

Doulton House

Main Street, Anwick, Sleaford, NG34 9SJ

Inspection dates

1–3 July 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
Sixth form provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This is a good school

- The headteacher and head of children's services have ensured that all the independent school standards are met and the quality of teaching is good. As a result, students' learning is good and they make good progress.
- Checks on teaching are rigorous and are making sure that good teaching is enabling students to achieve well.
- The headteacher has developed strong team work among staff in creating a strong culture for learning, good behaviour and well-being.
- Students make good progress in their behaviour and develop good attitudes to learning. For most, attendance improves well as they successfully re-engage with learning.
- The school's work to ensure the safety of students is good.
- Teachers have high expectations for learning; they maintain good relationships with students and manage behaviour well. Consequently, students want to learn and achieve well.
- Teaching assistants work well with teachers to manage students learning and behaviour effectively.
- Students make good progress in all subjects. A significant number of students make outstanding progress in mathematics, art and music. Most students make at least good progress towards their examination courses and are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. Teaching and the curriculum are good, enabling students to make good progress. Students benefit from good support and guidance and their behaviour and safety are good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not record the progress students are expected to make when assessing their learning on entry to school.
- Teachers do not always inform students of how to improve their learning, especially in their use of English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Partnerships are not always effective enough to improve the attendance of the very few students who refuse to attend school.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited five lessons, three of these jointly with the headteacher, to see the impact of teaching on students' learning. All staff were seen teaching.
- The inspector looked at samples of students' work across the school, with staff, including that in the sixth form.
- The inspector took account of the school's survey of carers as there were too few responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents, to be taken into account. He also looked at the questionnaire responses from staff.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, staff, the head of children's services (who represents the proprietor), and a group of students.
- The inspector looked at the company's website, as the school does not have its own website. He also checked that the required information, including a compliant safeguarding policy, for parents, carers and others, was made available on request.
- The activities to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards included the scrutiny of a range of school documentation and their effective implementation. These included: records of behaviour and attendance figures; safeguarding policies and risk assessments; the school summary self-evaluation and school development plan; and records of students' progress over time across the school, including the sixth form.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Doulton House School is a special school for a maximum of 20 girls and boys, between the ages of 11 and 18 years, with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- There are currently nine girls on role between the ages of 14 and 18 years of age and no boys. All are highly vulnerable. All have histories of poor attendance and many have been out of full-time education prior to being placed at Doulton House.
- All students have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. All students are looked after children by various local authorities.
- Most students are White British and none speak English as an additional language.
- The school, which is owned by InMind Children's Services, opened in September 2014. This is its first inspection.
- The school aims to provide each student with a personal education programme to enable them to achieve their potential and to prepare them for the next stage of their lives when they leave school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure that teachers:
 - record the progress each student is expected to make when assessing their learning on entry to school
 - always inform students how to improve their learning, especially in their use of English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Develop more effective partnerships to ensure the best support for students' attendance at school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and head of children's services are committed to developing the school. They make sure that the quality of education, including teaching and students' progress is good, and that all the independent school standards are met. The headteacher has developed strong teamwork with staff; staff morale is high and carers have confidence in the work of the school.
- The school has implemented a new system for managing the performance of teachers. The impact is already evident in ensuring good teaching and learning across the school, including in the sixth form.
- In such a small school, the work of subject leadership is covered by the English teacher and the mathematics teacher. They are developing the curriculum well and are making a good contribution to the school's evaluation of its own work with their subjects. They are using the outcomes to influence priorities for further development. Leadership of the sixth form is good. As a result, teaching is good and students' make good progress.
- The school's view of itself is accurate and the information is used well to set clear priorities for development.
- Systems for tracking the progress of student's learning are in place and based on examination grades. The school ensures that the attainment of all students in reading, comprehension and mathematics is assessed on entry to the school. However, staff do not record the expected levels of progress students should be making based on these initial assessments.
- The school's curriculum is tailored to the individual needs of each student. It is broad and balanced. The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations. All students are well prepared for life beyond school as they follow a range of examination course matched to their needs. All students, including Sixth form students, benefit from an individual programme of work-related learning and careers advice, enabling them to make appropriate choices when they leave school. The school makes good use of local facilities, such as the gym and leisure centre, for physical education.
- Staff promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are many opportunities for reflection. Each student reflects on what went well and what could be improved during discussions that are held the daily. Moral development is promoted well through topics in the comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education, such as the dangers of drug abuse. There are good opportunities to promote social development through turn-taking and group activities, such as singing and playing keyboards and guitars in music. Students increase their awareness of different religions and cultural traditions through, for example, topics on Buddhism.
- The school promotes British values well. Students are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Work in students' books shows that they learn about parliamentary democracy, respect for the law and tolerance of those from different back grounds. Students have carefully considered the extremist views of terrorists, the impact of war in Afghanistan, and looked at the valuable contributions of peacemakers such as Ghandi and Mandela, and the difference that they made to their countries during their lifetimes.
- The headteacher and staff have created an ethos of good learning, behaviour and teaching. This means that, as soon as students begin to attend school, they re-engage with learning quickly and their behaviour improves. However, the proprietors' work with others is not ensuring regular attendance for a very few students who refuse to attend school and this affects the progress they are making.
- The school promotes equality and diversity effectively. It ensures all students who attend school make good progress and it fulfils its duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. All students who regularly attend school are making equally good progress. There are no recorded incidents of harassment and good relationships between students are promoted well by staff.

- Leaders ensure that all the statutory requirements for safeguarding are met. Rigorous procedures are in place to check the suitability of staff and visitors to work with students. All staff have completed effective induction training, including in safeguarding and child protection. All training in child protection is up to date. Potential risks to student's safety in school and on educational visits are thoroughly assessed.

■ The governance of the school:

The head of children's services represents the proprietors in supporting and challenging the work of the school. He visits the school at least three times per week and has a thorough and accurate view of the quality of teaching and the impact this has on students' learning.

He uses assessment information well to hold the school to account for the progress individual students are making and to shape the school's priorities for development.

The head of children's services has implemented appropriate procedures for managing the headteacher's performance and ensures this is linked to the management of teachers' performance.

The proprietors ensure that all legal requirements of safeguarding are met, through, for example, the regular review and update of policies and procedures to promote the welfare and interest of students. However, they are not ensuring that carers are supporting the school's efforts well enough in promoting good attendance.

They are ensuring that the school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development effectively, including British values, and that procedures are in place to tackle any form of extremism, should it occur.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. They make good progress in improving their behaviour and nearly all make good progress in their attendance as they re-engage with learning when they enter school. A very small number of students refuse to attend school, due to severe emotional trauma, which limits their progress.
- Staff provide good role models for students' behaviour and implement the systems of rewards and sanctions well. They maintain good relationships with students, who respond positively to the management of their behaviour. Students agree that behaviour improves during their time in school.
- Staff promote a positive atmosphere for learning and good behaviour in their classrooms, celebrating student's achievements and providing good levels of encouragement and support.
- Students take a pride in their work and achievements, displaying good attitudes to learning. They listen carefully to others in lessons and follow instructions. Their work is neatly presented. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are not outstanding because sometimes low level disruption occurs and students dis-engage with learning.
- Students show respect towards others and are courteous and polite to visitors. Their good behaviour and attitudes have a positive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Sixth form students behave well and have positive attitudes to learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students' safe and secure is good. The grounds and premises are safe and secure. Students say they feel safe in school. There have been no incidents of students going missing from school; staff are rigorous in their supervision of students and in establishing the expectations for staying in school. Students are encouraged to use computers safely and staff are vigilant in ensuring their safe use.
- Students say they feel safe in schools and staff and carers agree. Staff implement safeguarding procedures well, and are fully trained in first aid and the use of physical restraint.

- Staff provide high levels of supervision and join in with students' activities, such as guitar playing and singing throughout the day. Bullying is rare and when it occurs it is dealt with effectively by staff. The headteacher ensures that all staff are kept up to date with training, including reading the latest guidance on safeguarding.
- Robust procedures are in place to put in place to avoid potential risks to students in school and when they are on school trips.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have high expectations for learning in all subjects they teach, especially in music, art and mathematics. They constantly provide feedback to students on how well they have done and how they can improve their work further to reach a higher grade. As a result, students reach high levels of performance in music and are entered for GCSE English, art and mathematics as soon as they are ready.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to students during lessons, helping the teacher to manage students' learning and behaviour well. They clarify students' misunderstandings and carefully explain the meaning of technical words. This enables students to focus on their learning in all lessons.
- Good teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy enables students to make rapid progress in English and mathematics. Staff make good use of resources, such as laptop computers, to enable students to research topics and to present their work. This helps ensure that students are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for independent living.
- Teachers make good use of assessment in planning sequences of lessons based on students' previous learning, to ensure they make good progress. Teachers carefully track students' progress towards their examination courses. They assess students' attainment on entry, although they do not record the progress pupils are expected to make when they are initially assessed.
- Teachers' marking is usually good. Teachers provide good feedback to students on how well they are doing, which students say is helpful to them. However, very occasionally they do not always inform students how to improve their work, particularly in how to improve their English grammar, punctuation and spelling in their written work.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment below those expected for their age, due to their histories of dis-engagement with learning, prior to admission. They make good progress from their different starting points because staff provide a positive ethos to promote good learning and behaviour in lessons. This enables students to re-engage with learning quickly.
- Students make good progress in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics because they are given appropriately challenging targets in the initial stages to develop these skills effectively. Students with disabilities and those who have special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates.
- Students make good progress in their examination courses and a significant number make outstanding progress in mathematics and art, where they are on course to achieve the nationally expected grades from below average starting points on entry. Teachers enter students for entry-levels courses and functional skills courses in English to prepare them for GCSE at a later stage.
- A small number of students make outstanding progress in music and have learned to play the guitar skilfully in a short period of time in school. They have written their own songs and composed their own music, taking pride in performing confidently in front of an audience. As a result they have been supported to study music at a higher level in a college of further education in September.

- The very few most able students make equally good progress as their classmates. Occasionally these students are not given hard enough work. This holds back their work in GCSE English, in particular.
- Students work in their books and on display shows that they are making good progress in all areas of learning. Their art sketch books show they are using a variety of media to produce portraits in the style of other artists, as well as graffiti art. Much of their written work is word processed and displays show that students are making good use of multi-media presentations, including downloading clip art and images, to bring their writing to life. Photographs of their work in food technology show how they prepare a variety of foods with great skill and enjoyment. Students' workbooks in English and mathematics are well presented and show how quickly they acquire new knowledge and are developing their skills in these subjects.

The sixth form provision is good

- Good leadership has ensured that teaching in the sixth form is good. This ensures that the very few students who attend the sixth form make good progress in their learning; their well-being and safety are promoted well. Staff provide individual learning programmes, including academic subjects, vocational training, careers guidance, and work-related learning for each student. Staff take account of students' interests and chosen career pathways when they leave school.
- Teachers have the same high expectations for learning for sixth form students as they do in the rest of the school. As a result, the quality of teaching is good which enables students to make good progress in their examination courses and prepare them well for independent living and for transfer to further education.
- Students' behaviour is good; they all attend regularly and they have positive attitudes to learning. They are very clear about the courses they wish to follow when they leave school and have already been accepted for places in colleges of further education from September 2015.
- Staff ensure that students are safe during activities in school and off the school site. They closely monitor attendance and behaviour, manage potential risks well and ensure high levels of supervision when appropriate.

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 GOV.UK website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-association-independent-school-inspection-handbook.

School details

Unique reference number	141490
Inspection number	462987
DfE registration number	925/6006

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	Day special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	8
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	1
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	InMind Children's Services Ltd
Chair	Simon Reynolds
Headteacher	Mary Pearce
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Annual fees (day pupils)	£60,000
Telephone number	01526 832086
Fax number	N/A
Email address	marypearce@childreninmind.org.uk

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