

# Fullerton House School

Off Tickhill Square, Denaby, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN12 4AR

**Inspection dates** 17–19 November 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Since their recent appointments, school leaders have brought about improvement at a fast pace. For example pupils' attendance has risen by 20% in the last six months to a level that is slightly higher than the national average. In partnership with directors they have set ambitious targets for future improvement.
- Teachers and tutors plan exciting and interesting learning activities for pupils which matches their individual needs well. Regular checks are carried out on how much pupils have learnt and this information is used to plan future learning.
- Pupils who attend the school often have very high levels of need associated with autistic spectrum disorder. Many have gaps in their past education. The calm and caring ethos within the school enables them to settle, and over time enables them to make considerable gains in their personal development, behaviour and self-esteem.
- Pupils say they feel safe and happy in school. Their regular attendance and punctual arrival are testament to this. The typically close relationships between staff and pupils ensure that they all know where to turn if a problem arises.
- The school's curriculum promotes British values effectively. Through, for example, conservation work undertaken within the community, pupils learn how to work together and respect others.
- Pupils make good progress socially, emotionally and academically. The vast majority make good and better progress in English and mathematics, often from low starting points.
- Although the school does not have a separate sixth form, a proportion of learners are aged between 16 and 19. These learners work alongside others in classes where pupils are grouped according to learning needs rather than age. Overall this group make good progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The more-able pupils make less progress in English than in mathematics because they do not have sufficient opportunity to practise their writing skills by undertaking longer pieces of work.
- The care home staff who support pupils in the classroom lack sufficient training on how to improve pupils' learning.
- Some written policies do not outline required actions in sufficient detail and are not unique to the school.

### Compliance with regulatory requirements

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

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of more-able pupils in English by offering more opportunities for them to undertake longer pieces of writing.
- Improve training opportunities for care staff who work in classrooms in order that they are able to support pupils' learning more effectively.
- Ensure that all policies are bespoke to the school and detail required actions accurately.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school leadership team has ensured that all independent standards are met.
- The newly appointed head of education, and the general manager, have together brought about change at a fast pace. Their clear focus on improvement has seen pupils' progress rise as a direct result of the close checks they carry out on the quality of teaching.
- School leaders know their school well, and their evaluation of what needs to be improved is accurate. They have developed a clear action plan for the next phase in the school's development.
- The curriculum is carefully matched to the needs of all learners. The school takes a bespoke approach which ensures that individual learning is planned for all pupils, and is delivered within a class setting which is designed to increase pupils' social skills.
- The head of education has high expectations for all pupils and has recently increased the levels of accreditation that pupils can now attain. This increases opportunities for more-able pupils in both Key Stage 4 and post-16.
- Staff performance is managed effectively. Teachers' targets and professional development are linked to the school's action plan and related to expectations for progress.
- 'School is fun and not boring' declared a group of pupils who until recently had very low attendance records. When a small group of post-16 learners refused to attend school, preferring to remain in the home, staff were assigned to work with the group. Their innovative approach quickly re-engaged this group, who now attend regularly and are involved in a wide range of community- and conservation-based activities. This contributes well to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Through activities such as participating in democratic elections and working within the community, pupils develop an understanding of British values. By celebrating Eid and Diwali and undertaking residential visits, pupils are helped to develop good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection held very positive views of the school, particularly under the new leadership. Although it was not possible to view parental responses during the inspection, phone discussions were held with a number of parents. They were particularly appreciative of the increase in communication between the school and themselves. All felt their children made very good progress, particularly in developing their communication skills, both in speaking and, for some, in writing. Parents felt they would recommend the school to others without hesitation.
- Pupils are currently engaged in an enterprise activity, the culmination of which is a stall at a local craft market. Staff and pupils are working hard to design and make a wide variety of different items for sale. These activities engage pupils and also teach them valuable life skills such as budgeting.
- School leaders have ensured that all required policies are in place and meet the independent standards. However some are too generic in their content and do not address the school's unique setting or reflect the good practice in place within the school sufficiently well.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The proprietors of the school including the chief executive officer (CEO) and the operations directors have played an integral role in supporting school leaders to bring about improvements in pupil outcomes. For example, the operations director played an active part in improving attendance by working directly with staff each morning and encouraging pupils in to school. They know the school well and understand its strengths and weaknesses and are clear about what is being done to improve the school still further.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school leadership team ensures that safeguarding pupils is a key priority within the school.
- Since coming to the school the head of education and the general manager have worked hard and successfully to improve safeguarding procedures, which are now robust and rigorously implemented by all staff.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve despite their often very high levels of need. Teachers have established a calm working atmosphere in the majority of classrooms, which enables

pupils to flourish and produce their best.

- Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge and plan work which engages and challenges pupils. For example, in one classroom pupils of different abilities were using musical instruments and 'slinky' springs to learn how sound waves of different sizes depict different sounds. This innovative practical approach enabled pupils of all abilities to gain an understanding of the concept.
- Tutors and teachers use questioning effectively to gauge pupils' levels of understanding of the work set for them. This enables them to build upon learning, and benefit from being challenged to do even better.
- Teachers offer pupils a range of different opportunities to improve their literacy skills and this improves their confidence in speaking, listening and reading.
- The introduction of a school marking policy has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils receive regular feedback on how well they are doing and are set realistic targets for improvement.
- More-able pupils respond positively to comments and follow up the guidance they are given on how to make their work even better.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to support pupils' learning. This could clearly be seen in a classroom where staff in partnership with the clinical psychology team deliver learning in a well-planned, highly structured environment which enables pupils to improve their behaviour.
- Because of the exceptionally high level of behavioural need of most of the pupils, the vast majority require two adults to support them. In order to facilitate this, members of staff from the children's home provide additional support in classrooms. As a result, pupils are sometimes supported by care staff who are well trained in dealing with pupils' difficult behaviour but lack training in supporting their learning. This sometimes slows learning for pupils.
- Assessment information is not always used so successfully. This leads to a mismatch of work to pupils' needs and then work is sometimes too easy for the most able.
- The English books of a small number of the most-able pupils showed that while the pupils were offered opportunities to learn basic grammar there was little opportunity for them to practise their skills in writing longer pieces of work.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by a recent increase in their attendance and good levels of punctuality.
- Staff and pupils are proud of the school and the work that it carries out in the community.
- The importance the school places on promoting individual pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in the care and concern shown for the welfare of all pupils.
- Pupils often start at the school after periods of turbulence, or gaps, sometimes of two or three years, in their education. All have very high levels of need associated with autism. Once they settle into the school's nurturing and caring environment they are well supported at all stages of their education. This enables them to make good strides in their social, emotional and academic development.
- A high proportion of pupils take part in a range of sporting, musical, dramatic and artistic activities, which successfully promote their physical and emotional well-being.
- Pupils are offered effective careers advice which helps them to understand, and make, better and more informed choices at the end of their time in school. The effectiveness of this can clearly be seen in the results from last year's leavers, who continued their studies at college and adult care providers after leaving the school.
- The promotion of British values of tolerance, and respect for the rule of law and democracy, are integral to the school's ethos. These values are reflected in opportunities for pupils to show a sense of responsibility, for example through being part of the school council.
- Pupils are aware that discrimination and bullying can take many different forms, including cyber and homophobic bullying. They feel safe in school, and the work they do on a range of health and social issues helps them to keep safe outside school.
- Through learning about other faiths, for example by celebrating Diwali and Eid, pupils learn tolerance, understanding and respect for the beliefs of others.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Despite their exceptionally high levels of behavioural need the school is an orderly and calm community most of the time.
- Staff are good at understanding the needs of pupils and particularly what may trigger difficult behaviour. The consistent, calm and measured approach taken by all staff has helped to reduce the number of serious incidents logged.
- Pupils' attendance has risen significantly in the last six months, from 70% to 94%. This rise is due to the very focused and proactive approach taken by the head of education and the proprietor to ensuring that pupils attend punctually. This has contributed to the improvement in pupils' achievement.

## Outcomes for pupils

## are good

- Pupils make good progress socially, emotionally and academically, often from very low starting points. The vast majority make or exceed the expected academic progress for similar pupils nationally.
- Post-16 learners also make good progress. Those who follow a more vocational route make good progress developing skills in a range of activities including conservation, horticulture and community work.
- Pupils develop many additional skills through activities. For example, pupils developed mathematical skills, such as budgeting, through their involvement in a fundraising enterprise scheme. Through art classes and vocational opportunities they are all contributing towards making items for a stall in a local craft market.
- Pupils also work in a range of community projects, for example, helping with window dressing in local shops. Pupils have attended interviews in order to obtain some of these positions, experiences which help to prepare them well for the next phase in their lives.
- Staff work closely with speech and language therapists. They use a wide range of different approaches such as signing, the use of signs and symbols, and alternative and augmentative communication therapy to support pupils' speech and language development. As a result pupils make particularly good progress in speaking and listening.
- Parents spoken to commented that this development had contributed directly to improvement in their children's behaviour, self-esteem and independence.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements and enjoy attending lessons. They learn in a variety of different settings. For example, they learn well through the activity-based curriculum, which enables them to develop skills in a wide variety of different activities, such as horse riding and outdoor education.
- Until recently pupils could only achieve up to diploma level in qualifications provided by Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) However, the head of education has recently introduced GCSE entry-level qualifications in English and mathematics. Although this is at an early stage of development, it is planned that it will increase pupils' academic achievement.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106817
<b>Inspection number</b>	10006869
<b>DfE registration number</b>	371/6011

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Independent special school
<b>School status</b>	Independent residential special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of learners in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	25
<b>Of which number on roll in the sixth form</b>	18
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	22
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Hesley Group
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Stephen Lloyd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Cavan
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£62,332
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£228,000–364,578
<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 861663
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fullertonhouseschool.co.uk">www.fullertonhouseschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:fhsadmin@hesleygroup.co.uk">fhsadmin@hesleygroup.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27–28 June 2012

## Information about this school

- Fullerton house school is an independent special school located in a large village close to Doncaster which is one of two schools in the area owned by the Hesley Group.
- It is registered to meet the needs of up to 40 pupils aged between the ages of 8 and 19 years.
- All pupils who attend have a statement of special educational needs or an education and health care plan. The vast majority have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder and have associated severe learning and communication difficulties.
- Residential placements of 52 weeks are provided for nearly all pupils who attend. Currently there are 25 pupils on roll, of whom 21 are boys and 4 are girls.
- The school admits pupils throughout the year, and local authorities from across the UK fund pupils' placements. Nineteen pupils are aged 16–19.

- Although the majority of pupils are aged between 16 and 19, the school does not have a discrete sixth form. Pupils are taught in four mixed-aged classes and are grouped according to their need and developmental stage rather than their age.
- The general manager has overarching responsibility for the school and children's home. The head of education is responsible for leading the school.
- The chief executive officer (CEO) and head of services within the company offer proprietorial governance to the general manager and the head of education.
- Central to the school's aim and purpose is to promote pupils' independence by providing a broad learning experience in an environment which offers warmth, security, consistency and understanding.
- The school was previously inspected in June 2012. The school is dual-registered as a children's home. This was inspected in September 2015, and the report is published separately.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector scrutinised all policies and procedures required in order to establish the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- Pupils' learning was observed in a wide range of curriculum areas across the school. The head of education accompanied the inspector during observations.
- Meetings were held with the leadership team, staff and individual pupils as well as the director of services and the company CEO.
- The inspector took into account the views of nine staff members who returned inspection questionnaires.
- The inspector spoke on the telephone to four parents who had indicated they wished to give their views to the inspector. Seven parents responded on Parent View (Ofsted's online survey) – this was insufficient to generate a report.

## Inspection team

Marian Thomas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2016

