different public services and British institutions. Planning ensures that a balanced account of political views and issues is presented to the pupils while in school and when taking part in extra-curricular activities and visits.
- All pupils wear uniform and mostly take pride in their work. Most pupils say that they enjoy school.
- The safety of pupils is good. Scrutiny of work, observations and discussions with the pupils indicate that they are taught about the different forms of bullying and learn how to keep themselves safe. Such issues are taught in personal, social and health education. This is reinforced by trips out and visitors to the school. More recently, pupils have enjoyed a trip to the local fire station and a talk from a police officer.
- Staff are skilled in managing the safety of the environment. The high staffing ratio ensures pupils are supervised well at all times and kept safe when incidents do occur.
- Staff recruitment is good and safeguarding procedures meet requirements well and are effective.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good, resulting in good academic progress, particularly in English and mathematics. On admission to school, each pupil is assessed in their basic skills. Consequently, planning is detailed in order to take account of all pupils' needs. The school also takes advantage of external support to ensure assessment is accurate.
- Planning is personalised and can be adapted for those who are experiencing some difficulties. With highly effective use of teaching assistants and high levels of support, pupils are achieving well over time and making good progress from their individual starting points.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively.
- Good systems are in place for checking the quality of teaching and learning with clear feedback to teachers from the headteacher.
- Teachers' expectations are high and extremely sensitive to the emotional needs of the pupils. Work is generally set at the right level for all pupils in the school with good levels of challenge and questioning. However, activities and resources used do not always excite the pupils enough, secure their full participation and maintain their concentration in lessons. School records indicate that, as a result, progress in lessons is restricted to good rather than outstanding.
- The number of staff supporting lessons is high and positive relationships are being developed well in a short period of time. They support the pupils well in and outside of lessons and their caring and positive manner is key to helping create a positive environment for learning.

- Assessment is good. The school has a clear assessment and marking policy. Pupils' assessment files and workbooks show some good examples of the policy being implemented effectively, however marking does not always inform pupils about how well they are doing and specify the next steps that must be taken in order to improve. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they might over their time in school.
- Provision for careers guidance is available and will be introduced when it is necessary.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The achievement of pupils is good. Most pupils enter the school with below-average levels of attainment for their age. As a result of good teaching, pupils are making good progress and achieving well in relation to their starting points, including those with special educational needs and those of higher ability.
- All pupils with statements of special educational needs have access to the company's educational psychologist and information is used to write robust individual education plans. All staff are aware of these plans and integrate targets into daily lesson planning. Individual education plans are written for all pupils, as the headteacher feels each pupil at the school will benefit from personalised planning.
- The school aims to integrate pupils back into mainstream education and places particular emphasis on improving pupils' progress in English and mathematics. A small number of pupils have already been reintegrated back into mainstream education and applications for more pupils to do so are already underway.
- With the high level of individual support from teachers, pupils are able to develop confidence and work towards closing the gaps from their starting points more rapidly. Each half term, pupils' progress is reviewed, enabling teachers to identify who is achieving better than expected and those who may need extra interventions to help them achieve better. Pupils on roll have been at the school for less than a year and some have exceeded expected rates of progress.
- Pupils are learning well in a variety of subjects, helping them to develop a wide range of skills to help prepare them for transition into mainstream education.
- Each pupil has a reading diary and is encouraged to read, often with individual support if necessary.
- The school ensures that the subjects offered promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination well.
- The school works well with other professionals, including therapists within the company to ensure pupils' current needs are met effectively and good progress is made.
- In its first year of registration, the school has secured good achievement and improvements are being made in pupils' personal development.

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	140486
Social care unique reference number	SC470224
Inspection number	Bury
DfE registration number	447290

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	Independent school for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	6–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Halliwell Homes
Chair	Karen Mitchell-Mellor / Andrew Constable
Headteacher	Mathew Hargreaves
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Annual fees (day pupils)	£19,500
Telephone number	01706 827201
Fax number	Not applicable
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