

# Willow House

12 October 2016

120 Stanley Road, Cheadle, Stockport, Greater Manchester SK8 6RF

## Overall outcome

**The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraphs 7 and (7)(a)*

- The standard was not met at the previous inspection as leaders and managers did not create a safe environment for pupils or promote a culture of safety across the school. Pupils did not value the school or pay sufficient regard to their own safety. Pupils' personal development and attitudes to learning were weak. Pupils demonstrated a disregard for what is right and wrong and caused damage to the school's fabric, furniture and office equipment.
- These issues have now been addressed and the proprietors have ensured that the school's fabric, furniture and office equipment have been repaired and that it is able to function as a school. Policies regarding pupil supervision have been reviewed and communicated to all staff.
- Leaders have placed renewed emphasis on ensuring that pupils understand how to play a positive role in society. The curriculum for personal, social and health (PSH) education has been strengthened to support pupils in their attitudes and in understanding the value of education. Provision is now appropriate to the ages and levels of pupils in different key stages. The school's aims and ethos, which are also embedded in all policies, are strongly linked to British values and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding information and guidance to pupils are provided through well-planned curriculum time. Trips and visits are also used well to support pupils' moral development and are well risk assessed to ensure that pupils' safety is paramount.
- Leaders have ensured that checks made on staff are rigorous and carefully recorded. There is a strong culture of care within the school. Staff are knowledgeable about risks and clear on how to use school systems to pass on concerns. Record-keeping and the suitability of actions taken by staff to safeguard pupils are appropriate.
- Staff are trained appropriately in child protection and know what steps to take to protect pupils if they identify any concerns. They know to whom to report concerns and how to access external sources of help and support. There are secure systems to ensure health and safety across the school. For example, key staff are trained as fire wardens and first aiders to safeguard pupils. Leaders have ensured that all staff have been trained to recognise the signs of child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism, and understand how to take prompt action to report it. Staff said that they had received extensive safeguarding training.
- Regulatory failures with regard to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils have been rectified and the school now meets all of the requirements. This standard is now met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1)(a)*

- As pupils' welfare was not assured, the standards for leadership and management were not met. The standard was not met at the previous inspection as leaders did not provide a safe environment or ensure that pupils behaved safely. Safeguarding was ineffective. Leadership failed to provide pupils with opportunities for effective personal development and consequently pupils' attitudes and behaviour were poor. The standard was not met at the previous inspection because leaders failed to demonstrate good knowledge appropriate to their role.
- The headteacher and proprietors have galvanised staff in their determination to bring about improvement. Staff have responded with a sense of urgency to the findings of the previous inspection.
- Leaders have ensured that all damage to the school's fabric has been rectified and that the environment is a safe place for pupils to learn. The school boundary has been reinforced with effective fencing to improve safety for pupils on site.
- Leaders have systematically reviewed and improved policies to ensure that they successfully support staff in establishing good behaviour and a safe environment. Staff have a sharper focus than previously on pupils' personal development and are quick to recognise barriers to learning or the need for additional support. Therapists and psychologists are used wisely.
- Leaders have sought external support from an independent educational adviser. This collaboration is having a positive impact on the progress the school is making, particularly with regard to developing staff's understanding of the independent school standards. Staff are responsive to ideas and get on with making necessary changes. They have amended school policies to ensure that they successfully support pupils' safety and well-being. This external support is valued by all staff.
- This standard is now met.

### *Paragraphs 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)*

- The standard was not met at the previous inspection because leaders failed to demonstrate the ability consistently and effectively to meet the independent school standards. The standard was not met at the previous inspection because leadership failed to promote the well-being of pupils.
- The proprietors and headteacher recognised the urgency for improvement and have restructured leadership roles across the school. Revitalised staff are now empowered to improve the provision. New staff have swiftly driven improvements in aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. The proprietors have increased the support available to all staff at the school.
- Leaders value the development of teachers' professional skills and aspirations, and thereby build a culture of continuous improvement. Staff have a desire to develop professionally and access development opportunities linked to improving the school provision and safety of pupils.
- The headteacher has injected a sense of order and further accountability across the school with frequent reports and quality assurance checks on pupils' behaviour and development. Communication between staff is vastly improved. Consequently, incidents of poor behaviour have fallen dramatically.
- The headteacher has ensured that an amended and detailed action plan has been activated to bring about improvement. Leaders are clearer about their roles and responsibilities and, as a result, all standards previously unmet are now met.

## Material change request

- During the inspection, the headteacher and proprietor requested a change to the registered age range at the school, four to 18 years, to a suggested amendment of five to 14 years. This request was a result of the school and the company, Halliwell Homes, reflecting on the success rate of the school's restorative education programme. Information provided by the headteacher showed clear success with pupils aged five to 14. Pupils in the younger years are more likely to make a successful return to mainstream education and form healthy foster-care relationships. The inspector checked the evidence provided and verified the school's capacity and reasons for the change to the age range.

## **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 that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged not to comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

### **The school now meets the following independent school standards**

- The proprietor ensures that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7, 7(a) and 7(b)).
- The proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

## School details

Unique reference number	136230
DfE registration number	356/6035
Inspection number	10024387

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	Independent school
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	5–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	0
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mrs Karen Mitchell-Mellor
Headteacher	Mr Mathew Hargreaves
Annual fees (day pupils)	£19,500
Telephone number	0161 437 9491
Website	<a href="http://www.halliwellhomes.co.uk/education-20.php">www.halliwellhomes.co.uk/education-20.php</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:contact@halliwellhomes.co.uk">contact@halliwellhomes.co.uk</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	9–10 December 2014

## Information about this school

- Willow House is a small, independent school that is owned and managed by Halliwell Homes.
- 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 four and 19. At the time of the inspection, one pupil on roll was following the key stage 3 curriculum.
- The school uses local sports facilities to provide for pupils' physical education.
- The headteacher is also the headteacher of the company's other schools.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress that the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The Department for Education (DfE) served a notice on the school on 20 July 2016, following the emergency inspection that took place on 29 June 2016 because of complaints and concerns regarding the safety of pupils. The inspection found that there were unmet school standards in relation to pupils' welfare, health and safety and the quality of leadership and management. The school submitted an action plan to the DfE that was rejected. This is the first progress monitoring inspection. It was carried out with no notice.
- The inspector was asked to monitor the progress the school has made and to check that parts 3 and 8 of the independent school standards are met.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, lead teacher and higher level teaching assistant. The inspector also made phone calls to a proprietor and a school improvement partner.
- The inspector completed safety checks of the school site and observed leaders' work to keep pupils safe in the school building.
- School policies and other documentation provided by the school were examined to check compliance with the independent school standards and to provide other inspection evidence towards meeting the independent school standards.
- Records relating to safeguarding and pupils' attendance and behaviour were scrutinised. The inspector looked at a range of documents used by leaders to check the school's work, including monitoring records, behaviour and incident logs, and training records. School policies relating to safeguarding and health and safety were viewed by the inspector and staff were scrutinised for their compliance. During the inspection, consideration was given as to how the school prepares its pupils for life in modern Britain.
- The school's updated action plan for school improvement was also scrutinised by the inspector.
- A material change to reduce the registered age range was requested by the school during the inspection. The inspector checked upon and verified the school's reasons and capacity to narrow the age range from four to 19 years, to include pupils from five to 14 years.

## Inspection team

Dawn Platt, lead inspector

Her Majesty's 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).

### Parent View

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 children looked after, 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