

Provident House School

C/o Castlecare Education Ltd, The Manor House, Squires Hill, Rothwell, NN14 6BQ

Inspection dates

2–3 June 2015

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.

- Students with histories of disrupted education re-engage with learning in this good and improving school.
- Students make good progress, achieving well from their low starting points. All gain appropriate accreditation that recognises their personal and academic achievement.
- Teaching is good, and as a result students achieve well and continue with their education.
- The safe environment encourages students to transform their previously challenging behaviour.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. In particular it helps students to gain in confidence and self-belief.
- Staff help students to appreciate that in modern Britain many faiths, ethnicities and communities come together to create our democratic society.
- Leadership is focused on raising standards. Leaders monitor teaching and its impact on learning and achievement. They ensure that all the independent school standards are met.
- Governance provides support and challenge. The company provides good opportunities for staff training and development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teachers' expertise and resources do not fully match the age range of the school.
- Plans to introduce arrangements for measuring students' progress are relatively new and it is too early to judge the full impact of this initiative.
- Teachers lack opportunities to work alongside colleagues in mainstream schools to help them to develop their expertise.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule for The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place with one day's notice. Three lessons and an assembly were observed and the inspector spent time talking to school and care staff about how education is supported throughout the day. This included ways in which the company's residential homes work alongside the school.
- Meetings were held with the company's national education manager, with staff in the school and with the manager of one of the three residences where the students live. A telephone discussion was held with the school's executive lead teacher.
- There were no responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey. Instead two of the local authorities who place young people in the local Castlecare residences contacted the inspector. In this way, representative views of carers were gathered and taken into account, since all students are looked after by their local authority.
- The inspector spoke with students to gather their views. Their work was observed in lessons and written work over time was looked at to provide evidence of progress. A detailed case study enabled the inspector to gain a picture of the wider provision and support for students.
- The views of staff were gathered from discussions throughout the inspection and from staff questionnaires.
- The inspector checked compliance with the independent school regulations. He looked at a range of documentation, including data on students' progress, planning and assessment, the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning, and a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Provident House is a small independent school, which is part of the Castlere Group provision. Students travel to school from three of the company's local residences. The provision in these homes did not form part of this inspection and they are separately inspected by Ofsted.
- The school is registered for up to nine male and female students between the ages of eight and 16 years, and currently there are four Key Stage 4 students on roll. Three have statements of special educational needs or an education, health care plan for their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and all four are looked after by their local authority.
- Some local authorities provide pupil premium funding, while others retain it for specific grants for their students, for which the school makes individual claims. This money is additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of their local authority.
- The school was first registered in December 2007 and was last inspected in March 2012.
- At present the school does not use any off-site training and it does not enter students early for examinations.
- There is no middle leadership in the school.
- Since the last inspection a new teacher-in-charge has been appointed and staffing arrangements have changed. Previously there was a single teacher supported by two learning support assistants. There are now two teachers and a single learning support assistant who also has the enhanced role of being the examinations officer since the school became an approved examination centre.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Expand current links with local mainstream schools to provide more training opportunities for staff to collaborate in order to reduce the risk of being isolated in an extremely small school.
- Develop alternative ways of measuring students' achievement and progress in preparation for the ending of National Curriculum levels and descriptors.
- Reduce the age range so that it becomes a secondary school in line with the resources and professional expertise in the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The company's national education manager, who is the designated headteacher, is a frequent visitor to the school. She works effectively with the executive lead teacher, who has responsibility for a group of schools including this one, and with the teacher in charge at Provident House. This system provides effective leadership and direction, focused on continual improvement.
- The headteacher has ensured that all of the independent school requirements are met for the leadership and management of the school's work, so that effective teaching and good behaviour can flourish. The company also provides full details of its safeguarding arrangements and other policies, including the complaints policy, to local authorities at the preliminary stage of them seeking a placement for a student.
- There are extremely close relationships between the school and the managers of the three local Castlecare residences. This ensures strong consistency of practice throughout the whole day in supporting students' education, as well as their behavioural and emotional development.
- Since the teacher-in-charge, the second teacher and the learning support assistant are the only staff at Provident House there are no 'middle leaders', or staff with management responsibilities for specific areas of organisation or teaching. The three employees work together as an effective team to ensure the smooth running of the school.
- Teaching is good, supported by effective leadership. There are good arrangements for monitoring teaching and planning. In turn, this supports the company's arrangements for setting targets for staff and the management of staff performance. Since the last inspection, only teachers with qualified teacher status are employed. They are not yet employed on teachers' pay and conditions and the company is still exploring creating a direct link between performance and pay. Clear annual objectives help meet the school's needs as identified through effective self-evaluation, which it uses to identify priorities for moving forward. The objectives also provide opportunities for staff to develop their personal expertise.
- The range of subjects taught is based on the National Curriculum; there are also opportunities for students to undertake work-related courses at Key Stage 4. Teaching is effective in supporting students' personal development to become re-engaged in learning. They especially enjoy the increasing opportunities for project and topic work. Since this provides opportunities to introduce elements of English and mathematics into a wider context, it strengthens and reinforces students' progress in these key areas. With very small numbers it is possible to ensure every student has an individual programme that meets their needs and helps them to reach their full potential.
- Citizenship is taught and can lead to accreditation. It helps students to develop positive attitudes towards the rule of law and towards accepting ideas and beliefs different to their own. Students also learn to appreciate the importance of being active members of the community and British society in order to make a positive contribution to life in modern Britain.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students receive strong support in developing greater self-confidence and self-belief. They develop skills such as collaboration, sharing and accepting that the views of others can be as equally valid as their own.
- The school is currently registered to take students from the age of eight, although no Key Stage 2 pupils have been admitted. The expertise of staff and the school's resources are focused on secondary-aged students, creating the possibility of a mismatch in provision should a younger child be admitted.
- The close focus on ensuring that the needs of each student can be met creates a clear commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and tackling discrimination. Careers advice and guidance are provided for all students. A testament to the success of the school is that the majority of students stay in education, moving on to college at the end of Year 11. They receive good support from care as well as education staff to enable this move to be successful.
- Care is taken to ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet legal requirements. They are implemented rigorously to seek to ensure the safety of very vulnerable young people. Arrangements for the appointment of staff are equally rigorous and in line with requirements.
- Links with the local authorities who place students in the children's homes are strong and they speak highly of the provision made for their young people. The close collaboration between education and care staff is rightly valued because of the consistency of expectation it provides. The local authorities appreciate the high quality of information provided at strategy meetings, reviews and other events. This allows local authorities to monitor the progress of their young people effectively. It is also clear that the views of students are taken into account when any decisions are made. Equally effective links with health and social care professionals ensure that students are well supported in their wider lives.
- The school premises support effective teaching and learning, while the good range of resources, including

computers, helps students to become active learners. All required information is available to local authorities seeking to place students. This includes clear and comprehensive information on safeguarding policies and arrangements, which, in the absence of a specific website for this individual school, is given in hard copy at an early stage in the process that might lead to a placement being made.

■ The governance of the school:

Staff are held to account for all aspects of their work by the company's senior leadership. This effectively supports the good achievement of the students and the delivery of effective education. Monthly reports ensure that senior leaders are aware of the quality of teaching and learning, and understand the performance data about students' progress. The company is committed to continuous improvement, while at the same time care is taken to ensure that careful financial management underpins the quality of provision. A senior director has specific responsibility for safeguarding, ensuring that legal responsibilities are all met and that staff training is of high quality. The national education leader ensures that challenging annual objectives are set for school leaders, for which they are held to account.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. When they first arrive they display extremely challenging behaviour allied to wider social and emotional difficulties. On occasions, this remains the case but carefully developed individual behaviour plans are implemented consistently by education and care staff. This supports rapid improvement in students' behaviour, although sometimes short-term placements mean that students do not gain the full benefit. This is why behaviour is not outstanding.
- During their time at the school, students are increasingly able to take decisions for themselves and to realise the consequences and impact of inappropriate behaviour on other people. No students have been excluded, in line with company policy. The good condition of the school's premises and resources reflects students' increasing respect for their surroundings and for each other.
- Students form strong relationships with education and care staff, who show empathy for the students; this leads to the development of mutual respect. At the same time staff act as very positive role models from whom students can learn to improve their own behaviour.
- Staff have high expectations, yet when students fall short of these on occasions there is no condemnation. At the same time, students are not allowed to slip back and support is always there for them. There is an expectation that, just as their engagement with learning will strengthen over time, so their social and emotional development will enable them to become positive members of their community. Since their special educational needs are the result of behavioural and emotional, rather than learning difficulties, this supports students in being able to progress towards their full learning potential. For most, this sees them successfully re-engaging with learning and going on from school to college.
- Policies and procedures prohibit the promotion of extremism and political views, so that the relevant independent school standards are met.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and meet all legal requirements. All staff have regular, accredited training in fire safety, first aid, child protection and in the use of physical restraint. The latter is only used in situations when there is a risk to the safety of other students or staff. Carers and students themselves believe this is a safe place.
- Serious or racist incidents and the use of restraint are all logged carefully. The school and the organisation analyse these incidents to look for any triggers or patterns and to see if there are lessons to learn that might reduce such incidents in future. Over time, incidents reduce as students settle into life in residence and school, adopting a more positive approach to their lives.
- Risk assessments of the school site, places where a visit is planned and of the students themselves are detailed and logged carefully. The company has central staff who work alongside its schools and homes to ensure compliance with all health and safety legislation and help to ensure that all regulations are met.
- The different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, are studied as part of the personal, health and social education programme. Students have a good understanding of what bullying is and why it is wrong. At the same time, very effective monitoring of students and their behaviour means that it is not a problem during the school day. When incidents do occur, staff deal with them quickly and effectively.
- Students' respect and courtesy towards others increase over time, supported by the example set by all adults. As a result, over time there is a clear reduction in the use of derogatory and abusive language.

The school is a positive community where people generally get on together well. At the same time care is taken to ensure that any visitors are suitable, so they are checked and monitored.

- Punctuality is good since students are driven to school by care staff from the homes. While most students show improved attendance over time, there are a few who do not fully appreciate the importance of good attendance, despite the best efforts of staff. With such small numbers this has a clear impact on attendance rates.
- The headteacher has ensured that all the requirements for the independent school standards for welfare, health and safety are met.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection because of the move to employ only staff who are qualified teachers. This was further supported by the appointment of a second teacher at the expense of a learning support worker post. It has led to greater challenge for students in their learning. Given that all of the students are disadvantaged and have special educational needs, they are now more stretched academically than was previously the case.
- The range of opportunities for accreditation now includes higher grade GCSE examinations. These can now be taken at the school since it has become a recognised examination centre, with the learning support assistant becoming the examinations officer.
- All of the regulations relating to the quality and impact of teaching are met. Staff make an effective team, supporting each other, planning effectively and delivering lessons that inspire students to become learners after years of having failed within the education system. Staff ask a wide range of questions and students respond positively. This not only allows teachers to measure students' understanding, it also supports students in expressing their thoughts and ideas, which in turn helps them to gain in confidence.
- Planning is good and with such small numbers it allows for individualised teaching. In this way the needs of each student can be addressed and the level of academic challenge adjusted to ensure that every student is fully stretched. If necessary, members of the care staff can work alongside the education team when an activity, or an individual student facing difficulties, needs a higher staffing level.
- At the same time, the school is extremely small and staff run the risk of professional isolation. Links with a local mainstream secondary school are developing but do not currently provide for training and development opportunities, or for staff to meet with other educational professionals at a local level. This makes it harder to further develop their skills and effectiveness, or to have a local forum for professional dialogue.
- There is a good focus on the key skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics. Staff have started to look at different ways to further engage students where they can apply these core skills in a range of different contexts.
- Emotional, as well as academic, progress is good. The progress students make in these areas is measured regularly and is supported by the close working relationship between school and the residences. This creates consistency of practice and expectation throughout the whole day.
- There are high expectations and strong support for students so that learning becomes the norm in their eyes. They enjoy learning, encouraged by the success they start to gain. Teaching is consistently good in the key areas of reading, writing and mathematics and opportunities are taken to teach these across the whole range of subjects and topics that are covered.
- Work is marked regularly and where appropriate contains advice for improvement as well as praise for good work.
- Teachers are aware of the progress and current levels of their students. These have been measured using the National Curriculum levels and descriptors of what could be achieved at each level. However, plans to introduce new arrangements for measuring students' progress are at a comparatively early stage, once the national levels disappear.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Previously disrupted histories of education mean that when students join the school their attainment is low. The same is true of their confidence as learners, since they have experienced many previous failures. The strong support they get from education and care staff helps them to transform their attitudes to learning. Over time they start to experience success and it is the expectation that at the end of Year 11 all will have gained external examination success relevant to their needs and will be able to go on to gain

further success at college.

- Part of the reason for their re-engagement with learning is a focus on helping students to improve their reading skills. Funding has enabled the number of available reading books to be increased. In addition, there is now a strong focus on developing students' skill in using phonics (connecting sounds with letters) to support those with the weakest reading skills. This has seen standards in reading rise steadily since the last inspection.
- Careful checks on students' ability levels are made when they join the school. Progress is then measured from their low starting points, showing that students make good progress in English and mathematics.
- In a school where every student is disadvantaged and has special educational needs, attainment and progress are improving rapidly compared to similar students nationally. With only four students on roll, the school looks carefully at, and focuses on, their individual progress. Numbers are too small for any meaningful analysis to be considered but individual success is rightly celebrated.
- Staff ensure that the most able students are challenged in their learning. This is reflected in the school becoming a recognised GCSE examination centre. Also, there is a realisation that the most able students can go on to obtain good quality GCSE grades and gain access to more challenging college courses.
- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards relating to students' achievement are met.

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.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	135456
Inspection number	462885
DfE registration number	938/6001

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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	Special school – behavioural, emotional and social difficulties
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Castlecare Group
Headteacher	Marion Paige
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 March 2012
Annual fees (boarders)	£174,453–£215,124
Telephone number	01536 711111
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